

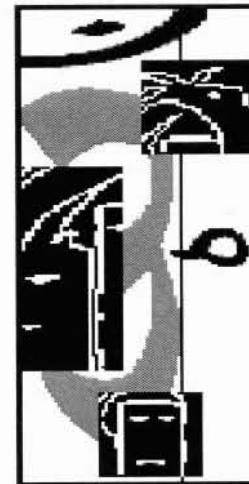
History Studies

University of Limerick

History Studies

Volume 11 2010

History Studies



University of Limerick
History Society
Journal

Volume 11 2010

History Studies is a refereed publication of the University of Limerick History Society and is published annually. It is registered with the Irish International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) Centre at the National Library of Ireland.

Cover design by Jennifer McCaffrey and Nora McGillicuddy, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology. The cover incorporates the concept of past, present and future, which is depicted, firstly by the use of the Buddhist symbol *Aum*. The idea is secondly represented by three illustrative heads looking in different directions. They symbolise the search for history by past, present and future historians.

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Printed by Ger Browne, Print and Design Ltd, Unit 2, Crossagalla Industrial Estate, Ballyneety, Co. Limerick.

ISSN 1393 – 7782.

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Preface

The interest in history and particularly Irish history is a notable feature of the discipline in late 2011. This can be measured in a number of ways through the expanding publications output which James Kelly identified in his recent study *Writing Irish History Today* (Dublin, 2010), the growth of publishing outlets, the appeal of popular history present in radio and television programmes. Thus despite the abolition of history as a core curriculum subject in the Leaving Certificate, and the fear of a decline of interest in history in the third-level sector, this has not been the case. The reasons for studying history are many; it provides a sense of place, time and community, reinforces a collective memory and hones individual's skills of interpretation, analysis, synthesis and personal skills of public debating, making presentations and defending scholarship. The current threat to the discipline namely its removal from the Junior Certificate curriculum must be resisted and the lesson learnt from the United Kingdom experience where a similar move will result as Eric Hobsbawm believed in 'the destruction of the past or, rather, of the social mechanisms that link one's contemporary experience to that of earlier generations, is one of the most characteristic and eerie phenomena of the late 20th century.' Hobsbawm feared that most young men and women will 'grow up in a sort of permanent present lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in.' The message is self-evident.

This volume emphasises the continued popularity of the discipline at third level, it includes contributions from scholars in Trinity College Dublin, Lancaster University, the University of Liverpool, King's College London, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. It provides invaluable insights into Irish, English and US history from the medieval to early twentieth century.

I commend the collection and congratulate the University of Limerick History Society and the journal editors, Mr Paul M. Hayes and Mr Freyne Corbett for maintaining such high production and scholarship values in volume eleven of the journal.

Bernadette Whelan M.A. Ph.D.
Head, Department of History
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Foreword

The University of Limerick History Society is delighted to see the continuing vitality of History Studies, which this year is edited under the careful supervision of Mr Paul Hayes. The Society is justly proud of the fact that its journal remains the only journal in Ireland edited and managed by students. A central aim of the Society is to provide a vehicle through which younger scholars can see their work in print.

While funding the journal is a matter for concern in a period of shortage and cutbacks, the Society is hopeful that the support it receives from its benefactors can be sustained into the future. In this regard, we are delighted to acknowledge the continuing financial aid provided by the Department of History, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Office of the Vice President, Research, without which History Studies could not be produced.

Ruth Ni Chathair

Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank Dr Bernadette Whelan, Head, Department of History, for her generous sponsorship and encouragement, and her predecessor Mr Raymond Friel. Without which this volume would not be published. Professor Tom Lodge, Dean of the College of Humanities and Professor Brian Fitzgerald, Vice President Research, University of Limerick who also provided valuable financial assistance. I am indebted to Dr David Fleming for his advice and help in preparing this volume. My thanks also go to the contributing authors for their patience.

Editorial

I am pleased to present volume eleven of *History Studies*. This contains nine essays based on the work of postgraduate students in both Irish and British universities. The essays in this volume cover various aspects of Irish, British and American history. Ranging from a defence of Irish 'general history' to a re-evaluation of the 'war of the world's' broadcast in the United States in 1938. The essays presented are as varied as royal succession in medieval England to the role of the IRA in the anti-drugs campaign in 1980s Dublin and the 1641 rebellion in Cavan to the conservative revival in England. The range of essays highlights the expanding nature of historical enquiries being pursued by research students in our universities. This in turn will ensure the survival of journals like this one.

Paul Hayes

'Let Us In'—A defense of the Irish 'general history'

Martin John McAndrew

The general history text is not an Irish phenomenon by any means, but great narrative texts, encompassing decades of history remain a stock feature of Irish history writing. Thomas Bartlett has recently contributed a well-received new volume to what is already a market approaching saturation.¹ That the grand narrative has remained popular is thanks largely to the dominance of revisionism, and the revisionist legacy which has inoculated Irish historians against other, more 'scientific' approaches which have dominated in other countries—one's mind springs instantly to the harshly quantitative methods embodied by the *Annales* School in France, for instance.² There is also the more obvious explanation—the dominance that the civil war's legacy, the Anglo-Irish connection and the Troubles in Northern Ireland have all exerted on Irish society, has meant that history has had an everyday relevance to the society of a young country that has only in the last two decades emerged onto the stage with enough confidence to look back on its foundation, searching for answers, much as in many other young states. There is always a demand for such answers, and given the excess of primary source material for modern Irish history, and the dearth of similar material for preceding centuries the readership is spoilt for choice.

These general or survey histories (defined best by Lawrence Stone as a narrative derived from 'the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots')³ are hefty tomes, necessitating a great deal of research and writing. They are nevertheless vulnerable to more than the usual criticism of academics and reviewers. They are castigated for providing only a 'tertiary source' an overview of issues that deserve a more rigorous debate and ruthless professional scrutiny. They, 'vulnerable to the vagaries of fashion', can contribute little to a discipline that has become so reliant on 'specialisation' and the ever closer study of topics.⁴ Though of course, the general history cannot provide the narrow thoroughness of a monograph, and must eschew approaching topics in the thematic way that the very worthy Thomas Davis lecture series, for example, can, it would be unfair to dismiss them.

¹ Thomas Bartlett, *Ireland: a history* (Cambridge, 2010).

² Lawrence Stone, 'The revival of narrative: reflections on a new old history' in *Past and Present*, 85 (1979), p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴ John Tosh, *The pursuit of history* (5th ed., Harlow, 2010), p. 160.

Their perusal as textbooks by the general public (and undergraduates) notwithstanding, these general histories have much to offer scholarship. After all, 'at the heart of historical narration is a process of emplotting, for it is in developing plot that the parts find their relation to the whole.'⁵ It is through the general history that this problem of fragmentation facing modern history as a whole can be countered.⁶ The use of the general history as a tool, both to the general public and to academics is the concern of this paper. The complexity of such texts will be demonstrated as will their necessity as apparatus in encouraging as broad as possible an understanding of history by their application of a long chronological focus to the periods under their review, which prevents a reader from neglecting the 'big picture.' Using as examples the two most widely-known Irish general histories; J.J. Lee's seminal work, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society*, and the more recent survey, *The transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* by Diarmaid Ferriter, the different priorities of focus (the 'vagaries of fashion') of the Irish general history will be examined which allow them to be read as a 'snapshot' of the trends in history-writing at the time of their conception.

Firstly, it is necessary to assess the purpose the general history serves. The increased professionalisation of history as an academic discipline has inevitably led to an increased specialisation of the subject. New scholars are forced to retrace the steps of their predecessors along the mines of history, seeking to plumb new seams of discourse, neglected aspects that the historians who passed this way before neglected to excavate. Of course, this increasingly narrow study is not unwelcome. In-depth study of a period is vital to the full understanding of that period and its impact on subsequent events, personalities and institutions. But the academic *rigueur* of history quickly caused the focus to become 'too narrow, too intense, and too hurried.'⁷ As Lee points out; 'in few fields of intellectual endeavour do the means so threaten to subvert the ends.'⁸ There is a danger now of overspecialisation, and of fragmentation; a scenario where historians might miss the wood for the trees. The logical outcome of this, for both historians and the general public, is negative.

David Thelen, as editor of *The Journal of American History*, noted that 'case studies are becoming mired in details, without illuminating larger issues.'⁹ What

is the prognosis of such a focus for history as a public subject? Instead of enriching American history as a whole, specialisation was making it more inaccessible; 'the demand is no longer; Let Us In. It is instead; So What?'¹⁰

Irish historiography, a slow starter in many respects, is in no way immune from following this American model and onwards to its own doom in obscurity. This would be a great shame, but also a missed opportunity, for as Dermot Keogh noted in 2005, 'the thirst for the reading and study of history in Ireland and abroad appears to be growing. Against international trends, there are signs of a revival of history as a leaving certificate subject in Ireland.'¹¹

Considering the potentially seismic impact that the recent revelations about hidden aspects of the history of Ireland, financial corruption for example, or the institutional and clerical child abuse are likely to have on Irish evaluations of our own history, especially of the post-independence era, an even greater thirst for Irish history among the general public is to be expected and even to be welcomed. The role of the historian (already a regular feature on television and radio panels) as social commentator will become more apparent. To furnish the public with a new, more varied history, inclusive of these new revelations, without obsessing on them—a history driven by a base, tabloid-desire to revel in this murky legacy would be disastrous—but instead placing them within the proper context is an opportunity that is the historians' for the taking. It may not be a welcome opportunity in some respects, not all historians will be comfortable with this perceived social role, and it will necessitate some departure from the specialised and original research that still necessitates the basis of an academic career. It is perhaps however, a consequence of the studies of the contemporary historian that they must furnish such truths as, from time to time, excite the *zeitgeist*.

The general history can become a vital tool in this regard. Couching, as has been stated, the facts of these new revelations in their appropriate context, and taking note of and responding to the specialised monographical studies, the general history functions as a stock-taking exercise, an explanation of how things came to be.

The historian must retell, with a new richness, the story of what some one of the worlds of the past was, how it ceased to be what it was, how it faded and blended into new configurations, how at every stage what was, was the product of what had been, and developed into what no one could have anticipated—all of this to help us

⁵ Thomas Bender, 'Wholes and parts: the need for synthesis in American history' in *The Journal of American History*, 73, 1(1986), p.122.

⁶ David Thelen, 'The profession and the *Journal of American History*' in *The Journal of American History*, 73, 1 (1986), p.9; J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. xi.

⁷ V.H. Galbraith, *Introduction to the study of history* (London, 1964), p.62.

⁸ Lee, *Ireland*, p. xi.

⁹ Thelen, 'The profession and the *Journal of American History*', p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp 10-11.

¹¹ Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland: revolution and state building* (Dublin, 1994), p. xxv.

understand how we came to be the way we are, and to extend the poor reach of our own immediate experience.¹²

Bernard Bailyn's words then, might be the watchword for historians today, reminding them of the latent duty they have taken on, to disseminate the narrative of history as clearly, and as widely as possible for the benefit of the public and, indeed, for their colleagues within the academy, some of whom may have specialised to such a degree that they have condemned themselves, like the Lady of Shalott, to view the world through a distorted reflection.

For it is undoubtedly a danger to take the subject of one's study and treat it as somehow exceptional. But it is dangerous to treat any aspect of history as singular or anomalous, to act or to write as if it occurred in a vacuum, not intruding on the wider contextual climate and in turn being immune from intrusion itself. By placing one's preferred subjects of study within a general history, the continuity of history itself is highlighted. The perceived uniqueness of the subject recedes or is refuted, to the appropriate degree, and the potentially more sensationalist aspects of history are toned down and if not necessarily rationalised (it is difficult, for instance, to rationalise institutional child abuse) then at least to a harsh monochrome are introduced some vital shades of grey.

The narrative account of the past such as is being defended here, it needs to be stressed, need not (indeed, should not) ever be unanalytical. It should be unemotional, but not dispassionate. A.T.Q. Stewart's observation that historians have neglected to remember that history is about people is a reminder of the need to engage with the psychological and humane aspects of history.¹³

The general history has other academic benefits also. Scholars, of course, are compelled to consult as wide a range of texts as possible. Here the plethora of publishing has become useful. As time passes on, so too do trends in the writing of history; as the focus shifts to different aspects of the broader narrative, the nature of the text also shifts. Different historians (often of different generations though nowadays there are enough exceptions to prevent this from being a rule) value different 'sub-plots'¹⁴ within the narrative, and their treatment of various figures and periods of history reflect this accordingly.

¹² Bernard Bailyn, 'The challenge of modern historiography' in *American Historical Review*, 87, 1 (1982), p. 24.

¹³ A.T.Q. Stewart interview, *History Ireland*, 1, 2 (1993), p.58.

¹⁴ Stone, 'Revival of narrative', p.6.

The rise and rise of social history writing in Ireland is a key example of this. F.S.L. Lyons, in the preface to his *Ireland since the Famine*, the first great general history of post-independence Ireland, noted the heavy reliance in Irish historiography on the political history of the nation.¹⁵ He attributed this largely to the 'historiographical revolution' of revisionism which sought to take contemporary politics out of history writing but was ironically only able to do so by focusing exclusively on the political sphere. He looked forward to a time when contemporary history would be less inhibited by the longevity of the protagonists of the revolutionary period, as well as citing the legacy of that conflict and the subsequent Northern conflict as further key elements in its retardation.¹⁶

It was a theme Lyons would return to. While he argued that it is possible for the historian to address such issues rooted in contention whilst using 'all the disciplines of his training to distance himself from that subject',¹⁷ he also prophetically suggested that future historians should use these inhibitions as a reason for exploring the social evolution of Ireland in the fifty years since independence.¹⁸ Though he was not to live to see it, Irish history-writing has indeed diversified along lines he predicted.

Though the reasons Lyons gave above for the poverty of social history are reflections of the revisionist movement which sought to temper the hot-headed nationalist approach to history with a cold-blooded distant variety which necessitated a veto on contemporary history (which can, after all, bleed into current affairs)¹⁹ and a refusal to look at the present as a product of the past, much to the chagrin of the next generation of historians.²⁰ This detachment, and subsequent fears that revisionism itself might become a morality tale did in fact lead to a generation of scholars focusing more on the neglected social and cultural history of Ireland.²¹ This, naturally, has led to a variety in the type of general history available.

The general history, in light of this, can be used as a demonstration of the various writing styles applied to history at various points in the evolution of Irish historiography. A comparison between both Lee's and Ferriter's histories is useful as

¹⁵ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London, 1971), p. 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.8.

¹⁷ F.S.L. Lyons, 'The burden of our history' in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish history: the debate on historical revisionism* (Dublin, 1994), p. 88.

¹⁸ Lyons, *Ireland*, p.8.

¹⁹ Ciaran Brady, '"Constructive and instrumental": the dilemma of Ireland's first "new historians"' in Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History*, pp 3-31.

²⁰ Lee, *Ireland*, pp 587-9.

²¹ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* (London, 2005), p. 23.

an illustration of this point. Lee's work can comfortably be described as a political history; sometimes this description can be applied to a work derogatorily.²² Of course all history, essentially the study of the interplay between power and society, is to some extent political and consequently, a slightly less unhelpful though much more cumbersome term might be 'history from above.' The priority given to diplomacy, government policy, and affairs of state undoubtedly stems from the author's own preferences but it is also likely a product of the legacy of the revisionist legacy, mentioned above. A conscious reaction to this legacy is also evident however, particularly in Lee's willingness to devote a very considerable portion of the work (no less than 177 pages) to the long neglected contemporary history. It is probably this foray into 'Perspectives' that has ensured the continued importance of the book.²³ Lee was the first historian to seriously use the present as a means of reevaluating the past performance of the state since independence; it greatly impacted on the historical interpretation of the period at the time and the work has held a position of prominence ever since. Though, it should be noted, that Lee was writing at a time when the state archives were being properly and routinely opened to the public under the aegis of the National Archives Act, and thus benefited from a much wider range of sources. There is a sense that his foray into contemporary general history was as much a result of his being in the right place at the right time, as of his own pioneering spirit. It was not without its critics however. A general history should ideally be accessible to the public as well as to scholars. Lee's book, was validly noted at the time for requiring some previous knowledge of the period.²⁴ Though this serves to highlight the fact that academics write these tomes for their colleagues as well as for the public.

Though Lee's book is clearly high-political in focus (the dates he sets for it 1912-1985, place it firmly between the third Home Rule crisis and the Anglo-Irish Agreement) it has been subject to criticism that it does not focus adequately on social history, particularly the history of women.²⁵ However, it is unfair to lavish such blame on a book that clearly accomplishes what it has set out to do, simply because it is not the book one would have chosen to have written in the same circumstances. Lee himself has since stated also that there is a danger in 'chasing the latest politically correct fashion which would be to prostitute history to propaganda.'²⁶

²² Bender, 'Wholes and parts', pp 120-1.

²³ Ferriter, *Transformation*, p. 3.

²⁴ Charles Townsend, 'Review: history as critique' in *The Irish Review*, 8 (1990), p. 117.

²⁵ Paul Canning, Review of J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985* in *Albion*, 23, 2 (1991), p. 374.

²⁶ J.J. Lee interview, in *History Ireland*, 3, 2 (1995), p. 45.

Ferriter's work can suffer little of the same criticism. Increased communication and access to the works of historians of other schools and countries has led to a rapid cross-pollination of trends. Irish historiography has caught up rapidly with other schools and a more promiscuous body of work has replaced the uniformity of the high-political, revisionist outlook. Ferriter's survey, if not necessarily a social history in the traditional sense, as described by Hobsbawm²⁷ for he does not neglect the political, could rightly be termed a narrative of inclusion; offering a perspective of history 'from below.' One reviewer wrote;

The emergence and development of a women's movement in Ireland is highlighted at different stages. The granting of a range of rights and the pursuing of gender equality is recorded in some detail...persistent poverty is linked with the growing prosperity of the nouveau riche...long term sexual repression that slowly and sometimes ambiguously gives way to an acknowledgement of homosexuality, an acceptance of contraception and divorce.²⁸

Admittedly, such historical analysis was long over-due. Ferriter's desire to 'inject a greater degree of humanity into the study of Irish history'²⁹ is evident. But there remains a caveat for the social or socially-minded historian writing a general history. Social history, by its own application, seeks to supplement perhaps even to subvert political history. In doing so, however, it risks losing the grand scope and the continuity which is so desirable to a general history, and which comes so naturally to the political analysis which uses 'the dates of reigns, administrations and battles [as] convenient markers.'³⁰ Instead, it risks becoming yet another 'proliferation of intensely parochial, nearly hermetic discourses around a series of social units smaller than either societies or nations.'³¹ This again threatens to resemble 'specialisation.' If general histories from below are to become established, they must not avoid some engagement with the political realm.

Of a similar problem in American 'new history', it was written that 'if kings, generals and notables lost their monopoly in historical narrative, the purpose of the new history was not so much to dismiss as to surround those actors with the social, economic and cultural collectiveness and forces that were at once the condition and the object of their actions.'³² The political realm can therefore be seen to be both the

²⁷ E. J. Hobsbawm, 'From social history to history of society' in M.W. Flinn and T.C. Smout (eds), *Essays in social history* (Oxford, 1974), pp 1-22.

²⁸ Michel Pellion, 'Review: Writing the history of the present' in *The Irish Review*, 34 (2006), p. 160.

²⁹ Ferriter, *Transformation*, p.2.

³⁰ Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London 1988), p. 3.

³¹ Bender, 'Wholes and parts,' p. 126.

³² *Ibid*, p.123.

progeny and progenitor of the social. Social historians rely upon the action of the political realm to foster a society which provides them with a narrative to recount.

Though groundbreaking, it is too early to tell whether Ferriter's work will become as significant as Lee's. But given that these new priorities of focus are relatively new to the Irish academy and are still finding their place, 'classic status' may elude it. Though it has succeeded in incorporating the new revelations and truths that emerged as the century closed, about neglected and hidden facets to the history of post-independence Ireland, the importance of which has been outlined above, it has clearly emerged, as a response to the 'emetic' that was administered to Irish society as the century closed; seeking to expose the 'dirty underbelly' of Ireland.³³ This is not to suggest that the author was deliberately setting out to write sensationalist history, or that the book itself is anything less than invaluable. But, by placing such emphasis on the negative aspects of Irish history from the first page of the introduction it states its aim in highlighting these it seems that Ferriter was falling onto that trap of 'prostituting history to propaganda' which may prohibit his text from aging as well as Lee's.

His use of sources betrays him further in this respect. Too often does he rely on the opinions (as distinct from the reports) of journalists. There is nothing wrong with using newspapers as a major source, especially, as for much of the later period they must take on the role of replacing the documents that are shielded behind a thirty-year-rule—we accept the use of nineteenth century papers in history, what is so different about twenty-first century papers? However, Ferriter has been criticized for his taking the commentary of journalists as fact, or as a replacement for his own analysis,³⁴ perhaps diving too enthusiastically into the role of current social commentator.

Given these diverging yet equally valid approaches to the general history, perhaps it would be desirable to combine both to give a more inclusive and therefore, though no next should ever claim to be definitive (or dare to think of itself as such), a more balanced narrative. Certainly moves were afoot in this direction of 'synthesis' in American historiography, which aimed not only to unite these trends of focus and interpretation but to further reinforce the status of the 'synthetic narrative'³⁵ i.e.

³³ Ferriter, *Transformation*, p. 2.

³⁴ Michel Pillion, 'Review' p. 161; Desmond Fennell, review of *The transformation of Ireland* in *History Ireland*, 13, 1 (2005), p. 58.

³⁵ Bender, 'Wholes and parts,' pp 131-2.

inclusive general history texts, uniting of the findings of the specialised monographical studies of the social, political and all their variants of history.

Admirable sentiments indeed, but there are flaws in this plan. The primary one being that it is difficult to approach history both from the top and from below in the same volume. Such omnivorous focus could lead to organizational nightmare, necessitating a switch from high politics to low society intermittently within each chapter which could exhaust the patience of the author and the goodwill of the reader. The volume would have to become so large as to be prohibitively expensive and time consuming, or so dilute of detail as to lose its historiographical value—passing from history into mere chronology. Collaborative works, such as *The new history of Ireland* may be suggested as a foil to this. However, these works tend to have unhappy and painfully long gestations, and in the event they again fail to provide any true analytical consistency 'however like-minded the collaborators and however forceful the editor.

³⁶

Though increased awareness and tolerance for each of the trends in general history writing is desirable from the other, it is perhaps for the benefit of the readership that both remain largely separate. They would thus continue to foster the debates necessary for the continued existence of history as an academic discipline also, which would be to the natural advantage of the academic if not to the lay-reader.

To demonstrate the value of the general history to the study of history, a subject that has followed the destiny of all the academic disciplines, and specialised to such a degree that its practitioners covet the most obscure of topics, lies in its ability to force the historian to place that topic within a wider context. Having this perspective ensures that a true analysis of any aspect of history—one that shirks the 'exceptional' nature of the study—is much easier to attain. Their use in the exploration of historiography, though challenging, is no less valuable. They demonstrate the variations that emerge with time within the historical community. They highlight the shifts in thought, in sources, and in the values of the historian as to what constitutes history and what is worth writing about. Lee's and Ferriter's books, are classic examples of these changes, and they represent two different perspectives on what entails a general history, though neither should ultimately triumph over the other; it is the fate of all those who come after them to consult both, always trying to unearth the 'true' perspective, the 'right' angles of approach. As time passes, it will no

³⁶ Tosh, *Pursuit of history*, p. 161.

doubt become consensus that is only by a reading and a blending of these perspectives that anything close to a 'true' historical understanding can begin to be reached.

But it is also beyond the ivory towers of academia that the general history proves its worth. It is the form most suited to the proliferation of the discipline of history to a wider audience. History should not be a sterile preserve of the university. Historians should not jealously guard the past; it is not a cadaver to be dissected by learned practitioners and their students behind closed doors. Accessible, readable histories like Lee's and Ferriter's ensure that the doors remain open, and that history remains alive. Bernard Bailyn has aptly written;

the critical need, it seems to me, is to bring order to large areas of history and thus to reintroduce history in a sophisticated form to a wider reading public, through synthetic works, narrative in structure, on major themes, works that explain some significant part of the story of how the present world came to be the way it is.³⁷

This cuts to the heart of what it is that makes history the most popular of the academic disciplines. But perhaps it is best to conclude in an Irish context and with the succinct words of our most venerable historian, R.B. McDowell; 'there can be the danger of getting into a closed room in which the experts chat to and fro and impinge very little on the outside world. I do not want to see history in that room.'³⁸

The Ulster rebellion of 1641 in County Cavan

Freyne Corbett

The rebellion that erupted in Ulster in October 1641 would engulf Ireland until the final collapse of resistance to parliamentary forces in 1653. Events that form the backdrop to the conflict were King Charles's confessional dispute with Scottish covenanters, the English parliament's suspicion of Charles and the king's cowardly dealings with the Irish catholic ascendancy in the matter of the Graces. The Graces were a royal form of blackmail: cash in exchange for religious freedoms.

The insurrection in Ulster began with the taking of Charlemont and Dungannon castles by Sir Felim O'Neill and his men on 22 October 1641.¹ This action by O'Neill overshadows the concurrent and pre-arranged outbreaks in counties Monaghan, Cavan, Tyrone, Down, Fermanagh, Louth and Longford as well as separate attacks in Tyrone.² Since the plantation of Ulster thirty years earlier the concerns of the Gaelic aristocracy had steadily grown due to the depletion of their estates, threatened religion and the ascendancy of what they perceived as lesser men from England and Scotland. The insurgent leaders seem at first to have been seeking to pull off a 'bloodless coup' with the intent of obtaining a bargaining position for Irish catholics with the English government.³ They repeatedly professed their loyalty to the crown and claimed the king's approval for their actions.⁴ Violence, however, was inevitable. Despite Sir Felim's claim from Dungannon on Sunday 25 October that no injury was intended to the people of the 'English or Scottish nation', there had already been many attacks on settlers which included a number of fatalities and abductions.⁵ The relationship between the newcomers, lowland or Covenanter Scots and English, and the Gaelic aristocracy was a complex one, and not simply one of mutual enmity. Both groups, perhaps, had more in common as landowners than differences in religion or origins.⁶

¹ M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641* (Belfast, 1994), p. 214.

² TCD, 1641 Depositions Project (<http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php>) (accessed 4 May 2011).

³ Aiden Clarke, *The old English in Ireland, 1625-42* (Dublin, 2000), pp 161-2; Patrick J. Corish, 'The rising of 1641 and the Catholic confederacy, 1641-5' in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds) *A new history of Ireland, III early modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976), pp 291-2.

⁴ Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak*, p. 218.

⁵ Depositions of Reynold and Elizabeth Griffith and Captain Thomas Chambers (6 Jan. 1642), 1641 Depositions Project, (<http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?deplD=<?php echo 836006r005?>>) (accessed 04 May 2011). All references to the online depositions were accessed on 4 May 2011.

⁶ Thomas Carte, *An history of the life of James the first Duke of Ormond and of the affairs of Ireland in his time*, 3 vols (London, 1851), p. 346.

³⁷ Bailyn, 'Challenge of modern historiography', p. 7.

³⁸ R.B. McDowell interview, in *History Ireland*, 1, 4 (1993), p. 12.

At the same time that Dungannon and Charlemont were taken, a number of other strongpoints and towns were captured by the rebels.⁷ These attacks and others indicate a well-formed plan of campaign throughout Ulster. As we shall see, however, the initial success of the Irish was rapidly undermined by their failure to capture several key strongpoints that held out for the settlers. The failure to capture Dublin castle, and thus successfully capitalise on the English administration's temporary paralysis, allowed hope to the beleaguered British in Ulster. The breakdown of authority among the Irish leaders which followed soon after the first successes undermined the rebels' cause and the dispersal of leadership to regional figures added to their ineffectiveness. This meant that, in each county local leaders took charge of the struggle with a greater or lesser degree of control over their followers.⁸ Instead of a unified movement under a recognised general, as Owen Roe O'Neill was to become in 1642, the Ulster revolt during the winter of 1641-2, was a complex series of un-coordinated sub-regional actions. This essay will attempt to explain how the 1610 plantation of Ulster sowed the seeds for what was to follow by causing bitter resentment among the Irish peasantry and inseminating a culture of violence. It will recount the events in County Cavan in the first weeks of the uprising using various sources but particularly the Depositions, or refugee accounts of the rebellion that were recorded in Dublin from early 1642 until the 1650s. The Cavan depositions are examined for clues to the motivations of the Irish, the role of women and other less well-known revelations on the rebellion. In order to put the Cavan uprising and subsequent depositions in perspective an attempt will be made to gauge the success or failure of the Cavan plantation, as well as provide an estimate of the settler population at the time of the insurrection in October 1641.

In accounts of the uprising it is usual to read that the Irish rebel leaders explained their actions as being supported by the king, or queen Henrietta Maria, that their Catholicism was threatened, and that the parliament of England intended forced attendance at Protestant services.⁹ The issue of land is mentioned as a cause of discontent but as the Irish leaders were landowners, their grievances on land issues would be considerably less emotive than to the labouring classes.¹⁰

Cavan was divided into eight baronies, (See Fig. 1) which were used to divide the county for the 1610 plantation. Sixteenth-century Cavan, was a borderland

area between the English lordship of the Pale and the powerful Gaelic lords of Ulster. Until the end of the sixteenth century the O'Reillys, the chief sept or clan of Breifne, as the area of Cavan and Leitrim was called, had been adept at managing these conflicting powers. The southern lands of Breifne, the baronies of Clanmahon and Castlerahan, as well as parts of Clankee in the east, had been settled by Old English families such as the Nugents, Flemings, Plunketts, Talbots and Dowdals. The O'Reillys had astutely intermarried with these Old English Palesmen whilst making similar alliances with Gaelic families. During the Nine Years' War (1594-1603), however, the O'Reillys, despite a long-standing allegiance to the Crown, supported Hugh O'Neill and, on his defeat, their lands were subject to confiscation and plantation.¹¹

At the time of the plantation of 1610 the Barony of Loughree, having some of the best agricultural land in the county, was reserved for English undertakers - so called because they 'undertook' to settle their areas with immigrants - whilst Tullyhunco and Clankee, with relatively poorer land, were settled by Scots planters.¹² The newcomers were to live in plantation estates and towns, which, apart from Cavan town, had to be built by the undertakers and their tenants from scratch. The 'deserving' native Irish and servitors - men rewarded for military service, but who also included Old English appointees, as well as royal beneficiaries - were allocated poorer land in a crescent between Loughree and the better lands of Clankee. The mountainous lands of Tullyhaw in the east were also allocated to this group of existing residents who were considered worthy of consideration by the English government. Even in the inferior areas the Irish were the last group to be considered and received pockets of land which remained after the newcomers had been allocated.¹³

⁷ P. J. Duffy, 'Perspectives on the making of the Cavan landscape' in Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Cavan: essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1995), pp 17-8; Philip Robinson, *The plantation of Ulster: British settlement in an Irish landscape 1600-1670* (Belfast, 1994), p. 40; Idem, 'The evolution of estate properties in south Ulster 1600-1900' in William J. Smyth and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Common ground: essays on the historical geography of Ireland* (Cork, 1988), p. 93.

¹² Brendan Scott, *Cavan, 1609-1653: plantation, war and religion* (Dublin, 2007), pp 11-14; Duffy, 'Perspectives', pp 21-5.

¹³ This view has been contested. See Duffy, 'Perspectives', pp 22-3; Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, p. 96, 123; S. J. Connolly, *Contested island: Ireland 1460-1630* (Oxford, 2007), p. 299; Robinson, *The plantation of Ulster*, pp 85-7.

⁷ Mary Hickson, *Ireland in the seventeenth century or the Irish massacres of 1641-2*, vol. I (London, 1884), p. 112.

⁸ Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001), pp 472-3.

⁹ Ibid., p. 472.

¹⁰ Martyn Bennett, *The civil wars in Britain and Ireland, 1638-51* (Oxford, 1997), pp 91-4.



Figure 1. Baronies and towns, County Cavan.

Cavan, in part because of its peripheral location in the Ulster plantation and because much of the land was considered unsuitable for colonisation, was not settled as extensively as the rest of settlement Ulster.¹⁴ With the Old English in the south, whose older claim to Cavan lands was respected by the authorities, the land taken for the undertakers was mostly in the central and eastern parts of the county.¹⁵

Cavan had, however, the largest number of servitors of any county and the baronies of Tullyhaw, Clanmahon, Castleraghan and Tullygarvey were set aside for these men, as well as for the 'deserving' Irish.¹⁶ These Irish, previously the ruling elites, who once controlled most of the county had to conform to English lease law provisions and, of course, were to remain loyal to the English crown. The 'lesser' Irish, those who had previously lived on the English or Scottish allocated baronies, were supposed to move. The attitude of these 'lesser' Irish may be partially comprehended by a letter to Lord Salisbury from the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir Arthur Chichester, in November 1610. Speaking of the Irish determination to remain in their home area Chichester writes:

The quality of the new settler stock may be gauged from this account by the Rev. Andrew Stewart, a presbyterian minister and son of a settler:

Cavan's mixed topography, with poor boggy and mountainous land in the east, drumlins in the south, lakes and productive land in the central and western areas, made for a varied and distinctive landscape. Errors arose when the 2,000, 1,500 and 1,000 acre lots or 'proportions' were drawn up on the basis of a misunderstanding of Gaelic land descriptions. Irish land units such as ballyboes, polls and tates do not indicate a fixed spatial territory, but rather, food production potential in an area and which could vary enormously in size.¹⁹ This error resulted in the undertakers receiving much more land than envisaged and the extent of the mistakes made in mapping and measurement can be seen in the barony of Loughtee where six undertakers were assessed to receive a combined total of 12,500 acres and, in fact, actually became owners of 96,000 acres – seven and a half times their 'entitlement'.²⁰ Additionally, few undertakers, who were obliged to import tenants from England and Scotland, had

the means to develop the land in the manner intended. Commonly, they resorted to keeping Irish tenants, in defiance of its prohibition under plantation strictures, in profiteering ventures.²¹

The initial plantation scheme granted the forfeited land of Cavan to twenty-eight British planters, comprising thirteen servitors and fifteen undertakers, as well as smaller portions of land to loyal Irishmen. These twenty-eight were obliged to import tenants of various categories and commence building estates and towns.²² In 1611 Sir George Carew was appointed to undertake a survey of the plantation counties. It was found that many undertakers had either not bothered to inspect their new property or had visited their land and promptly returned home.²³ Threatened with the loss of their estates some owners sold their land to more enterprising planters.²⁴ Sir Josias Bodley conducted a further survey in 1613 which indicated that the native Irish were still on escheated lands in greater numbers than the settlers and that the population of the six planted Ulster counties was between 1,900 and 2,200 British males.²⁵ Using the factor of 2.4 males to each family, which the undertakers and surveyors used, these figures would indicate a total British population of around 5,000 people on the planted territories.²⁶ In 1618 a more comprehensive survey was conducted by Captain Nicholas Pynnar who provided the data for table one, also documented the state of strongpoint construction, the readiness and number of arms-bearing men of eighteen years and upwards, whether a sufficient store of arms was stockpiled and the number of 'mere' Irish.

Pynnar found some improvement, particularly in Loughree, but also much to complain about. It appears that settlers told Pynnar of their *intentions* rather than their accomplishments in an attempt to imply a degree of compliance.²⁷ A 1630 muster of British men in Cavan provides a further comparison although it only lists males over eighteen and therefore Bodley and Pynnar's survey of families must be converted to adult males. This is accomplished using the factor of 2.4 males per

family. A comparison of the planter population of Cavan using these three sources (Table 2) suggests growth in Loughree and Tullyhunco, decline in Clankee and Clanmahon and little change in the others.²⁸ In comparison to the figure of 765 males in 1630, Perceval-Maxwell gives a compatible figure of 830 adult males in 1630 but this is for both Cavan and Fermanagh.²⁹

Table 1. Number of Settler families in County Cavan in 1619³⁰

Barony	No. of Undertakers	No. of families in 1619	No of men over 18
Loughree	7	183 (English)	439
Tullyhunco	4	97 (Scots)	180
Clankee	4	80 (Scots)	178
Tullyhaw	3	2 (Servitors and Natives)	Nil
Clanmahon	3	7 (Servitors and Natives)	Nil
Castlerahan	5	8 (Servitors and Natives)	Nil
Tullygarvey	2	4 (Servitors and Natives)	Nil
Total	28	381	797

Although these figures must be seen as very approximate they are good enough to give a trend for the county as a whole. The rapid growth between 1613 and 1619 was not matched over the following ten years. In the first six years the population grew by almost ninety percent but the rate slowed to thirty-three percent in the second period. The only areas of building growth were in Loughree and Tullyhunco where the first settler towns were established. In Loughree, Ballyhaise and Belturbet began as small market towns as did Killeshandra in Tullyhunco. Cavan town was already established and had a large Gaelic population.³¹ Using the figures above, and allowing for continued expansion of the population to 1641, it seems that Cavan could not have had much more than 2,500 British inhabitants just prior to the rebellion.³²

²¹ M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish migration to Ulster in the reign of James I* (London, 1973), pp 146-7. So necessary was Irish labour and rent to the planters that in 1625 they were officially permitted by the king to allow the Irish on a quarter of their estates. Hill, *An historical account*, pp 447-8.

²² An example is the tenantry on the estate of Thomas Waldron who in 1619 had the following: 5 freeholders; 17 lessees for years, and 31 cottagers. Hill, *An historical account*, pp 461-2; Connolly, *Contested island*, pp 291-2.

²³ Hill, *An historical account*, p. 447.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Connolly, *Contested island*, p. 300; County Coleraine was planted later by the city of London and became County Londonderry; Annaleigh Margey, 'Surveying and mapping plantation in Cavan, c.1580-1622' in Brendan Scott (ed.) *Culture and society in early modern Breifne/Cavan* (Dublin, 2009), pp 113-5.

²⁶ Padraig Lenihan, 'The Catholic confederacy 1642-9: an Irish state at war' (PhD thesis, NUIG 1995), App. 25, pp i-ii; Robinson, *The plantation*, p. 224. The non-Irish population of Antrim and Down are excluded from these figures.

²⁷ Hill, *An historical account*, p. 454.

²⁸ Ibid., pp 213-15.

²⁹ Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish migration*, p. 223.

³⁰ Robinson, *The plantation*, Appendix 10, pp 213-15, 224; Hill, *An historical account*, pp 445-74.

³¹ Jonathan Cherry, 'The indigenous and colonial urbanization of Cavan town, c.1300-c.1641' in Scott (ed.) *Culture and society*, p. 93.

³² Robinson, *The plantation*, pp 93-7; William Roulston, 'The Scots in plantation Cavan, 1610-42' in Scott (ed.) *Culture and Society*, p.130. I have allowed a continued increase of thirty-three percent for the years 1630-41, although this might be optimistic. Taking 765 males in 1630 by 2.4 (men per family), by thirty-three percent gives 2,448 inhabitants.

Table 2. Number of British adult males in Cavan in 1613, 1618 and 1630

Barony	1613	1618	1630
Loughtee	230	277	420
Tullyhunco	64	131	210
Clankee	0	133	107
Tullyhaw	0	0	0
Clanmahon	0	11	0
Castleraghan	14	14-25*	28
Tullygarvey	0	0-11*	0
Total	308	576	765

* These figures are the minimum and maximum.³³

This would mean that the Cavan depositions, numbering 261, represent around ten percent of the total settler population and considerably more if only adults are considered. Looking at the overall plantation of Ulster, Robinson estimates around 6,500 adult British males in 1630 and Connolly, adding the settler populations for Antrim and Down, arrives at a 'rough' figure of 15,000 adult males for the same date.³⁴ Given the decline in growth after 1619 an estimate, using the muster figures, for the settlement counties, is around 22,000 settlers in 1641.³⁵ The Cavan depositions form one of the most numerous collections of witness statements for the 1641 Rebellion in the north of Ireland. This is likely because fewer 'British' were killed in Cavan than other counties and because the escape route for the Cavan settlers was south to Dublin, where the depositions were recorded.

The revolt in Cavan was headed by Sir Philip McHugh McShane O'Reilly, head of that sept under the old Gaelic system, and MP for the county. Other clans followed the O'Reilly lead, notably the Bradys, McCabes, Magowens, McGirvans and O'Sheridans. Since 1608 property that had originally been reserved for the 'deserving' Irish had, as in neighbouring Monaghan, passed into English and Scots hands. Indeed

only sixteen percent of Cavan's land was in Irish hands by 1641.³⁶ The sheriff of Cavan, Miles Reilly, was the first to strike on 22 October, when, under the pretext of combatting the rebels, he commandeered weapons from the English in the area for their protection. His true intentions were soon revealed, when he took Farnham castle, near Cavan town, seat of the Waldren family, and soon after Clogh Oughter castle, originally a Reilly home. He reverted to his Gaelic name of Mulmore McEdmond O'Reilly, although he continued to act as sheriff. Mulmore, with his men joined his kinsman, The O'Reilly, in an attack on Belturbet which was defended by four or five hundred English soldiers who had, by this time, been warned of the insurrection.³⁷

Throughout Cavan, there were many attacks on the English settlers; the Scots initially being left alone as the Irish leaders claimed to have no quarrel with them. The depositions give individual accounts, with a few notable exceptions, of the attacks on the English, but do not provide a strategic or military overview. As the deponents were hoping to gain recompense for their losses and were keen to name their attackers, the larger view did not concern them. Attacks on towns such as Belturbet, Cavan and Ballyhaise account for eighty five of the depositions and are accounts of the same action. Settlers could be attacked more than once; the first in their home parish and a further attack on the road to Dublin, usually at Virginia or Oghill in Castlerahan and Clanmahon baronies respectively.³⁸

Most deponents identify their origins in County Cavan, as elsewhere, as a parish.³⁹ In some cases deponents gave an alternative place-name which is no longer identifiable. The majority of the attacks took place in the barony of Loughtee, which also contained the settlement towns of Cavan, Belturbet and Ballyhaise. These three towns registered sixty-seven attacks, and a further eighty-two deponents gave their residence as a parish in Loughtee. Attacks did occur elsewhere but on a smaller scale (Table 3). This would indicate that the Insurgents' claim that they had no quarrel with the Scots was not just a ploy to divide their enemies but was, initially, a genuine conviction. Annagh, a civil parish, shared between Loughtee and Tullygarvey, registered fifteen attacks but can be considered as part of the Loughtee English

³³ Robinson, *The plantation*, Appendix 10, p. 224.

³⁴ Connolly, *Contested island*, pp 301-2; Robinson, *The plantation*, pp 95-7, 223.

³⁵ This figure is achieved using Hill's calculation of between 6,555 and 6,589 adult males in 1630, allowing a thirty-three percent increase over the next ten years and using the generous factor of 2.4 males per family.

³⁶ Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish migration*, pp 141-4; Scott, *Cavan*, pp 16-7; Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, pp 94-5; Hickson, *Ireland in the seventeenth century*, p. 105; J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1652*, vol. 1, ii, pp 477-8.

³⁷ Relation by Henry Jones, D.D., of proceedings in Cavan, 1641-2', in J. T. Gilbert (ed.) *History of the Irish confederation and the war in Ireland* (Dublin 1882-91), pp 476-8; S.J. Connolly, *Divided kingdom: Ireland 1630-1800* (Oxford, 2008), p. 43.

³⁸ Deposition of Thomas Taylor, 12 Jan. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>).

³⁹ These parishes, called civil parishes, are the Church of Ireland's smallest ecclesiastical and administrative units which were formed in Ireland from the English reformation period. Though many are co-terminous with Catholic parishes, they form part of the shiring and mapping efforts that accompanied the Tudor conquest.

settlement. This suggests that Loughtee was the main target area for the rebels which, as shown, was the most populated with settlers.

Table 3. Attack by Barony

Barony	No. of Attacks	Settled By
Loughtee	149	English
Tullygarvey	17	English/Old English
Tullyhaw	3	Irish
Clankeel	5	Scots
Tullyhunco	9	Scots
Clanmahon	7	Old English
Castlerahan	7	Old English
Total	197	

The attacks on fortified positions took different forms; force, deceit and negotiations were used. When Farnham castle was captured on the 22 October arms for forty or fifty men were seized.⁴⁰ Miles then proceeded to Clogh Oughter castle and captured the castle. After a failed assault at Moynehall castle in Annageliff, Loughtee Upper, the attackers, Mulmore O'Reilly and Shane Brady with sixty men, claimed they wished to spend the night, which was agreed. Once inside, however, they ransacked the castle and stripped all the English.⁴¹ These events took place on the first weekend of the rebellion, between the 23 and 25 October. The stripping of English prisoners, carried out in all areas of rebellion in Ulster, was, apart from the humiliation to the victim, an act of theft as the clothes could be valuable or conceal valuables.⁴² It might also indicate resentment towards those who had replaced them on the land in the plantations and a suggestion that they leave with nothing, as they had arrived.

The capture of Belturbet by Sheriff O'Reilly took a little longer. O'Reilly demanded the town's surrender, claiming he wanted to protect the townspeople from Rory Maguire's army, who were expected from Fermanagh. An agreement was made with captain Ryves and Mr Ashe, a Justice of the Peace, that, if the English surrendered their weapons to the Irish, all would be spared molestation. This would

indicate a level of amity between settler and native and, at least at the higher levels of society, this appears to be the case. Once the town was taken, O'Reilly evacuated the English from the town and escorted them out of the county. Although there is no record of fatalities in the taking of Belturbet, some thirty people – although some deponents claim one hundred persons – were killed or died of privation on the route through Cavan.⁴³ Some English, hearing of the rebellion, tried to flee but were halted on their way, robbed and stripped but rarely killed and sent on their way.⁴⁴ Cavan town faced a large force of as many as 3,000 men, whereupon Captain Bailey, having – only a few armed men and little gunpowder, surrendered on terms on 27 October.⁴⁵

By the beginning of November only two strongpoints remained free of the insurgent's control. Sir Francis Hamilton's castle at Keilagh in Tullyhunco was initially left undisturbed as he was a Scot, but later, in December 1641, when the O'Reillys were encircling Drogheda from the south, he was attacked by a force of 2,000 men, which he repulsed after first burning nearby Killeshandra. Another Scot, Sir James Craig, held out at Croaghan, also in Tullyhunco, despite efforts by Robert Nugent to dislodge him by subterfuge. Such a threat did the two garrisons prove to the O'Reillys by repeated marauding sallies that Edmund O'Reilly was sent back from Drogheda to take charge of the attacking forces besieging the two castles. They finally surrendered in June 1642.⁴⁶ Despite the Irish pledge that their quarrel was not with the Scots it was inevitable that they should clash. Until then, however, some Scots had even assisted the insurgents by delivering English fugitives to the Irish.⁴⁷

Many of the deponents relate how their attackers claimed they had the king's approval for their actions, that foreign aid from France and Spain was on its way or had arrived, and that the Irish and Scots had a non-aggression pact.⁴⁸ However, there are several themes that emerge from the Cavan depositions, in addition to the often cited causes for the rebellion: religious persecution, land restoration and the example of the lowland Scots. A strange but telling ambition of the Irish surfaces occasionally in the depositions, that when Dublin and Drogheda were won they would

⁴⁰ Deposition of Arthur Culme 11 May 1642, 1641 Depositions Project TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>); Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, ii, p. 478.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Canny, *Making Ireland British*, pp 542-3.

⁴³ Depositions of Richard Lewys, 13 Oct. 1641, and Dorothy Ward 26 Feb. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD, (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>); Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak*, p. 220; Deposition of George Butterwyke 8 Jan. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>); Carte, *An history of the life of James*, pp 349-50.

⁴⁴ Deposition of Faithfull Teate, Elizabeth Day and William Thorpe 20 Apr. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>); Deposition of William Castledine 5 Jan. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, ii, p. 479.

⁴⁶ Perceval Maxwell, *The outbreak*, pp 220-1; Examination of Arthur Culme 11 May 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>); Roulston, 'The Scots in plantation Cavan', p. 143; Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, p. 486; Deposition of Thomas Crant 13 Feb. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>).

⁴⁷ Deposition of Richard Parsons 24 Feb. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Deposition of George Creighton 15 Apr. 1643, *Ibid.*

take the war to England itself and defeat the puritans there.⁴⁹ There is evidence that, even quite early in the rebellion, Irish soldiers had travelled back to Cavan from Flanders where they had been fighting for the Spanish to aid the insurrection. Ambrose Bedell, son to the Anglican bishop of Kilmore, identified two men; Hugh Bui O'Reilly, described as a 'base brother' to Philip McMulmore O'Reilly and Philip Roe O'Reilly, as being 'lately comen over out of the Low countries.'⁵⁰

Among the less well known insights from the depositions is the role of women in the rising, dissent among rebel leaders and enmity between the native Irish and the Old English. Irish women, usually the wives and sisters of Cavan's Gaelic leaders, were active in Cavan. Rose Ní Reilly, wife of Colonel Philip McHugh McShane O'Reilly, and an O'Neill, terrorised her victims with a petronel, or large firearm which was fired with the butt resting on the chest and demanded all her victim's movable goods. She bore a great enmity towards the English and Scots, claiming she was 'never well that daie that she sawe any of either of those nations', and had to be restrained from killing all she found. Because of her warlike demeanour and her habit of marching with the soldiers, Rose was referred to as Colonel Neill. Rose was accused of being one of the instigators of the massacre of between thirty and fifty people at Belturbet in January 1642.⁵¹ Other women rebels were Ann, the wife of Hugh McMulmore O'Reilly, and Jane Reilly who led twenty men in a raid on Pierscourt in Clankee, and kidnapped Mrs Baillie, the owner, for ransom.⁵² Some deponents tell of women urging on their men to be more murderous.⁵³

There were signs of friction between the Irish of Ulster and the Old English of the Pale. Thomas Nugent claimed that if he had a command among the rebels he would do a better job than the Ulstermen.⁵⁴ Luke Dillon of Trinity Island in Upper Loughree was reluctant to join the rebels, but his brother, Lord Dillon, advised him to join the Palesmen, but not the Ulstermen as they had different views on the insurrection. One deponent heard Irishmen often claim that if they were rid of the English they would kill the Palesmen as they considered them English.⁵⁵ When the earl of Fingal wrote to the O'Reillys in 1642, requesting they bring their forces into

County Meath, they were initially suspicious about his motives, fearing a trap.⁵⁶ More mistrust was engendered when Lord Dunsany offered hospitality to the fleeing English.⁵⁷ There was a feeling among the Palesmen that the Ulster Irish, in their rash revolt had 'undone the whole Kingdom'. The river of refugees entering their territories from the north caused squabbles between the two groups.⁵⁸ Richard Parsons remarked that murders were carried out in all the settled counties except Cavan and that the Catholic lords of the Pale were initially reluctant to take up arms against their protestant neighbours but when they did they were just as cruel as the Ulstermen. Even then they were mistrusted as the Irish felt that Palesmen, whom they described as 'English churls with great breeches' would soon reverse their stance and oppose the revolt.⁵⁹

Others among the Irish had conflicting opinions to their kinsman – Philip McMulmore O'Reilly, uncle to Sheriff O'Reilly, seems to have been a reluctant rebel as he told Richard Castledine that he had an argument with his nephew about his actions and claimed he would hang before joining them. He was kept prisoner for some weeks until released under pressure from the Palesmen who would not join the rebellion until he was freed.⁶⁰ Not all the Irish were ill disposed to the English. Arthur Culme said that he was treated kindly by his gaoler Owen McTurlach O'Reilly.⁶¹ Thomas Crant said his life was saved by the intervention of Mrs Maguire, daughter to Catherine óg Ní Mahon.⁶² An old Irish soldier, veteran of the Nine Years' war, Richard McSymonds, not only sheltered an English family in his house, but escorted them as close to Trim in County Meath as he dared.⁶³ Despite the attacks on the English in Cavan it is noteworthy that, to some at least, that the O'Reillys of Cavan were perceived as a sanctuary of sorts for those fleeing from the more northerly counties.⁶⁴

By the first week of November, with only the two strongpoints left in Scottish hands, the rest of Cavan was under Irish control. At this point the O'Reilly leadership seemed intent to move onto Dublin, although Henry Jones, the Dean of Kilmore and future head of the committee in charge of collecting the depositions,

⁴⁹ Deposition of Richard Castledine 19 July 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Deposition of Ambrose Bedell 26 Oct. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Deposition of Marmaduke Batemanson 13 Apr. 1643, *Ibid.*

⁵² Deposition of Faithfull Teate, Elizabeth Day and William Thorpe 20 Apr. 1642, *Ibid.*; Deposition of Marmaduke Batemanson 13 Apr. 1643, *Ibid.*; Deposition of William Jamesone 8 July 1642, *Ibid.*; Deposition of John Stevinson 29 Oct. 1642, *Ibid.*; Deposition of Alexander Anderson 26 June and 26 July 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵³ Deposition of Martha Culme (Monaghan) 14 Feb. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Deposition of John Anderson 11 July 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Deposition of Ambrose Bedell 26 Oct. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Deposition of George Creighton 15 Apr. 1643, *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Deposition of Thomas Crant 13 Feb. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Deposition of George Creighton 15 Apr. 1643, *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Deposition of Richard Parsons 24 Feb. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Deposition of Richard Castledine 19 July 1642, *Ibid.*; Deposition of Arthur Culme 11 May 1642 *Ibid.*;

Deposition of Francis Wilson 20 July 1642, *Ibid.*; Deposition of Judeth Allen Apr. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Deposition of Arthur Culme 11 May 1642, *Ibid.*

⁶² Deposition of Thomas Crant 13 Feb. 1642, *Ibid.*

⁶³ Deposition of John Seaman 30 May 1643, *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, I, ii, p. 482.

claimed credit for diverting them to Drogheda instead, with exaggerated reports of Dublin's defences.⁶⁵ Before taking any action they sent an emissary to the Dublin administration with a 'Humble Remonstrance' in early November, providing a list of grievances and explanations for their actions. This document, entrusted to Jones, described the rebels as loyal subjects of the crown who were forced to

take into our hands, for his highness' use and service, such forts and other places of strength, as coming into the possession of others, might prove disadvantageous, and tend to the utter undoing of the kingdom.⁶⁶

Although the Remonstrance tried to justify the reasons for rebel actions, by the time the government in Dublin responded they had already assembled an army of 3,000 men at Virginia and had, on 24 November, moved into County Meath capturing Kells and Navan.⁶⁷ William Bushop, from County Monaghan, claims that the O'Reillys had already raided lands in Cushington, County Meath by 18 November.⁶⁸ By this time the Monaghan forces, under the McMahanons, had arrived at Drogheda, taking Mellifont near Drogheda on the way, to begin the siege.⁶⁹ The O'Reilly army had begun to move towards Drogheda from the south when they surprised a force of around 600 government soldiers at Julianstown in County Meath on 27 November. Many of these untrained soldiers were disposessed men from Cavan and other plantation counties, hurriedly mustered and sent from Dublin to relieve Drogheda. They were accompanied by a troop of cavalry who escaped as soon as hostilities commenced and the foot soldiers were routed by the numerically superior Irish forces.⁷⁰

In conclusion, this essay has attempted to provide an account of the 1641 revolt in County Cavan as well as the backdrop of plantation and 'Anglicisation' of the county which preceded it. Although the Gaelic world had appeared to have ended with the Flight of the Earls in 1607, the new order had not entirely triumphed yet. Of all the reasons given for the unhappiness of the Gaelic lords; confessional persecution, loss of land, loss of authority and respect and others, it maybe that the most compelling reason was the loss of that Gaelic world where they ruled supreme. The

depositions allow a look into the plight of the newcomers to Ulster, most of them ordinary untitled tradesmen and artisans, whose accounts of their attackers' motivations is their most informative feature. In a few cases their attackers are labourers and 'ordinary' Irish about whose motivations, apart from looting, can only be guessed at.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp 481-3.

⁶⁶ Carte, *An history*, III, pp 351-2; Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, I, ii, pp 482-3.

⁶⁷ Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak*, p. 222; Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, I, ii, p. 482; *The earl of Castlehaven's memoirs; or, his review of the wars in Ireland with his own engagement and conduct therein: containing also an appendix and postscript enlarged and corrected by himself* (Dublin, 1815), pp 27-8; E. Borlase, *The history of the execrable rebellion 1641-1660* (London, 1680), p. 31.

⁶⁸ Deposition of William Bushop (Monaghan), 29 Jan. 1642, 1641 Depositions Project, TCD, (<http://1641.tcd.ie/>) (accessed 10 May 2011).

⁶⁹ Borlase, *The history*, pp 37-8.

⁷⁰ Castlehaven, *Memoirs*, p. 29; An English officer, *The Irish war of 1641*, p. 14.

Empress Matilda and the anarchy: The problems of royal succession in medieval England

Lynsey Wood

Great by birth, greater by marriage, greatest in her offspring,
Here lies the daughter, wife and mother of Henry.¹

A visitor to the Empress Matilda's tomb at Rouen might be mistaken in believing that its occupant had never sought the English throne in her own right. Yet in the long struggle which engulfed the kingdom after her father's death in 1135 this is exactly what she did. Matilda may indeed have been the greatest English heiress of the twelfth century to fail to secure her inheritance.² Charles Beem remarks that Matilda's epitaph 'described the summit of earthly achievement to which a twelfth-century aristocratic woman could aspire, according to the dictates of a male-dominant feudal society.'³ Matilda's rule lasted less than seven months before she was unceremoniously driven out of London in the spring of 1141. Even so, her lordship bore many of the typical characteristics of royal administration, and with King Stephen imprisoned by her supporters Matilda for a time was recognised as the sole source of royal authority in the kingdom.⁴ As the only legitimate offspring and sworn successor of her father, Henry I, she also possessed a strong claim to the crown to which she aspired. So why is it that Matilda was unable to secure the throne in her own right? And why do historians continue to debate the legitimacy of her brief lordship? It is interesting to note that the British monarchy's website includes another disputed royal heiress, Jane Grey, and since its relaunch in February 2009 now includes Matilda alongside Stephen in its list of monarchs.⁵ Perhaps this can be seen as an acknowledgement that the so-called 'anarchy' of the twelfth century was not simply the tale of a defeated

king and a female pretender who seized power in his absence. Certainly Matilda represents an incomplete precedent for female rule before the advent of ruling queens in England in the sixteenth century. She was never crowned and did not adopt the title of 'queen', but her actions marked Matilda as an extraordinary woman who sought to claim what she saw as her rightful inheritance at a time when the idea of a female sovereign was still an extremely rare occurrence in Western Europe.⁶ During her campaign for the throne Matilda faced exceptional difficulties attempting to overcome the social norms of her day whilst simultaneously satisfying contemporary expectations of a woman's role in royal affairs. Chronicles of the period are inevitably coloured by such tensions, but they also serve to question the very idea of what it meant to be a monarch in the twelfth century. A study of Matilda's dynastic career can illuminate not only notions of sovereignty in medieval England but also help us to gain a better understanding of the reality of female royal inheritance at a time when there were no clear-cut rules governing the English succession.⁷ It is therefore only through the study of such considerations that the failure of Matilda's campaign to be recognised as England's first queen regnant can be properly understood.

Unlike the British monarchy today, which has more or less adhered to the rule of primogeniture since the cessation of the Wars of the Roses in 1485, there was no firmly established precedent for succession to the English crown in the mid-twelfth century. A claim to the throne could be based on many factors, including royal kinship, designation by a successor, military conquest, election by the baronage, and, perhaps most importantly, basic opportunism. There were really no grounds for claiming that the crown should descend to the nearest blood relative, male or female, since primogeniture was not yet fully established in feudal law, and the matter of precedence of blood could raise sharp disagreements.⁸ The rediscovery of Edward III's succession charter in the late 1990s appeared to confirm that the English throne had only been made an exclusively male preserve in 1376, and that before this date there was really no legal barrier to the succession of a female.⁹ Of course, other circumstances served to limit the opportunities of royal inheritance afforded to women in the medieval period. The latter years of Henry I's reign served to expose the

¹ A. A. Porée (ed.), *Histoire de l'abbaye du Bec*, ii (Evreux, 1901), p. 615. The original Latin inscription on her tomb at the abbey church of Bec-Hellouin read as follows: 'Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima partu. Hic jacet Henrici filia, sponsa, parens.' Marjorie Chibnall notes that minor variations appear in several medieval chronicles. The original monument was destroyed during the wars of 1421 and later restored by the Maurists in 1684; Matilda's remains were finally laid to rest in the cathedral at Rouen after the abbey church was destroyed by Napoleon's forces. See: Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 190-2.

² Pauline Stafford, 'Women and the Norman conquest' in Barbara H. Rosenwein and Lester K. Little (eds), *Debating the middle ages: issues and readings* (Oxford, 1998), p. 262.

³ Charles Beem, '"Greater by marriage": the matrimonial career of the Empress Matilda' in Carole Levin and Robert Bucholz (eds), *Queens and power in medieval and early modern England* (Nebraska, 2009), p. 1.

⁴ Charles Beem, *The lioness roared: the problems of female rule in English history* (Hampshire, 2008), p. 26.

⁵ An analysis of the British monarchy's website in March 2008 reveals that the drop-down box listing the kings of each dynasty denotes only Stephen, although it does include Matilda on the page devoted to his reign. After its relaunch in February 2009 Matilda is now included alongside Stephen in the list of monarchs; the text detailing the reign remains the same. See: <http://www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensofEngland>

⁶ For a fuller discussion of female sovereignty in the medieval period see: Ann Lyon, 'The place of Women in European royal succession in the Middle Ages' in *Liverpool Law Review*, xxvii, 3 (2006).

⁷ Keith John Stringer, *The reign of Stephen: kingship, warfare, and government in twelfth-century England* (London, 1993), p. 3. I extend my sincere thanks to Professor Stringer for looking over an early draft of this article and giving me valuable advice for its revision.

⁸ Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (California, 1973), p. 19.

⁹ Lyon, 'The place of Women', p. 361.

problems of such a tentative policy of royal succession. Even amongst medieval kings Henry is famous for siring at least twenty royal bastards during his lifetime.¹⁰ He was not so fortunate in producing legitimate issue. Of the four children that Henry had by his first wife Edith-Matilda of Scotland, who died in 1118, only their daughter Matilda and her younger brother William Adelin survived childhood. William subsequently perished in the wreck of the White Ship in 1120. Only a few months later the fifty-three year old Henry took a second wife, Adeliza of Louvain. But despite the king's legendary virility and the youth of his teenage bride the union produced no children. After much deliberation Henry gathered together his barons and had them swear an oath to accept Matilda as his heir to both the kingdom of England and the duchy of Normandy, intending to reunite the two once more. Yet there was no guarantee that the king's wishes would be respected in regards to the succession. Indeed, a number of candidates emerged who might each make a viable claim to the English throne upon the king's death. The list comprised not only Matilda and her second husband, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, but also the king's bastard son, Robert, earl of Gloucester, and Henry and Stephen, the two youngest sons of the king's sister, Adela of Blois.¹¹ Stephen, in particular, had been brought up at the English court and endowed with lands forfeited by rebels, making him almost without peer in power and wealth within the realm.¹² When King Henry died in December 1135 his daughter was in Anjou and pregnant with her third child. Stephen seized his opportunity and swiftly crossed the Channel to England, securing not only the support of the barons and the clergy but also the royal treasury: it is highly probable that the coup was planned in advance of the king's death given the swiftness and efficiency with which it was implemented.¹³ Before the end of the month Stephen was crowned by the archbishop of Canterbury. With his elevation as anointed king Stephen had effectively won the battle for the throne before Matilda could even set foot on English soil. Although Matilda could argue her claim by pointing to her position as Henry's only legitimate offspring and his appointed successor, supported by baronial oaths, such designation might be withdrawn or changed at any time, and Stephen sought to discredit Matilda by producing witnesses who said that the king had changed his mind, even including a

¹⁰ Chris Given-Wilson and Alice Curteis, *The royal bastards of medieval England* (London, 1984), p. 17.

¹¹ William Clito, son of Robert Curthose and nephew of King Henry, possessed a strong blood claim to the throne and represented Matilda's most obvious male rival. Her position was naturally strengthened after his sudden death in 1128. See: David Crouch, *The reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (Essex, 2000), p. 28.

¹² Warren, *Henry II*, p. 13.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

list of those who had elected him as king in his coronation charter.¹⁴ Stephen's claim of hereditary kingship was thus conversely based upon his possession of the blood royal but also upon his election and elevation by the political elite. Once he had become the Lord's anointed king Stephen had also effectively made any form of rebellion against him synonymous with treason.¹⁵ This was not a concept exclusive to England, but it was certainly something which the Normans had fostered with much success. The idea of a 'priest-king' resonated strongly by the twelfth century, and can be found in the *Song of Roland*, which presented a monarch who is both priest and king, divinely ordained by God.¹⁶ This concept generated an aversion to taking up arms against a consecrated sovereign in the medieval period. Just as controversial were the oaths which Henry secured from his barons to accept Matilda as his successor.

The importance of the baronial oaths cannot be underestimated. They were crucial for the success of Matilda's cause, for she only later claimed hereditary right once these oaths had failed her.¹⁷ William of Malmesbury, in his *Historia Novella*, mentions several times that the magnates of England swore an oath to Matilda, including Robert of Gloucester, King David of Scotland and Stephen himself. Oaths were regarded with the utmost importance in medieval society and Matilda's supporters argued that by seizing the crown Stephen was guilty of perjury and consequently unfit to rule.¹⁸ It was therefore to Stephen's advantage to cast doubt upon the validity of these oaths in order to ensure his own elevation to the throne. The tactics he employed to accomplish this were threefold. Firstly, it could be claimed that the oaths had been taken under duress and so held no legality. However, such a tale does not hold up to scrutiny, for the king required his barons to swear fealty to Matilda on three separate occasions: in 1126, upon her return from Germany, in 1131, after her marriage to Geoffrey, and again in 1133 after the birth of her eldest son, Henry.¹⁹ Another tactic was to suggest that these oaths were conditional and came with certain stipulations which the king had failed to uphold. William of Malmesbury tells us that Roger, bishop of Salisbury, claimed that he was released from his oath 'because he had sworn only on condition that the king should not give his daughter in marriage to anyone outside the kingdom without consulting himself and the other

¹⁴ Edmund King, *Medieval England: from Hastings to Bosworth* (Stroud, 2005), p. 50.

¹⁵ Warren, *Henry II*, pp 16-7.

¹⁶ David Charles Douglas, *William the Conqueror: the Norman impact on England* (California, 1977), p. 261.

¹⁷ Warren, *Henry II*, p. 18.

¹⁸ Donald Matthew, *King Stephen* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 1.

¹⁹ Warren, *Henry II*, p. 18.

chief men.²⁰ This claim likewise rang false when we remember that the barons had twice sworn their allegiance to Matilda *after* her marriage to Geoffrey. The final tactic which might be employed with success was to claim the oaths had been reversed in the king's lifetime.²¹ Hugh Bigod, the future earl of Norfolk, testified that on his deathbed the king had released the barons from their oaths, a claim never proven or corroborated; eventually Stephen's advocates were reduced to argue, rather unconvincingly, that Matilda was the result of an incestuous union because her mother had been a professed nun prior to her marriage.²² Nevertheless seeds of doubt had already been planted to undermine Matilda's claim to the throne, and once she arrived in England in 1139 to contest her inheritance her cause failed to gain much momentum amongst the political elite. Her difficulty in consolidating power was also compounded by her sex.

As her final epitaph makes clear Matilda was ultimately seen as nothing more than a vassal through whom a claim to the throne could be transmitted. In this sense she anticipated the concept of royal inheritance through the female line which would become so important to legitimate the succession rights of the fledgling Tudor dynasty in the late fifteenth century. Like Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII, Matilda appeared to possess a closer blood claim to the throne than the son she would eventually secure it for. However, hereditary right was not always enough to secure a royal throne, and a lack of clear precedents for female rule certainly did not help strengthen Matilda's case. The legend of Queen Boudicca, for example, was rediscovered in the fourteenth century and flourished during the Renaissance, but in the time of the Normans was long forgotten.²³ There had never been an Anglo-Saxon or a Norman queen regnant, and custom dictated that the possibility was highly unlikely. Norman law barred female succession to a crown or a duchy—although women could inherit a fief—and a woman's property was placed at the disposal of her husband upon marriage.²⁴ Although an heiress could succeed to her father's lands, medieval people were also reluctant to accept the idea of a daughter succeeding her

father as a ruler.²⁵ No specific prohibitions barred the accession of a female to a throne with the exception of France, which introduced Salic law in 1328, but none were generally needed. The barriers to female sovereignty were already there, since so few women came to occupy such positions of power, and then only in the absence of male alternatives.²⁶ But this is not to suggest that royal women did not wield considerable power as consorts or even as regents in the Middle Ages.²⁷ Eleanor of Aquitaine, who married Matilda's son Henry in 1152, was a powerful heiress in her own right only a generation after her mother-in-law's struggle for the throne. King Stephen's queen, Maud of Boulogne, was another influential royal female, key to rallying support for her imprisoned husband. For a woman at this time to reign in her own right, however, or to be designated as heir was a rare occurrence, and those who did rule often found their position challenged by male relations or their husband wielding most power.²⁸ It was not until the sixteenth century that Mary Tudor came to the English throne without a husband or a council of assigned male guardians to circumscribe her power. There also remained the role of a medieval sovereign to consider. Throughout Western Europe the command of troops in battle was seen as central to the kingly role.²⁹ Sovereigns were similarly praised or condemned for their military prowess and chivalry. Women, however, could not bear arms in the medieval period and thus were unable to fulfil this essential aspect of sovereignty. Subsequently Matilda occupied the traditional sphere assigned to a female in medieval politics: important and influential, perhaps, but forever facing barriers and limitations and always assigned a secondary role to that of a man.³⁰ In response Matilda deliberately eschewed a more feminine construction of authority and styled herself as a female feudal lord.³¹ It was her 'masculine' behaviour in this capacity which so scandalised the chroniclers documenting the events of this period.

Matilda had continued to use the title of 'empress', which she gained after her marriage to Henry V, the Holy Roman Emperor, even after his death in 1125, and despite the fact that her coronation had been conducted by an anti-pope.³² This fact is

²⁰ Edmund King (ed.), *William of Malmesbury's Historia Novella*, (Oxford, 1998), p. 11.

²¹ The silence of the *Gesta Stephani* on this matter implies that Henry neither affirmed Matilda nor named an alternative on his deathbed, although this does not preclude the possibility that the king privately discussed the matter with those attending him or even came close to endorsing other candidates during his illness. What is clear is that he died without committing himself to any successor. See: Crouch, *The reign of King Stephen*, p. 31.

²² Warren, *Henry II*, p. 18. Edith-Matilda had indeed spent much of her life at a convent, but a council presided over by Archbishop Anselm in 1100 concluded that she had never taken holy vows and thus remained eligible for marriage.

²³ Andrew G. Traver, *From Polis to Empire—the Ancient World, c. 800 B.C. -A.D. 500: a biographical dictionary* (London, 2002), p. 72.

²⁴ Ann Lyon, 'The place of Women', p. 368.

²⁵ Jennifer C. Ward, *Women in England in the Middle Ages* (London, 2006), pp 132-3.

²⁶ Lyon, 'The place of Women', p. 362.

²⁷ There exist numerous studies on the careers of medieval queens consort but a useful abridged history of Anglo-Saxon and Norman queenship as it relates to Matilda can be found in Beem, *The lioness roared*, pp 30-43.

²⁸ Lyon, 'The place of Women', p. 362.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 363.

³⁰ Marjorie Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, xxxviii (1988), p. 107.

³¹ Beem, *The lioness roared*, pp 55-6.

³² Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', p. 124.

very indicative of her personality. W.L. Warren depicts her as a *belle dame sans merci*: she was a strikingly handsome woman, but also haughty and domineering, expecting devotion as her due because of her high birth.³³ At the age of seven Matilda had been sent to live at the German imperial court. Robert of Torigni tells us that it was decreed that Matilda 'should be carefully educated, until the appropriate time for the marriage, and that she should learn the language and behave according to the customs of the Germans.'³⁴ As preparation for her future role Matilda was taught a rigid court etiquette completely alien to the Normans, making her both a foreigner and a stranger to the English upon her return.³⁵ Matilda had also been in rebellion with her father at the time of his death, demanding castles along the frontier of Normandy and Maine to secure the inheritance of her sons. The English barons seized upon this state of conflict to undermine Matilda's right to succeed. Many objected to what they perceived as behaviour unbefitting of a woman. Indeed, historians of the next three centuries are almost unanimous in their verdict of Matilda's actions as inherently manlike.³⁶ William of Malmesbury described Matilda as *eadem virago*, 'that woman of masculine spirit.'³⁷ The author of the *Gesta Stephani* spoke of Matilda's behaviour with obvious disgust:

She at once put on an extremely arrogant demeanour instead of the modest gait and bearing proper to the gentle sex, began to walk and speak and do things more stiffly and haughtily than she had been wont, to such a point that soon, in the capital of the land subject to her, she actually made herself queen of all England and gloried in being so called.³⁸

But in reality Matilda never took the title of queen, preferring to style herself *domina Anglorum* or 'Lady of the English'.³⁹ At the pinnacle of her career Matilda drew upon her triple representation as an empress, the daughter of a king and a sovereign feudal lord.⁴⁰ She may have been hesitant to call herself queen since hitherto the term had applied only to queens consort, or simply because she had not yet been crowned.⁴¹ In

this sense *domina* was more of an anticipatory mantle than a declaration of sovereignty. Marjorie Chibnall writes that Matilda had hoped for a more regal title, and planned to secure it during a coronation which never took place due to the defection of the legate and the Londoners in 1141.⁴² Matilda did not have much scope for error in a male-dominated world, but she did little to recommend herself and merely reinforced existing prejudices against female rule.⁴³ Yet not every chronicler was so severe. William of Malmesbury depicted Matilda as the rightful successor to the Saxon and Norman line of kings, although in his work she was presented as more of a figurehead whilst her half-brother, Robert of Gloucester, was the military and diplomatic leader in her campaigns.⁴⁴ This depiction, however, was surely influenced by the fact that William had dedicated his work to Robert of Gloucester, whose patronage was needed to ensure the security of Malmesbury Abbey during the dislocation of the reign. The chronicler Wace too was sympathetic to Matilda, writing that:

Henry was young at the outbreak of the war which King Stephen launched against him most wrongfully. The Empress Matilda, Henry's mother, endured much hardship from this and suffered constant grief. At the siege of Winchester her fine qualities were manifested; she was there for forty days, may the Lord God help her!⁴⁵

Carolyn Anderson points out, however, that Wace all but removed Matilda from the line of descent in his chronicle, seeing her as a feminine threat to order.⁴⁶ In contrast Stephen's queen Maud of Boulogne was greatly admired by the chroniclers, praised not only for her leadership of Stephen's armies during his imprisonment but also for her pious femininity. The chroniclers often compare Maud's gentle and feminine nature with Matilda's arrogant and masculine bearing. One reason for this distinction is that, whilst Maud was fighting on behalf of her husband's cause, Matilda was attempting to rule by herself and not on someone else's behalf; her anomalous role could not be reconciled by contemporary writers. Matilda may have been noted or even admired for her courageous actions, but that admiration did not stretch far enough to acknowledge the authority of a woman who sought to exercise sovereign power in a masculine capacity. 'Matilda wished to convince her contemporaries that

³³ Warren, *Henry II*, p. 12.

³⁴ Robert of Torigni, 'Deeds of the dukes of the Normans (on Empress Matilda)' in Elisabeth M.C. Van Houts (ed.), *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester, 2000), p. 97.

³⁵ Warren, *Henry II*, p. 12.

³⁶ Betty Bandel, 'The English chroniclers' attitude toward women' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xvi, 1 (1955), p. 117.

³⁷ King, *Medieval England*, p. 56.

³⁸ K.R. Potter trans. and ed., *Gesta Stephani*, (Oxford, 1976), pp 118-9.

³⁹ David Crouch remarks that if Matilda did indeed play with the title of 'queen' after her victory at Lincoln then she quickly drew back from the claim. Marjorie Chibnall similarly concludes that we simply cannot be sure if Matilda ever styled herself as queen, although some of the chroniclers named her as such. See: Crouch, *The reign of King Stephen*, p. 170 and Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp 103-4.

⁴⁰ Beem, *The lioness roared*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Maureen Waller, *Sovereign ladies: the six reigning queens of England* (London, 2007), p. 2.

⁴² Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', p. 126.

⁴³ Stringer, *The reign of Stephen*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Bandel, 'The English chroniclers' attitude toward women', p. 118.

⁴⁵ Wace, 'Roman de Rou' in Glyn Sheridan Burgess and Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts (eds), *The history of the Norman people* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 5.

⁴⁶ Carolyn Anderson, 'Narrating Matilda, "Lady of the English", in the *Historia Novella*, the *Gesta Stephani*, and Wace's *Roman de Rou*: the desire for land and order' in *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History*, xxix, 1 (1999), p. 47.

she was quite capable of being a king,' notes Charles Beem, 'but their reactions betrayed hostility toward her as a woman presuming to establish kingly authority.'⁴⁷ It was ultimately her inability to legitimate her authority, compounded by the difficulties of dynastic civil war, which doomed Matilda's campaign for regal power to failure. She was also crucially unable to secure the seat of English government in order to consolidate her lordship effectively.

The keys to monarchical power in medieval England had always been the cities of Winchester and London.⁴⁸ In centuries past Winchester had served as the capital of the ancient kingdom of Wessex and of England itself until the eleventh century, and remained the site of the royal treasury. Matilda's hopes of gaining broad-based support depended upon securing London-Westminster, but she was driven out before she could exploit the capital sufficiently.⁴⁹ The power-broker of political events in this period was also Stephen's brother Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester.⁵⁰ The two brothers had an often antagonistic relationship, and after Stephen was captured at the Battle of Lincoln in February 1141 Henry lent his support to Matilda and in his role as papal legate received her as 'Lady of the English' at Winchester Cathedral just two months later. Matilda quickly took charge of governmental affairs and many essential aspects of royal administration appeared, as she issued regal charters, dispensed justice, and had coins struck in her name at Bristol, Cardiff, Oxford and Wareham.⁵¹ However, Matilda alienated the capital by exacting heavy taxes upon the Londoners, refusing their requests to return to the laws of Edward the Confessor and threatening the city with the presence of her troops. Her unfriendly court also refused to recognise gifts of patronage granted under Stephen and was perceived as attacking the build up of magnate power since 1135. It should be realised that many powerful magnates still remained loyal to the crown, either unconvinced that Matilda would serve their best interests or else waiting to make a definitive alliance with either camp. The Southeast also remained steadfastly faithful to Stephen, whilst Matilda found most of her support in the West.⁵² Ultimately Matilda's court was a small and disparate group, rife with local factions and lacking the wider influence or momentum

necessary for Matilda to secure the throne for herself.⁵³ Stephen's anointed kingship also continued to prove a considerable obstacle. Although imprisoned at Bristol for most of 1141 Stephen remained king and retained the support of the clergy. He was even referred to as sovereign in Matilda's own charters. It was clear that conflict of arms had failed to settle the issues of rightful kingship and succession which so dogged Matilda's campaign. Only deposition, abdication or regicide would serve to eliminate the problem of Stephen's kingship. The latter, however, was completely out of the question; papal recognition of Stephen's title also made deposing the king outright a very dangerous proposition. Conditional abdication might have served to entice Stephen to relinquish his crown, but in the end such considerations were no longer necessary with the capture of Robert of Gloucester in late 1141. Matilda was forced to release Stephen in exchange for her most valuable supporter, and from this point onwards she retained support for her campaign only by transferring her hereditary claims to her eldest son.⁵⁴

Marjorie Chibnall remarks that the available sources force us to judge Matilda chiefly by her actions, resulting in widely varying interpretations of her career which have depended upon the legal and constitutional assumptions of the historians studying her.⁵⁵ To modern eyes Matilda may have had a rightful claim to the English throne, but we must reconcile our understanding of monarchical succession with the realities of twelfth century feudal custom. Although the eldest son of George V reigned only 326 days after his father's death in 1936 and was never crowned, there is no doubt that he was counted as Edward VIII; however, the eldest child did not automatically become sovereign upon the death of the king in the twelfth century. Instead, an interregnum occurred which ended only when the next king had been anointed and crowned.⁵⁶ We must also realise that an acceptance of female sovereignty would take many generations to instil upon the English. It was not until the mid-sixteenth century, with the accession of Elizabeth I, that England arguably had for the first time a queen regnant who was fully accepted and indisputably ruled as monarch.⁵⁷ It was partly because of the folk memory of the anarchy under Stephen that Henry VIII took six wives to ensure that he produced a legitimate male heir.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ Beem, *The lioness roared*, p. 58.

⁴⁸ King, *Medieval England*, p. 55.

⁴⁹ Stringer, *The reign of Stephen*, p. 43.

⁵⁰ King, *Medieval England*, p. 55.

⁵¹ Stringer, *The reign of Stephen*, pp 39-40.

⁵² Charles Petit-Dutaillis, *The feudal monarchy in France and England: from the tenth to the thirteenth century* (London, 1986), pp 104-5.

⁵³ Warren, *Henry II*, pp 24-5.

⁵⁴ Stringer, *The reign of Stephen*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 199.

⁵⁶ Beem, *The lioness roared*, p. 44.

⁵⁷ Lyon, 'The place of Women', pp 366-7.

⁵⁸ Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England, 1485-1714: a narrative history*, (1st ed., Oxford, 2004), p. 64.

Even today, primogeniture still dictates the royal succession, although there have been signs in recent years that this may yet be reformed.⁵⁹ It is likely that the debate regarding the legitimacy of Matilda's brief lordship will continue into the foreseeable future, but it is curious to note that the reigns of both Matilda and Jane Grey remain disputed largely because they were unable to hold onto power, regardless of matters of legality or consecration. Even the Lancastrian-Yorkist kings of the late medieval period are counted as legitimate monarchs despite an almost see-saw policy of deposition and restoration characterised by a state of continuous dynastic violence.⁶⁰ Matilda made many mistakes during her long struggle for the English throne, and her position was never as strong as has generally been supposed due to the precipitous nature of royal succession. Yet by seeking power in her own right Matilda exercised an autonomous historical agency which remains unacknowledged in the confines of her final epitaph.⁶¹ Her eldest son eventually came to the throne as Henry II in late 1154 and Matilda settled in Rouen, keeping in touch with political happenings in England as she presided over the government of Normandy in his absence. Matilda claimed many titles in her life, but she eventually found her most convincing role as queen mother.⁶² As a sixteenth-century chronicle lamented 'she placed her contentment wholly in her Son.'⁶³ But this does not mean that her campaign for the throne was a complete failure. She was, after all, nothing if not the granddaughter of William the Conqueror. Matilda intervened in English affairs at a crucial moment, establishing a major stronghold for the Angevins in the West Country and the west Midlands, and served to successfully revive the right of her son to succeed to the throne of his grandfather.⁶⁴ She was instrumental in making possible the Treaty of Winchester in 1153, which deemed that Henry would peacefully succeed as king after Stephen's death. Matilda thus not only enabled the restoration of the male line of Norman kings, but also brought the first monarch of the House of Plantagenet to the reunited thrones of England and Normandy. Although she had little time to entrench herself in the difficult role of governing, Matilda gathered enough experience during her campaigns in Germany, England and Normandy to play the role of regent, advisor

⁵⁹ BBC News, 'PM and Palace "discussed reform"', BBC, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7967142.stm> accessed 2 May 2011.

⁶⁰ Charles Beem directly contrasts the experience of Matilda with that of Edward V, a twelve-year-old minor who ruled for only three months in 1483 and yet continues to be recognised as king despite remaining uncrowned. See: Beem, *The Lioness roared*, pp 26-7.

⁶¹ Beem, 'Greater by marriage' in *Queens and Power*, p. 2.

⁶² King, *Medieval England*, p. 73.

⁶³ Sir Richard Baker, *A chronicle of the kings of England* (London, 1674), p. 49.

⁶⁴ Stringer, *The reign of Stephen*, p. 38.

and transmitter of her claim with more success than is typically recognised.⁶⁵ Matilda also prepared her son by giving him time to establish himself as a leader in his own right, and continued to advise him as part of his inner circle after her return to Normandy.⁶⁶ If Matilda had given up on her cause in the darkest hours of her campaign, it is doubtful whether her son could have won the throne as peacefully as he did. She may not have succeeded in ruling in her own right, but given the myriad barriers she faced because of her sex Matilda achieved more than was expected of a woman in the world of twelfth-century dynastic politics. Through his mother Henry II inherited the realms of both England and Normandy, whilst her second marriage brought him the wealthy counties of Anjou, Maine and Touraine; together with the extensive lands Henry gained from his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine, the Angevin Empire was established through these endowments of the female line, which helped to raise the English monarchy to dizzying heights.

⁶⁵ Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', p. 129.

⁶⁶ Stringer, *The reign of Stephen*, p. 40.

A pre-Famine murder in County Limerick

Noreen Curtis

With a horror that baffles description, we have this day to announce the appalling murder of a Protestant Clergyman, by some of that sanguinary peasantry who are driven to deeds of blood and desperation by the wicked incitements of their demagogues.¹

On 1 June 1835, a murder was committed in Ballinacarriga, County Limerick. This area is in the parish of Ardcanney, in the Barony of Kenry and is situated on the southern shore of the Shannon estuary. It was one of the baronies which had been allotted to those known as 'Adventurers', who had financed Cromwell's war in Ireland during the 1640s. Phineas Bury was one such recipient, and had received 5,310 acres in Kenry, including *Baile na Carriga*, the townland of the rock.² The family built Ballinacarriga House as a hunting lodge and it was near there that the murder occurred. The victim of the murder was a clergyman and landlord, Reverend Charles Dawson, whose mother was Bury, and he had inherited the land. He was a curate in Kilbarry, Co. Carlow, and had only come on a visit to Ballinacarriga, to view his property which he had inherited on the death of his father. On the occasion he stayed with Mr. Westropp of Mellon, who was his brother-in-law, as he did not have a residence of his own. During that visit, he was apparently superintending the building of a lodge for his occasional use, when he was attacked by three persons, and killed.³

This incident occurred in broad daylight on Dawson's own property, and because of underlying tensions among the tenants at the time would seem to be a land-related rather than a sectarian crime. The newspapers at the time, however, inferred that the murder was sectarian, stating, 'the present atrocity seems to have arisen from the connection between the landlord and tenant, and that in the person of the Rev. Dawson, both these characters were united, a clergyman and landlord, he presented a double mark to the assassin's bullet.'⁴ The account of the crime, mentioned the difficulties that 'rents and lands would soon be mixed up with tithes and churches', and warned that the 'ruin of one would be but the prelude to the destruction of the other.'⁵ The question of sectarian conflict as a reason for the murder has to be considered. Great resentment was caused by the Protestant Crusade in Ireland of the

1820s, which was funded from Britain and was aimed at the conversion of Irish Catholics and may have added to the Catholic/Protestant conflict in the area. Jennifer Ridden makes the point that there was local Protestant opposition to the Crusade in County Limerick, which included benevolent landlords such as Sir Thomas Spring Rice, Sir Aubrey De Vere, and his brother, Stephen, and Sir Matthew Barrington, who was Crown Solicitor for Munster.⁶ These families were characterised by piety and by liberal political views, according to Ridden.⁷ Other individuals gave the crusade support: at Shannongrove, close by Ballinacarriga, on Bury-held land, a Charter School, known locally as the Blue School, had been built in the late eighteenth century. The purpose was 'to rescue the souls of thousands of poor children from the dangers of Popish superstition and idolatry, and their bodies from the misery of idleness and beggary.'⁸ The school was under the patronage of William Bury, of Shannongrove House, an ancestor of Rev. Charles Dawson.⁹ A 'nursery school' for young infants was also built, and in due course, these children would pass on to the Charter School. This became known locally as the 'Babby School' and the ruins are still to be seen today, close by the road to Ringmoylan. The whole venture ended in failure, and the Charter School was closed in 1835, a century after it was first established.¹⁰

Protestant churches and parochial houses were subject to attack by burning or breaking of windows, though there is no evidence to indicate if these attacks were the actions of a lone disgruntled individual, or whether there was group agitation involved. According to Curtin, Protestant ministers were the main focus of sectarian attack. From 1830 to 1837, a newspaper extract reported forty-nine attacks, some of which resulted in murder, of clergymen throughout Ireland, and which in Limerick, included Mr. Going and Mr. Dawson.¹¹ In Golden, Co. Tipperary, in 1832 a clergyman named the Rev. Irvine Whitty was brutally murdered, in much the same manner as Dawson was in 1835, and it was stated at Whitty's inquest that it was because of tithe arrears owed in the parish that the murder was carried out. In February 1836, it was reported in the *Limerick Chronicle* that the Rev. Edward Croker and his son had been stoned as they were riding from Croom to Athlacca, which was

¹ *Clare Journal*, 8 June 1835.

² Máirtín Ó Corrbui, *Kenry: the story of a barony in County Limerick* (Pallaskenry, 2004), p. 72.

³ Gerard Curtin, *West Limerick: crime, popular protest and society 1820-1845* (Ballynahill, 2008), p. 194.

⁴ *Clare Journal*, 8 June 1835.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Jennifer Ridden, 'The forgotten history of the Protestant crusade: religious Liberalism in Ireland' in *Journal of Religious History*, 31, 1(2007), p. 82.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ó Corrbui, *Story of a barony*, p. 80.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹¹ *Limerick Chronicle*, 1837.

not far from Ballinacarriga. Croker was both a clergyman and a landowner, so possibly agrarian and sectarian motives played their part. In Loughill, Co. Limerick, in the same month, some thirty miles west along the Shannon estuary from Ballinacarriga, the Rev. Mr. Adamson was struck on the head with a stone. A reward of £50 was offered for information leading to conviction with regard to this outrage. But ministers were not the only targets in sectarian attacks. Tithe proctors, or collectors were regarded with suspicion and hatred by the people in general, and over-zealous evangelical landlords were also targeted, as on 27 December 1834, shots were fired at and wounded Edward Hewson of Ballydoule, an estate very close to Ballinacarriga, in the parish of Ardcanny. A reward of £100 was offered for information leading to the apprehension of the perpetrators of the outrage. The reason put forward for this particular attack was that Hewson compelled all his servants, no matter what their religion, to attend family prayer.¹² Again, it appears that some landlords, in this case, Hewson, were excessively evangelical. To the Irish peasants, the economic, religious and political system imposed by an alien, Protestant minority seemed to threaten their very existence.

Some sectarian animosity was voiced at the time of the Dawson murder. During the trial in 1843, one witness named Moloney, in the course of giving evidence, claimed that when he was accompanied by Patrick Lynch, following the murder, they encountered a Mr. Hills and who pulled up his horse, and said 'Ye Ballinacarriga murderers, ye have killed Mr. Dawson', and that Lynch's reply was: 'I would not doubt you, you Orange thief, to say so!'¹³ This is indicative of the feelings of resentment and hostility that prevailed in the district at that time. The fact that Mr. Hills was riding a horse, and was addressed as 'an Orange thief' showed he was Protestant, and may have been a strong farmer— suggesting in turn that the tensions were economic as well as sectarian. Contemporary commentators, like Cornewall Lewis emphasised that bad landlord/tenant relations as the main cause of rural disturbance.¹⁴ The French author, Gustave de Beaumont, writing about his travels in Ireland during the 1830s, made some interesting remarks about the topic of crime in Ireland.

The character of the crime is always the same, it is always about land. The cause of the crime is always some tenant being driven off his plot, or believing himself to be,

the victim is invariably the landlord or his agent, the murderer an unknown person who commits the crime openly, and is fairly sure of getting away with it¹⁵

Galen Broeker concluded 'that a considerable portion of the population continued to accept agrarian outrage as a legitimate weapon in the continuing struggle against those who represented authority, landlords, magistrates, policemen and soldiers.'¹⁶ The general atmosphere in Ireland and in Limerick during the early 1830s was of serious unrest and what has been described as a situation close to anarchy existed over wide areas of rural Ireland. K.T. Hoppen is quite definite in his view that the occupation of land seems to have overshadowed all other concerns in the minds of those embarking on acts of agrarian violence the evidence is overwhelming that occupation stood at the core of discontent.¹⁷ This seems to have been the case in Ballinacarriga in 1835.

Who was Charles Dawson? He was the immediate tenant of Lord Charleville, described as the head landlord at Ballinacarriga.¹⁸ Dawson was born in Co. Wexford in 1781, where his father, also Charles, was a captain in the army. His mother was Deborah Bury, of Derryluskan, Rathcool, Co. Tipperary, who was related to the Earl of Charleville, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Charles entered Trinity College, Dublin in 1801, and was conferred with a B.A. in 1809, and subsequently became a curate in the Diocese of Leighlin in Carlow. He married Charlotte Dawson and they had one child, a daughter, named Deborah. It appears that his fateful trip to Ballinacarriga in Co. Limerick in 1835, was merely to view his inheritance. A request was made to the Church of Ireland regarding the details of the shocking death of the Rev. Dawson, and the reaction of the Church to such an outrage. Unfortunately, the records had all been destroyed in the burning of the Four Courts in 1922.

To build this lodge, according to reports, the Rev. Dawson had dispossessed sitting tenants, although he had not actually evicted them, having offered them another house on the estate. Possibly his attitude was high-handed, and the community was aggrieved. This was suggested by a report from T.P. Vokes, the local magistrate, to Dublin Castle. He quoted Patrick Lynch, one of those threatened with displacement, who told of a visit to his (Lynch's) house by Rev. Dawson. On that occasion, Lynch got notice from him to quit, Dawson saying 'that room would match

¹² Curtin, *Crime, popular protest and society*, p. 118.

¹³ *Limerick Chronicle*, 15 Mar. 1843.

¹⁴ George Cornewall Lewis, *Local disturbances in Ireland* (Cork, 1977), p. 80.

¹⁵ Gustave de Beaumont, *Ireland* (London, 2006), p. 389.

¹⁶ Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland, 1812-36* (London, 1970), p. 1.

¹⁷ K.T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), p. 345.

¹⁸ *Limerick Chronicle*, 13 June 1835.

him while his lodge would be building.¹⁹ Mr. Enright, who was Rev. Dawson's agent, got possession of the house for his employer. This comment, if it is truthful, could give a reasonable explanation for the subsequent violent action as it does show the landlord's lack of understanding for the tenant's situation. There does seem to have been considerable local resentment against Rev. Dawson. From local folklore, Rev. Dawson on that fateful day was walking from Mellon, and was seen by a number of witnesses.²⁰ A story later circulated, the veracity of which is uncertain, that a Mrs. Madigan was instrumental in taking a pistol from the pocket of the greatcoat which the victim was wearing, unbeknownst to him, which she then hid in a pot on the fire in her kitchen. If this is correct, the fact that the Rev. Dawson was carrying a weapon on his person suggests that he was aware of threats against him, or that there was a general air of tension in the area. Without this weapon, he would have been unable to defend himself when he was attacked. This also suggests that the attack was premeditated, and possibly a group of neighbours was involved, and that the killing was more planned than opportunistic. There is no evidence, so this is just conjecture. Generally, in such a violent incident, warning would have been given beforehand, sometimes by a threatening letter, or setting fire to a house, and murder would be the ultimate act. There does not seem to have been any forewarning here, which was unusual in the perpetration of such an outrage. According to the local historian Ó Corrbuí, 'moonshining' or the distillation of illicit liquor was rife in the barony of Kenry during the first half of the nineteenth century,²¹ so whether neighbours were nervous about the potential discovery of the distillation of alcohol and that this may have been a causal factor in the attack is not clear, but it might be considered.

According to Terence Dooley 'landlords and their families had become psychologically distanced from the vast majority of the people in nineteenth century Ireland.'²² In Ballinacarriga at the time, there were other tenants who had lost their leases and were put off the land, which naturally resulted in a lot of tension and bad feeling. Because Rev. Dawson was not from the area, this would probably result in hostility, as the outsider was always regarded with suspicion and viewed as a threat. He was dealing with a close-knit community many of whom were intermarried, as the

¹⁹ T.P. Vokes to Chief Secretary, 20 Aug. 1835 (N.A.I., registered papers, private index, County Limerick, 1845/20097).

²⁰ Michael O'Halloran, local historian, interview Sept. 2009.

²¹ Ó Corrbuí, *Story of a barony*, p. 181.

²² Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 18.

evidence at the trial shows, and this would certainly not help in his demand for possession.²³

Following the tragic event, the police had great difficulty in collecting evidence, as even though many people were in the area when it happened, there seemed to be a collective amnesia. They had to identify three different categories of individuals: potential suspects; those about whom there were more than vague suspicions; and those who had disputes with the late Rev. Dawson. On 13 June 1835, three men belonging to the third category were arrested, John Hogan, Patrick Dillon, and David Fitzgerald, whom the police believed had a grievance against the Reverend Dawson, as two of them had lost their leases, and the third had been put off the farm.²⁴ These men were eventually discharged, for lack of credible evidence. Eventually, two men were arrested, Patrick Lynch, son of the man whose house the late Mr. Dawson had appropriated, and Edmund Conway, described as a servant boy of Patrick Lynch, senior.²⁵

The fact that a very substantial reward, £750, was offered for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators, an enormous sum at that time, is an indicator of the seriousness of the crime, and of the determination of the authorities to find and arrest the murderers. Even so it took almost a decade to resolve the case. Though the crime was committed in June 1835, and the two accused arrested in July of that year, the eventual trial did not happen until Monday 13 March 1843. The files which had been built up over eight years reveal the difficulties which the authorities had in trying to bring the killers of the Rev. Dawson to justice. It seems a long time to bring the accused to trial, but in the Assizes held in July 1835, the authorities decided not to prosecute the suspected murderers at that time, for unspecified reasons. In the Spring Assizes in 1836, there was contradictory evidence, so the Crown did not consider it. By 1843 when the trial was finally held, what was described as 'the injurious sympathies that existed among the people' by the counsel for the Prosecution at the trial, was one of the reasons given as to why it took so long to bring the perpetrators to justice.²⁶ The reluctance of the local people to speak to the authorities was the principal cause for the delay in the prosecution. It is apparent that in this small close-knit community, trying to get individuals to give information against family was

²³ *Limerick Chronicle*, 15 Mar. 1843.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 June 1835.

²⁵ T.P. Vokes to Chief Secretary, 5 Sept. 1835 (N.A.I., registered papers, private index, County Limerick)

²⁶ *Limerick Reporter*, 14 Mar. 1843.

practically impossible.²⁷ Some of the witnesses who came forward, possibly because of the reward offered, gave evidence that differed substantially from others who gave evidence, and the result was inconclusive. For example, the evidence given by Michael Murnane, was in direct contradiction with that of another witness, Patrick Rourke. Of course, the problems the law faced when trying to persuade local witnesses to come forward was a major drawback at the time. Informers were difficult to find and were not always reliable, and the title 'informer' was anathema. Crimes perpetrated against those who gave information to the authorities or acted as witnesses were very violent, with a quarter of those so attacked being killed.²⁸ Giving information was seen by the local community as a betrayal. The authorities were always considered to be the enemy, and to co-operate with them was considered to be an act against the community. This is also clear in the Ballinacarriga case. But as well as tension between the tenants and Dawson, there were also apparent divisions and conflict within the tenantry itself – which became evident during the trial, when some locals denied having looked for possession of land from which others had lost the lease. John Madigan, a witness during the trial of Lynch and Conway, stated, 'I knew Pat Lynch, I never demanded possession of that land', so it is possible that there was bad blood between the families.²⁹

There was no mention of organised agitation in Ballinacarriga at the time of the murder, despite the apparently very strong feelings of resentment among the neighbours and families on the estate to resort to such an extreme action as murder. Even though there was apparently no Whiteboy-type organisation, the killers at Ballinacarriga used some of the methods employed by such societies. The wearing of an article of white clothing was a form of disguise used by the Whiteboys, and although this was not the case in the Dawson murder, there was some disguise worn. Some witnesses at the trial claimed that two of the attackers wore women's clothing, and also had their faces blackened, to camouflage or conceal their appearance. The murder happened at approximately four o'clock in the afternoon on a June day, so a disguise of some sort would be necessary to avoid being identified.³⁰ It seemed as if

²⁷ Michael O'Halloran, local historian, interview Sept. 2009.

²⁸ W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in Ireland 1848-1904* (Dublin 1984), p. 119; Curtin, *Crime, popular protest and society*, p. 119; Terence Dooley, *Murder at Wildgoose Lodge* (Dublin, 2007), p. 235. As Cornwell Lewis wrote 'there is no name of more ominous sound in Ireland than that of informer.' In his book, *Wildgoose Lodge*, which recounted the most horrific murder, Terence Dooley discusses how the victim was treated by men belonging to a local agrarian society, who believed he had gone to the authorities to inform on them because of an arms raid: not alone did they punish him, but his entire family was burnt alive.

²⁹ *Limerick Chronicle*, 15 Mar. 1843.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

the murder had been planned and was not opportune or random. One man was used to decoy the victim to a particular area, the others were lying in wait, and then attacked. Mr. Dawson was shot and pelted with stones, and died as a result of his injuries.

The contradictory nature of the evidence against those accused eventually led to the acquittal of both Lynch and Conway, and shortly afterwards both emigrated. Had they actually murdered Dawson? The foreman of the jury informed the judge, after having stayed up all night deliberating, that 'there is not the slightest possibility of our agreeing.'³¹ This jury was made up of landlords and strong farmers, at least seven of whom, Curtin notes, had Protestant surnames, and the other five, catholic surnames. It is possible that the inability to reach a verdict resulted from voting along religious lines.³² According to Curtin, jurors in such cases came from a wide geographical area and were not from the immediate vicinity where the murder took place, probably to avoid the risk of intimidation by locals and in this case jurors were drawn from a twenty mile radius within the county. The counsel for the defence, Waller, apparently did not believe his clients were innocent, and dismissed them as 'murderers' when they came to thank him for his efforts on their behalf.³³ Popular opinion was equally dubious and local folklore had it that one of those accused 'wore out ten rosaries' trying to assuage his guilt.³⁴ Indeed, when the case seemed to be closed in 1843, there was more to come. The following year, in January 1844, a police report to the Inspector General regarding the Dawson case, indicated that John Lynch, brother of Patrick Lynch, had been arrested and charged with the murder and committed to the County Gaol for trial.³⁵ Obviously, the authorities were still not satisfied with the outcome. A report in the *Limerick Chronicle* dated 13 March 1844, stated that John Lynch was found not guilty, but that Edmund Conway and Patrick Lynch were found guilty and sentenced to death for the murder of the Rev. Dawson. The date of execution was set to be 8 May 1844. So had Patrick Lynch and Edmund Conway not really emigrated in 1843, as the newspapers of that year stated? There is no way of answering this, however, as the trail disappeared here, a tawl of

³¹ Curtin, *crime, popular protest and society*, p. 195.

³² Landlords included Blennerhassett and Leake, who had land near Rathkeale, Edward Villiers, with an estate at Kílpeacon, John Cantillon, a middleman and farmer from Adare, William Holland, farmer at Ballybricken East, Peter Griffin, faramer with land at Altavilla, Nantinan. George Bennett, John Cussen, Peter Franklin, Brian O'Donnell, Thomas Costelloe, John Mason were also on the list of jurors and were probably strong farmers.

³³ Ó Corrbuá, *Story of a barony*, p. 181.

³⁴ Interview with Michael O'Halloran, local historian, Sept. 2009.

³⁵ Pallaskenry to Chief Secretery, 24 Jan. 1844 (N.A.I., registered papers, private index, County Limerick 1845/20087).

newspapers around that time failing to reveal if the execution actually happened, or what eventually transpired. Transportation records have been searched to see if the men had their sentences commuted, but all to no avail, as there was no mention of the convicted men here. A list of executions was also investigated but neither of the two men were mentioned, suggesting that they escaped execution.³⁶ Neither is it clear why there were several trials, or what aspects of the law allowed this. The question of double jeopardy does not seem to have been considered when the case was re-opened in 1843 or in 1844.

But the Ballinacarriga saga seems to have continued. A Scottish writer and journalist, Alexander Somerville (1811-85) who in his writings was known by his pseudonym, 'The Whistler at the Plough', was appalled at the state of the country during a visit to Ireland during the Great Famine. His sympathies were with the tenants, as he quotes a report from the *Limerick Chronicle*, twelve years after the murder, describing an eviction from the property of the late Rev. Dawson, in Ballinacarriga, which states that 'no breach of the peace was attempted by those being evicted.'³⁷ The land being repossessed was from James Hanley and six others for non-payment of rent. Somerville was sympathetic towards the displaced tenants, and cutting in his description of the event, as there was a squadron of dragoons, a company of infantry, armed, and large detachment of Irish police, to assist at the eviction from seven small farms, which is no small deterrent to a breach of the peace! So, it would appear that, twelve years later, things had not changed much in Ballinacarriga, where Miss Deborah Dawson was now the landlord.³⁸ Over much of the same period, the population in Ardcanny parish, where Ballinacarriga was situated, fell from 430 in 1841 to 123 in 1861. Whether this was as a result of the Great Famine, or natural causes, or emigration is unclear. It seems like a huge drop in the population in just two decades. The total reduction in the population in the Barony of Kenry went from 13,312 to 8,362 in ten years.³⁹

One hundred and seventy five years later, the hunting lodge at Ballinacarriga is no longer in existence, just the ruins remain, nature has reclaimed the landscape. When the lodge was demolished, the slates from the roof were taken and are now roofing a nearby farm building used for housing cattle. And there still seems

to be a wall of silence surrounding the murder in the local community – research into the incident is hampered by what is either a total lack of information or inability to remember or even discuss this violent act which must have been quite a momentous event in such a small area. Yet the event was obviously of sufficient importance to have gone into folk memory in the household of a local family, where the cant 'who killed Dawson' is still remembered by an elderly descendent of one of the witnesses at the trial. The same lack of knowledge of the murder is found in the Dawson family. A book written about the Westropp family by George Westropp mentions Mountiford Westropp, husband of Jane Dawson, who lived at Mellon, and who was a sister of the Rev. Charles Dawson.⁴⁰ The book deals in detail, naturally, with the Westropp family, but there is absolutely no reference whatsoever to Charles Dawson, or of his untimely end. It must have been an enormous shock to the family that such an outrage would happen and in close proximity to their estate, and yet it is not mentioned at all. A descendent of the extended Westropp family, George Stacpoole, of Adare, had no knowledge of Charles Dawson when asked.⁴¹ This incident seems to have been airbrushed from family memory.

³⁶ Transportation Registers, 1843, 1844 (N.A.I., Convict Reference Files 1844).

³⁷ *Limerick Chronicle*, 17 Mar. 1847.

³⁸ After the death of her father, Miss Dawson inherited the land, and is shown in Primary Valuation of Tenements (Griffith's Valuation) of 1851, County Limerick, Barony of Kenry, parish of Ardcanny, to be the landlord.

³⁹ Ó Corrbui, *Story of a barony*, p. 185.

⁴⁰ George Westropp, *The Westropp Family 1250-2000* (2000), pp 158-9.

⁴¹ Telephone conversation with Mr. George Stacpoole, Dec. 2009.

'A complete acceptance of their domination and demands':

Douglas Hailsham, appeasement and the Anglo-Irish Agreement

1938

Chris Cooper

The Anglo-Irish Agreement signed in April 1938 ended the economic war and settled the land annuities dispute between Britain and Southern Ireland which began in 1932. Perhaps most significantly, Britain relinquished sovereignty over the three Treaty Ports on the south and west coasts of Ireland at Berehaven, Queenstown and Lough Swilly after their retention in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. When the agreement was debated in the Commons one backbench Conservative described it as 'an indefensible bargain', while Churchill later recalled that 'a more feckless act can hardly be imagined.' He claimed these ports were 'the sentinel towers of the western approaches', and reflected that this 'lamentable and amazing episode' was an 'improvident example of appeasement.'¹

Accordingly, historians credit Churchill as being 'among the first to regard the transfer of the ports as a colossal blunder' and 'very much the lone voice.'² He himself recalled standing 'almost entirely alone' when he spoke against the agreement in the Commons.³ Although Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, claimed that his colleagues in the National Government were unanimous in their support for the agreement, there was one notable exception.⁴ This was the veteran cabinet minister Douglas Hogg, 1st Viscount Hailsham. Notwithstanding the spirited protests of the sixty-six year-old, who had remained Lord Chancellor despite suffering a serious stroke in 1936, the cabinet endorsed the agreement. The treaty was part of Chamberlain's wider policy of appeasement and Hailsham's resistance anticipated his 'anti-appeaser' role in the celebrated cabinet revolt which overrode Chamberlain's advice and rejected Hitler's Godesberg terms in September 1938.⁵

Douglas Hogg was a beneficiary of the collapse of the Lloyd George coalition in October 1922, catapulted at the age of fifty into office as Attorney-General in Bonar Law's government. After his election to parliament, he sat, almost continuously, on the Tory front bench until his retirement in October 1938. In the intervening period he came close to succeeding Baldwin as Conservative leader during the years 1929-31, and he held senior government portfolios, including the Lord Chancellorship (1928-9 and 1935-8), the Leadership of the House of Lords and the Ministry of War (1931-5).⁶ His career coincided with Britain's ongoing Irish question. Fittingly, his maiden Commons speech assisted in the passing of the controversial Irish Free State Constitution Bill in late 1922 which ratified the Anglo-Irish Treaty and granted Southern Ireland Dominion Status. But this was only the beginning of Hogg's involvement in Anglo-Irish issues. Hogg anticipated that the Free State would loyally observe that treaty and feel pride in being a member of the British Empire.⁷ His experience in the 1930s, however, showed that these early hopes were overly-optimistic. Following his elevation to the Lords in 1928 and his inclusion the National Government in late 1931, he became a leading architect of Britain's Irish policy and a principal opponent of concessions to Irish nationalism.

Contemporaries and historians alike have claimed that Hailsham's reluctance to negotiate with the Free State was the result of reactionary die-hard views.⁸ Malcolm MacDonald suggested that Hailsham's 'views on the Irish problem were rabid',⁹ while Canning argues that the British cabinet often 'fell into Hailsham's die-hard views'.¹⁰ Brought up 'in a powerfully evangelical tradition' with 'a deep antipathy to Roman Catholicism',¹¹ Hailsham was a committed Unionist whose ancestors were amongst the early Scottish Protestant settlers in Ireland. Although his upbringing influenced Hailsham's response to the Irish problem, the suggestion that die-hard sentiments governed his attitude is a gross simplification. Significantly, around fifty die-hard MPs opposed the bill he helped pilot through the Commons in 1922 and his reaction to Irish challenges to the *status quo* during the 1930s amounted

¹ *Hansard 5 (Commons)*, CCCXXXV, 1116, 1098-99 (5 May 1938); W.S. Churchill, *The gathering storm* (London, 1948), pp 216-7.

² Robert Fisk, *In time of war* (Dublin, 1983), p. 41; Deirdre McMahon, *Republicans and imperialists: Anglo-Irish relations in the 1930s* (London, 1984), p. 282.

³ Churchill, *Gathering storm*, pp 216-7.

⁴ N. Chamberlain to Hilda, 13 Mar. 1938 in Robert Self (ed.), *Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters* (4 vols, Aldershot, 2005), iv, pp 305-6.

⁵ Cabinet minutes, 25 Sept. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 23/95).

⁶ Chamberlain to Ida, 21 Feb. 1931 in Robert Self (ed.), *Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters* (4 vols, Aldershot, 2002), iii, p. 239; Harford Montgomery-Hyde, *Baldwin: the unexpected prime minister* (London, 1973), p. 318.

⁷ *Hansard 5 (Commons)*, CLIX, 774 (29 Nov. 1922).

⁸ P.M. Canning, 'The Impact of Eamon de Valera: domestic causes of the Anglo-Irish Economic War' in *Albion* 15, 3 (1983), pp 181, 200; McMahon, *Republicans*, p. 33; Deirdre McMahon, 'A transient apparition': British policy towards the de Valera government 1932-5' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 22, 88 (1981), p. 335; Clyde Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: bringing an end to Empire* (Belfast, 1995), p. 112.

⁹ Malcolm MacDonald, *Titans and others* (London, 1972), p. 60.

¹⁰ Canning, 'Impact of de Valera', p. 201.

¹¹ Geoffrey Lewis, *Lord Hailsham* (London, 1997), p. 3; Geoffrey Lewis, 'Quintin McGarel Hogg, Lord Hailsham' in *Biographical memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 48 (2002), p. 224.

to defending this treaty which he regarded as the limit of concession. The sanctity of treaties, Britain's defence strategy and the wider effects that surrendering to Irish nationalism could have on imperial unity determined Hailsham's reaction to Irish republicanism.¹²

Following the success of Fianna Fáil in March 1932 and Éamon de Valera's accession to power as President of the Executive Council, the National Government formed a cabinet sub-committee, the Irish Situation Committee, charged with coming to terms with the Free State.¹³ In addition to Hailsham, this powerful committee included Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative leader and Lord President. Despite the committee's efforts, the Free State denounced many of the agreements contained in the 1921 Treaty during the 1930s. In November 1932 the role of the Governor General was marginalised. Six months later the Oath of Allegiance was abolished. Notwithstanding Hailsham's assertions that the Free State could not end Appeals to the Privy Council without Westminster's concurrence,¹⁴ the Dáil abolished them in late 1933. In 1935 the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act and the Aliens Act made British citizens aliens in the Free State and in 1937 a new constitution renamed the Free State 'Eire', which became a republic in all but name.

When de Valera's government defaulted on land annuities and other payments in April 1932, Hailsham maintained that the Free State was legally bound to make the payments and, showing considerable foresight, he warned that the issues raised by de Valera's bill to abolish the Oath of Allegiance to the King were far wider than the Oath.¹⁵ The Free State, he claimed, 'was taking steps publicly to remove the statutory obligations binding them to observe and carry out the Treaty.'¹⁶ His reaction to these violations illustrated the principle which guided his response to de Valera's challenges for the remainder of his career. He concluded, 'that no useful purpose would be served by... making fresh bargains with a government which had just shown in unmistakable fashion that it could not be relied upon to keep the most solemn engagements.'¹⁷

After Hailsham and J.H. Thomas, the Dominions Secretary, had travelled to Dublin to negotiate with de Valera, it became clear that 'nothing short of an

agreement as to fundamentals would produce permanent peace.'¹⁸ These fundamentals were unacceptable to the British ministers. Hailsham, therefore, believed that further negotiations would be futile after the Irishman confessed that only the establishment of an Irish republic and the end of partition could secure harmonious relations. As such an outcome was unimaginable for Hailsham, he consistently advocated measures designed to moderate the Free State's demands. Discussions held in London two days later broke down and the National Government placed a twenty per cent tariff on Irish goods entering Britain, designed to recoup the losses from the withheld payments and compel the Free State to reconsider its policy. Thomas and Hailsham's firm lead 'persuaded the cabinet to make its one firm stand during a decade of appeasement.'¹⁹ The Free State responded by imposing its own tariffs on British goods. The 'economic war' began and, while it caused Britain inconvenience, it brought misery to the Free State.²⁰

Thomas' uncompromising approach was, however, short-lived. Three months later he recommended a financial settlement to end the dispute, but Hailsham and his colleagues rejected this suggestion. The War Secretary maintained that Britain 'could admit no compromise.'²¹ Thomas again attempted conciliation in October when he proposed concessions to allow an Irish republic to stay within the Commonwealth. In a decisive intervention, Hailsham claimed that such an approach represented 'betrayal and surrender' and he carried the committee with him.²² This defiant lead, with Chamberlain's support, prolonged the 'economic war.' Hailsham's uncompromising approach guided Britain's policy towards Irish violations of past agreements.

Before Malcolm MacDonald became Dominions Secretary in late 1935, Hailsham remained the dominant force in the formulation of British policy. His defence of the 1921 Treaty and his personal experience of negotiating with de Valera provided the rationale for his objections to steps geared towards creating an Irish republic. Even after the detrimental effects of the 'economic war' became apparent, he did not change his view. 'De Valera and his friends', he noted, 'have merely insisted on the repudiation of their liability... when we do make a generous settlement it is only

¹² Cabinet minutes, 4 Dec. 1933 (T.N.A., Cab. 23/77).

¹³ Irish Situation Committee [I.S.C.], 'Explanatory Note' (T.N.A., Cab. 27/522).

¹⁴ *Hansard 5 (Lords)*, XC, 335, 6 Dec. 1933.

¹⁵ I.S.C. minutes, 13 Apr. 1932 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/523).

¹⁶ McMahon, *Republicans*, p. 8.

¹⁷ I.S.C. minutes, 9 May 1932 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/523).

¹⁸ Memorandum by Thomas and Hailsham, 8 June 1932 (T.N.A., Cab. 24/230).

¹⁹ Gregory Blaxland, *J.H. Thomas* (London, 1964), p. 262.

²⁰ David Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland since 1870' in R.F. Foster (ed.), *The Oxford history of Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), p. 217.

²¹ I.S.C. minutes, 27 Sept. 1932 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/523).

²² *Ibid.*, 25 Oct. 1932; Canning, 'Impact of de Valera', p. 203.

used as an excuse for further demands.²³ The Irishman, he believed, was 'so obsessed with his own bigoted view of Anglo-Irish relations ... that there was no common meeting ground.'²⁴

In June 1935 Hailsham left the War Office and returned to the Lord Chancellorship but, more significant for Anglo-Irish affairs, MacDonald replaced Thomas as Dominions Secretary in November. Unlike Hailsham, the National Labour minister favoured concessions to secure better relations with the Free State. MacDonald even told de Valera that he would like partition ended.²⁵ Such an eventuality was repugnant to Hailsham. 'I don't believe the people of this country', he insisted, 'would ever agree to hand over Ulster to the tender mercies of the Irish Republicans.'²⁶ A clash between the two colleagues seemed inevitable.

Under MacDonald's direction new approaches were made to the Free State in 1936. He advocated a financial concession by Britain to end the land annuity dispute and the economic war. He also felt it desirable to return the Treaty Ports to the Free State if a defence agreement could be reached. Unsurprisingly, Hailsham objected to the terms envisaged. In one onslaught, which MacDonald described as 'a brilliant attack',²⁷ Hailsham maintained that seeking agreement with de Valera 'could produce no good result at home, in Ireland or elsewhere.' He warned that the failure of such discussions could engineer an anti-British feeling in the Free State.²⁸ Despite his opposition, the cabinet endorsed MacDonald's plan. Crucially Chamberlain, formerly an opponent of conciliation, now backed MacDonald.²⁹ The resulting conversations led to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in April 1938, the terms of which were totally unacceptable to Hailsham for whom they represented capitulation.

During the First World War, Ireland's Atlantic ports of Berehaven, Queenstown and Lough Swilly were invaluable. They served as assembly points for British convoys and as bases for naval flotillas.³⁰ The entire British fleet sheltered at Lough Swilly during 1914 and Berehaven was subsequently regarded as among Britain's most important ports at home and abroad, graded a Category A port by the

Committee of Imperial Defence.³¹ Acting as a 'five-hundred-mile semi-circle of naval defence', the ports were seen as a lifeline for Britain's food supply in war.³² Britain retained sovereignty over the ports in the 1921 Treaty, which maintained that, until the Free State could provide for her own coastal defence, Britain would undertake this responsibility.

After assuming office, De Valera's attention moved to the British occupied ports. In October 1935 John Dulanty, the Free State's High Commissioner in London, hoped that the Free State could assume responsibility for the ports without guaranteeing Britain's access in a future emergency.³³ As Joseph Walshe, secretary of the department of External Affairs, outlined in 1936, 'we cannot agree to give England an automatic right to our ports' or 'an arrangement... which involved us in war whenever... she was at war.'³⁴ Although Irish leaders pledged that the ports would never be used against Britain, this point was irrelevant and such proposals never got off the ground. The vital consideration for the British was the ports' role in the defence of western trade routes.³⁵

MacDonald's original proposals maintained that Britain must have the use of the ports in war,³⁶ hoping that Eire would modernise them and make them available to Britain in an emergency. By early 1938, however, MacDonald conceded that de Valera would not give that assurance. A defence agreement could only be secured if partition ended.³⁷ With no defence arrangement embodied in the draft agreements, Hailsham vigorously opposed the terms presented to the sub-committee in early 1938, pointing out that the Taoiseach 'had been quite frank and definite in warning us' that no permanent improvement in relations was possible while partition remained. As British and Irish long-term aims conflicted, he believed it was irrational to make concessions. Struck by the lack of Irish compromise in the trade and tariff agreements, he exclaimed that the 'benefits of the agreement were all one way' with Britain 'getting next to nothing.'³⁸

Hailsham found Britain's proposed relinquishment of the Treaty Ports most alarming. Ironically, it appeared that the ports were being abandoned in order to

²³ Hailsham to Earl Granard, 8 June 1934 (Churchill Archives Centre Cambridge [C.A.C.], Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/1/1).

²⁴ Hailsham to Granard, 5 Mar. 1934 (C.A.C., Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/1/1).

²⁵ MacDonald, *Titans*, p. 64.

²⁶ Hailsham to Granard, 2 July 1934 (C.A.C., Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/1/1).

²⁷ MacDonald, *Titans*, p. 61; Fisk, *Time of war*, p. 33.

²⁸ I.S.C. minutes, 12 May 1936 (T.N.A. Cab. 27/523).

²⁹ McMahon, 'Transient apparition', p. 341.

³⁰ Stephen Roskill, *The war at sea*, (3 vols, London, 1954), i, p. 46.

³¹ P.M. Canning, *British policy towards Ireland 1921-1941* (Oxford, 1985), p. 182.

³² Fisk, *Time of war*, p. 7.

³³ Note by Anthony Eden, 15 Oct. 1935, no. 286 in C. Crowe, R. Fanning, M. Kennedy, D. Keogh, and E. O'Hallpin (eds), *Irish documents on foreign policy*, vol. 4 (Dublin, 2004).

³⁴ Note by Joseph Walshe, 7 Sept. 1936, no. 370 in *ibid.*

³⁵ N.H. Gibbs, *Grand strategy* (London, 1976), p. 817.

³⁶ I.S.C. minutes, 20 Jan. 1937 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

³⁷ Cabinet minutes, 26 Jan. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 23/92).

³⁸ I.S.C. minutes, 17 Feb. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

facilitate their return. 'We thought', MacDonald remembered, 'that if there was a war and if – or because – we had given up the ports, Eire could come in on our side.'³⁹ Thomas Inskip, the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, believed that an unwritten 'gentlemen's agreement' had been crafted with de Valera and, if war broke out, Britain would be able to use the facilities as Eire was 'almost bound to be on our side.'⁴⁰ This belief that Britain would be granted access was genuinely held and her maritime scheme of defence continued to be based around the ports.⁴¹ Therefore, although de Valera had asserted in June 1936 that in a future war 'We want to be neutral',⁴² Britain's capacity to resist attacks upon her food supply was endangered in a gamble to buy Irish goodwill without satisfying de Valera over partition. Defending what he saw as Britain's vital interests, Hailsham, after six years of wrangling with de Valera, believed that Eire would demand the end of partition to establish an all-Ireland republic in return for Britain's right to use the ports if an emergency arose.⁴³

Notwithstanding Hailsham's protests, there was some logic behind the agreements. British use of the ports undermined Eire's independence, the upkeep of the bases was costly and considerable expenditure was required to re-equip them. The War Office was anxious to be absolved of responsibility for defending the ports and, if war broke out, it was estimated the Army would need one division at each port to meet a hostile Irish population.⁴⁴ Yet, this pessimistic conclusion was reached without a proper assessment of the repercussions of withdrawal, Irish political conditions, or of Eire's likely attitude in a future war.⁴⁵ Hailsham, after serving as War Secretary, was fully aware of the War Office's funding shortages, but he did not see this as an insuperable objection. Despite his protests, MacDonald recalled that in 'most of Chamberlain's Cabinet's judgment – supported by the unanimous opinion of the Chiefs of Staff – the very importance of those ports in the event of war threw the balance of argument [to]... voluntarily resigning our Treaty right to occupy them.'⁴⁶ The Chiefs' supposed unanimity was questionable as political pressure impinged upon defence strategy. Their defence report from 1936 was contradictory and 'owed as much to a desire to facilitate MacDonald's policies' as it did to naval strategy.⁴⁷ This

³⁹ Fisk, *Time of war*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ I.S.C. meeting, 1 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A. Cab. 27/524); Cabinet minutes, 2 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A. Cab. 23/84).

⁴¹ Fisk, *Time of war*, p. 115.

⁴² *Dáil Éireann debates*, vol. LXII, 2660 (18 June 1936).

⁴³ I.S.C. meeting, 1 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

⁴⁴ I.S.C. meeting, 10 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

⁴⁵ Eunan O'Hallpin, *Spying on Ireland* (Oxford, 2008), p. 29.

⁴⁶ MacDonald, *Titans*, p. 82.

⁴⁷ Fisk, *Time of war*, p. 30.

report stated: 'it is not suggested... that the free and unimpeded use of these ports is in any way less vital to our fleet than it has been in the past.' The 1938 report warned that having no access to the ports in wartime could be so serious that 'the life of the nation would be imperilled.' Yet, it concluded that 'it would be preferable to waive insistence on a formal undertaking which might be politically impracticable.'⁴⁸

Contradictory assessments of Britain's defence requirements were also revealed in Inskip's reasoning. He felt that by abandoning the ports Britain was 'not giving up anything worth having.' But, paradoxically, he recognised the importance of the ports and accepted that 'we might have to take [them] by force if war came.'⁴⁹ His justification for abandoning the bases was that Britain 'might have to do exactly the same thing if... [the ports] remained nominally ours.' McMahon has used Inskip's arguments to claim that Britain had 'no alternative.'⁵⁰ Hailsham, however, disagreed and appreciated the weakness of such an approach.

Even if a division of troops at each base was required, the security the ports provided British shipping could not be overlooked. Moreover, after great exertions to gain Eire's goodwill, an attempt to re-take the ports illegally would provoke Irish antagonism. Such a course made no sense to Hailsham. Typically keen to uphold international law, he reminded his colleagues that

If we did not hand over the ports by agreement, we had preserved our Treaty right... If we handed them over to Eire, and then proceeded to put soldiers into them in war, we should have committed a clear breach of our undertaking.⁵¹

John Maffey, Britain's representative in Dublin 1939–49, shared the Lord Chancellor's reasoning. He believed that assessments of Irish antagonism were exaggerated and recalled that the 'theory was advanced that we should have had to land forces to protect the ports. This is rubbish. The ports were British by treaty rights internationally recognised.'⁵² While Hailsham admitted that Britain's limited resources did not make upgrading them a peacetime priority, he held that 'in time of war the ports would be very valuable.'⁵³ If the bases were retained, they could be quickly restored. Hailsham recognised that their value lay in their deep-water

⁴⁸ Fisk, *Time of war*, p. 31, 39.

⁴⁹ I.S.C. minutes, 1 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

⁵⁰ McMahon, *Republicans*, p. 293.

⁵¹ I.S.C. minutes, 1 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

⁵² *Irish Times*, 4 July 1962.

⁵³ I.S.C. minutes, 1 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

anchorage.⁵⁴ Remembering that Britain was almost defeated in 1917 because of German submarine activity, the Lord Chancellor observed that the 'ports would have an important role to play in guarding our trade routes and in the campaign against enemy submarines.' Showing considerable foresight, he shared neither MacDonald nor Inskip's delusion. He doubted if Britain would be granted use of the ports in wartime and recognised that even if they were made available, their preparedness could not be guaranteed. He warned against this 'policy of surrender' and refused to endorse the draft agreement.⁵⁵ The root of this difference of opinion was over what best served Britain's interests – resistance or surrender.

When the proposals came before the cabinet, Hailsham recorded his dissent for the first time in an eleven-year ministerial career. He was the only member of the government to protest against relinquishing the ports. Totally isolated, he merely requested that his colleagues 'note that he had placed his dissent... on record at the Irish Situation Committee and would not repeat his views.'⁵⁶ MacDonald's arguments were accepted with Chamberlain's full support. The latter appeared more concerned with a 'successful conclusion... than the actual terms upon which this agreement was founded.'⁵⁷

While Hailsham regarded the Anglo-Irish Treaty as an 'egregious agreement',⁵⁸ the return of the ports was 'a tremendous coup' for de Valera. Indeed, 'people both in Ireland and Britain were unable to believe that there were no strings attached.'⁵⁹ Several members of de Valera's government had even told the Taoiseach that Britain would not give up the ports, while Dulanty 'could hardly believe his own ears' when he heard that they were being returned.⁶⁰ These agreements were signed and Britain gave up these strategic assets six weeks after Germany had incorporated Austria into the Reich.

Hailsham's opposition was soon vindicated as the agreements meant different things to each party. Chamberlain felt Britain's gains were 'intangible, imponderable, but nevertheless invaluable.'⁶¹ As Hailsham anticipated, however, de Valera told the Dáil that without the end of partition, 'this Agreement is a bad and poor document.' Consistent with his earlier remarks to Hailsham, the Taoiseach

maintained that good relations with Britain could not be established 'as long as that outrage... persists.'⁶² Sean Lemass, the high-profile republican and future Taoiseach, promised to end partition, while de Valera's son, Vivian, publicly exclaimed: 'we have got the Swilly, Derry is the next objective.'⁶³ Even allowing for rhetoric designed to placate de Valera's more extreme followers, this was not the desired outcome to an agreement designed to facilitate friendly relations. De Valera and his supporters had not been bought off. British concessions, as Hailsham had warned, had been in vain.

Londonderry who shared Hailsham's ancestral links with the six counties, assured his former colleague that 'everything that you have said has been fully justified.'⁶⁴ Hailsham himself 'wonder[ed] whether Neville ever sees cuttings from the Belfast Press!' The Lord Chancellor was afraid that Chamberlain believed that

better relations with Southern Ireland are being successfully achieved... but I think young de Valera's speech about the enemy going out and Derry being the next objective, and about the necessity of being strong so as to rescue their unfortunate northern brothers... is proof to the contrary. I do not believe the British government know the actual situation, or anything about it.⁶⁵

Hailsham was at one with Churchill in this matter. When the latter returned to government at the outbreak of the Second World War, he explored the possibilities of recovering the ports and even considered using force to do so. For Hailsham, the government's Irish policy was an example of the dangers of appeasement. He saw a link between the approach towards de Valera and that towards Nazi Germany. The Germans, he confessed, were 'impossible people' to make an agreement with 'short of surrender.' In fact, 'an agreement between us and them would be just like our proposed agreement with Southern Ireland – namely a complete acceptance of their domination and demands.'⁶⁶ While the constraints on Britain's foreign policy reconciled Hailsham to the appeasement of Germany, he felt that no such factors existed in relation to Eire. Put simply, appeasement was unnecessary. Chamberlain, however, was confident of the success of his wider policy.⁶⁷ 'I am very anxious to get the agreement', he told his sister, 'as I think it would produce an excellent effect in

⁵⁴ Gibbs, *Grand strategy*, pp 817-8.

⁵⁵ I.S.C. minutes, 1 Mar. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 27/524).

⁵⁶ Cabinet minutes, 2 Jan. 1938 (T.N.A., Cab. 23/92); John Colville, *Fringes of power* (London, 1985), p. 489.

⁵⁷ *Irish Times*, 2 Jan. 1969.

⁵⁸ Hailsham to Londonderry, 25 Apr. 1938 (CAC, Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/4/43).

⁵⁹ J.T. Carroll, *Ireland in the war years 1939-45* (Newton Abbot, 1975), p. 25.

⁶⁰ Robert Brennan, *Ireland standing firm* (Dublin, 2002), p. 5; *Irish Times*, 4 July 1962.

⁶¹ *Hansard 5 (Commons)*, CCCXXXV, 1074 (5 May 1938).

⁶² *Dáil Éireann debates*, lxxi, 429 (29 Apr. 1938).

⁶³ *Irish Times*, 6 June 1938.

⁶⁴ Londonderry to Hailsham, 7 June 1938 (CAC, Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/4/43).

⁶⁵ Hailsham to Londonderry, 9 June 1938 (CAC, Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/4/43).

⁶⁶ Hailsham to Londonderry, 8 Apr. 1938 (CAC, Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/4/43).

⁶⁷ Robert Self, *Neville Chamberlain* (London, 2006), p. 298.

Berlin.⁶⁸ He hoped that the Anglo-Irish Agreement would convince Hitler of Britain's willingness to negotiate a broad settlement.

When Britain and France declared war on Germany in September 1939, the Dáil passed the Emergency Powers Act which secured Irish neutrality and thwarted Britain's access to the ports with a 'disastrous impact on the war against submarines'.⁶⁹ The verdict of Chamberlain and many of his colleagues that the ports would be of 'little use' was mistaken, even negligent.⁷⁰ The Royal Navy's leading historian claims that the arguments in favour of maintaining Britain's rights were 'given insufficient weight'.⁷¹ One commentator speculated that Britain's access to the ports might have provided a quicker victory in the Battle of the Atlantic, facilitated the earlier liberation of France and even prevented the fall of Singapore.⁷² Although the ports' usefulness receded after the fall of France in mid-1940 enabled German U-boats to operate from French ports,⁷³ the figures relating to British losses during 1939-40 speak for themselves. By the end of 1939, only four ships that sailed in convoys sank. In waters without protection, however, 110 vessels sank.⁷⁴ While all these losses cannot be attributed to the surrender of the Treaty Ports, the use of Berehaven alone would have allowed convoys to operate 180 miles further west. The Naval Staff reported in May 1940 that the use of that port remained 'an urgent requirement'.⁷⁵ Despite British requests, de Valera's categorical answer was 'non possumus.' The 1938 Agreement, Britain's representative protested, was 'an act of faith... in the belief that in the hour of need the hand of friendship would be extended.' But de Valera claimed that Britain could not 'expect... advantage from what was not ours'.⁷⁶ Maffey summed up the cost for Britain in the Second World War: 'Had we retained and exercised our rights, hundreds of ships and thousands of lives would have been saved'.⁷⁷ Hailsham's stand recognised the probability of another war, the pivotal role that the ports could play and the unlikelihood of the ports ever being returned.

⁶⁸ Chamberlain to Hilda, 9 Apr. 1938, *Diary Letters*, iv, p. 314.

⁶⁹ B. Bond and W. Murray 'The British Armed Forces 1918-39' in A. R. Millet (ed.) *Military effectiveness* vol. ii. (Boston 1988), p. 109.

⁷⁰ Chamberlain to Ida, 1 May 1938, *Diary Letters*, iv, p. 318.

⁷¹ Stephen Roskill, *Naval policy between the wars*, vol. ii (London, 1976), p. 446.

⁷² John Buttiner, 'The Treaty Ports' *An Cosantoir*, 38 (1978), pp 195-9.

⁷³ Convoys then took the route around the north of Ireland and bases in Northern Ireland became more important. John Ramsden, *Man of the century* (London, 2002), p. 245.

⁷⁴ J.R.M. Butler, *Grand strategy*, vol. ii (London, 1957), p. 84; Clair Wills, *That neutral island* (London, 2007), p. 114.

⁷⁵ Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 30 May 1940 (T.N.A., Cab. 66/8/13).

⁷⁶ Report by John Maffey, 21 Oct. 1939 (T.N.A., Cab. 66/8/13).

⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 4 July 1962. Even Viscount Maugham, one of Chamberlain's early apologists, shared this conclusion. Britain 'gained nothing' by this 'useless display of generosity'. Maugham, *At the end of day* (London, 1954), pp 344-5.

Shortly before his death, Chamberlain admitted that 'I did not get all that I hoped for from Mr. de Valera'.⁷⁸ Similarly, MacDonald conceded that he had 'made mistakes' about the extent of concessions that de Valera would make and that he 'had been too optimistic in [his] advice to the cabinet'.⁷⁹ It is difficult to disagree with the conclusion that the ports were 'rashly surrendered'.⁸⁰ Hailsham understood that, rather than being ends in themselves, de Valera's violations of agreements were geared towards establishing an all-Ireland republic. He did not doubt the Irishman when he claimed that 'no permanent settlement would ever be accepted on any other terms'.⁸¹ His desire to retain the Treaty Ports was not the knee-jerk reaction of a die-hard imperialist. He recognised that the ports could be of pivotal importance in the future war which, he had anticipated since 1932, would take place against Germany.⁸² While Hailsham's opposition rested on his distrust of de Valera and made few allowances for the domestic political constraints placed upon the Taoiseach, his approach was realistic and designed to protect Britain's strategic interests.

⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 4 July 1962.

⁷⁹ MacDonald, *Titans*, pp 73-4.

⁸⁰ David Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands: 1912-1939* (Oxford, 1998), p. 152.

⁸¹ Hailsham to Granard, 2 July 1934 (CAC, Hailsham papers, HAIL 1/1/1).

⁸² Lord Hailsham, *The door wherein I went* (London, 1974), p. 114; Cabinet minutes, 31 Oct 1932 (T.N.A., Cab. 23/72).

Activism and philosophy: Conservative revival seen through the National Association for Freedom and *The Salisbury Review*.

David Linden

During the latter part of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, a resurgence in political activism took place in British politics initiated by individuals sympathetic to the Conservative Party when it was led by Margaret Thatcher. It coincided with several attempts to renew and update the philosophical foundations of party policy. According to John Casey, who in 1975 helped organise the Conservative Philosophy Group, this was due to an increased focus on ideas within the Conservative Party because Thatcher presided over 'the odd moment in the history of the Tory Party when it decided to lie back and enjoy ideas.'¹ Many organisations that held views in common with the Conservative Party were also founded during the period. These organisations were seen as representing middle-class interests, and Andrew Gamble has identified the party's ability to stimulate political activity as an essential reason for its electoral success.² This resulted in a twofold political change: firstly with the Conservative Party having an increasingly individualistic political platform, and secondly an increased focus on ideology, associated today with the 're-radicalisation' of the Conservative Party that took the form of Thatcherism.³ At the core of this, was a notion that Britain was in crisis and that it would require a break with post-war corporatism in order to emerge from it. If this crisis was not solved, trade unions were going to 'transfigure parliamentary democracy into a form of soviet state' and endanger democracy.⁴ In the words of Martin Durham, a common feature of this twofold political change, which made it a cornerstone of the thinking of the New Right, was the self-proclaimed 'restoration of traditional morality.'⁵ This study will therefore focus on the political significance of this revival in activism as seen through the foundation of the National Association for Freedom in 1975, and in ideology as seen in the journal *The Salisbury Review* in 1982.

The National Association for Freedom (NAFF) was founded on 2 December 1975 by, among others, former Conservative cabinet minister and

Governor-General of Australia Viscount De L'Isle and the co-founder of the Guinness Book of World Records, Norris McWhirter. The idea of an organisation was first brought forward by Norris McWhirter's twin brother Ross, who had spent much of his career resisting and legally challenging what he perceived to be a dangerous expansion of the state in Britain. Before he was assassinated by the IRA on 27 November 1975 for having offered £50,000 in reward for information leading to the arrest of IRA bombers, Ross McWhirter had begun drafting a charter of rights and liberties that was later to be at the core of the National Association for Freedom.⁶

Those freedoms and rights were.

the right to be defended, the right to live in peace, freedom of movement, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and publication, freedom of assembly and association for a lawful purpose... the freedom to withdraw one's labour; other than contrary to public safety, freedom to choose whether or not to be organised as employed or employer, the right to private ownership, the right to dispose or convey property by deed or will, freedom to exercise personal priority in spending and freedom from oppressive, unnecessary or confiscating taxation... the freedom from all coercive monopolies, freedom for private enterprise, freedom of choice in the use of state and private services and the right to protection from invasion of privacy.⁷

Overall with the help of these rights and liberties 'the British problem' was meant to be solved, and therefore the activity of the NAFF should concentrate on two themes which encapsulated them and were set out by the Australian journalist Robert Moss. In 1976 he was appointed editor of the Association's journal *The Free Nation* and had described the solution to Britain's problem as the need to 'reassert the rule of law' by enforcing the previously mentioned rights.⁸ Among the original members of the organisation's governing body, the council, were Conservative MPs Anthony Berry, Airey Neave, Winston Churchill, Nicholas Ridley and Rhodes Boyson.⁹ Ridley had since the 1960s 'pressed for the Tory Party to be firmer in its resolve to restore the market economy and to roll back the frontiers of socialism.'¹⁰ Ridley therefore appreciated ginger groups such as NAFF, as it had become known, since he thought they helped Margaret Thatcher as newly elected leader 'to broaden her base of support among opinion-leaders.'¹¹ She had also attended the memorial service for Ross McWhirter and co-signed a letter of appeal for the Ross McWhirter Foundation in

¹ John Casey, 'Welcome back to the forum where Thatcher and Powell argued' in *Spectator*, 17 Mar. 2007, p. 1.

² Andrew Gamble, 'Book section: the middle class revolt' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 33, 1 (1979), p. 233.

³ Brent Steel and Taketsugu Tsurutani, 'From consensus to dissensus: a note on post-industrial political parties' in *Comparative Politics*, 18, 2 (1986), p. 243.

⁴ Douglas Eden, 'We came close to losing our democracy in 1979' in *Spectator*, 6 June 2009, pp 1-6.

⁵ Martin Durham, 'Family, morality and the New Right' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 38, 2 (1985), p. 180.

⁶ Norris McWhirter, 'A brief history of the Freedom Association, 2003' (http://freedomassociation.typepad.com/the_freedom_association/files/his01.PDF) (accessed 20 June 2010).

⁷ Charter of Rights and Liberties of the National Association for Freedom, (1975, London School of Economics and political science archive, Papers of Sir Gilbert Longden, 9/ 85, p. 1).

⁸ Robert Moss, *The collapse of democracy* (London, 1975), p. 13.

⁹ John McGowan, 'Dispute', 'battle', 'siege', 'farce'? - Grunwick 30 years on' in *Contemporary British History*, 22, 3 (2008), p. 393.

¹⁰ Nicholas Ridley, *My style of government: the Thatcher years* (London, 1991), p. 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

which it was declared that 'freedom is imperilled in the country which cradled it in the modern world.'¹² Thatcher did this in opposition to many members of her Shadow Cabinet who 'regarded it with deep distaste.'¹³ Boyson had served together with Ross McWhirter as a director of the right-wing Constitutional Book Club, and in 1975 he helped to set up the Foundation. In Parliament he advocated the reintroduction of the death penalty as 'it was the least I could do for Ross's memory' and as a member of the NAFF council he fulfilled his obligations and spoke at local branches.¹⁴ It was alleged by its critics that NAFF 'forayed into the traditional domain of the social authoritarians' and was racist.¹⁵ This accusation they rebutted by stating in the policy document *All the Queen's subjects* that 'a British citizen is not to be judged by his race, colour or creed but by his devotion and adherence to British Freedom.'¹⁶ The alleged Conservative bias of the organisation was addressed by the widow of Herbert Morrison who as a council member warned that 'we must never take freedom for granted.'¹⁷ Dr Stephen Haseler, who together with Douglas Eden co-founded the Labour Party fringe organisation the Social Democratic Alliance, addressed the issue of trade unionism:

We must ensure that modern trade union bureaucrats are taken off the backs of the worker ... and that they leave ultimate political decision-making to those whom all the workers elect through Parliamentary democratic institutions.¹⁸

In August 1976 an industrial conflict at the London film-processing firm of Grunwick became a symbol of the end of consensus in Britain with and NAFF was to be associated with it.¹⁹ Members of the largely Asian female workforce who had joined the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs (APEX) union were fired by the employer George Ward who did not recognise their grievances as legitimate. Other unions such as the postal union (UPW) did, however, support the right of APEX to picket the firm. When he looked for support Ward felt 'saddened by the lack of support from some people ... on whose concern for individual freedom we thought we could depend.'²⁰ Those were the 'wet' faction in the Conservative party as represented by Shadow Employment Spokesman Jim Prior,

who found himself 'under attack each year as the Party Conference approached.'²¹ As an APEX member and former cabinet minister, he represented the non-confrontational side of the Conservative Party and he was not hostile to the practice of the closed shop which NAFF was convinced the strikers wished to implement at Grunwick. Instead of confrontation, he had suggested that the party should influence and gain support among trade union members by supporting 'moderate' candidates for union office.²² He differed from right-wingers such as Norman Tebbit who saw the Grunwick strike as having justified criticism of trade union power and having made confrontational views 'seem less eccentric.'²³ Prior was also attacked by Thatcher's ally Keith Joseph; this forced her to release a statement declaring that Prior's views that the conflict should be settled was party policy and that the closed shop would not be outlawed by a Conservative government.²⁴ Joseph's views were similar to those of both George Ward and NAFF. After Ward had heard a speech by Roger Webster, who as a railwayman had been fired over the closed shop and later reinstated with the help of NAFF and appointed as their branch manager, he contacted them.²⁵ However, John Gouriet, who was the first Director of NAFF, claimed that it was the Conservative MP Sir Fredric Bennett who called his attention 'to Grunwick's plight, mentioned briefly on the back page of the *Evening Standard*.'²⁶ To support Ward they 'recommended solicitors who, after consulting counsel, advised me that legal action would prove effective.'²⁷ With this legal involvement 'NAFF had elevated Grunwick from a local trade-union dispute into a national political issue' according to the secretary of the Brent Trades Council, Jack Dromey.²⁸ In the words of *The Economist*, NAFF activists at Grunwick came to resemble a parallel 'union of the kind of people who would not be seen in a union.'²⁹ For example, when the local UPW branch refused to deliver the mail for Grunwick, NAFF arranged for the mail to be delivered by their activists, despite the fact that the plant was under mass picketing. The successful outcome of Operation Pony Express made Thatcher declare that NAFF was doing more for

¹² 'Letter appealing for donations to Ross McWhirter Foundation, 5 December 1975'

(<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/192468>) (accessed 30 July 2010).

¹³ Margaret Thatcher, *The path to power* (London, 1995), p. 399.

¹⁴ Rhodes Boyson, *Speaking my mind: the autobiography of Rhodes Boyson* (London, 1995), pp 125-206.

¹⁵ Paul Gordon and Francesca Klug, *New right new racism* (Nottingham, 1986), p. 8.

¹⁶ Cited in Narindar Saroop, 'Freedom and race' in K. W. Watkins (ed.), *In defence of freedom* (London, 1978), p. 118.

¹⁷ Lady Morrison of Lambeth, 'Freedom and the family', in *ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁸ Stephen Haseler, 'Freedom and the trade unions', in *ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁹ Kenneth O. Morgan, *The people's peace: British history 1945-1990* (Oxford, 1990), p. 415.

²⁰ George Ward, *Fort Grunwick* (London, 1977), pp 3-4.

²¹ Jim Prior, *A balance of power* (London, 1986), p. 154.

²² Paul Routledge, 'As union interest grows, how strong a foothold will the Tories get on the shop floor?' *The Times*, 14 Apr. 1976, p. 18.

²³ Norman Tebbit, *Upwardly mobile* (London, 1988), p. 193.

²⁴ Margaret Thatcher, 'Written statement on Prior-Joseph dispute, 12 September 1977'

(<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103270>) (accessed 30 July 2010).

²⁵ Roger Webster, *When Britain waived the rules and sampled anarchy* (Sussex, 2000), pp 96-107.

²⁶ John Gouriet, 'Ghosts of Grunwick', unpublished draft, p. 2.

²⁷ Ward, *Fort Grunwick*, p. 55.

²⁸ Jack Dromey and Graham Taylor, *Grunwick: the workers' story* (London, 1978), p. 70.

²⁹ 'Grunwick: A judge for the workers' in *The Economist*, 16 July 1977, p. 88.

freedom in this country 'than anyone else in politics.'³⁰ In May 1977 their cause was further assisted by the visit of Labour ministers Shirley Williams, Fred Mulley and Denis Howell to the picket lines, since that made it possible to treat it as a party political issue. Three weeks afterwards there followed severe confrontation between police and militant pickets which the press treated as a consequence of their visit. The tabloids had, in the words of Williams, 'gleefully fingered my colleagues and me as the instigators of the violence.'³¹ When Lord Scarman published an official report in which it was recommended that the strikers should be reinstated, it was dismissed by Ward and attacked by Keith Joseph. Joseph stated that the 'extent of trade union power is worrying many trade unions themselves' and made an explicit link between the ministerial visit and violence.³² In the words of Philip Whitehead, Labour MP at the time, Grunwick became 'a point of counter-revolution' with the consequence that the language of the Conservative party became 'almost indistinguishable from that of NAFF.'³³ NAFF also managed to gain public support against what was seen as 'mob rule and the uncontrolled threat from trade union power.'³⁴ For the left, the conflict came in retrospect to demonstrate the fact 'that when unions had to protect workers against really bad employers, as often as not they failed.'³⁵ The successful campaign launched by NAFF also received public support, and laid the foundation for the Conservative party's demand of radical union reform which after the Winter of Discontent in 1978-79 became a cornerstone of Thatcherism.

The search for a coherent philosophy was also a part of the political coalition which 'laid the foundation' for Thatcher's win in 1979 and to which the National Association for Freedom belonged.³⁶ The search took the form of intellectual debate in forums such as the Conservative Philosophy Group, the Salisbury Group and the publication of journals such as the *Cambridge Review*. In 1975 John Casey's appointment as editor of the journal turned it 'into the first public forum for [a] ... kind of cultural conservatism' and 'an important antecedent' to *The Salisbury Review* that was founded in 1982 by the Salisbury Group.³⁷ The purpose of the latter was 'to

convey the ideas and concerns of genuine conservatism and carry articles on all aspects of public life".³⁸ The editor, Roger Scruton, defined Conservatism as "the sense that one belongs to some continuing and pre-existing social order, and that this fact is all-important in determining what to do."³⁹ However, in the introduction to a series of reprinted essays from the journal, Scruton stated that 'the reader may well come to the conclusion that the Conservative Party is not conservative, or that some other party is.'⁴⁰ Its contributors had, furthermore, 'taken seriously the ideas of social continuity, national identity and tradition upon which durable political order depends.'⁴¹ It was also seen as having made a 'naturalness' of racism and repatriation.⁴² For example in 1984 the Bradford head teacher Ray Honeyford had criticised the practice of allowing Pakistani children to return for long periods of time to Pakistan. The reason the authorities allowed it to happen was 'the race lobby has managed so to induce and maintain feelings of guilt in the well-disposed majority.'⁴³ For this he 'was sent death threats ... was forced to resign and never allowed to teach again.'⁴⁴ He had also advocated the need to emphasise the basic understanding of English in terms of reading and writing, and was seen as having influenced Thatcher to the extent he was invited to Downing Street in October 1985. The White Paper of that year, *Better Schools*, with its emphasis on 'the need to learn ... and understand British culture and history' was therefore perceived as having been influenced by Honeyford and the New Right.⁴⁵ According to Jack Demaine, Honeyford could, however, not 'be regarded as a leading New Right thinker, although he certainly took up some of the New Right themes.'⁴⁶ He shared the view expressed by many contributors to the journal, Scruton included, that a school should be selective 'on the basis of its academic record.'⁴⁷ But despite the attack launched against Honeyford by several intellectuals and teachers, the journal that previously had been despised as 'the theoretical muscle behind the fruit-cake right' and its editor Roger Scruton still

³⁶ 'About the Salisbury Review' (<http://www.salisburyreview.co.uk/index.php?>) (accessed 27 July 2010).

³⁷ Roger Scruton, *The meaning of conservatism* (London, 1984), p. 21.

³⁸ Roger Scruton, 'Introduction' in Roger Scruton, (ed.), *Conservative thinkers: essays from The Salisbury Review* (London and Lexington, 1988), p. 8.

³⁹ Roger Scruton, 'Introduction' in Roger Scruton, (ed.), *Conservative thoughts: essays from The Salisbury Review* (London, 1988), pp 7-8.

⁴⁰ Gill Seidel, 'The white discursive order: the British new right's discourse on cultural racism with particular reference to the *Salisbury Review*' in Iris M. Zavala, Teun A. Van Dijk and Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz (eds), *Approaches to discourse, poetics and psychiatry* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 1987), p. 62.

⁴¹ Ray Honeyford, 'Education and race' in *Conservative thoughts*, pp 91-9.

⁴² Karyn Miller, Melissa Kite, James Orr, Nina Goswami and Roya Nikkhah, 'Headteacher who never taught again after daring to criticise multiculturalism' *Daily Telegraph*, 27 Aug. 2006, pp 1-4.

⁴³ Christopher Knight, *The making of Tory education policy in post-war Britain 1950-1986* (Bristol, 1990), p. 175.

⁴⁴ Jack Demaine, 'Racism, ideology and education: the last words on the Honeyford affair?' in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 14, 4 (1993), p. 410.

⁴⁵ Roger Scruton, 'The acid test for education' *The Times*, 5 July 1983, p. 10.

³⁰ Cited in Hugo Young, *One of us: a biography of Margaret Thatcher* (London, 1989), p. 111.

³¹ Shirley Williams, *Climbing the bookshelves: the autobiography of Shirley Williams* (London, 2009), p. 237.

³² Keith Joseph, 'Speech at Hove Town Hall', 1 Sept. 1977 (Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Keith Joseph Papers, LCC, p. 6).

³³ Philip Whitehead, *The writing on the wall: Britain in the seventies* (London, 1985), pp 219-20.

³⁴ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Callaghan: a life* (Oxford, 1997), p. 583.

³⁵ Francis Beckett and David Hencke, *Marching the fault line: the 1984 miners' strike and the death of industrial Britain* (London, 2009), p. 39.

³⁶ Vincent McKee, 'Conservative factions' in *Contemporary British History*, 3, 1 (1989), pp 30-2.

³⁷ Jeremy Rayner, 'Philosophy into dogma: the revival of cultural conservatism' in *British Journal of Political Science*, 16, 4 (1986), p. 457.

maintained a critical relationship with the Conservative Party.⁴⁸ In 1987 when Thatcher said during an interview that 'there was no such thing' as society she was criticised in the journal and by Scruton in particular.⁴⁹ According to John Campbell, a Thatcher biographer, her statement 'seemed to legitimise selfishness and reduce public provision for the poor.'⁵⁰ Her statement militated against the idea, outlined by Scruton and other contributors, of the importance of High Tory paternalism, social unity and continuity in such domains as authority, religion, nation and race. This new kind of conservatism attacked the left in the cultural 'more than the economic sphere.'⁵¹ The focus on common culture can also be traced in the changed Conservative rhetoric during the latter part of the 1980s. Its impact was therefore more connected with the use of governmental rhetoric than with practical policy, since they had chosen to focus on culture rather than economic policy-making. Therefore the impact the journal also had, in respect of rhetoric, was that it inspired the government to take a 'rightist pro-family stand' as expressed by Roger Scruton.⁵²

The resurgence in Conservative political activism during the 1970s contributed to a political climate where the right maintained the intellectual and political initiative over the left. It was a movement where the 'novelty lay not in our ideas, but in our degree of commitment', according to Alfred Sherman.⁵³ However, it was also criticised by representatives of the 'wet' faction in the Conservative Party leadership such as the Director of the Conservative Research Department, Chris Patten, who thought Thatcher had formed too close a relationship with the right-wing faction in the party. He thought that 'some of the people who make the NAFF tick and some of the MPs sympathetic to it believe they played a crucial part in putting her where she is.'⁵⁴ Subsequently Thatcher acknowledged that the conduct of the picket lines at Grunwick had benefited her politically.⁵⁵ However this movement would not have been successful had it not been for its emergence coinciding with the end of the post-war consensus. In industrial relations it was replaced with confrontation and a

reaction against 'the British disease' of the 1960s-70s.⁵⁶ It was articulated by *The Salisbury Review* and Roger Scruton who saw the basis of freedom being 'the community and family, and the state.'⁵⁷ It was therefore a dual political reaction, with activism and ideological debate that benefited the Conservative Party and was stimulated by Margaret Thatcher. What followed was activism as shown by the National Association for Freedom which since Grunwick has been associated with sympathisers of the Conservative party. In 2002 sympathisers of fox-hunting have portrayed activism as 'a necessary part of the survival story of the human race.'⁵⁸ It was felt there should be an equal freedom to belong, or not belong, to a union. The ideas presented in *The Salisbury Review* were also present in their latest form as tax breaks for married couples.⁵⁹ The notion of what Martin Durham called American-style campaigning by a New Right was also used by NAFF when attacking trade union power, although not as their US equivalent in terms of moral values as advocated in the journal.⁶⁰ What they did do, however, was to respond to 'the rise of social critique' that during the 1980s was mounted by the Church of England against the government.⁶¹ Due to confrontation with the trade-unions, as foreseen by NAFF and practised by them at Grunwick, the party was confident in activism when fighting the 1979 general election. Finally, with the help of intellectual debate as presented in journals such as *The Salisbury Review*, the party while in office developed a coherent set of policies that delivered them three electoral victories and established a Conservative hegemony.

⁴⁸ Anthony Arblaster, 'Scruton, intellectual by appointment' in *New Socialist*, November (1985), p. 16.

⁴⁹ Margaret Thatcher, 'Interview for *Woman's Own*, 23 September 1987'.

(<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>) (accessed 30 July 2010).

⁵⁰ John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher volume two: the iron lady* (London, 2008), p. 533.

⁵¹ Roger Eatwell and Noel O' Sullivan, (eds), *The nature of the right: European and American politics and political thought since 1789* (London, 1989), p. 11.

⁵² Martin Durham, 'Family, morality and the New Right', p. 187.

⁵³ Alfred Sherman, 'The outsider inside' in Mark Garnett (ed.), *Alfred Sherman, paradoxes of power: reflections on the Thatcher interlude* (Exeter, 2005), p. 39.

⁵⁴ Interview with Chris Patten, 15 September 1977 in Ion Trewin (ed.), *The Hugo Young papers: thirty years of British politics – off the record*, (London, 2008), p. 114.

⁵⁵ Thatcher, *The path to power*, p. 398.

⁵⁶ Robert Taylor, 'The rise and fall of the social contract' in Anthony Seldon and Kevin Hickson (eds), *New Labour, Old Labour: The Wilson and Callaghan Governments* (London, 2004), p. 98.

⁵⁷ Alison Jeffries, 'British conservatism: individualism and gender' in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1, 1 (1996), p. 35.

⁵⁸ Peter Richards, 'In defence of the freedom to fish, shoot and hunt' in *Philosophical Notes*, 63, (2002), p. 4.

⁵⁹ James Chapman, 'Conservative leader David Cameron vows to give tax breaks to married couples' *Daily Mail*, 11 Apr. 2010, pp 1-2.

⁶⁰ Martin Durham, 'The Thatcher Government and "The Moral Right"' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 42, 1 (1989), p. 65.

⁶¹ Martin Durham, '"God wants us to be in different parties": religion and politics in Britain today' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 50, 2 (1997), p. 215.

'The big bluff' or double bluff? Concerned Parents Against Drugs and the Provisional IRA

Gearóid Phelan

An oft-repeated criticism of the broader republican movement throughout the past three decades has been that of their alleged links to the illegal drugs trade north and south of the border. This criticism continues to the present day, with Real IRA attacks on drug dealers in Cork and Derry being dismissed as merely one gang eliminating another behind a façade of benign communal intentions.¹ This study does not seek to evaluate contemporary accusations, but rather to examine the origins of these criticisms in the south; namely, the relationship between the Concerned Parents Against Drugs organisation in Dublin and the Provisional IRA in the early 1980s. This study will consider the socio-economic context, the realities of republican involvement in community activism as well as the media's portrayal of this relationship and the possible motives of all involved.

In 1972, Rosita Sweetman wrote of conditions in the Ballymun flat complex, Dublin—how, for 6,000 children, there were no cinemas, no swimming pools, no community centre, no playing fields and no nursery. For the thousands of adults, there were 'two pubs'.² Seven years later and little had changed; much of inner-city Dublin was rundown and the social fabric of much-lauded suburban developments was quite threadbare. The repercussions from Jack Lynch's giveaway election promises of 1977 had begun to have a significant effect also: unemployment reached 100,000 – and continued rising.³ Meanwhile, the Provisional IRA's campaign in the north continued unabated, following a brief lull in the late seventies. This organisation's popularity, or tolerance, in urban working-class areas was rarely addressed in mainstream media, particularly given such recent outrages as the killing of Lord Mountbatten in 1979. For example, a poll conducted in the latter half of the seventies by a Dublin-based priest found that only three point one percent of people would outright refuse to have any social contact with members of the Provisional IRA while thirty percent of respondents were willing to admit a member of this organisation into their family.⁴ On top of other issues Dublin, by the summer of 1980,

was also in the midst of a severe heroin crisis. In one of its last issues before circulation ceased, the current affairs publication *Hibernia* had noted forebodingly, that the 'misuse of hard drugs like heroin is increasing dramatically in Ireland, as more and more heroin finds its way into Western Europe'.⁵ In the main, however, the media largely ignored this growing problem. The appearance of the drug in Ireland was not piecemeal or gradual, and was restricted solely by virtue of a dearth of contacts – for example, despite its abundance in the south of the city, it was to be another year before the north inner-city was similarly hit.⁶ The contemporary and current consensus is that this vast amount of inexpensive, easily available heroin originated in the 'Golden Crescent' area of the Middle East (Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan) and as a direct consequence of events in Iran in 1979. As Yeates and Flynn put it: 'After the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the onset of the war in Afghanistan, émigré supporters of the deposed Shah and the Afghan rebels both found the offloading of heroin hoards the best means of financing their disparate activities.'⁷ The overthrow of the Shah of Iran had generated a considerable amount of coverage in Irish newspapers initially but, by late spring of 1980, public interest had dimmed. What could not be foreseen at the time was the long-term consequences of this revolution halfway across the world on the working-class of, not only Ireland, but western Europe in general during the following few years.

Initial reactions within the communities devastated by the drug were of bewilderment and mute despair. In time, locals and relatives of addicts approached Dublin city councillor, Tony Gregory, a socialist politician who had previously been involved with Official Sinn Féin and (briefly) the Irish Republican Socialist Party, to seek help. Addiction levels by this time were running in some areas at twelve and thirteen percent of the teenage community, with heroin ranking as the second most popular drug after cannabis among schoolchildren – in fact, the addiction rate amongst teenagers in Dublin was higher than Brooklyn, New York had been in the previous decade.⁸ Gregory initially thought the stories he was hearing from constituents a little fantastical until directed to certain areas in the city and, according to himself, witnessed ten year old children taking heroin.⁹ Numerous attempts were made by

¹ For example, see: *The Irish Times*, 10 Mar. 17 Sept. 2009.

² R. Sweetman, *On our knees: Ireland, 1972* (London, 1972), p.37.

³ E. Sweeney, *Down, down, deeper and down: Ireland in the '70s and '80s* (Dublin, 2010), p.197.

⁴ Mae Gréil, M., *Prejudice and tolerance in Ireland* (Dublin, 1977), p.237, 247.

⁵ *Hibernia*, 19 June 1980.

⁶ S. Flynn, P. Yeates, *Smack: the criminal drugs racket in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1985), p.155.

⁷ Flynn, *Smack*, p.108.

⁸ *The Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1982, 15 Feb. 1984 and 'The press and the people in Dublin central: Ronan Sheehan Talks to Tony Gregory, Mick Rafferty & Fergus McCabe' in *Media and Popular Culture, The Crane Bag*, 8, 2 (1984), p.45.

⁹ Flynn, *Smack*, p.155.

Gregory after this to draw greater attention to the crisis. However, as André Lyder notes, despite continuous representations to politicians, the Gardaí, Dublin Corporation and the health authorities for a concerted response nothing of any significance was undertaken.¹⁰ Indeed, an example of this was a government report commissioned in 1983 which recommended an area-based response to the drug problem (at the time, Jervis Street had the only treatment clinic in the city). As the Addiction Research Centre notes of this report, '[it] was never published however, and a government statement on the report did not make any reference to this particular recommendation.'¹¹ At Liberty House complex, one of the worst-affected areas in the city, a group of mothers began to speak openly about asking the Provisional IRA to 'clean up the flats', though this never went beyond the talking stage.¹² An approach had previously been made by a priest in the north inner-city to the Official IRA, but this was rebuffed as the OIRA 'didn't do that sort of thing anymore.'¹³ Similarly, leaflets began appearing in west Dublin, distributed by a group who claimed links with the IRA. These leaflets warned that drug dealers would be 'punished' if they continued with such activities.¹⁴

When action was eventually taken against pushers, it emerged from within the communities themselves. In June 1983, a meeting was held in St. Teresa's Gardens in the south inner-city. At most, seventy people attended this meeting and, amidst much shouting and confusion, a vote was passed giving three drug-pushers in the area a week's ultimatum to leave. The following week, nearly three-hundred people showed up forming a human chain that passed the furniture of the pushers down the stairs in order to evenly distribute any criminal culpability. By October of that year, this area of Dublin was free of heroin. As *Magill* reports, 'a dance was held in Our Lady's Hall beside the Gardens. It was called the Victory Dance.'¹⁵

This example of community-based direct action against the drug pushers quickly spread throughout the city. Five-hundred people showed up to a meeting in Lower Crumlin after two women were seen distributing heroin packets among children. The men of that area lit oil barrels at the entrances to the streets, questioning

those wishing to enter and carrying out nightly patrols complete with walkie-talkies.¹⁶ By February of 1984, there were various unofficial branches or groups of such citizens scattered throughout the city and suburbs. The grassroots popularity of the movement was revealed that month when thousands of people marched through the city centre to hand in a letter of concern to Taoiseach, Garrett Fitzgerald.¹⁷ Banners at the march indicated representation from areas such as Dolphin's House, Tallaght, Ballyfermot, Ballymun, Crumlin, Clondalkin, Coolock and others.¹⁸ The following month, these people, now constituted as Concerned Parents Against Drugs, established a central committee to 'enable a more efficient exchange of information.'¹⁹

It was inevitable that, in time, those involved in the drug trade would attempt to strike back at activists in order to protect their business. The first major incident occurred the same month as the CPAD's rally in the city centre. In that incident, anti-drugs activist, Joey Flynn, was shot in both legs in daylight at Donore Avenue; a bold move on the part of his attackers.²⁰ A shadowy group began to emerge at this time, rather mockingly self-labelled 'concerned criminals', portraying themselves as ODCs (ordinary decent criminals) whose activities were outside the remit of CPAD but who claimed to feel threatened by that group's increasing vigilantism. Unlike the situation across the border, so-called 'punishment beatings' or shootings were very rare in the south. There was one incident of a minor spate of attacks by Provisional IRA members on several petty criminals in the Cabra area in 1982, though this was considered quite provocative and risky and no further actions were carried out.²¹

One of the most prominent members of CPAD was republican, Christy Burke. A full-time party activist at Sinn Féin's headquarters on Blessington Street, Burke had served a prison sentence in the seventies for IRA activities.²² He was approached by his Hardwicke St neighbours in the north inner-city who had decided to rid the area of drug-pushers in the late summer of 1983.²³ Using standard CPAD tactics, Hardwicke St was soon drug-free and subsequently regarded as a very difficult area to push drugs.²⁴ The principal reason for Burke's prominence in the CPAD was

¹⁰ A. Lyder, *Pushers out: the inside story of Dublin's anti-drugs movement* (Victoria, 2005), p.14.

¹¹ B. Cullen, *Community and drugs: a discussion of the contexts and consequences of the community drug problems in Ireland, 1976-2001* (Dublin, 2003), p.26.

¹² Flynn, *Smack*, p.158.

¹³ B. Hanley, S. Millar, *The lost revolution: the story of the official IRA and the Workers Party* (Dublin, 2009), p.448.

¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 6 Oct. 1982.

¹⁵ *Magill*, Mar. 1984 (the *Irish Independent* puts attendance at the initial meeting at no more than fifty, see: 29 Feb. 1984).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Irish Independent*, 1 Mar. 1984.

¹⁸ *The Irish Times*, 1 Mar. 1984.

¹⁹ *Magill*, Mar. 1984.

²⁰ *The Irish Times*, 21, 22 Feb. 1984.

²¹ *Irish Independent*, 6 Oct. 1982; Flynn, *Smack*, p.234.

²² *Irish Independent*, 10 June 2009.

²³ *Magill*, Mar. 1984.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

what Lyder has referred to as the 'big bluff'. He states: 'To put it simply, it suited the communities to have republicans fronting the campaign.'²⁵ This 'big bluff' seems even to have been approved of by a local priest active in the anti-drugs movement who felt that 'pushers would draw their own conclusions from the fact that Burke was on the committee.'²⁶ A newspaper distributed in Dublin in November, 1983 entitled *Inner City Republican* and endorsing Christy Burke as Dublin Central by-election candidate purported to have conducted an interview with a Provisional IRA spokesperson. The spokesperson at first puts responsibility for dealing with the drug problem firmly on the shoulders of each individual community. However, they go on to say of the drug dealers themselves: 'They are totally cynical and callous business people who will exploit unscrupulously to fill their own pockets and we issue a strong warning to those people that they will not be safe no matter where they live ... we are keeping a constant watch on them.'²⁷

One must consider the fact that the republican movement was a very broad organisation and it would be incorrect to apply the limits of the 'big bluff' wholeheartedly to all involved in that movement. Here, the difficulty in speaking of IRA involvement in CPAD comes into play – that the reality on the ground was much more important to local IRA volunteers in Dublin city than any IRA General Headquarters' directives is an essential point. The leadership at the time was firmly focused on the campaign in the north and had no intention of opening up some kind of 'second front' against drug dealers in the south.²⁸ In fact, among some volunteers, there was resentment that such action was needed as a result of what they perceived as Garda inaction:

...at the time, a lot of us believed that we were doing the cops work. That the cops were actually letting these people do this either for their own financial gain or to divert republicans; they seen republicans being diverted in Dublin, you know, when they went after the drug pushers.²⁹

Within the republican movement, the anti-drugs campaign was something that many members found difficult to understand, so fixed were they on the conflict in the north. Lyder mentions one Sinn Féin official in Dublin who spoke of how it took many of the less socially-political, but senior, members of Sinn Féin 'years to get their

heads around it.'³⁰ What occurred instead were localised and unofficial intimations on the part of individual volunteers that support would be given should CPAD activists come under serious threat. With the shooting of Joey Flynn on Donore Avenue, such a situation had now arisen.³¹

Several days after the mass rally in Dublin city centre, Thomas Gaffney, a small time criminal, was kidnapped by Provisional IRA members near Harold's Cross on the south side of the city. He was held in captivity for several weeks before being released near Abbeyfeale in Co. Limerick.³² It would appear that this kidnapping came at the behest of members of the Crumlin-Cork St. branch of CPAD who approached local members of the IRA with the kidnapping request.³³ While Gaffney was still in captivity, a second kidnapping attempt was made, this time on Martin 'the Viper' Foley, who had been at the forefront of several physical clashes between CPAD members and the 'concerned criminals.' His kidnapping attempt ended in a high-speed car chase and a shootout between Gardai and IRA members in the Phoenix Park.³⁴ It was around this time that large-scale public sympathy towards the concerned parents' movement began to drastically decline. Only three months before the Gaffney kidnapping, a soldier and a trainee Garda had been killed in disputed circumstances in Co. Leitrim following the IRA kidnapping of Don Tidey.³⁵ Other IRA operations in 1983 that resonated deeply in the psyche of many Irish citizens for their senselessness were the kidnapping of Shergar and the Harrods bombing in London, which killed eight people.³⁶

With a very public connection made visible between the republican movement and the anti-drugs campaign, the concerned parents now came under increasing attack from politicians and elements of the media who denounced it as a front for the Provisional IRA. Government minister, Barry Desmond, claimed that Sinn Féin were 'exploiting the drugs war' while simultaneously conceding that only fifteen per cent of illegal drugs coming in to the country were being intercepted by the Gardai.³⁷ Similarly, Minister of Justice, Michael Noonan accused Sinn Féin of infiltrating the anti-drugs movement the following year while boasting that 'Dublin is

²⁵ Lyder, *Pushers out*, p.51.

²⁶ Flynn, *Smack*, p.234

²⁷ 'IRA speaks on Drugs and Crime' in *Inner City Republican*, Nov. 1983, (<http://cedarlounge.files.wordpress.com/2007/11/icr.pdf>) (accessed 1 Apr. 2011).

²⁸ Lyder, *Pushers out*, p.52.

²⁹ Interview with former-IRA member, B (Limerick), 25 Mar. 2010.

³⁰ Lyder, *Pushers out*, p.52.

³¹ *Ibid*, p.41.

³² *The Irish Times*, 23 Mar. 1984.

³³ *Ibid*, 14 Mar. 1984.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 28 Mar. 1984.

³⁵ T.P. Coogan, *The troubles* (London, 1996), p.230.

³⁶ Bishop, P., E. Mallie, *The provisional IRA* (London, 1987), p.386.

³⁷ *Irish Independent*, 21 July 1984.

no longer the drugs capital of Europe.³⁸ However, the greatest assault on the CPAD was to come from the Workers Party. An offshoot of the 1969 split in the republican movement which led to the formation of the Provisionals, the Workers Party's military wing had been involved in several bloody feuds with the Provisional IRA in the north during the 1970s. Senior party member and TD, Proinsias De Rossa, likened CPAD to the Ku Klux Klan and the Workers Party distributed leaflets at several concerned parents' meetings in Finglas and Ballymun denouncing the organisation as a 'Provo front.'³⁹ De Rossa conveniently chose not to draw attention to Mick White, a Workers Party activist, who sat on the same branch of Concerned Parents Against Drugs as Christy Burke.⁴⁰ The Workers Party's greatest asset in this campaign of vilification was their near total control at the time of Ireland's current affairs programme, *Today, Tonight*.⁴¹

As early as the winter of 1983, *Today, Tonight* had broadcast a special report on CPAD, strongly implying that Sinn Féin had infiltrated the organisation to the extent of dominating it.⁴² Sinn Féin could not adequately respond to such allegations given that they were banned from radio and television due to Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.⁴³ Sister Elizabeth O'Brien, a nun who was involved in the production of that particular episode of *Today, Tonight*, wrote to the *Irish Independent* to express her disgust at the manner in which it was edited to convey a particular political agenda.⁴⁴ Following the attempted kidnapping of Martin Foley, Pádraig Yeates (a former member of the Workers Party himself), wrote a two-piece article on the Provisional-CPAD connection for the *Irish Times*. His investigation led him to conclude that 'Sinn Féin involvement in the Concerned Parents Against Drugs committees began more by accident than by design ... Sinn Féin members sit on it [the central committee] as delegates from anti-drug groups, not party members.'⁴⁵

Indeed, Sinn Féin activists in the CPAD were 'very much in the minority on both local committees and the Central Committee. They were also very much a minority of Sinn Féin members in the city.'⁴⁶ Dublin community activist, Mick Rafferty, believes that the more tabloid elements of the media played up the

Provisional involvement because 'it makes a good read', though he considered the more politically-motivated journalists to have been terrified of the Provisionals becoming involved in community organisations. He spoke of the ironic consequences of this in that the media 'were exposing something that didn't exist. And in doing so they helped create the very phenomenon which they wished to avoid.'⁴⁷ The possibility that working-class communities could organise on such a wide scale themselves was alien to much of the establishment. In Yeates' second part insight into the Provisional-CPAD connection, he wrote: 'The gardai, and some politicians, are so frightened that people in these areas are organising themselves that they claim they are being manipulated. They can't conceive that ordinary working class people can organise themselves.'⁴⁸

But media vilification was the least of the anti-drugs movement's worries. Increasingly, the Gardai began to devote a great deal of time to the harassment of CPAD members. Demonstrations or marches were broken up and those involved found themselves being arrested for the dubious charge of 'watching and besetting.'⁴⁹ One republican who was involved in the anti-drugs campaign spoke of the type of treatment meted out to ordinary, non-political members of the CPAD and the consequences of such treatment:

...the cops came in fairly heavy-handed. They used to drive up to people's houses, up the driveway, full, blaring the lights full-blare on and off in their sitting-room windows. They'd come out and they'd drive off. So they'd ring the cops, and that was the cops, you know. So they felt very intimidated by what was going on. So the cops were basically trying to turn them against doing good work in their own communities. So there was a lot, we lost a lot of people over that. They were saying 'Ah, jeez, I can't get involved in that, the cops are onto me. I'm only trying to help me kids.'⁵⁰

Writing of this period, Yeates and Flynn noted the priorities of the Gardai that thousands of garda hours were wasted in an unsuccessful battle to suppress illegal trading [Moore Street] while a few hundred yards away drug pushers slipped unhampered through the flat complexes of the north inner city.⁵¹ Tony Gregory tried to inject some perspective into this campaign stating that, while Gardai were 'running women traders off the streets they are not dealing with heroin pushers who are operating within a stone's throw of Store Street station.'⁵²

³⁸ Ibid, 26 Oct. 1985 [italics added for emphasis].

³⁹ Hanley, *The Lost Revolution*, p.486.

⁴⁰ Flynn, *Smack*, p.252.

⁴¹ Hanley, *The Lost Revolution*, p.373.

⁴² Flynn, *Smack*, p.235.

⁴³ M. Kelly, B. Royston, *Irish society-- sociological perspectives; broadcasting in Ireland; issues of national identity and censorship* (Dublin, 1995), p.581.

⁴⁴ *Irish Independent*, 16 Dec. 1983.

⁴⁵ *The Irish Times*, 27 Mar. 1984.

⁴⁶ Lyder, *Pushers out*, p.50.

⁴⁷ Sheehan, 'The press and the people in Dublin central', p.46.

⁴⁸ *The Irish Times*, 28 Mar. 1984.

⁴⁹ *Magill*, Mar. 1984; Flynn, *Smack*, p.255.

⁵⁰ Interview with former-IRA member, C (Dublin), 30 Sept. 2010.

⁵¹ Flynn, *Smack*, p.157.

⁵² *The Irish Times*, 27 July 1985.

In time, the barricades and community checkpoints came down across those areas in the city hardest hit by heroin. The drug problem remained, but no longer was it to be confronted in any great sense by the communities themselves, emasculated as they now were. It would be years before these areas once again had the confidence to publicly face down drug-pushers. Tony Gregory's contention that the goal of the Gardai was to 'contain the community, not prevent crime within it' appeared to have a kernel of truth.⁵³ Concerned Parents Against Drugs ceased to effectively operate as a protest group in the mid-1980s after a short but relatively effective existence. According to one analysis, part of its demise was due to it descending into 'an aggressive, vigilante movement with loose paramilitary associations, and some confusion with respect to its punitive attitude towards drugs.'⁵⁴ The problem of domineering personality clashes was also quite a significant factor on a local and central committee level.⁵⁵

As regards the extent of its connections with the Provisional republican movement, there is no emphatic answer. Eamonn Sweeney has written that it was 'noteworthy how much of an all-Ireland organisation the Provisionals were in the mid-seventies.'⁵⁶ This statement could be extended to the 1980s also, and particularly to working-class areas in an urban context. Many such communities in Dublin did contain Provisional IRA members, or at least 'known' republicans, most of whom were equally as appalled as their neighbours at the mounting heroin crisis in their midst. It would appear to be the case that initial republican involvement in the anti-drugs movement was piecemeal and down to individual personal motivations – certainly involvement in either wing of the republican movement indicated a degree of political or social awareness; however misguided one may wish to dismiss it as.

From interviews and a close reading of primary and secondary sources, there certainly does not seem to have been any overall strategy of infiltration of the anti-drugs campaign on the part of the republican movement. However, toleration from the IRA leadership with regards the activities of volunteers is another matter. On the subject of IRA actions against Gaffney and Foley – if these were unofficial, why was there no disciplinary measures taken within the movement? Was it merely considered pointless to bolt the stable after the horse had already fled? Or was this

toleration part of a wider strategy hinted at by Gerry Adams in an interview with *Magill* some years earlier. In that interview he spoke of how: 'You can't get support in Ballymun because of doors being kicked in in Ballymurphy.'⁵⁷ Certainly nobody in the CPAD seemed to have been too concerned at the involvement of the IRA, as Lyder puts it: 'Many ordinary people did not appear to be adverse to the 'whiff of sulphur' in the background.'⁵⁸

One can see the political dividends of such republican involvement: Sinn Féin's most prominent anti-drugs campaigner, Christy Burke, was elected as a city councillor in 1985 – the only such Sinn Féin representative in the city for many years. And, interestingly, when Burke ran in the 1982 European election, his strongest vote came from the Cabra area where the Provisional IRA had carried out punishment attacks only months before.⁵⁹ More than half of the Sinn Féin councillors elected in Dublin city in 1999 were also to the fore in anti-drugs activities in their local communities.⁶⁰ Similarly, as one republican put it of the 2002 general election: '...we got – what's his name – Seán Crowe into the Dáil basically over that. That's what I reckon, how Seán got into the Dáil that time, it's because of that situation.'⁶¹

In speaking of the demonisation and demise of the CPAD; Section 31 and the Workers Party's influence on Irish television at the time cannot be overstated as contributory factors. The inability of the Provisionals to contest claims made on television or radio as well as the whims of newspaper subeditors ensured there would never be a balanced debate on the issue as it was then ongoing. Ironically, it should be noted that a splinter group from the Workers Party, when analysing the drastic electoral decline of their party throughout the 1990s, acknowledged that:

The drugs campaign of the 1980s in Dublin saw the end of grassroots working class support for the WP [Workers Party]. The WP chose to ignore the working class in Dublin when they had decided to 'take on' the dealers who were making peoples' lives a living hell in working class parts of the city.⁶²

Perhaps most importantly, groups such as the Concerned Parents were perceived as a threat to society, whether because of their ambiguous approach to what they saw as a very faulty judicial system or because they represented the potentials of working class unity. As Dessie Ellis said of the rise and fall of the Concerned Parents Against Drugs:

⁵³ 'Meeting Room and the Dublin anti-drugs movement of the 1980s'; (<http://anarchism.pageabode.com/andrewnflood/meeting-dublin-anti-drugs-movement-cpad>) (accessed 9 Apr. 2011).

⁵⁴ Cullen, *Community and drugs*, p.28.

⁵⁵ Interview with C, 30 Sept. 2010; Interview with Dessie Ellis, 1 Oct. 2011.

⁵⁶ Sweeney, *Down, down, deeper and down*, p.77.

⁵⁷ *Magill*, July 1982.

⁵⁸ Lyder, *Pushers out*, p.45.

⁵⁹ Flynn, *Smack*, p.234.

⁶⁰ *The Irish Times*, 19 June 1999.

⁶¹ Interview with C, 30 Sept. 2010.

⁶² Republican Left, internal document (<http://cedarlounge.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/rep-left.pdf>) (accessed 9 Apr. 2011).

any government, and no matter what it is, if they see a group of people who are doing the work of the police, or they're doing, you know, they're actively involved in their communities and trying to deal with issues that are genuinely law and order issues in many ways, whether it's drug dealers or whether it's anti-social elements, the state always clamps down on those issues. And anyone who naively thought that they wouldn't, you know, found out in the long run that the state was going to react.⁶³

⁶³ Interview with Dessie Ellis, 1 Oct. 2011.

Mass panic and alien invasion-remembering Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* broadcast

John Sharples

Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News.¹

Issues concerning the history of deceptions, their place in cultural history and location in cultural 'spaces' have all received not insignificant attention recently; James W. Cook's *Arts of Deception* (2001) and Jim Steinmeyer's *Art and Artifice* (1998) to name but two have convincingly shown that illusions, deceptions or artifices were born of theatrical tradition and played upon the fashions of their time – from the Chess-Playing Automaton to P.T. Barnum's 161 year-old woman. At their simplest, all such popular deceptions consisted of claim and counter-claim and a relationship between deceiver and deceived whilst attempting to impose a fictional scenario over reality. Concerning the historian, one can also focus on the subjective memory of deceptions – the way deceptions, deliberate or otherwise, have been remembered, dismembered and recreated again in popular culture. Such faulty memories can also be seen as deceptions, deliberate or otherwise, imposing one interpretation over another. To reformulate the issue, there is a difference between history and memory – between considered analysis, and events as they are recorded and remembered in popular culture. This distinction is of particular importance when considering both a) the deception and b) the memorialisation of the deception which concern this article: the *War of the Worlds* 30 October 1938 broadcast by Orson Welles for CBS Radio and subsequent panic by American listeners, and the fiftieth anniversary event of the broadcast in 1988 held at the site of Grover's Mill – the location given in the radio broadcast as the site of the 'alien invasion.' The broadcast has been remembered as a classic example of media artifice and a demonstration of the naïveté of the American public. Such an image was constructed and created not by the broadcast but by the popular media of the time. The 'success,' perhaps unintentional, of the broadcast, in its use of the tools of mass media – well-established forms of communication – in creating panic through radio and the subsequent (re-)creation of the event by popular newspapers in connecting the cause of this mass panic as naïve and uneducated American public are both themes worthy of examination when thinking about popular

¹ Transcript, *War of the Worlds*, CD (Allen8 Limited, 2008 edition, first broadcast 1938).

memory. Equally problematic was the 1988 commemoration of the original broadcast which contested the idea of the panic in 1938 as the product of naïve Americans. Whilst positioning itself as a corrective to popular misunderstanding, this memorialisation of the past – of the memory and location – aimed not simply to reconstruct popular memory of the event, but to re-write popular interpretations, emphasising the difference between accepted records of the event as a mass panic and the differing, equally biased accounts of those present. That is, although the anniversary event positioned itself as an attempt to distinguish between inaccurate memory and considered history ‘the first [which] comes naturally to the mind, the second [which] is the product of analysis or reflection’², the message it presented was equally inaccurate. Only considering both memories – of those present and those reporting – can one attempt a balanced history.

The *War of the Worlds* broadcast on CBS Radio by Orson Welles on 30 October 1938 is perhaps one of the most famous radio broadcasts in the history of the medium. The play began with the broadcast of a music concert – Ramón Raquello in the Meridian Room of the Park Plaza Hotel – before a special news broadcast ‘interrupted’ the entertainment to bring news of ‘several explosions of incandescent gas, occurring at regular intervals on the planet’ Mars and ‘moving towards the earth with enormous velocity.’³ Combining unfamiliar techniques of ‘documentary-style’ reporting and transplanting H.G. Wells’ original story of Martian invasion to the sleepy New Jersey town of Grover’s Mill, the broadcast was so convincing that some listeners believed the broadcasting to be genuine. Or so the story goes. Whilst some have claimed that hundreds of thousands of people on a national scale were panicked by the broadcast across the country, with people packing up and heading for the hills or arming themselves in preparation for a final battle, the truth is more prosaic. Indeed, one history contends that the ‘idea that the broadcast touched off a huge national scare is more of a hoax than the broadcast itself.’⁴ More importantly, the popular memory of the event was constructed by the popular media as a mass panic by a naïve populace, or, more accurately, used as example of this pre-existing view. This image of the reaction to the *War of the Worlds* broadcast was most famously detailed, and to some extent invented, in articles in *Life Magazine* and the *New York Times*. The accounts given in these two reports have proved most pervasive and long-lasting.

² Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of memory*, vol. 1 (London, 1994), p. ix.

³ Transcript, *War of the Worlds*. CD.

⁴ http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/archive/permalink/the_war_of_the_worlds/ (*War of the Worlds* Broadcast) (accessed 11 Apr. 2011).

despite efforts at revisionism. The latter, from 31 October 1938, headlined the story ‘Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact – many Flee Homes to Escape.’⁵ Continuing, it noted ‘Radio War Drama Creates A Panic.’ Reports of people crying and fleeing were reported as well as groups of armed civilians preparing to defend against ‘Them.’ Particular emphasis on this latter reaction was given by *Life Magazine*’s 14 November 1938 issue with their cover, shown below, of an armed farmer, ‘Grandpa’ Bill Dock, who worked at the nearby mill, posing soldier-like, ready to defend himself. The effect is perhaps more *Dad’s Army* than heroic defender and the sense of mockery is hard to avoid, particularly when the photograph was, in fact, taken, nearly two weeks after the original broadcast. Indeed, the photograph should be seen as a deliberate act of creation – popularising a specific image of the event. Emphasising this, a caption below explained that that he was ready to fight off the Martians. Nevertheless, staged or not, as all photographs are, the image has become one of the events defining images.



Fig1.

Nation Is Swept By Hysteria Over ‘Martian Invasion’

Widespread Demand Rises For Suppression of Synthetic
‘News’ Programs, Offering Drama in Guise of ‘News-
Flashes’, After Program on ‘War of the Worlds’
Last Night Brought Panic to all Sections,
Thousands Fainting, Fleeing

Fig 2.

Reactions to the broadcast: Fig 1. *Life Magazine*⁶ and the *New York Times*⁷, Fig 2.

⁵ *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1938.

⁶ *Life Magazine*, 14 Nov. 1938.

⁷ *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1938.

This view of the event – as a mass panic amongst a rural naïve American public was also shared by Orson Welles, the organiser and narrator of the show. Although Welles' comments afterwards suggest he had no idea he would cause such panic, he was perhaps being disingenuous and made little effort to correct the popular media interpretation of the event as a parable on American naivete. Such a view became internationally known relatively quickly and one can find reference to a 'meeting between H.G. Wells and Orson Welles in 1940, at which Wells pointed out that Adolf Hitler, in a Munich speech, used the show to demonstrate how weak and cowardly Americans were.'⁸ This view has ossified and the event has 'served ever since as the classic example of how little it takes to make large numbers of allegedly civilised people behave like fear-ridden animals.'⁹ Welles' view was made clear in an interview soon after the broadcast, in which he stated:

I'm quite surprised that the H.G. Wells classic, which is the original for many fantasies about invasions by mythical monsters from planet Mars [and] a story which has become familiar to children through the medium of comic strips and many succeeding novels and adventure stories should have had such an immediate and profound affect upon radio listeners.¹⁰

Although Welles elsewhere claimed, 'I don't think we'll try anything like that again,' apparently 'chastened by the inadvertent chaos,'¹¹ his further comments, more revealingly, explained that he had hesitated about performing the play because 'it was our thought that perhaps people might be bored or annoyed at hearing a tale so improbable,'¹² emphasising his belief in the naiveté of the listening public. Again, this was couched in a general apology 'expressing profound regret that his dramatic efforts should cause consternation,'¹³ which placed responsibility on the listeners, not his own dramatic production.

Welles' reaction, and the use of the image by the popular press to demonstrate popular stupidity, however, ignores three issues – firstly, the generic quality of H.G. Wells' story, secondly, the specific nature of the broadcast with its interspersed comments and realism, and thirdly, the heightened tension felt by Americans of invasion threats during the early months of WW2. All these aspects were accentuated by the broadcast and again suggest the intention was to cause disturbance and anxiety. Indeed, Welles' associate, 'John Houseman commented

cheerfully that "the show came off [i.e. was a success]. There is no doubt about that."¹⁴ More generally, Welles is also incorrect in his implicit assumption that only his broadcast could cause mass panic. In fact, later broadcasts of the play including a 1944 performance in Chile and Ecuador in 1949 caused even more violent reactions.¹⁵ Indeed, as the above *New York Times* clipping highlights, Welles' effort was far from the first 'fake news' item and, as emphasised by the claim that 'Widespread Demand Rises For Suppression of Synthetic "News" Programs, Offering Drama in Guise of "News-Flashes,"¹⁶ annoyance at such efforts was increasing. People tuning in to the programme late, reports *Museum of Hoaxes*, also created misunderstanding and confusion.¹⁷ In any case, the idea of the 'masses' being fooled is nothing new. Ricky Jay, historian and practitioner of magic, has noted that what fooled the public two hundred years ago when mass media emerged is remarkably similar to more modern deceptions. For example, the 'Great Bottle Hoax' in England of 1749 had a similar impact on stereotypes of the English as the *War of the Worlds* broadcast on Americans when an anonymous conjurer announced, by newspaper advertisement, that he would offer for examination, and then enter, a wine bottle. Tickets, priced highly, sold out only for the conjurer to refrain from appearing. After the audience realised they had been conned, as Jay continues, 'they rioted and destroyed the Haymarket Theatre. The event was for more than a century cited as evidence of the gullibility of the English public.'¹⁸ Both the popular memories of the *War of the Worlds* broadcast and the Great Bottle Hoax depended on a similar, cynical perception of the masses.

This pre-conceived idea of the American public as naïve and, perhaps, gullible was, as should be apparent, held by the popular media such as *Life* and the *New York Times* as well as Orson Welles and his radio team. Yet one could argue that the constructed popular memory merely responded to public expectations. One recent commentary, noted that one major problem regarding memory in the age of mass media concerns 'the media pursuit of the iconic at the expense of comprehension [and] the reduction of narratives on the past to simplistic sets of readily-assembled

⁸ *Mercer Business News*, Oct. 1988.

⁹ *Home News*, Oct. 1983.

¹⁰ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho_9XTnUJkM (O. Welles Interview, 31 Oct. 1938) (accessed 11 Apr. 2011).

¹¹ *Home News*, Oct. 1983.

¹² *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1938.

¹³ *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1938.

¹⁴ *Home News*, Oct. 1983.

¹⁵ http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/archive/permalink/the_war_of_the_worlds/ (*War of the Worlds* Broadcast) (accessed 11 Apr. 2011).

¹⁶ *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1938.

¹⁷ http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/archive/permalink/the_war_of_the_worlds/ (*War of the Worlds* Broadcast) (accessed 11 Apr. 2011).

¹⁸ Ricky Jay, *Extraordinary exhibitions* (New York, 2005), p. 34.

images.¹⁹ That is, staged photographs and simplistic headlines should not be understood as necessarily deliberate manipulation by the media, but utilised for conveniences sake by them. Their popularity hence depended on their ability to satisfy the *Zeitgeist* – ‘we are under attack!’ – a feeling which grew ever stronger with the emergence of the Cold War paradigm of ‘Them’ and ‘Us.’ That the popular memory was in tune with public opinion is emphasised by the ever-growing legend of the *War of the Worlds* broadcast and its transformation into a popular culture meme – an image representing mass panic and confusion, even at the expense of facts and the citizens of Grover’s Mill and America, whose individual, perhaps rational responses, were subsumed into collective irrationality. One can, by this viewpoint, think of popular memory as a stage where events play out pre-conceived ideas of society, rather than generating new ways of thinking.

Popular memory constructed by the mass media and propagated ever since is only half the story, however. Other constructions and interpretations of 30 October 1938 exist, if not at the national level. One such view can be found at the fiftieth anniversary of the 1938 broadcast where citizens of Grover’s Mill gathered, according to the event organisers, to remember the event and offer their own view of what happened. However, their version of the past, whilst being set up as a corrective to the constructed popular memory described above, can in fact be seen as equally problematic. On the one hand, the anniversary event, as reported in the October 1988 edition of *Mercer Business* – the local newspaper – and ignored by the national press – was merely a commemoration of events – not a re-writing of them. Douglas Forrester, chairman of *The War of the Worlds* fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Committee and former mayor of the area including Grover’s Mill was reported as saying that the commemoration had three innocent purposes – to fund scholarships for students pursuing careers consistent with the spirit of the broadcast, to raise funds to assist with the restoration of Grover’s Mill Pond, and to ‘educate and amuse the public.’²⁰ However, on the other hand, later in the interview Forrester made it clear that the anniversary was a chance to re-write the past, complaining that, ‘the story has grown .. that this was [a] joke played by city slickers on rural folk.’ He continued, ‘there are some in our town who have felt [that the idea exists that] the folk’s in Grover’s Mill

were unusually gullible. And that just was not the case.’²¹ In fact, they claim, ‘the alarm over the broadcast was not displayed primarily in Grover’s Mill but rather all over the country, and mostly in urban areas. The people here didn’t react any differently than in any other part of the country.’²² This view directly contradicts original media reports which noted Grover’s Mill as generating particularly intense panic.

Thus, both the popular view and revisionist interpretation held by the anniversary organisers were constructed around the memory of the broadcast and subsequent panic as an example of naïve, rural Americans, but neither view can be considered as ‘history’ – despite claims to objectivity by both. This difference between memory and history is well understood. Popular memory is, to quote Samuel, not just a ‘passive receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past’ but ‘an active, shaping force’ on the present. It is ‘dynamic [and] what it continues systematically to forget is as important as what it remembers. It is a ‘way of constructing knowledge.’²³ Thus, contrasting the accepted view of the *War of the Worlds* broadcast with the view elaborated by the anniversary event as memory vs. history is incorrect – rather the anniversary event sets one group of biased memories against another – collectively these views, when examined and weighed against each other, constitute something like History. The fiftieth anniversary memories should be seen as ‘historically conditioned, changing .. shape according to .. the moment. [They are not] .. handed down in the timeless form of “tradition.”’ At a distance of fifty years, any memories have been ‘progressively altered from generation to generation.’ Whilst History accepts ‘erasures, emendations and amalgamations, .. it also composites’²⁴ – accepting alternate views to construct a fuller version of the past. Bearing this distinction in mind, the process by which the anniversary event both selectively and destructively engaged with the popular memory took three forms. Firstly, through the re-writing or ‘righting’ and forging and re-forging of history as a counter-weight to the popular cultural ‘interpretation’ through the emphasis of a ‘Them’ vs. ‘Us’ mentality; secondly, through the selectivity of the events chosen as worthy of remembrance and the selectivity of those invited to participate in this remembering; and, thirdly, through the rationalisation of the panic (by a limited outsider minority) as random chance – a series of connected coincidences rather than due to naïveté.

¹⁹ www.warandmedia.org/documents/NewMemoryattheICA.doc (A. Hoskins and L. Annison, New Memory at the ICA: A Review of Memorial to the Iraq War Exhibition, Institute of Contemporary Arts, 23 May-27 June 2007) (accessed 10 Apr. 2011).

²⁰ *Mercer Business News*, Oct. 1988.

²¹ *Mercer Business News*, Oct. 1988.

²² *Mercer Business News*, Oct. 1988.

²³ Samuel, *Theatres of memory*, p. x.

²⁴ Samuel, *Theatres of memory*, p. x.

Perhaps the most important task of the memorial event was the way it attempted to generate a community spirit, not simply as Forrester stated, 'as a pleasant way of getting the towns of Mercer Country together,' but an imagined community defined in opposition to outsiders in both geographical terms and, more importantly, in terms of a) who experienced the original broadcast and who did not and b) who was victimised by the media coverage and who was not.²⁵ That is, the event demonstrated the continuation of the Them vs. Us mentality – a neat mirror of the original Aliens vs. Humans interpretation of the broadcast – with the outside world and media invading Grover's Mill acting as an ill-defined Other. This is emphasised by Forrester, who stated that the 'half dozen residents' who remembered the Martian scare are a 'little reluctant to share their stories of that night [because] they have been badgered so much by the press.' Every year, reporters 'annoy them with questions like, "why were you such a fool to believe Martians were landing?"'²⁶ Such defensiveness permeates previous reports on the event. All eyewitnesses reported panic – but exclusively by others, not themselves. For example, the local Grover's Mill newspaper reported in 1983 that whilst 'approximately a million listeners were frightened or disturbed ... most of the Grover's Mill residents ... were not among the panic-stricken.'²⁷ Such a claim stretches credibility until one understands the damaging effect of constant media attention and emphasises that the Grover's Mill version of events was as much about forgetting as remembering. Likewise, although one eyewitness recalls 'people screaming, crying and hollering,' those named report their lack of concern, despite panic around them. For example, Jean Main of Clarksville Road remembers 'we missed the excitement' and although she saw a 'solid line of cars outside her window she didn't learn of the "attack" until the following day.' Likewise, Robert Sanders, 'who still lives .. not far from the mill, recalls that the broadcast didn't worry him at all but he did receive several calls from anxious friends in Trenton.'²⁸

Further justifying the Them vs. Us mentality and sitting at the heart of the anxiety permeating the memorial event was the question of why Grover's Mill was chosen by the CBS Broadcast as the site for the fictional invasion. Two opinions have found common appeal. More important than their accuracy is that each opinion confirms a specific interpretation of the event. According to one report, Grover's Mill

²⁵ *Mercer Business News*, Oct. 1988.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Home News*, Oct. 1983.

was only picked by accident when the script writer Howard Koch randomly pointed a pencil at the New Jersey map. This version was the 'official' view of the fiftieth anniversary event, detailed in the press releases for the event. However, contradicting this is the view detailed in an article on the much smaller, 1983 anniversary celebration – an event without as much intervention by the mayor or corporate institutions. According to one local resident, 'the selection of Grover's Mill was no accident' and that 'Orson Welles was a guest in this house in the late '30s.'²⁹ Whereas the former view considers the connection between Grover's Mill and the broadcast as random chance – the fickle, uncaring and malevolent hand of corporate Big City America, the latter view sees the choice as deliberate – a personal connection between Welles and the area based on his affection for the town. That is, the former view reinforced the Them vs. Us mentality which the fiftieth anniversary event presented. Both on an individual and collective level, therefore, memory of the event and its subsequent interpretation has deeply affected Grover's Mill. At this point, a comment on the nature of memory – the remembered past³⁰ – and its relationship to the past is worthwhile. Of particular note is that the memory of the *War of the Worlds* broadcast has come to define Grover's Mill and the older inhabitants. The loss of control over the memories of the past has affected the residents' 'sense of self as human beings.' Nevertheless, one should also reaffirm that the memories of Grover's Mill are equally selective – 'memory cannot be "passive or literal recordings of reality ... we do not store judgement-free snapshots of our past.' Memories are 'subject to various kinds of distortion' and remembering is an 'active, selective, and constructive process.'³¹

Further emphasising this selectivity, the anniversary event did not include the participation of all of Grover's Mill. Only a small proportion of the population of Grover's Mill were given an opportunity to contribute to the recorded memory and attend the individual events. This can immediately be discerned by the itinerary which recorded six events: a) Martian Festival – admission \$1, b) WOW Art Show Reception, c) "We Remember," d) Flight of Fantasy [formal ball, tickets \$150] and Mars Planetarium Show, e) Martian Day Parade, and f) Martian Landing Dedication [pass required].³² On the one hand, the 'Martian Festival,' Art Show, 'Planetarium Show' and Parade were within the price range of every attendee; on the other hand,

²⁹ *Home News*, Oct. 1983.

³⁰ Anna Green, *Cultural history* (London, 2008), p. 82.

³¹ Green, *Cultural history*, p. 83.

³² http://www.war-of-the-worlds.co.uk/grovers_mill_50_anniversary_map.htm (Map of Festivities) (accessed 10 Apr. 2011).

the formal ball, Martian Landing Dedication, involving a time capsule burial, were highly priced, excluding the majority of attendees. Similarly, corporate sponsorship of the event highlights that, when it came to recording memories, only those able to afford the minimum fees were eligible. Those unable to afford these prices could buy souvenirs of the event including remarkably kitsch T-shirts, ... bumper stickers, ... frisbees, made seemingly purely for commercial purposes and utilising the famous tripods from the War of the Worlds story, which sold 'very well in area stores'.³³

The burial of the time capsule of personal memories demonstrates the most obvious attempt to create and manufacture history, being just as selective as the popular cultural reaction to the original broadcast and panic. Only the organisers of the event, with their agenda, decided what went in and, just as problematically, who contributed. According to the *Mercer Business News*, only paying customers were invited to share their recollections of either the original event or anniversary. In fact, it is not entirely clear what event was being remembered with the creation of a time capsule – their memory of the time or their reaction to fifty years of media and cultural commentary. As reported by *Mercer's*, individuals and firms 'contributed \$1,000 each to become members of The Grover's Mill Circle. They will receive special recognition during the celebration and will be invited to place remembrances in the time capsule, which will be opened on the hundredth anniversary in 2038'.³⁴ Equally selectively, 'one complete issue of the October 1988 edition of *Mercer Business Magazine* will be placed in a time capsule among other items commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of "*The War of the Worlds*" at Grover's Mill'.³⁵ The paper continued, 'the time capsule items hopefully will be retrieved at the hundredth anniversary of the event... "It will obviously become a collector's item" G.J. Sayko, *Mercer Business* Editor, said,³⁶ although quite why this is 'obvious' is unclear - the time capsule contains nothing new for the historian interested in either popular culture or the local history of the town, other than a demonstration of the exclusivity of the views present. Rather, the symbolic burial of the past – a kind of catharsis – allowing the town to look both forward and selectively back, was perhaps the main aim, although a certain commercial undertone can also be detected with the time capsule becoming another future collector's item surrounding the event.

Summarising, the events of 1938 at Grover's Mill – the fictional Grover's

Mill and the 'real' location - have combined in the popular image. The commemoration of 1988, with its recreations of Mars landings and planetarium events melded with recollections of the original broadcast, demonstrating the conjunction, and the thin barrier, between fact and fiction in the modern media age. The commemoration was also an act of reclaiming and re-purposing – reclaiming the physical location of Grover's Mill as a community and re-purposing the memory of the 1938 broadcast as a source of community spirit and commercial enterprise, albeit selectively. That is, the memorial was a combination of the personal, the community, the nation and the commercial. Nevertheless, the anniversary events should not be seen as being the 'true' history of events, but another set of memories, distorted and biased. In some sense, therefore, there were two memorials at Grover's Mill in 1988 – one, a memorial to an event which never happened, and the other, to a memory that persists.

³³ *Mercer Business News*, Oct. 1988.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Shirley Quill – herself

Stephen Ryan

In his 1988 pamphlet entitled *Mike Quill and the birth and growth of the Transport Workers Union*, Gerald O'Reilly, outlined his recollection of the formative years of that union, of which he was a founding member. The purpose of the pamphlet was 'solely to give a balanced picture'.¹ The necessity to give a balanced picture derived from the publication of a memoir, three years earlier, by Shirley Quill, based on the life of her husband and the first elected president of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), Mike Quill. Shirley had been Mike's long-time associate and lover and eventually became his second wife.² O'Reilly also wrote an unpublished review which castigated Shirley's book. This essay outlines the nature of Shirley's memoir, it contextualises both the contentious issues highlighted within O'Reilly's relevant writings as well as the circumstances surrounding the publication of her memoir. It explores and analyses the key areas of contention within Shirley's book that O'Reilly sought to highlight.

Mike Quill was born in Kilgarvan County Kerry in 1905. Having fought with the IRA between 1919-21, Quill sided with the irregulars during the Civil War.³ Being on the losing side in the Civil War did not help Quill's prospect of getting a job in what was a difficult economic climate. As a result Quill emigrated to America, where after working many odd jobs, he became a ticket changer on the New York Interborough Rapid Transit subway system.⁴

The subway system mainly employed Irish people as they were a cheap source of anglophonic labour in poor working conditions.⁵ An influx of Irish Republicans in the wake of the Civil War revitalised the Irish emigrant population in New York. The reformed Clan na Gael and the IRA clubs provided social events for new emigrants.⁶ Some of the more socially conscious of these emigrants also joined

the Irish Workers Clubs, an organisation founded by Jim Gralton, a deported Socialist from Leitrim.⁷

Given that so many of these young Irishmen worked together and were organised within Clan na Gael and the IRA clubs, as well as sharing the common grievances of poor wages and substandard conditions, which included eighty-four hour weeks and constant harassment from supervisors and company spies known as 'Beakies', favourable circumstances for unionising the workforce existed.⁸ A delegation of workers was sent to solicit help from the Friendly Sons of St Patrick and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, both long established Irish-American organisations, and the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA).⁹ In this period the CPUSA were going through the latter stages of the 'Third Period' at this time. Where the party supported the policy of dual unionism by participating and aiding the competing labour organisations the Trade Union Unity League and the American Federation of Labor and were seeking to unionise transport in the major cities in the U.S.¹⁰ Despite having to overcome the major pitfalls involved in founding a trade union, the union went from strength to strength with Quill at the helm.

In 1948, after fifteen years of maintaining good relations with the CPUSA, Quill decided that it was necessary to break with them.¹¹ While Earl Browder had been president of the party, it had been easier to maintain good relations. However, with the advent of William Z. Foster to the presidency it proved to be more difficult, as Foster proved to be more 'hardnosed and arrogant'.¹² The issue which became the catalyst for change was whether or not the city of New York should raise the 'nickel fare', a policy supported by Quill, who saw it as a way of creating revenue for a significant wage increase for his members, but was vehemently opposed by the Communist Party.¹³ When Quill decided it was time to challenge the Communists, the union split, as many of its officers were either themselves Communists who had gained key positions within the Union through the support of the CPUSA or had become, through the union, closely aligned with the Communists. The battle for power within the union was bitterly fought from early 1948 until the Sixth Biennial

¹ Gerald O'Reilly, *The birth and growth of the Transport Workers Union* (Enterprise, 1988), p. 1.

² Joshua B. Freeman, *In transit: the Transport Workers Union in New York City, 1933-1966* (New York, 1989), p. 410.

³ Freeman, *In transit*, pp 55-6.

⁴ L.H. Whitmore, *The man who ran the subways: the story of Mike Quill* (New York, 1968), pp 8-12.

⁵ Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (eds), *The New York Irish* (Baltimore, 1996), pp 144-6; Gus Faber, *And then came TWU* (New York, 1950), pp 14-15.

⁶ Joshua B. Freeman, 'Catholics, Communists and Republicans: Irish Workers and the organisation of the Transport Workers Union' in Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz (eds), *Working-class America: essays on labor, community, and American society* (Illinois, 1983), p. 272.

⁷ O'Reilly, *Transport Workers Union*, p. 1.

⁸ Freeman, *In transit*, pp 11-14.

⁹ O'Reilly, *Transport Workers Union*, pp 2-3.

¹⁰ Freeman, *In transit*, pp 42, 86.

¹¹ David J. Saposs, *Communism in American Unions* (New York, 1959), pp 196-8.

¹² Gerald O'Reilly, Unpublished review of Shirley Quill's memoir (hereafter O'Reilly Review), (Tammiment Archive (hereafter TAM), Transport Workers Union Records (hereafter TWUR), 235/71/28).

¹³ Michael Marmo, *More profile than courage: the New York City transit strike of 1966* (Albany, 1990), pp 69-70.

Convention was held in Chicago between 6 to 10 of December of that same year.¹⁴ Quill won and successfully ousted the Communists from the union.¹⁵ Despite the mutual animosity shown during the split, Quill was content to welcome back his estranged friends as soon as it was politically viable to do so. Quill continued to lead the union until his death in 1966.¹⁶

Shirley, Mike's second wife and author of the memoir, was a New Yorker of Russian-Jewish descent.¹⁷ She had been a member of the Young Communist League and had worked as a professional organiser for the CPUSA controlled United Electrical and Radio Workers Union before going on loan to the TWU.¹⁸ In 1943 she became a volunteer worker in Mike Quill's campaign for election to the New York City Council.¹⁹ Mike had married Mollie O'Neill, from Caherciveen in Co. Kerry, on his return home for the Christmas holidays in 1937.²⁰ Mike's marriage became strained and he began a love affair with Shirley.²¹ Following his election to City Council, Shirley became his legislative secretary at City Hall and administrator of his constituency office in the Bronx.²² Shirley became Mike's campaign manager for his re-election in 1945.²³ When the split in the union came in 1948, Shirley supported Mike over the Communists, and after the convention she became Mike's executive assistant on the union's staff.²⁴ In 1958, Mollie Quill died and after the lapse of a short time, Mike and Shirley married.²⁵ After Mike's death in 1966, Shirley spent four years in the office of the Director of Labor Relations for the city of New York.²⁶ In her retirement from trade union activities she became President of the Association of Tenants of Lincoln Tower, an apartment complex in Manhattan and was active as a tenant organiser.²⁷

In the early 1980s, Shirley began toying with the idea of recording a 'love story' style historical memoir based on the life of her late husband.²⁸ The actor Carroll

O'Connor, who was famous for his portrayal of the title character in the sitcom *Archie Bunker's Place*, bought the rights to the biography of Mike Quill from Shirley Quill.²⁹ Shirley was to be an advisor in the production of the film, but the film never came to fruition. In 1982, Shirley signed a contract to produce a book entitled *Mike Quill: The man behind the headlines* with Chelsea House Publishers.³⁰ While this book also failed to materialise, the material produced for the publication of this memoir was published in 1985 by Devin Adair Publishers as *Mike Quill: Himself*.

Devin Adair Publishing Company had a history of publishing books of Irish interest. In the post-World War II era, during the tenure of Devin Garrity, son of Henry Garrity the company's founder, as President of the company, Devin Adair began to focus more on the publication of right wing, anti-Communist and conservative books.³¹ In 1945, Devin Adair published *The Jewish dilemma: The case against Zionist Nationalism* by Elmer Bergen and in 1951 produced *A partisan history of Judaism: The Jewish case against Zionism*. During the era of McCarthyism, Devin Adair published pro-McCarthy literature including, *McCarthyism, the fight for America: in defence of Joe McCarthy*. They continued in this vein in the Post-McCarthy era. The company became instrumental in the political movement that championed Ronald Reagan and assisted in getting Reagan elected as the President of the United States of America.³² Having championed themselves as the 'leading publishing firm of the right', Devin Adair were ostensibly an unusual choice of publisher for the pro-Israel, Communist, trade union and tenant organiser, Shirley Quill. Despite having a track record of publishing books of Irish interest, Devin Adair appeared, politically, to be diametrically opposed to Shirley Quill. Shirley, however, was predominantly interested in the dissemination of her story and, being a powerful and significant publishing firm, Devin Adair would have been able to widely publish her book and as such Shirley was willing to overlook this complication.

Shirley's book was of Irish interest in that Quill himself was an Irishman. Another facet of the book which would have appealed to Devin Adair publishers was the negative manner in which the Communist's role in the union was addressed. This was one of the most contentious aspects of the book. Pandering to the publisher's

¹⁴ Joseph Robert Starobin, *American communism in crisis, 1943-1957* (California, 1975), p. 293; Transport Workers Union, *report of proceedings, sixth biennial convention Transport Workers Union of America, Cio, Shoreland Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, December 6-10, 1948* (New York, 1948).

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, 11 Dec. 1948.

¹⁶ *TWU Express*, Feb. 1966.

¹⁷ Shirley Quill, *Mike Quill-himself: a memoir* (Connecticut, 1985), p. 130.

¹⁸ O'Reilly Review, Undated (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28); Freeman, *In transit*, p. 420.

¹⁹ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 155.

²⁰ Whitmore, *The man who ran the subways*, pp 63-4.

²¹ Freeman, *In transit*, p. 420.

²² Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 161.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 186.

²⁴ *Ibid*, appendix.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 263.

²⁶ *Ibid*, appendix.

²⁷ *The New York Times*, 26 Dec. 1982.

²⁸ Shirley Quill's memoir publisher's agreement, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/3).

²⁹ *Ocala Star-Banner*, 4 Apr. 1980.

³⁰ Shirley Quill's memoir publisher's agreement, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/3).

³¹ Margaret McAdams, 'Billions, blunders and baloney' in *The Hanover Historical Review*, 10 (2009), p. 47; George Thomas Kurian, *The directory of American book publishing, from founding fathers to today's conglomerates* (Michigan, 1975), p. 103; *Bangor Daily News*, 20 Apr. 1972; Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, *Right face: organizing the American Conservative movement 1945-65* (Copenhagen, 2002), p. 95.

³² Ronald Reagan, *Ronald Reagan talks to America*, p. vii.

needs, Shirley's own confrontational manner as well as her aspirations for the type of book she hoped to produce all contributed to the compromising of the book's historical integrity.³³

The most ardent challenge to Shirley's representation of her husband and of the TWU came from one of Mike's oldest friends and one of the organisers with the longest service record in the TWU, Gerald O'Reilly.³⁴ O'Reilly, like Quill, had been a member of both Clan na Gael and the Irish Workers Clubs. O'Reilly was part of the original group who set about founding the TWU.³⁵ During the schism in the union in 1948, O'Reilly opposed Quill, siding with the Communists.³⁶ After having been ousted from the union O'Reilly came to the realisation that Quill had been correct to rid the union of Communist control. Having denounced the Communist Party as soon as it was politically viable, Quill welcomed O'Reilly back into the union.³⁷ In Shirley's memoirs, O'Reilly does not feature largely and was not the target of her acrimonious narratives. Nevertheless, O'Reilly took exception to her book. In response, he wrote the aforementioned scathing review and article. The purpose of this article, O'Reilly stressed, was to 'put the facts in proper perspective.' He also stated that 'other publications have tried to portray the party's role in a negative light', a reference to Shirley's memoir, and stated that his 'purpose is solely to give a balanced picture.'³⁸

Shirley, in the preface to her memoir, outlined the nature of her book describing it as more than an account of Mike's activities as president of the TWU stating that it was also a 'love story' and the love story theme and the behind the scenes view of the protagonists of her book are consistent throughout the memoir.³⁹ O'Reilly was dismissive of Shirley's approach claiming that 'the creation of romantic incidents, however inconsistent with Mike's character may have been necessary to spice up a T.V. or Broadway show', a reference to the proposed script on Quill's life, and he continued that these incidents 'have no place in a serious book.'⁴⁰ O'Reilly took exception to Shirley's 'love story' style primarily because of the portrayal of Mollie Quill, Mike's first wife. O'Reilly dedicated his pamphlet specifically to the

memory of Mollie.⁴¹ He did so both to give her acknowledgement for her role in the early days of the union, O'Reilly lauded her for her effectiveness in winning the support of the wives of the transit workers and her role in building a ladies' auxiliary, and also to highlight his opinion that Mollie wasn't given the respect she deserved in Shirley's book.⁴² In her memoir, Shirley did not show any obvious aversion towards Mollie, which would not have been unthought-of given that Mollie was Mike's wife and Shirley was his lover and also given Shirley's forward manner in dealing with people for whom she had a personal dislike. Shirley did, however, emphasise the lovelessness of their marriage. She used innuendoes to suggest Mike had been disinterested in Mollie, even before they married and suggested that it had been a marriage of convenience. She also intimated that Mike found solace in whiskey before he sought comfort in the company of women.⁴³ Her depiction of Mollie and Mike's marriage is a stark contrast to how O'Reilly interpreted their relationship. O'Reilly depicted Quill being distraught on the death of his wife in 1959, after twenty two years of marriage, questioning whether he had sacrificed too much of his home life in the building of the union.⁴⁴ Despite this, Quill did have an affair for almost sixteen years of his marriage yet nevertheless remained married to Mollie for twenty two years until her death.

One of the key areas of contention between O'Reilly and Shirley formed the primary thesis of O'Reilly's pamphlet. This pamphlet pertained to the role of the CPUSA in the founding and the development of the TWU. In Shirley's memoirs, she described the role of the Communist Party in founding the union. She stated that 'Mike never denied that he saw the alliance with the Communist Party as a practical instrument' and went on to attribute a quote to her husband saying, 'Sure I worked with the Communists. In 1933 I would have made a pact with the devil himself if he could have given us the money, the mimeograph machines and the manpower to launch the Transport Workers Union.'⁴⁵ The role played by the Communists in the expanding union was depicted negatively and these views were projected onto Mike. The progression of the union and its relationship with the CPUSA was depicted as a constant battle between Quill and the Communists. O'Reilly painted a very different portrait of the role of the Communist Party in the early years of the TWU. O'Reilly,

³³ Interview with Joe Jamison, Irish American labor coalition president, 24 Mar. 2011.

³⁴ Notes taken by Shirley Quill from an interview with Gerald O'Reilly, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/10).

³⁵ O'Reilly, *Transport Workers Union*, p. 3.

³⁶ Freeman, *In transit*, p. 320.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 334.

³⁸ O'Reilly, *Transport Workers Union*, pp 7-8.

³⁹ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. xi.

⁴⁰ O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

⁴¹ Gerald O'Reilly, 'Mike Quill and the birth and growth of the Transport Workers Union' in *Labour History News*, 4 (1988), p. 12.

⁴² O'Reilly, *Transport Workers Union*, p. 7.

⁴³ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 152.

⁴⁴ O'Reilly, *Transport Workers Union*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 63.

having been one of the original founders of the TWU, was able to give a first-hand account of their role. O'Reilly, however, despite having admitted that he had been wrong to oppose Quill in the 1948 Convention, had backed the Communists and perhaps was more sympathetic to the Communists in the historiography of the Union.⁴⁶ O'Reilly stated that he was one of a small committee that went to solicit the support of the CPUSA in organising a union.⁴⁷ Shirley also acknowledged this, but where their accounts differ is on both the attitude of Mike Quill towards the CPUSA and also on the nature of the alliance. O'Reilly illustrated the gaps in Shirley's narrative. He pointed out that the party helped finance the union's first, one-room office, in 1934, and also the larger office the union needed as its membership grew.⁴⁸ He directly contradicted Shirley on her point that when, in 1935, Mike and Douglas MacMahon, the latter another cofounder of the union, quit their transit jobs to work full time in developing the union, they were dependent for their wages on the membership of the union. O'Reilly pointed out that he himself had, on many occasions, picked up a subsidy at the headquarters of the CPUSA to cover the payroll and other expenses. He further stressed that this continued until 1947, when he collected the last subsidy he received from the party.⁴⁹ He also dispelled the notion that Quill was in a constant battle with the Communists, by pointing out that Quill was frequently invited as a guest at the party's summer camps and other social functions and that Quill reciprocated this cordiality by maintaining close relations with the Communists. The example O'Reilly gave was the invitation of Irving Potash, an official of the Communist-led Fur Workers Union, to be a guest speaker at the TWU's 1956 convention as an expression of the TWU's appreciation for the financial assistance received from the furriers union.⁵⁰

The TWU was closely aligned with the Communist Party from its founding in 1934 until the expulsion of the Communists fourteen years later. In that time Mike was closely affiliated with the Communist Party and was publically recognised as a faithful follower of the 'party line' despite having always publicly denied he was a member of the CPUSA.⁵¹ Mike outlined his own attitude towards the Communist Party in a letter to Luigi Longo of the Italian Communist Party in April 1948, where he commented on how he had a good working relationship with the Communists

⁴⁶ Sean Cronin, *The Transport Workers Union of America – the Irish connection* (Dublin, 1984), p. 13.

⁴⁷ O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Louis Waldman, *Labor lawyer* (New York, 1944), p. 290.

while Browder was general secretary of the party but how it deteriorated under Foster's tenure.⁵² After having been ousted in 1946, Browder spent some time on the TWU payroll and the letter to Longo appeared to be a combined effort of both Quill and Browder to undermine Foster internationally.⁵³ In her revision of the role of the Communists in the TWU and in particular in her revision of her husband's association with the CPUSA, Shirley neglected to look at the internal machinations and factions of the Communist Party and neglected to mention Quill's close association with Browder both before and after his expulsion from the party.⁵⁴

Shirley's account of the role of the Communists in the early years of the union was misleading, possibly done in order to ensure publication and wide circulation of her book in what was the late Cold War era. It is also possible that Shirley became very anti-Communist, perhaps after the intensity of feuding leading up to the 1948 convention. Regardless of her reason for doing so her account did not fit comfortably into the historiography of the TWU.

A third issue highlighted by O'Reilly was Shirley's use of the book to 'get even with those, in the union and in the Communist Party, who ran afoul of her personal ambitions.'⁵⁵ The most fervent attack of this sort was on MacMahon. MacMahon had lost his position as Secretary-Treasurer of the International Union in 1948. Having left the union, MacMahon founded a candy and stationery shop, a venture which proved unsuccessful. In 1949, MacMahon left the party becoming disillusioned stating 'I left the party...because I finally woke up to the fact that these people were not legitimate, were not honest, were not fighting for the workers as I thought they were.' Quill assisted MacMahon in getting a job with a small CIO union and, once again, finding him out of work in 1960 following an unsuccessful bid to run for elective office, Quill named him as an international representative of the TWU.⁵⁶

MacMahon was described by O'Reilly as a 'gruff and blunt individual' and deduced that he must have 'offended Shirley deeply because her fierce tirade against him reached the depths of vulgarity and deceit.'⁵⁷ Shirley stated that 'MacMahon was surely the most disliked man in the organisation; staff members referred to him as "that son of a bitch". He had no following among the transit workers who became

⁵² Cronin, *The Transport Workers Union of America*, pp 19-22.

⁵³ Starobin, *American Communism in crisis*, p. 293.

⁵⁴ Manus O'Riordan, 'Review: Shirley Quill, *Mike Quill - himself*, (Devin-Adair, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1985); Sean Cronin, 'The Transport Workers' Union of America – the Irish connection', (Labour History Workshop, Dublin, 1984) in *Saothar*, 11 (1986), pp 71-3.

⁵⁵ O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

⁵⁶ Marmo, *More profile than courage*, p. 145.

⁵⁷ O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

union men in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁸ O'Reilly claimed that she was wrong and pointed out that MacMahon was 'so thoroughly admired and respected' that he was elected by acclamation at the TWUs 1969 convention to his former position as International Secretary-Treasurer.⁵⁹

Another victim of Shirley's wrath was Gustav Faber. Faber had been a member of the Communist Party and was the only party member to support Mike in the 1948 convention. Faber succeeded MacMahon in the role of International Secretary-Treasurer following the convention.⁶⁰ Shirley remarked that Mike didn't have any expectations of solid help from Faber as when he was elected he was already showing signs of 'premature senility'.⁶¹ Despite this, as O'Reilly pointed out, Faber was re-elected at each of the two succeeding conventions and 'served the union faithfully and efficiently until his retirement'.⁶²

While Faber and MacMahon's cases were the only two addressed by O'Reilly in his review, Shirley also derided others. One notable and less than believable anecdote suggested that William Z. Foster, the leader of the CPUSA was so blinded from reality that he refused to believe any news until he was informed about it from Moscow.⁶³ Shirley's 'windy exaggerations' and implausible anecdotes detracted from the credibility of her book.

Shirley's book was a memoir, while it depicted the biography of her husband, it was casually structured and written, a shortcoming consistent with the nature of memoirs. Shirley envisioned a 'love story', an anecdotal, sentimental and colourful book. O'Reilly on the other hand addressed the book as if it were designed to be a serious historical piece. Nevertheless, because of their shared past and mutual associates, Shirley's 'inexcusable preference for fiction over fact' understandably resonated badly with O'Reilly.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 204.

⁵⁹ O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 203.

⁶² O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

⁶³ Quill, *Mike Quill*, p. 194.

⁶⁴ O'Reilly Review, (TAM, TWUR, 235/71/28).

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