History Studies

University of Limerick

Volume 15
2014

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

Table of Contents

Preface

It brings enormous pleasure to see the launch of Volume 15 of *History Studies*. The eight contributions to it are testament to the healthy state of history as currently practised by today's undergraduate and post graduate scholars. Indeed, the chronological range and diversity of interest and the quality of both the archival research and analytical reflection that we find here, build on the impressive record of *Historical Studies* since its inception at the University of Limerick at the end of the 1990s. As a peer reviewed journal, *Historical Studies* is entirely produced by postgraduates with a rotating editorship, and this makes it unique within the island of Ireland. The essays reflect the direction in research that is currently being undertaken by the rising generation of scholars.

Collectively, the essays thus offer an insight into the changing historiographical landscape in each field or period of study, as we can read in the contributions by Nina Vodstrup Andersen, who examines the ideological tensions between William Philbin, the bishop of Down and Connor, and the Provisional IRA in the early years of the Northern Ireland conflict, and the essay by Seán McKillen on John Hume's role in the Sunningdale Agreement (1973) that laid the foundation for power-sharing in Northern Ireland; McKillen's piece can be read as a companion piece to Andersen. Staying with Ireland, but south of the border, Gerald Maher's essay on the Roscommon I.R.A's ambush of Crown Forces at Scramogue in 1921 will arouse interest and possibly controversy in this decade of contested commemorations.

History Studies is a broad church, and five of the eight essays reflect this. Evana Downes in a masterly sweep of contemporary and secondary literature introduces us to the fear of contagion and the spatial orientation of the early modern city; her essay not only reveals the emotions of fear embedded in early modern discourses on health, but it makes a

strong contribution to early modern European urban history. In a similar vein, the close reading of the trial of the so-called Libberton Witches who were tried and killed in the Scottish Parish of Libberton in 1661 by Elysia Maludzinski, opens our eyes not only to perennial gender wars, but also to the mental world of seventeenth century Scotland. Like Downes, Maludzinski makes a contribution to the cultural history of emotions and fear, two relatively new fields of study. Scotland's early modern history offers a rich seam to hew for any young researcher. And Sarah Bartosiak deftly cuts away at that seam to throw new light in her discussion of the sixteenth century political philosopher George Buchanan, notably on his writings on tyranny and kingship and power, work that still resonates in our modern world. Lately, our contemporary concerns with tyranny and power relate increasingly to those agencies spawned by a progressively secretive state, as whistle-blowers bring their activities into the public domain. But this latest concern of modern society with the activities of secret security agencies and how they pursue not just the interest of the state they are supposed to serve, but also their own sectional interest, is not new and has its antecedents. The irony here is that the agencies themselves frequently harboured not so much whistleblowers, but spies. Jonathan Best turns his attention to the British nuclear physicist Alan Nunn May who had been engaged on atomic energy research in Canada for the Allies, and was later found to have been passing secrets about the programme to the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Cáthal Power's essay on American efforts to counter the perceived spread of communism is an object lesson on how not only information can be misunderstood, but also policy choices, in this case harnessing local forces in Afghanistan, can in the long run sow the seeds of a greater danger, namely Jihadism against the 'West'.

Whilst *History Studies* eschews theming its volumes, there is nevertheless a thread that runs through the contributions to this volume: that of power. Whether usurper power in the form of the I.R.A. or power to be shared in conflicted communities, the deployment of

power by one gender over another; the power of medical knowledge driven by fear of disease; power that revolved around mysticism of 'divine right' or on secrecy to maintain the power relations of the international status quo, collectively, the essays of Volume 15 give food for thought.

Professor Anthony McElligott,
Head, Department of History,
Patron of *History Studies.*

Acknowledgements

Editorial

With this publication, the editors of *History Studies* are pleased to present its landmark fifteenth edition. Having received a large quantity of papers from a variety of institutions across Ireland, this brought about difficult decisions and the rejection of a number of excellent pieces. However, the editors are proud to present eight exceptional works from the wider community of history students covering topics as diverse as spatial constructs in early modern Europe to an intrinsic account of an ambush in Scramogue, Co.Roscommon. Both the contributions here and those received from our call-for-papers demonstrate the increasing appetite for historical scholarship. Academic institutions, funding institutions, and post-graduate researchers themselves have all played vital roles in bringing this edition to fruition. *History Studies* not only is the oldest post-graduate history journal in the country but also has a long tradition of enlightened research. With this in mind, the editors look forward to seeing the journal offer a platform for new scholars and continue to prosper in the years to come.

The editors,
Seán McKillen and Jeffrey Leddin

The Libberton witches:
femininity and persecution in a Scottish parish, 1661

Elysia Maludzinski

In the summer of 1661, eleven people from South Lanarkshire in Scotland were accused of witchcraft. They were from the parish of Libberton and as a result are collectively referred to as the "Libberton Witches." More than half of them were executed while those who remained were acquitted with a stern warning to cease their practices. In many ways the Libberton Witches provide an interesting lens into the conception of witchcraft in Scotland during this period. In particular the fact that ten of the eleven accused were women highlight the role of gender within the issue. This paper will use the case of the Libberton Witches to examine the relationship between feminine identity and persecution. It will argue that while women were not specifically targeted by these witch-hunts on the basis of their gender alone, the suggestion that women were morally weaker than men made them easier to persecute and the most likely victims of this type of persecution. Moreover, the conception of women as the weaker sex was reinforced both theoretically through contemporary views of women's sexuality, and practically through socio-economic dependence and legal inferiority. Consequentially, while witch-hunts did not persecute women exclusively, it is not surprising that the vast majority of witches were women.[1]

Witchcraft became a capital offence in Scotland in 1563 and remained so until 1736.[2] Within this time period the most dramatic waves of witch-hunting in Scotland occurred in

---

[1] The Libberton Witches included: Janet Gibson, Margaret Bryson, Elspeth Blackie, Jonet Hewats, Margaret Greive, Bessie Flinkar, Bessie Wilson, Elspeth Mowat, Margaret Porteous, Thomas Black, and Agnes Pogavie. Their confessions and trial information are outlined in Christina Larner, Christopher Hyde Lee, and Hugh V. McLachlan (eds), *A Sourcebook of Scottish Witchcraft* (Glasgow, 1977). This sourcebook has been cross-referenced and supplemented with further information on these cases from "The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft" (http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/) (31 March 2014). The statistics presented within this article are derived from their cases.

[2] Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and religion: The politics of popular belief* (Oxford, 1984), p.23.

1590-1, 1597, 1649, and 1661-2.[3] The cases from Libberton occurred in the center of this final wave of prime witch-hunting years, which alone exceeded 300 victims.[4] Scotland and England persecuted a collective total of more than 3000 witches, though Scotland was responsible for more than half of this number despite its smaller population.[5] Using the limited data set of the Libberton Witches, greater themes concerning the connection between femininity and persecution are expounded. It is important to caution that while the themes drawn from the witch trials at Libberton may prove indicative of larger trends, it is difficult to generalize from parish to parish in specific detail.[6] This paper holds that Libberton was indicative of this larger sentiment in Scotland during 1661, and as a result the themes and anxieties that are expressed within the individual cases may speak to the larger climate regarding such persecutions.

Before delving into the themes associated with the Libberton Witches it is important to provide a quick overview of the trials in general. Of the eleven accused only one, Thomas Black, was male. Julian Goodare estimates that about eighty-five percent of Scottish witch trials were against women, or that about three out of every twenty was male.[7] In this way the Libberton Witch trials marginally exceeded this average. However the sample remains valid as Goodare's data was compiled from a collection of all trials in Scotland and therefore some large groups of witches would have contained far more than this estimated number of males while some would contained none at all. The presence of Thomas Black in the Libberton Witch trials serves as a reminder that while the increased tendency for women to be persecuted for witchcraft is being examined here, such accusations were in no way exclusively feminine. The inclusion of Black supports Clive Holmes' assertion that witch-

---

[3] Gary K. Waite, *Heresy, magic, and witchcraft in early modern Europe* (Houndmills, 2003), p. 188.
[4] Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and superstition in Europe: a concise history from antiquity to the present* (Lanham, 2007), p. 159.
[5] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in early modern Europe* (London, 2006), p. 22.
[6] Bailey, *Magic and superstition*, p. 170.
[7] Julian Goodare, 'Woman and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland' in *Social History*, 23 (1998), p. 289.

hunting was not 'woman-hunting.'[8] Women were not persecuted solely based on their gender, but due to popular beliefs surrounding their advanced tendency toward moral weakness that caused women to be more vulnerable.

One of the great parallels between all eleven of the Libberton Witch trials was the presence of, and interaction with, the Devil. The Reformation and the growing idea that the Devil was actively at work amongst the population heightened the fear of the Devil in society.[9] The identification of the witch denied personal agency to the perpetrator and instead placed them within the wider scope of a Satanic heresy and conspiracy that was neither individual nor local; fear of Satan meant fear of his 'diabolical army.'[10] Of Essex, James Sharpe writes that the majority of cases were concerned with human well-being and featured items such as illness, death, damaged property, and the mistreatment of animals.[11] In this way Scotland was set apart from England and had more in common with witch-beliefs that were present on the continent, where items such as the Devil's mark and Witches' Sabbath were much more common. [12] In other words where English cases typically centred around maleficium, or malign intent, Scottish witch-trials tended to focus on diabolism, or unnatural feats achieved through diabolic means.[13] It is interesting that all eleven of the Libberton cases explicitly included the Devil as it was representative of Scottish witch-belief during the period and suggests a connection between Scotland and the continent while setting Scotland distinctly apart from its neighbour to the south.

Finally it is important to examine the source material for the Libberton Witches. These confessions were limited in several ways. Firstly, they were sorely lacking in information surrounding the persecutors themselves, apart from providing a list names and

---

[8] Clive Holmes, 'Women: witnesses and witches' in *Past & Present*, 140 (1993), p. 45.
[9] Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in early modern Europe*, p. 112.
[10] Bailey, *Magic and superstition*, p. 144.
[11] James Sharpe, *Witchcraft in early modern England* (Harlow, 2001), pp 40-1.
[12] Bailey, *Magic and superstition*, p. 167.
[13] Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in early modern Europe*, pp 13-15.

positions within the trial.[14] Secondly, the nature of these confessions was drawn into question as the mechanisms for judicial torture were in place in Scotland in this period.[15] The similarity of the confessions certainly indicated that suggestive questioning was implemented. While these weaknesses are acknowledged, they do not prevent such confessions being used to illustrate the way in which women were more vulnerable to these sorts of trials. In this way the freedom of the confessions is moot as the collective fantasy of the persecutor and the persecuted that provides more insight. This is not to assert that witchcraft was a delusion for both parties but rather that for contemporaries it was a real issue with real traits that were being actively assigned to its suspects; both the power of the persecutor and the power of the community to identify and create stereotypes surrounding the types of crimes for which a witch might be arrested. Thus, it can be asserted that these crimes were those that women were perceived to be most likely to commit, and though men could be found guilty as well, women were made more vulnerable by the content of the proceedings.

The first way in which women were made more vulnerable to charges of witchcraft and persecution was through beliefs surrounding sexuality. There were links drawn between sexual transgression, immoral crimes, and the Devil. Within the Libberton Witch trials five of the accused did not confess to sexual intercourse with the Devil, however many of these do include some degree of intimacy in that they occur at night and often in the home. For example, when Margaret Bryson returned home to find her husband had sold their cow she shouted curses to both God and the Devil and fled into the night. Her daughters persuaded her to return and put her to bed. Unable to sleep, Margaret went to the door to her home and met the Devil there. After renouncing her baptism and promising service, she received the Devil's

---

[14] Six of these cases cite David Dunmure as prosecutor and David Mowbray as chancellor. They also tend to contain at least six confession witnesses, all male. These are occasionally supplemented with male commissioners, often less than six in number. This trial information is found in 'The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft' (http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/).

[15] Goodare, "Woman and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland", p. 302.

mark through a bite on her shoulder.[16] Margaret's case is interesting as it suggests the vulnerability of women within these non-sexual cases and to accusations of immoral crimes that did not include sex.

Firstly, the Devil appeared to Margaret at night, which is reflected in 73% of the Libberton cases. The context of an evening meeting alone suggests some form of vulnerability due to the impediment of the senses. It also suggests some form of intimacy, though Margaret did not engage in sexual intercourse. The Devil appeared to her within her home, which suggests willingness on the part of the witch since the Devil had gained access to a private space. The home was also a distinctly feminine space as the centre of the family and social unit and may suggest that this was a setting where women would be prominent as well as more vulnerable. Finally, Margaret's use of curses prior to her meeting with the Devil was something that scholars such as Julian Goodare have pointed out as a means through which women in the community expressed frustration or settled scores.[17] Though men were able to curse and certainly did, it was far more prevalent among women and therefore more likely for women to be tried for such offences.[18] While Bryson's confession did not contain sexual engagement with the Devil, it did continue to suggest that women were viewed to be more susceptible to Satan and to extending an invitation to him.

The assumption that women were weaker than men was so engrained in society that it barely needed mention and in William Perkins' work on witchcraft it garnered only a fleeting mention. Women, according to Perkins, could trace their moral weakness back to Eve and therefore were more susceptible to temptation.[19] They were not alone in succumbing to temptation, as Adam had also deviated, but they were more prone to it. In Scotland, this view

---

[16] Margaret Bryson,'Confession of Margaret Bryson' in Larner *et al* (ed), *A Sourcebook of Scottish witchcraft*, p. 256; 'The survey of Scottish witchcraft" (http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/).
[17] Goodare, 'Woman and the witch-hunt in Scotland', p. 298.
[18] Ibid., p. 297.
[19]Sharpe, *Witchcraft in early modern England*, p. 43.

was reinforced by James VI who vocally supported the conception of women as the weaker and frailer of the two sexes.[20] Transgressions on the part of women in society were viewed as being almost natural, due to their moral weakness and culpability. As a result contemporaries would not have viewed the surplus of women in witch trials as exceptional; instead it was natural that women should be in the majority.[21] This helps to explain the way in which Bryson's confession was conceived, even if it is the result of suggestive questioning. Her alleged actions, such as cursing, would have been the result of community expectations for the female witch.

It is important to now turn to those confessions within the Libberton trials that did contain sexual deviance. Six of the eleven accused, or circa 55%, confessed to having sex with the Devil. Most of these cases read incredibly similarly; they assert that the accused allegedly renounced their baptism and promised service prior to engaging in sexual relations. In this way the sexual intercourse functioned as the signature at the end of a contract. Furthermore in almost all of these cases the witch was engaged by the Devil in her bed and in all of the cases these events occurred at night. In many cases the accused reported being confused as to whether it was the Devil who lay with her or her husband. Firstly these accounts assert the primacy of women within these trials. It is telling that Thomas did not engage in sex with the Devil.[22] In addition to being confused over the identity of her partner, these confessions support the role of women within conceptions of sexual immorality as the Devil appears as a male figure and is linked intimately to female sexuality.[23] As a male figure, often appearing the bed of his female accomplice, these cases promote the idea of women's vulnerability through space and circumstance. Women, perceived as the weaker

---

[20] Goodare, "Woman and the witch-hunt in Scotland", p. 288.
[21] Sharpe, *Witchcraft in early modern England*, pp 42-3.
[22] *A Sourcebook of Scottish Witchcraft*, p. 257 and "The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft" (http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/)
[23] Bailey, *Magic and superstition*, p. 147.

sex, would have been viewed to be naturally more open to this sort of temptation and therefore the witch was created as the sexual deviant by community expectations and was often made female by the happenstance of a male partner.

Witchcraft was intrinsically linked to ideas concerning sexual deviance through the 1563 parliamentary bans of witchcraft and adultery.[24] In this way witchcraft was associated with both moral offences and sexual deviance. Both crimes were asserted to be victimless though they were also viewed to be dangerous to society and consequentially drew the attention of neighbours and required community regulation.[25] Furthermore, due to the association between witchcraft and deviant sexual activity, sex with the Devil was imagined to be an important part of the pact with the witch.[26] Since the Devil was often imagined in male form it then was simple to primarily associate women with such demonic pacts. Women with backgrounds that were known to contain sexually deviant behaviour, such as Helen Cross, who had a reputation for having multiple sexual relationships with English soldiers in 1661-2, were more likely to be targeted with accusations of witchcraft.[27] Though not exclusively targeted, female sexuality was perceived as being more likely to be deviant compared to male sexuality. Women such as those tried at Libberton were much more vulnerable to accusations of sexual immorality and were not targeted solely based on gender, but rather based on the preconceived notions of what excesses their gender was more susceptible to.

Finally there is also a connection between these sexual crimes, as expressed at Libberton, and those of the continent. On the continent the Witches' Sabbath was envisioned not only to be diabolical in content, but to be an event during which the participants "worship[ped] demons, engage[d] in orgiastic sex, desecrate[d] crosses, befoul[ed]

---

[24] Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion, p.* 24.
[25] Goodare, 'Woman and the witch-hunt in Scotland', p. 296.
[26] Ibid., p. 294.
[27] G.R. Quaife, *Godly zeal and furious rage: the witch in early modern Europe* (London, 1987), p. 167.

consecrated hosts, and murder[ed] and devour[ed] babies at cannibalistic feasts."[28] As on the continent sexual transgression was immediately imagined in the cases of witches' interactions with the Devil. As in Scotland the women were concocted as the participants due to the male form of the Devil and their sexual engagement with him. Therefore the Libberton cases demonstrate not only Scotland's connection to the continent within these trials but also the way in which beliefs surrounding the witch's activities reinforced the stereotypical portrayal of the witch as a woman. Beliefs regarding sexual transgression assumed the female perpetrator and the vulnerability of women for such persecution was not only a result of such beliefs but was perpetuated by and reinforced by such beliefs.

Three of the Libberton cases asserted the presence of the Devil's mark. This was held to be a type of branding upon the body in order to signify a pact between the accused and the Devil. Along with Margaret Bryson, whose case contained receipt in the form of a bite on her shoulder, Bessie Wilson and Agnes Pogavie are also implicated as having such a mark. Agnes Pogavie reportedly received this token in a similar fashion to Margaret Bryson. Lying in bed one night, she was carried away by the Devil who appeared to her first as a dog. Upon his second appearance, the Devil took the form of a man and appeared to her again in her bed. This time she allegedly renounced her baptism and had sex with the Devil three times before she was a bitten on the shoulder. Another of the Libberton Witches, Bessie Wilson, is interesting as she never confessed to the mark herself but was instead implicated by another of the accused, Bessie Flinkar. Both Flinkar and Wilson confessed to having sex with the Devil and then being taken up into the hills to dance with "the rest," suggesting a larger group than just themselves. In her confession, Bessie Flinkar admitted that Bessie Wilson was amongst this group and that it is there that she saw Wilson's mark.[29]

---

[28] Bailey, *Magic and superstition*, p.144.
[29] *A sourcebook of Scottish witchcraft,* pp 256-8; 'the survey of Scottish witchcraft'.

The Devil's mark is important because it highlights the belief in both physical as well as mental deviance. It is also linked to sexual identity, as in Agnes Pogavie's case where it was received after sexual intercourse.[30] Often such blemishes were sought on the genitalia of the accused, so even when it was not explicitly linked to sex it was suggestive of sexual identity and practice.[31] It could be any blemish and was believed to be often insensitive to pain.[32] As with the act of engaging in sex, the Devil's mark suggests through its conception a largely female dimension due to this connection with sex. Furthermore it incriminated the accused through its implication of willing submission and participation. This again drew on fears of the Devil's active campaign on Earth and suggested witches as the antithesis to Christianity. Since women were more susceptible to mental deviance through moral weakness, the belief that women would be more likely to bear the physical signs of this pact was sustained. Its presence in the Libberton trials demonstrates the continuing theme that women were more vulnerable to this sort of persecution.

Moving away from sexual immorality it is also important to explore the socio-economic circumstances of the accused in order to understand the relationship between women and this type of persecution. The primacy of the economic conditions of the accused was evident through the Libberton Witch trials as seven out of the eleven were promised that an alliance with the Devil would ensure that they would want for nothing. Moreover, the pact with the Devil was seen to function as a type of socio-economic exchange that was not without cost to the witch. In ten of the eleven Libberton trials the witch renounced their baptism and in six out of the eleven this was accompanied by a promise of service. In other words one's moral ideologies could be exchanged for material benefit. This may be indicative of the perception of the persecuted on the part of the persecutor or may be indicative of the

---

[30] Ibid, p. 257; 'the survey of Scottish witchcraft'.
[31] Goodare, "Woman and the witch-hunt in Scotland", p. 302.
[32] Ibid.

perception of the socio-economic status of those who were accused. Regardless it suggests that economic factors and the desire to want for nothing would play a significant role in such an exchange, which makes sense since most of the accused would have been of the poor or middling sort. Only those who were exceptional had their occupations cited in records, which suggests that none of the Libberton Witches fell outside of these socio-economic groupings.[33] Janet Gibson was the sole case of the eleven whose socio-economic status is known to be middling.[34] Therefore it is understandable that the motivation of the Libberton Witches, real or imagined, might have been economic. It further suggests that those who were less economically stable would be easier to suspect due to the material advantages of an alliance with the Devil. Typically those accused were more economically vulnerable, such as the elderly and the poor.[35]

Both women and men fell into these categories but since women were more likely to be economically dependent and had a higher chance of becoming marginalized in the event of their husband's death or otherwise, it stands to reason that women would have been more vulnerable to persecutions regarding witchcraft should they be believed to benefit economically from it.[36] This did not mean that they were entirely set apart from the population, since most of the population in such regions would have been of the poor or middling sort. Rather it implies that their economic need was enough to satisfy communal belief that they might turn to the Devil to alleviate it. For example, in the case of Margaret Porteous she was noted to have been involved in neighbourhood disputes in which she had borrowed money from members of the community. In her meeting with the Devil, he promised her all of the 'pleasure of the earth.'[37] There is some suggestion that amongst the

---

[33] *A sourcebook of Scottish witchcraft*, p. 242.
[34] 'The survey of Scottish witchcraft'
[35] Sharpe, *Witchcraft in early modern England*, p. 43.
[36] Sharpe, *Witchcraft in early modern England*, p. 44.
[37] *A sourcebook of Scottish witchcraft*, p. 257;'the survey of Scottish witchcraft'.

Libberton Witches that marital status did not play as large of a role as it is often assumed to have played, as eight of the eleven did not have their marital status recorded. Two of the other three were married and one was widowed. Though marital status could play an important role in socio-economic need it was the simple fact that there was socio-economic need rather than the source of this need that was recorded, in the case of Libberton. Women were more vulnerable due to their advanced likelihood to become economically marginalized rather than based on their gender alone.

Women also had important roles in the social realm that made them more vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft and the persecution that followed. Most of the witches that were tried in Scotland during this period were tried as a result of allegations on the part of their neighbours.[38] Though the records show that only four of the eleven Libberton Witches actively accused each other they were still all intimately linked in the minds of the persecution. In her confession Elspeth Blackie recalled that she had met with the Devil at Kinghorn yard at 10pm. There a group of forty had gathered including Elspeth Mowat. She was unable to identify anyone else as masks obscured their faces. Margaret Greive also denounced several women from Libberton, Bessie Flinkar denounced Bessie Wilson, and Bessie Wilson returned the favour.[39] In this way not only were women more vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft but they were also an active part in the accusation process. For example, Bessie Flinkar's confession implicated Bessie Wilson, whether through her own imaginings or the suggestive questioning of her interrogator, and thus perpetuated the communal stereotype that cast the female as the most likely witch. Due to women's importance in the social realm and the role of gossip within small communities as a "form of information management" and social control, it makes sense that women would be more

---

[38] Quaife, *Godly seal and furious rage*, p. 190.
[39] *A sourcebook of Scottish witchcraft,* pp 256 – 8; 'the survey of Scottish witchcraft'.

likely to be accused of social crimes by their neighbours.[40] For example, Jonet Hewats' confession noted that when the Devil came to her she was in bed with Helen Spears, another known witch.[41] Social networks such as these likely perpetuated the idea of Satanic cults or armies that were great in number and this was expressed through denunciations of friends and neighbours. Accusations made by women suggest that this was not a misogynistic program but rather a system of popular belief and real paranoia that women were more vulnerable to due to, alongside that which has been outlined above, their social roles in the community.[42]

Finally, women were more legally vulnerable than men and in many cases would need a man to vouch for them in order to stand a chance at any trial against them.[43] All of the Libberton cases were from the records of the High Court of the Justiciary and though two of these cases remained at the local level in Libberton the remaining nine went to Edinburgh for further interrogation or imprisonment and eight of these went to trial there. Firstly Libberton's proximity to Edinburgh meant that central trial was a viable economic option.[44] Further the presentation of witchcraft charges at these secular courts, which was standard after 1550, served to validate and perpetuate them as a reasonable criminal offence. It demonstrates that in Scotland the legislative power of the state was a valid means to go about trying moral offences. Since women were more vulnerable to legal action and were believed to be more likely to commit moral transgressions, it makes sense that women would make up the majority in a judicial system that heard such cases. For the Libberton Witches this meant that of the eleven witches that were accused eight went to trial. Janet Gibson, Margaret

---

[40] Wolf Bleek, 'Witchcraft, gossip and death: a social drama' in *Man*, 11 (December 1976), p. 540. Bleek examines the social function of gossip and its interaction with witchcraft in this article detailing the findings of a six-month research project concerning the Kwahu, an Akan sub-group in Ghana. Though this study is not European in focus, it provides valuable insight into the role that gossip may play in small community through reinforced expectations, information sharing, social hierarchies, and the advancement of personal interest. Though a bit dated, these things remain fundamental in an examination of the interaction of small communities and continue to be relevant to the European context.

[41] *A Sourcebook of Scottish Witchcraft*, p. 258; 'the survey of Scottish witchcraft'.

[42] Holmes, "Women: witnesses and witches", pp 45-6.

[43] Bailey, *Magic and superstition*, p. 148.

[44] Larner, *Witchcraft and religion,* p. 25.

Bryson, Elspeth Blackie, Bessie Wilson, Thomas Black, and Agnes Pogavie were executed by strangling and burning on 9 August 1661 at Common Green between the hours of 14:00 and 16:00. The remainder were acquitted and the fate of one is unknown.[45]

The case of the eleven Libberton Witches in 1661 to demonstrates the way in which the conception of witchcraft in Scotland in this period was more likely to target women in order to understand the relationship between femininity and such persecutions. Popular beliefs concerning women's weakness and moral culpability, the increased likelihood of being economically vulnerable, important social roles, and finally susceptibility in the legal system all contributed to the increased tendency for women to be denounced and tried as witches. Though women were never exclusively targeted, they were much more likely to be suspect as a result of these factors. This paper has used confessions that were unlikely to be free in order to demonstrate the collective conceptions of what roles the witch was expected or even required to fulfill and has embraced the idea of suggestive questioning in order to sustain and enforce these roles on the accused. As such though the confessions outlined above did not necessarily reflect the beliefs of those to whom they are attributed they do reflect the communal expectation regarding the behaviour of witches. The assertions placed upon these individuals speak to the collective fantasy; to what the witch was imagined to do, and thus reveals the very real anxieties behind the presence of these individuals in the community. The agency for change remained within the community and the collective conception of the witch. This conception was changed to suit the needs of the community.

Through the lens on witchcraft, the conclusions drawn about the way in which feminine identity and persecution interacted is revealing on a more general basis as well. It underlines the moral pressure that was placed on contemporary women and the weight placed on their sexual conformity. It also highlights their economic and legal vulnerability as men

---

[45] *A Sourcebook of Scottish Witchcraft*, pp 26-30; 'the survey of Scottish witchcraft'.

overshadowed women in these spheres. Finally it asserts that such persecutions fed on themselves: perhaps persecutors utilized stereotypes to draw out the confessions they desired or perhaps the accused used the same stereotypes to create themselves. Either way in confessing they perpetuated the community's conception of the witch and she was often female.

'The most deadly enemies of god and man:'
distinguishing kings from tyrants in George Buchanan's political writings

Sarah Bartosiak

On 10 January 1579, George Buchanan dedicated his latest work *De Iuri Regni Apud Scotos Dialogus* to his royal charge, King James VI of Scotland. [1]Ostensibly written to justify the deposition of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1567, this work provided an outlet for Buchanan to articulate his political theories, which he hoped James, who had reached majority in 1578, would embody during his reign. From the rights of the ruled to the duties of the ruler to his people, his political discourse centered on the actions and attitudes that distinguished a legitimate king from a tyrant.[2] However, his most radical departure from, and greatest threat to, the established hereditary monarchical governments that predominated in sixteenth century Europe was his endorsement of resistance against monarchs who degenerated into despots, even calling for their assassination.[3] Fearing that his sovereign would follow in the footsteps of his mother whose misrule forced her to abdicate the throne, Buchanan wrote this political treatise for James to use 'not only as a guide, but also as a harsh and sometimes insolent critic, to steer you, at this formative time in your life, through the reefs of flattery.'[4]

While today, most scholars focus on Buchanan as a political theorist as *A Dialogue* was one of the most influential political essays of the sixteenth century and continued to provoke thought about the formation of governments hundreds of years afterwards, his contemporaries praised him as a Latin poet.[5] Buchanan wrote hundreds of poems on a

---

[1] Translated as *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots* and henceforth referred to as *A dialogue*; George Buchanan, dedication in *George Buchanan's A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots: De Iure regni apud Scotos dialogus*, eds. Martin S. Smith and Roger A. Mason (Edinburgh, 2006), pp 37–8.

[2] Jamie Reid Baxter, *George Buchanan: Scotland's renaissance man* (Stirling, 2006), p. 27.

[3] J. H. Burns, 'George Buchanan and the Anti-monarchomachs,' in *Political discourse in early modern Britain*, ideas in context (Cambridge, 1993), p. 5.

[4] Buchanan, dedication in *George Buchanan's A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p.38.

[5] Paul J. Mcginnis and Arthur H. WIlliamson, *The political poetry* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 1; J. H. Burns, 'The political ideas of George Buchanan,' *The Scottish historical review* 30, no. 109, 1 (April 1951), p. 60–61.

multitude of topics, which earned him the sobriquets 'the great Scottish poet' and 'poetrum nostril seculi facile princeps.'[6] He believed that poetry, in addition to being a form of self-expression, served the important role of informing society; thus most of his works were commentaries on, and often criticisms of, current people, events, and issues.[7] Due to his position within European courts which was gained by royal patronage, many of his poems were political in nature; thus, Buchanan the political theorist cannot be separated from Buchanan the political poet. In fact, the essays written after the deposition were a culmination of the theories that he had been developing and reflecting on throughout his poems since his schooling on the continent during the Renaissance and the Reformation.[8] He was an avid proponent of political freedom, and the civic ideal of popular sovereignty and republic, the ideas of a limited and contractual monarchy, the hatred of and need to resist tyranny were all themes in his reforming political poetry addressed to Queen Mary I and King James VI of Scotland decades before he completed *A Dialogue* by which these radical concepts became renowned.

In an era dominated by the divine right of absolute monarchs, Buchanan argued that sovereignty was actually located with the people over which the monarch ruled. In *A Dialogue*, he explicitly stated that 'power is vested in the people' because 'the people have the right to bestow authority on whomever they wish.'[9] He was not promoting a democratic form of government in which the people were actively involved in political matters; rather, his aim was for the classical civic ideal of a republic, where governments work above all else

---

[6] Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 340; Philip J. Ford, *George Buchanan: Prince of poets* (Aberdeen, 1982), viii.
[7] Philip Ford and Roger Green, *George Buchanan: poet and dramatist* (Swansea, 2009), p. xx.
[8] I. D. McFarlane, *Buchanan* (London, 1981), p. 392.
[9] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 54.

for the common good of their people, to become a reality.[10] This, Buchanan identified in *A Dialogue*, was one of the primary differentiations between kings and tyrants:

> Kingly authority is in accordance with nature, that of a tyrant is contrary to it. A king rules over willing subjects, a tyrant over unwilling. Kingship is the princely power of a free man among free men, tyranny is that of a master over slaves. A king's subjects stand guard over him to ensure his safety, while strangers guard a tyrant in order to crush his subjects, for the one wields power on behalf of his subjects, the other for himself.[11]

These ideas of popular sovereignty and civic republicanism were key factors separating kings, who served with the consent of the people for the benefit of the people, from tyrants, who usurped power for personal gain.

The 'great Scottish poet' used this distinction between a legitimate king, who placed the people first, and a tyrant, who placed himself and his own ambitions above the people and the public welfare, to completely inverse the predominating idea of divine right. By conflating the humanist concept of *pietas*, duty toward the community, with Christian piety, Buchanan emphasized the responsibilities that rulers had to their people, which the people granted them with to maintain their welfare.[12] Accordingly, rather than using divine right to justify monarchs' rule regardless of their political actions, particularly if they had self-serving intentions, this reformer asserted that looking beyond their own interests for the benefit of the greater good was divine.[13] God did not give rulers the right to their position; the people gave monarchs their power and God gave them the capacity to rule justly and unselfishly. From Buchanan's viewpoint, this simultaneously civic and religious quality was enormously important for kings to possess, which is exemplified in 'A Celebration of the Birth of James VI, King of Scots:' 'Accustom the tender child from his young years/ To the idea of justice, and let him imbibe the sacred love of virtue/ With his mother's milk; let piety be attendant in

---

[10] McGinnis and Williamson, *The political poetry*, p. 11.

[11] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 93.

[12] Andrew Hadfield, 'Spender and Buchanan' in *George Buchanan: political thought in early modern Britain and Europe* (Farnham, 2012), p. 73.

[13] Williamson, 'George Buchanan and the patriot cause' in *George Buchanan: political thought in early modern Britain and Europe*, p. 98.

his cradle,/ And let it be the formative influence in his spirit and grow equally with his body.'[14] While *A Dialogue* was written when James reached his majority in order to teach him how not to become a tyrant, this poem, written at the time of his birth, similarly sought to guide him to a legitimate kingship based on the civic and religious merits of justice, virtue, and piety.

Furthermore, this inversion of divine right impacted the relations that rulers had with the people as rulers with divine right dictated to the people, while rulers with civic and divine virtue were dictated to by the people.[15] This political reversal of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic was explicit in *A Dialogue* when Buchanan stated that 'the people, therefore, are superior to the king.' His political poetry also referred to this idea, and in 'A Celebration,' he wrote: 'The descendants of Romulus saw Numa offering sacrifice, fostering peace and tranquility,/ The palms of the Euphrates saw mighty Solomon.'[16] Numa and Solomon were kings of Rome and Israel, respectively, and they ruled with a 'love of piety and virtue' that exemplified the embodiment of civic virtue and 'in whom shines the true and living image of God.'[17] He drew simultaneously on the influences of the Renaissance and the Reformation by using both classical and biblical examples and motivations to distinguish kings from tyrants in his political theory of popular sovereignty.

Personifying republican and Christian qualities also separated a king from a tyrant because a legitimate monarch served as a living example for his subjects. As Buchanan stated in *A Dialogue*, the people saw their king as a model for just behavior and action: 'Let the king constantly bear in mind, therefore, that he stands on the world's stage, set there for

---

[14] George Buchanan, 'A celebration of the birth of James VI, king of Scots,' in (eds.) Paul J. McGinnis and Arthur H. Williamson, *The political poetry* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 154.
[15] Baxter, *George Buchanan*, p. 24.
[16] George Buchanan, 'A celebration,' in *The political poetry*, p. 158.
[17] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 129.

all to look upon, and that nothing he says or does can be hidden'[18] While the cautionary tone of this quotation warned the ruler to act appropriately because people would be watching him, the next paragraph took the reverse perspective by illustrating the positive impacts that the people's imitation of the king's actions could have. Beginning with 'If anyone still doubts how much influence the life of a prince can have in improving public behaviour, let him picture those early days when Rome was still in its infancy,' he devoted this paragraph to the description of Numa's reign.[19] He referred to the Roman king both in this work and in his poem 'A Celebration,' as one who ruled his people justly with virtue and piety. Numa was not only a model of an ideal king who current rulers should follow, but he was a model of an ideal citizen who the people he ruled did follow.

Representing a moral exemplar was an essential aspect of a rightful ruler as it was a duty he had to his people and, therefore, a characteristic that distinguished his legitimacy. In 'A Celebration,' Buchanan directly identified this as a royal responsibility: 'Thus do the people fasten their gaze on the king;/ And they love him, and they model their lives on his;/ They strive to fashion themselves and their characters from the mirror, as it were, which he holds up for them.'[20] As with Numa's ancient archetype, the king was expected to be a living example for his people to guide them in all aspects of life. Buchanan's contemporary sovereign, however, was the antitype and the reason behind the publication of his political writings. In 1560, the Protestant Reformation destabilized Scotland's political situation when a successful rebellion rejected Catholicism in favor of the Reformed Kirk. This was a popular movement that was not reflected by Mary, Queen of Scots, who preserved Catholicism personally at home and publicly at court.[21] She ignored the changing customs, and this religious disparity created conflict between Mary and her people because she was no

---

[18] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 86.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Buchanan, 'A celebration' in *The political poetry*, p. 156.
[21] Smith and Mason, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 5.

longer a godly example in all ways, including religion. In fact, given her idolatry and rejection of true religion, Mary was an ungodly example who Buchanan judged the people of Scotland would do better without.[22] He expected his sovereign to put the public welfare above his own interests, or in this case her own beliefs, by upholding the moral standard for the people to emulate. By acting contrary to this standard, he defended that Mary necessitated the installment of a new monarch who would act as moral exemplar, which effectually delegitimized her own rule.

The conduct of the people, but also the power necessary for their obedience demonstrated if the ruler was a moral king or a corrupt tyrant. Returning to the example set by Numa in both *A Dialogue* and 'A Celebration,' the only power he needed for governance was his own discipline and obedience to the laws of man and God. In the former, Buchanan explained that the most effective form of rule was a monarch's example: 'Our attempts to obtain what we want by entreaty rather than by making arrogant and presumptuous demands are much more effective than legal threats, the display of penalties, or armed force. This is what brings the people back to obedience without violence, wins for the king the goodwill of his subjects, and increases and protects public peace.'[23] A rightful king could maintain the public welfare by requesting and exemplifying obedience that the people would imitate, with no need for the harsher threats and punishments that a tyrant would employ to subdue and control the people. Buchanan similarly detailed the importance of the monarch's example as a legitimate way to lead his people in 'A Celebration:'

> As the course of the ship is changed by the movement of the rudder,
> So do the people found their behaviour on the character of the prince.
> Imprisonment, punishment, and the executioner's axe,
> Do not so animate the soul's trembling fear of the law
> As does the reputation of genuine virtue, the character of a good king,
> The glory and respect owing to blameless rule,

---

[22] Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought*, p. 190.
[23] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots,* pp 85-86.

Convert the souls of subjects to an honourable way of life.[24]

A lawful king only needed the power of his own righteousness to provide the reason for and example of obedience, while a tyrant's power derived from the threats and violence that forced people to his self-interested will.

As a moral exemplar, a legitimate monarch observed the law, and so was restrained by it; this further distinguished kings from tyrants as the forms of government over which they presided were inherently dissimilar. Although kings and tyrants could both be monarchs, the former was constitutional and limited by the law, while the latter was absolute. Buchanan proclaimed this legal difference in *A Dialogue*: 'Because the king was not required to restrain the law, but the law to restrain the king; and he derives from the law the very fact that he is a king, for without the law he would be a tyrant. The law, then, is more powerful than the king.'[25] He contended that the law itself, as well as the ruler's adherence to and enforcement of the law gave the king legitimacy. In fact, the word 'legitimacy' itself derives from the Latin word *lex* meaning 'law,' and so a 'legitimate' government 'designated rule according to law in contrast to arbitrary rule or tyranny.'[26] Without law there can be no legitimacy, and so adherence to the legal code differentiated legitimate kings from unlawful tyrants.

This legal limitation of the monarch's power, a restraint on his behaviors and actions, was necessary to maintain the common good of the people, which was the defining purpose of a legitimate ruler. Buchanan, clearly evoking Protestant thought, reasoned in *A Dialogue* that monarchs needed to be limited by law because people were naturally sinful and acted selfishly: 'He is not only a king but a human being as well, erring in many things through ignorance, often transgressing of his own will, often almost against his will … [That is why]

---

[24] Buchanan, 'A Celebration' in *The political poetry*, p. 154.
[25] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots* , p. 127.
[26] Kenneth Baynes, 'Legitimacy.,' (ed.) Joel Krieger, *The Oxford companion to the politics of the world* (New York, 2001), p. 34.

the law should be yoked to the king to show him the way when he does not know it or to lead him back to it when he wanders from it.'[27] Reminiscent of the dedication of this piece to James VI, laws were thus a necessary limitation on royal power as, now evoking humanist thought, they served to subdue his natural human tendencies.[28] Laws ensured that a king ruled for the welfare of the people rather than his own aims as would a tyrant, as Buchanan illustrated in 'A Celebration:' 'In contrast [to tyrants of empires], nature has never given a more generous gift to the human race,/ Nor will she bestow a greater boon, than a well-governed prince,/ In whom shines the true and living image of God.'[29] He combined his Christian and humanist ideals into his depiction of a legitimate king whose self-controlled rule was both divine and benefited the people before himself.

Throughout the sixteenth century, this idea that a legitimate king was not above the law, but rather that he was the ultimate enforcer of the law to which he, too, was subject, was a central argument limiting the absolute power of monarchs who dominated European politics.[30] Buchanan claimed in *A Dialogue* that laws were the people's way of restraining the king's power: 'I want the people, who have granted him authority over themselves, to be allowed to dictate to him the extent of his authority [through laws], and I require him to exercise as a king only such right as the people have granted him over them.'[31] Given that sovereignty was located with the people and they gave the king authority to rule, the people created laws to check the power of the king and ensure that he acted within specified bounds. Buchanan reflected this humanist hierarchy of power with the public dictating the laws which were more powerful than the monarch in his poem celebrating James's birth: 'In fact, too indulgent perhaps, he takes burdens from his subjects,/ And undergoes them himself, and he

---

[27] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 58.
[28] Burns, 'The political ideas of George Buchanan,' p. 63.
[29] Buchanan, 'A celebration' in *The political poetry*, p. 158.
[30] Robert von Friedeburg, 'Buchanan and the German monarchomachs' in Roger A. Mason and Caroline Erskine (eds.) *George Buchanan: political thought in early modern Britain and Europe* (Farnham, 2012), p. 136.
[31] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 72.

is the first to obey the orders which he himself issues,/ And he makes hard laws soft by his own example of obedience,/ And he spares the faults of others which he would never spare in himself.'[32] Admittedly an exaggerated claim, he emphasized the need for a legitimate monarch to observe the laws as both a right of and a responsibility to his people.

In addition to being limited and constitutional, Buchanan argued that legitimate monarchies were also contractual as monarchs agreed to place the interests of the people above their own, while the people agreed to consent to their authority and obey their power. This mutual contract between the rulers and the ruled was essential to his vision of a legitimate monarchy as he stated in *A Dialogue:* 'We [the people] are indeed bound by oath [in obedience to kings]; but they on their part promise first that they will administer justice on the basis of what is right and good … There is, therefore, a mutual pact between a king and his subjects.'[33] The agreement with the people obligated a legitimate ruler to maintain the public good by upholding civic virtue, representing a moral exemplar, and obeying and enforcing the law in return for the power the people through popular sovereignty bestowed upon him. In his poem celebrating the royal marriage, 'Epithalamium for Francis of Valois and Mary Stewart, of the Kingdom of France and of Scotland,' Buchanan revealed the importance he placed on oaths: 'That glory which belongs to the quivered Scots … To keep faith in the things promised.'[34] For this political theorist, contractual monarchy was a superior form of government because it set the bounds between the monarch and the people that legitimized a kingship based on shared trust.

Without this mutual agreement, if the oath was broken and the contract breached, then the kingship was no longer legitimate and the ruler was a tyrant. Tyranny, according to Buchanan's *A Dialogue*, was the greatest and most detestable evil: 'Tyrants should be

---

[32] Buchanan, 'A celebration' in *The political poetry*, p. 156.
[33] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 140.
[34] Henceforth referred to as 'Epithalamium;' Buchanan, 'Epithalamium for Francis of Valois and Mary Stewart, of the Kingdom of France and of Scotland' in *The political poetry*, p. 136.

reckoned among the most savage of beasts, and that tyrannical violence is more unnatural than poverty or disease or death or all the other evils which can befall men in the natural course of events' [35] Legitimate kings had a responsibility to their people to obey the laws that ensured public welfare; however, legitimate kings could degenerate into immoral tyrants by breaking the contract either by acting above the law or for their own benefit. [36] In *A Dialogue*, the author judged that if one side breached the contract, then the other was no longer bound by it: 'The one who first goes back on the accord and acts contrary to what he has agreed makes the pact and agreement void.'[37] When a king failed to justly serve the people, he broke the contract and became a tyrant; thus, the people were freed from their obligation to obey his rule and it was their right to overthrow the unlawful monarch. [38] Popular sovereignty further justified the people's resistance of tyranny because they could withdraw their consent and revoke the authority they had previously ascribed to the tyrant. Buchanan's contemporary situation strengthened his position. Mary, Queen of Scots, whose religious differences, possible involvement in the murder of her second husband, and suspicious marriage to the man accused of committing the murder, convinced the people that she was an unfit ruler.[39] He argued that Mary first breached the mutual contract by breaking the law to achieve her own religious and personal goals, and so the Scots could lawfully withdraw their consent of her rule and force her to abdicate the throne. The people had the right to hold tyrants accountable for their actions and punish them for their offenses.[40]

For Buchanan, though, deposition was a subordinate form of punishment as he was a proponent of tyrannicide. Absolutist supporters criticized his extreme resistance theory, and

---

[35] Baxter, *George Buchanan*, p. 24.
[36] McFarlane, *Buchanan*, p. 397.
[37] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots, p. 140.*
[38] Hadfield, 'Spencer and Buchanan' in *George Buchanan: political thought in early modern Britain and Europe*, p. 74.
[39] John MacQueen, ''Return, Buchanan!' The letter of Walter Dennistoun to George Buchanan and Buchanan's reply' in Philip Ford and Roger Green (eds.) *George Buchanan: poet and dramatist* (Swansea, 2009), p. 268.
[40] John Hearsey McMillan Salmon, 'An alternative theory of popular resistance: Buchanan, Rossaeus, and Locke,' in *Renaissance and revolt*, (Cambridge, 1987), p. 138.

William Barclay labeled him a 'monarchomach,' the sixteenth century term for political theorists who supported rebellion against unlawful monarchs, which further connoted support for the killing of kings.[41] Buchanan fully embodied this label as he justified the murder of tyrants in *A Dialogue*: 'A tyrant not only possesses no just authority over the people, but he is also the enemy of the people … a war waged against an enemy on account of grievous and intolerable wrongs is a just war … now when a war has once been undertaken against an enemy for a just cause, it is the right not only of the people as a whole but also of individuals to kill the enemy'[42] By breaking the mutual contract, the tyrant made himself the enemy in a war that he started against the people who had the duty of fighting back against him and the ultimate goal of defeating him; thus, the people had the right to kill him for his transgressions. Buchanan expressed the same call to arms in 'Epithalamium:' 'Not to guard their fatherland by trenches and ramparts, but by battle,/ And to defend their honour even at the cost of their lives'[43] Due to popular sovereignty, the people were superior to the monarch, and they had the right, if the contract was broken and they were no longer bound to obey the authority with which they imbued him, to actively defend themselves from the tyrant's misdeeds.

Buchanan was the most extreme resistance theorist in Europe during the sixteenth century, as well as the most radical Calvinist revolutionary, and he combined ideas from both of these perspectives to justify tyrannicide.[44] Therefore, a tyrant was not only the enemy of the people, but also the enemy of God, as he explained in *A Dialogue*: 'Those who openly wield power not for their country but for themselves, who take account not of the public interest but of their own pleasure, who found the stability of their authority on the weakness

---

[41] Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought*, p. 301.
[42] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 141.
[43] Buchanan, 'Epithalamium' in *The political poetry*, p. 136.
[44] Hadfield, 'Spencer and Buchanan' in *George Buchanan: political thought in early modern Britain and Europe*, p. 73.

of their subjects, and who see their kingship not as a commission entrusted to them by God but as a plunder for the taking; such men … must be adjudged the most deadly enemies of God and man'[45] As discussed above, he did not agree that God granted monarchs the right to rule, but rather that He gave them the ability to put aside their own self-serving tendencies to focus on the public good. If the kings did not properly use this divine blessing, then they were not worthy of their position as leader and moral exemplar, and they deserved to be removed from power by the people. Furthermore, as the moral example who was limited by the laws of man and God and served the welfare of the people justly, Buchanan regarded the legitimate monarch as an earthly image of God. Conversely, a tyrant corrupted the image both of the ruler and God by possessing the exalted station without the moral intentions. In 'A Celebration,' he threatened tyrants with divine punishment for their misrule and misrepresentation: 'But if the king should contaminate this image by shameful vices,/ Or if some person should desecrate it by force or fraud,/ God Himself will exact a bloody punishment for such a sacrilege,/ Nor will He leave unavenged an insult to His image.'[46] If the monarch degenerated into an illegitimate ruler, then it was the duty, indeed the moral necessity, of the people to kill the ungodly tyrant.[47]

Buchanan again merged his humanist and Protestant perspectives by exemplifying the Christian morality of tyrannicide with classical allusions of honorable assassins and murdered tyrants. In *A Dialogue*, he explicitly stated the righteousness of killing illegitimate rulers: 'They [tyrants] must be regarded as the enemies of God and of men … If anyone rears such beasts, he is rearing destruction for himself and for others; whoever kills them benefits not only himself but the whole community.'[48] By murdering the tyrant, the mutual contract was

---

[45] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 94.
[46] Buchanan, 'A celebration' in *The political poetry*, p. 160.
[47] Hadfield, 'Spencer and Buchanan' in *George Buchanan: political thought in early modern Britain and Europe*, p. 71.
[48] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 96.

reestablished between the people and a new legitimate ruler who acted for the public welfare; therefore, the murderer who restored the civic virtue and God's image was a hero. Buchanan's most recognized heroic model was Brutus, who acted individually to kill Caesar in order to save the republican ideal from the expansion of the emperor's tyranny.[49] He included a multitude of additional references to classical tyrants, particularly when their abuse of power caused their deaths. In 'A Celebration,' he illustrated the divine punishment of several tyrants from the Romans Nero, Catalina, and of the Flavian dynasty to the Sicilians Hippocrates, Gelon, and Hieron: 'Daring to disgrace the likeness of God with their execrable crimes./ Thus did they [and their name] perish root and branch from the face of the earth. … Thus did they, driven to madness, yield up their lives at long last in wretchedness and ruin,/ And stain their kindred for all time to come with an everlasting mark of infamy.'[50] Buchanan exposed these men as the epitome of cruelty and corruption, as well as the antithesis of civic virtue and the republican ideal. These unjust tyrants deserved death for their evil rule, and their moral murderers deserved praise for their godly actions.

The sixteenth century was a time of great intellectual, religious, and political change throughout Europe as reformers publicized theories that their contemporaries deemed radical and yet remain effective in society today. Influenced by the humanist thought of the Renaissance and the Christian beliefs of the Reformation, George Buchanan was one of these radical political reformers who sought to inform the people of their monarch's misdeeds and advocated for a more legitimate system of governance. Even before he articulated his extreme political theories in the eminent *De Iuri Regni Apud Scotos Dialogus*, the 'great Scottish poet' expressed his progressive ideas in his poetry celebrating the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the birth of James VI, King of Scots. The ideals of civic virtue, popular

---

[49] Thomas Downie, *George Buchanan: the man. A lecture delivered in Killearn October 1976* (Perth, 1979), p. 32.

[50] Buchanan, 'A celebration,' *The political poetry*, p. 160.

sovereignty, and limited and contractual monarchy identified the rights of the people and responsibilities of a lawful king to his people; for without these ideals the ruler was a tyrant, and tyranny was to be resisted at all costs, even the ultimate cost of the monarch's life. This monarchomach's assertion that only rightful rulers had the right to maintain their power extended from advice regarding professional obligations, to examples demonstrating appropriate behavior, to outright threats on their position—and their very lives—if they forsook the people, the law, and the common good for their own gain. Buchanan's hatred of tyranny prompted him to warn his sovereigns about the dangers of degeneration, as in the dedication to *A Dialogue*: 'It may not only admonish you, but also keep you to the path which you have once embarked upon, and if you should stray from it, rebuke you and drag you back again.'[51] Although Buchanan's work failed to accomplish his immediate aims as Mary I was deposed for tyranny and James VI intentionally ruled as an absolute monarch, the theories exhibited in his political discourse and poetry vis-à-vis legitimate government and rightful resistance continued to shape political thought and action for centuries throughout Europe and abroad.

---

[51] Buchanan, *A dialogue on the law of kingship among the Scots*, p. 38.

British intelligence and the case of Alan Nunn May.

Jonathan Best

On 1 May 1946 Alan Nunn May, a British nuclear physicist who had been engaged on atomic energy research in Canada for the Allies, was successfully prosecuted and imprisoned for ten years for breaking the British Official Secrets Act as he passed top-secret atomic energy information to the Soviet Union.[52] May was one of the first atomic spies; a group of Soviet agents that infiltrated the Western atomic energy and weapons programmes and gathered intelligence for Moscow. Using British Security Service (MI5) records which have been released by the National Archives (NA) this paper will use the case of Alan Nunn May to reveal that in the immediate years after World War II the British intelligence and security services were at a significant disadvantage and unable to combat Soviet espionage in the West.

The defection of Igor Gouzenko, a cipher clerk working for the Soviet military intelligence (GRU), on 5 September 1945 in Ottawa, Canada led to the British discovery that May was a Soviet agent. That evening Gouzenko stole 109 top secret documents and, with them under his shirt, walked out of the Russian embassy and turned himself and the documents over to the Canadian authorities.[53] These documents revealed that Soviet agents had penetrated several Canadian government departments and also accessed secret information which was being passed between Ottawa, London and Washington.[54] Gouzenko's defection is widely seen as the transition from World War II to the Cold War for

---

[52] 'Atomic secrets charge', *The Times*, 20 Mar. 1946; Statement of Alan Nunn May, 20 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212).

[53] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin archive: the KGB in Europe and the West* (London, 2000), p. 180.

[54] Amy Knight, *How the Cold War began: the Igor Gouzenko affair and the hunt for the Soviet spies* (New York, 2006), p. 2.

western intelligence agencies as they became focused on countering Soviet espionage.[55] The organiser of this espionage ring in Ottawa was GRU officer Nicholai Zabotin, whose cover was that of military attaché in the Soviet embassy. One of the most important agents within Zabotin's network was an agent codenamed Alec,[56] who was identified as being Alan Nunn May.

In 1945 British intelligence service came out of the war with considerable achievements due to significant successes against the Axis. As the Cold War began some within the British intelligence community felt that they could replicate these successes with the Soviets. However, throughout the conflict in Europe British intelligence had been focused on countering Axis espionage and was therefore unable to contribute sufficient resources to counter Soviet espionage even when presented with evidence that there were Soviet agents within the British government. In 1937–Walter Krivitsky an NVKD officer– defected to America. In January 1940 he travelled to Britain to be interviewed by MI5. He revealed that he was aware of two Soviet agents operating in British government departments. One of these agents, John King in the Foreign Office Communications Department, was identified, arrested and imprisoned for ten years, while the second agent remained unidentified. Later evidence gained in light of the revelations of the infamous Cambridge Spy ring pointed to either Donald Maclean or Kim Philby being the second agent.[57]

While much of Krivitsky's knowledge of Soviet espionage was out of date and occasionally inconsistent he did provide the British, for the first time, with insight into the organisation, methods and activities of Soviet espionage in the west. However, due to the war

---

[55] Ibid, pp 6-13.
[56] MI5 report on Alan Nunn May: list of pseudonyms, 11 Mar. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2226). May was given the codename Primrose by the British.
[57] The Cambridge Spies, also known as the Cambridge Five or the Magnificent Five, refers to Cambridge University graduates: Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross who were recruited by Soviet intelligence during the 1930s and were able to gain positions within the British intelligence and diplomatic community where they gained access to sensitive information which they relayed to their Soviet handlers.

effort MI5 lacked sufficient resources to investigate further.[58] British intelligence had also been restricted in their activities against the Soviets by the British Foreign Office. MI5 was prohibited from gathering intelligence against the Soviet embassy and trade delegation in London, both which were frequently used as covers for Soviet intelligence officers, as such operations could possibly have jeopardised Anglo-Soviet relations which were vital to the defeat of Nazi Germany.[59] Consequently, as the Cold War began British intelligence did not have 'a single Soviet agent worth the name, were woefully ignorant about the extent of Soviet wartime penetration, and lacked even much basic information about Soviet intelligence agencies'.[60]

Additionally, the British signals intelligence service Government Communications Headquarters was for several years in the early Cold War period of 'little assistance and never came close to replicating against the Soviet Union the spectacular wartime successes against Nazi Germany.'[61] Only at the end of the 1940s and into the early 1950s were the British and the Americans able to decipher almost 3,000 intercepted Soviet communications from the 1940s in a project codenamed Venona. These decryptions led to the discovery of Donald Maclean as a Soviet agent in 1951 but Kim Philby through his senior position in British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) was able to warn Maclean who promptly defected with another Soviet agent, Guy Burgess, to Moscow in May 1951.[62]

Alan Nunn May had studied at Trinity Hall, Cambridge University, between 1930 and 1936 and had been a contemporary of Donald Maclean.[63] During May's time at Cambridge he had become supportive of Communist ideology and during the 1930s he secretly joined

---

[58] Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the realm: the authorized history of MI5* (London, 2010), pp 263-8.
[59] John Curry, *The Security Service, 1908-1945: the official history* (Kew, 1999), p. 364
[60] Andrew, *Defence of the realm*, p. 339
[61] Ibid, p. 339
[62] Ibid, pp 423─6.
[63] Survey of Russian espionage in the United Kingdom 1935─55: Alan Nunn May, June 1956 (TNA KV 3/417); Andrew Boyle, *The climate of treason: five who spied for Russia* (London, 1969), p. 250.

the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) but was not actively involved.[64] In 1936 he was appointed to the editorial board of *Scientific Worker*, the official journal of the National Association of Scientific Workers which had many communist members.[65] By the start of the Second World War he had let his involvement in the communist party wane as he focused on scientific research.[66] In 1942 he was selected to join Britain's atomic-bomb research team, codenamed the Tube Alloys project, and transferred to Canada to undertake research where he also liaised with the American atomic research project.[67] In this position May had access to information on the atomic research programmes being directed by the Americans and visited research facilities in America.[68]

Gourzenko provided no exact date when May was recruited by the GRU but many in MI5 believed that May had been a Soviet agent for many years and had been recruited before he went to Canada but specifics are not mentioned within his MI5 case file.[69] Only towards the end of his life did May reveal his first contact with Soviet intelligence. On his deathbed he stated that he had first aided the Soviets in 1942 as he informed them about a possible German plan to detonate a nuclear dirty bomb on the Eastern Front. By doing this the Soviet intelligence services identified May as a potential agent.[70] From the Gouzenko documents it is clear that May was left alone by Soviet intelligence during his first two years in Canada. May was eventually contacted by the GRU in either late 1944 or early 1945 (the exact date is not specified). At the end of 1944 Zabotin had been instructed by his superiors in Moscow to make contact with May. A member of Zabotin's GRU staff, Pavel Angelov, was assigned as

---

[64] Paul Broda, *Scientist spies: a memoir of my three parents and the atom bomb* (Leicester, 2011), p. 54; Knight, *How the Cold War began*, p. 29; Summary of information on Nunn May, 13 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).
[65] Alan Moorhead, *The traitors: the double life of Fuchs, Pontecorvo, and Nunn May* (London, 1952), p. 21.
[66] Broda, *Scientist spies*, p. 78.
[67] Summary of information on Nunn May, 13 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).
[68] Telegram from New York regarding Dr Cockcroft's estimate of the knowledge possessed by Primrose, 10 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209); Extract from Canadian Royal Commission report, 5 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212).
[69] Summary of information on Nunn May, 13 Sep. 1945; Memorandum on Corby/Primrose case, 24 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209)
[70] *Guardian* 27 Jan. 2003.

his case officer. Angelov requested May to provide intelligence on uranium and atomic energy research rather than information on the atomic bomb project.[71] Over the next ten months May and Angelov met regularly and May provided detailed intelligence on uranium, atomic energy scientific research and provided two uranium samples, U. 233 and U. 235, which were sent to the Soviet Union for testing.[72] In April 1945 May received two hundred Canadian dollars and a bottle of whiskey from Angelov in lieu of his services.[73] The intelligence passed on by May was of vital importance as the two uranium samples were essential to research being conducted by the Soviet Union on their own atomic weapons programme. The Soviet Union eventually detonated their own atomic bomb in August 1949 which was viewed with great surprise in the West as their intelligence services had forecast that the Soviets would only be capable of constructing their first atomic weapon by the mid-1950s.[74]

Although the Gouzenko evidence led MI5 to discover May's activities for Soviet intelligence, British intelligence was still in a difficult position. May could not be arrested because the Gouzenko evidence was inadmissible in the British courts. Furthermore, Gouzenko had never met May in person meaning he could not identify him.[75] Guy Liddell, the director of B Branch, the counter-espionage section of MI5, recorded in his diary on 13 September 1945 that if May was not caught in the act of espionage then there would be great difficulty in building a case against him.[76] In July 1945 May was informed that he would be

---

[71] MI5 report on Alan Nunn May: report no. i, 1 Dec. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2226).

[72] Statement by Igor Gouzenko, 14 Mar. 1946; Statement of Alan Nunn May, 20 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212); MI5 report on Alan Nunn May: report no. i, 1 Dec. 1945; Royal Canadian Mounted Police report, 13 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2226); Copies of telegrams concerning May passed from Ottawa to Moscow, 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).

[73] MI5 report on Alan Nunn May: report no. i, 1 Dec. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2226).

[74] Christopher Andrew, *For the president's eyes only: secret intelligence and the American presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York, 1995), p. 177; Diary of Guy Liddell, 24 Sep. 1949 (TNA KV 4/471).

[75] Extract of telegram (255-258) from New York regarding Primrose, 10 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209); Memorandum on Corby case, 24 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/1419).

[76] Diary of Guy Liddell, 13 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 4/466).

returning to Britain.[77] He duly informed Zabotin who requested instructions from Moscow.[78] From the Gouzenko documents the British learned that Moscow responded by arranging a meeting between May and his new GRU controller in London, on 7 October 1945 at 8.00pm, in front of the British Museum. The 'identification sign' between them was for May to have a copy of *The Times* under his left arm while his controller would have the magazine, *Picture Post*, in his left hand. May was to confirm his identity by beginning the conversation with the phrase 'best regards from Mikel' and his contact would respond with 'what is the shortest way to the Strand' and May would respond 'well come along. I am going that way'.[79] This meeting was the perfect opportunity for MI5 to observe May in the act of espionage with Liddell recording in his diary on 18 September 1945 that this meeting was possibly the only opportunity to gain evidence to allow for the prosecution of May.[80]

From the moment May arrived in Britain he was under surveillance by MI5. This operation was the joint responsibility of B-Division, and F-Division of MI5, and also included Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police.[81] MI5 gained Home Office Warrants (HOWs) which allowed MI5 to intercept May's mail and listen in on his telephone calls.[82] These HOWs were directed against his hotel, his university office and his old residence and he was frequently shadowed by MI5 officers.[83] Despite this surveillance MI5 gained no new intelligence on May, or identified any links to the Soviets and May did not appear to be

---

[77] MI5 report on Alan Nunn May: report no. i, 1 Dec. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2226).
[78] Copies of telegrams concerning May passed from Ottawa to Moscow: telegram from Grant to the Director, 31 Aug. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).
[79] Copies of telegrams concerning May passed from Ottawa to Moscow: telegram from Grant to the Director, 9 Aug. 1945; Telegram from the Director to Grant, 22 Aug. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).
[80] Diary of Guy Liddell, 18 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 4/466).
[81] Telegram from New York regarding Primrose, 12 Sep. 1945; Telegram from CSS regarding return of Primrose to the UK, 13 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209); Notes on meeting on Primrose case, 1 Oct. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2210). B-Division was the counter-espionage and F-Division was the counter-Soviet/Communist espionage sections of MI5.
[82] Andrew, *Defence of the realm*, p. 320.
[83] Note by Marriot on May, 18 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).

acting suspiciously.[84] It was decided that if May appeared and made contact with his handler May should be arrested after the meeting while his contact should be followed and identified if possible.[85] In the days leading up to 7 October 1945 May was put under round the clock surveillance and MI5 requisitioned the top floor of a public house which offered a commanding view over the indented meeting point.[86] However, all this preparation was pointless as neither May, nor his contact, appeared for the prearranged meeting. Some officers speculated that they should arrest May immediately and interrogate him in the hope of gaining a confession but leading MI5 officers felt that this strategy would be unlikely to succeed. On 30 October 1945 Roger Hollis, the head of F-Division, stated 'We do not think we have enough material to give interrogators a reasonable chance of breaking him. His behaviour is such as to convince us that he must have been warned by Russians of possible compromise.'[87]

After May failed to make the 7 October 1945 meeting many within MI5 believed that May had been warned, either in Canada or in Britain, not to meet his contact as a result of Gouzenko's defection. During the Gourzenko investigation it was widely believed that Zabotin had managed, for some time, to hide from his superiors in Moscow that there had been a serious security breach after Gourzenko's defection. Some MI5 officers speculated that he had used this time to inform his agents, including May, that they were at risk and to disregard all previous orders. This opinion was held by many in MI5 until 1951 when the defection of Maclean and Burgess, just days before Maclean was to be interrogated by MI5, suggested that there was a Soviet mole somewhere within British intelligence. This defection alerted MI5 officers to the high probability that in the May case this agent warned that the 7

---

[84] Summary of information on Nunn May, 13 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).
[85] Notes on meeting on Primrose case, 1 Oct. 1945; Note on Primrose case, Marriott, 4 Oct. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2210); Diary of Guy Liddell, 22 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 4/466).
[86] Note from B6 to F2A regarding May, 8 Oct. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2210).
[87] Extract from telegram regarding May, Alan Nunn, Hollis, 30 Oct. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2211).

October 1945 meeting was going to be under MI5 surveillance.[88] This Soviet spy was later identified as the now infamous Kim Philby who had penetrated SIS and eventually defected himself to Moscow in 1963 after being unmasked as a Soviet agent.[89] Philby's role in the May case was finally confirmed at the end of the Twentieth Century when records from the KGB archives finally demonstrated that Philby had warned Moscow that May was under surveillance and suggested that the meeting be aborted.[90]

Kim Philby had been a Soviet agent since the mid-1930s. In 1941 he was recruited by the SIS and by 1945 he had been appointed head of Section IX which was tasked specifically with communist and Soviet counter-intelligence.[91] From his position he was aware of the intelligence which Britain and its allies were gathering on the Soviet Union. As Robert Cecil, the deputy head of SIS during the war, stated in 1984, Philby becoming head of Section IX 'ensured that the whole post-war effort to counter communist espionage would be become known in the Kremlin'.[92] In the Gouzenko case Philby was actively involved, as, from his position as head of Section IX, he had access to all information on the case as any reports from Canada to Britain came through the SIS station in New York. As a result Philby learned of the MI5 plan to observe May in the act of meeting his contact and duly informed Moscow.[93] Philby informed his Soviet contact on 18 November 1945:

> In London they are of the firm opinion that May, as well as other agents from the Zabotin network, were warned of the impending danger. According to MI5, May has not put a foot wrong from the time he arrived in England. He did not establish any suspicious contacts. He does not show any signs of being afraid or worried and continues to work quite normally on his academic research. Bearing this in mind, MI5 came to the conclusion that May is a tough customer who will not break down under questioning until he is confronted with fresh and convincing evidence.[94]

---

[88] Andrew, *Defence of the realm*, pp 344, pp 422−6.

[89] For the British intelligence investigation into the Cambridge spies see Andrew, *Defence of the realm*, pp 420-41.

[90] Genrikh Borovik, *The Philby files: the secret life of the master-spy. KGB archives revealed* (London, 1994), p.23.

[91] Keith Jeffery, *MI6: the history of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949* (London, 2011), pp 368, 657.

[92] Robert Cecil, 'The Cambridge Comintern' in Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (eds), *The missing dimension: Governments and intelligence communities in the twentieth century* (Chicago, 1984), p. 179.

[93] Borovik, *The Philby* files, pp. 239-40; Kim Philby, *My silent war* (New York, 2002), p. 177.

[94] West and Tsarev, *The crown* jewels, p. 238.

With the failure of the surveillance operation MI5 was placed in a difficult position. As Philby predicated MI5 officers were unwilling to arrest May as they felt they lacked sufficient evidence to result in a confession under interrogation.[95] May was observed throughout the remainder of 1945 but no significant developments occurred. However, on 3 February 1946 the investigation into May changed dramatically when details of Gouzenko's defection were publically broadcast by an American journalist.[96] Instantly the Gouzenko case became a media sensation. In Canada a Royal Commission was established to investigate the case and the allegations of espionage by a foreign power in Canada. Almost overnight the secret investigation into Gouzenko, his material and the agents he had identified, became a public inquiry.[97] MI5 decided that this public inquiry might present a reasonable and possibly the only chance to obtain a confession from May and plans were made to question him.[98]

May was detained for questioning on 15 February 1946 and was jointly questioned by Commander Leonard Burt of Special Branch and an MI5 officer. Initially May refuted all the allegations against him and stated that he had no contact with any Russians while in Canada.[99] However, five days later, under further interrogation MI5 and Special Branch used information from the Gouzenko documents to induce a confession. They asked him was he supposed to meet someone on 7 October outside the British Museum, was he supposed to use the greeting 'best regards from Mikel' and was he to be identified by carrying *The Times* under his left arm? They presented these questions as new information which had been gained recently during inquiries. These revelations appeared to perturb May and, believing that there was substantial intelligence against him, he confessed and stated 'I didn't keep the

---

[95] Extract from telegram (P.F. 66949 Y-6408) regarding May, Alan Nunn, from Hollis, 30 Oct. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2211).
[96] Knight, *How the Cold War began*, pp 104–8.
[97] 'Leakages in Canada', *The Times*, 5 Feb. 1946; 'Soviet spy ring in Canada', *The Times*, 16 Mar. 1946.
[98] Note on legal side of Primrose interrogation, A.D.F., 6 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212).
[99] Statement of Alan Nunn May, 15 Feb. 1946; Note on first interrogation of May, 16 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212).

appointment as, when I returned, I decided to wash my hands of the whole business.'[100] May finally confessed to being a Soviet espionage agent.

He revealed that he had been contacted by an 'individual' who he did not name who sought information on atomic research. May stated that he had provided some information on atomic energy research as well as handing over two samples of uranium. He acknowledged that he was given instructions for the meeting with his contact but that he had forgotten the precise details and had decided that he would no longer be a Soviet agent after returning to Britain. He stated that the 'whole affair was extremely painful to me' and that he 'did not do it for gain'.[101] The reason for working for the Soviets, put forward by May in this confession, was that he was concerned about ensuring that atomic energy was not confined to America. In his eyes, his actions were 'a contribution…to the safety of mankind.'[102] As part of his defence May stated that he felt justified in sharing atomic secrets with the Soviets as they had the right to this knowledge as, at that time, they were a wartime ally of both Britain and America.[103] He stated that he did not want the secrets of the atomic bomb to be monopolised by the Americans and with the public release of material on the atom bomb project at the end of the war he viewed that he was no longer required as a Soviet agent.[104] Through the creative use of Gouzenko evidence MI5 were able to obtain a confession which allowed for the successful prosecution of May. In retrospect it is clear that Philby's actions were almost successful, as the only evidence MI5 had on May was the Gouzenko evidence and without May's own confession a successful prosecution of him would not have been possible.[105]

---

[100] Deposition of Deputy Commander Burt, 19 Mar. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2226); Leonard Burt, *Commander Burt of Scotland Yard* (London, 1959), pp. 43–6.
[101] Statement of Alan Nunn May, 20 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212).
[102] Ibid.
[103] Rex v. Alan Nunn May, 1 May 1946 (TNA KV 2/2226).
[104] Statement of Alan Nunn May, 20 Feb. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2212).
[105] MI5 report on Alan Nunn May: report no. ii, 11 Mar. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2226).

He was arrested and charged with breaking the Official Secrets Act on 4 March 1946 and was tried on 1 May 1946 where he was found guilty and sentenced to ten years imprisonment.[106] MI5 continued to check May's correspondence while he was in prison in the hope of gaining additional intelligence; however, this proved fruitless.[107] In November 1946 MI5 attempted to interview May in prison in an attempt to gather additional intelligence but he refused to co-operate and was reported to be 'mistrustful of MI5 and the police'.[108] Between his incarceration in 1946 and his release in 1952 MI5 gained no additional information on or from him regarding his activities as a Soviet agent.[109] Upon May's release in 1952 MI5, hoping that he might reconnect with his Soviet handlers, placed him under observation again, including the issuing of HOWs. However, as before this surveillance revealed nothing of interest and was eventually discontinued.[110] With his career and reputation in tatters May was forced to take a job at the University of Ghana in 1961 and did not return to Britain until 1978. May believed, right up until his death in 2003, that he had done the right thing in sharing the secrets of atomic research with the Soviets.[111]

The May case revealed a significant failing in British security vetting procedure. The only mention of May in MI5 records prior to the Gouzenko case was when, as a representative of the National Association of Scientific Workers, he attended a conference in London in 1938 and was observed meeting Communist party members.[112] When it was proposed that May would join the Tube Alloys project it was the responsibility of MI5 to vet

[106] Rex vs. Alan Nunn May, 1 May 1946 (TNA KV 2/2226).
[107] Home Office Warrant, 19 Dec. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2214).
[108] Alan Nunn May: interview at Wakefield Prison, 23 Nov. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2214).
[109] Philby to Hollis, 10 Dec. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2214); Note on Alan Nunn May, DG White, 21 Nov. 1946 (TNA KV 2/2218).
[110] Home Office Warrant, 31 Dec. 1952 (TNA KV 2/2218).
[111] 'Physicist who began the atom spy era', *Guardian*, 23 Jan. 2003; 'Alan Nunn May, *The Times*, 24 Jan. 2003; 'Spy's deathbed confession', *Guardian* 27 Jan. 2003.
[112] M2 report on World Boycott Conference, 14 Feb. 1938 (TNA KV 2/2209).

him.[113] This was carried out using the vetting procedure known as 'negative vetting'. This is where individuals with access to sensitive information were checked against MI5 records to see if they were a threat but no additional research into the individual was undertaken.[114] If MI5 records revealed no mention of the individual then they were recorded as 'No Trace' in the Registry, which occurred in the case of May, which indicated that MI5 could find no evidence that he was a threat.[115] It would appear that May shielded his communist beliefs from public light.

As a result he was allowed to go to Canada where he eventually began spying for the Soviets. This shielding of communist ideology was also utilised by other Soviet agents who penetrated the British establishment such as the Cambridge Spies and other atomic spies, such as Klaus Fuchs and Bruno Pontecorvo, who were all vetted by MI5. During the late 1940s it was decided that the British security policy of negative vetting was failing to detect both potential and active Soviet agents. As a result it was decided that a new system was required which became known as positive vetting.[116] This was a more 'intrusive and focused system of investigation' which allowed MI5 to examine the history of an individual and therefore possibly uncover details which would have been missed in the negative vetting process.[117] The failure of negative vetting to detect tangible links between May and communism allowed him to be placed in a position where he proved to be a security risk to Britain and her allies and damaged the security reputation of MI5 and Britain. The revelations regarding his treachery damaged the special relationship between America and Britain. America lost confidence in Britain to offer satisfactory security and in 1946 the American

---

[113] Telegram from New York regarding arrival of Primrose in UK, 10 Sep. 1945; Summary of information on the case of Primrose, 14 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 2/2209).

[114] Hennessy, Peter and Gail Brownfield, 'Britain's Cold War security purge: the origins of positive vetting' in *The Historical Journal*, xxv, no. 4 (1982), p. 967.

[115] Application for exit permit by Primrose, 21 Nov. 1942 (TNA KV 2/2209); Diary of Guy Liddell, 17 Sep. 1945 (TNA KV 4/466).

[116] Hennessy and Brownfield, 'Britain's Cold War security purge', pp 968–70.

[117] Peter Hennessy, *The secret state: preparing for the worst 1945-2010* (London, 2010), p. 95.

Congress passed the Atomic Energy Act, also known as the McMahon Act. This act made the sharing of American atomic research with any foreign power illegal and therefore effectively ending the joint Anglo-American atomic research.[118]

The case of Alan Nunn May reveals that at the end of World War Two British intelligence agencies were at a significant disadvantage when faced with Soviet espionage in the West. During the Second World War, the lack of sufficient resources and the restrictions upon the gathering of intelligence on Soviet espionage meant that the British secret services were in a totally inadequate position to face this new threat. It was only with Gouzenko's defection did British intelligence discover the extent of the Soviet's penetration of many aspects of the west's military, political and scientific establishments during the war, from which valuable intelligence had been obtained. If it were not for Gouzenko's evidence then May would not have been identified as a Soviet agent and the British security services would not have obtained a confession from him. In hindsight the May case reveals that there was a significant weakness in MI5's vetting system. However, it was only the discovery of additional Soviet spies throughout the 1940s which prompted the British to move from negative vetting to positive vetting, thus strengthening their security. It is also now clear that in the early Cold War period the actions of Western counter-intelligence operations against the Soviet Union were being nullified before they began, due to the presence of the Soviet spy Kim Philby, whose actions also nearly prevented the successful arrest of May. By examining the case of Alan Nunn May it is evident that, in this new Cold War era, the Soviet Union was and had been a substantial threat for a number of years. The British security services were clearly afflicted by significant weakness, both apparent and hidden, which prevented the successful countering this newly exposed adversary which allowed Soviet agents to operate in Britain during the 1940s, thus damaging Britain's security.

---

[118] H. Montgomery Hyde, *The atom bomb spies* (London, 1980), p. 40.

The Soviet-Afghan war, US involvement and the Reagan doctrine – an anti-Communist jihad?

Cáthal Power

Few events in modern history have produced such contentious interpretations as the effects of American involvement in the Afghan conflict on later political developments. This polarisation focuses mostly on the part such intervention played in the ending of the Cold War and in the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Many of these interpretations correlate with their proponents' assessments of Ronald Reagan's role in history. He can ben understood as the man who ended the Cold War by triumphing over the Soviet Union in an attritional struggle. Yet, equally so it could argued that he create a hornet's nest in the Middle East which led directly to 11 September. This study considers the long history of American concern with the menace of communism and how that coloured US foreign policy; it examines the role which Jimmy Carter's administration played in setting US Middle-Eastern policy on a trajectory which Reagan pursued and amplified; and it looks at that amplification and its consequences for Afghanistan, America, the Cold War, and the growth of Islamist fundamentalism.

Russia (and later the Soviet Union) had a long history of strategic interest in Afghanistan, dating to the nineteenth century and its expansion into central Asia. In 1920 Afghanistan and the USSR signed a treaty of friendship and this relationship was augmented from 1954 when Soviet aid increased markedly. In April 1978 the Democratic People's Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power in a coup and drew ever closer to the Soviet Union whose military advisers increased from 350 to 4,000 over the following year. However, the PDPA was riven with factions and after two presidents had been overthrown and after a wave of uprisings against the government, in December 1979 the USSR sent in special-forces

troops and assassinated the latest incumbent, Hafizullah Amin, replacing him with Babrak Karmal who, it was hoped, would reunite the party.[1]

This account is generally uncontested by historians or political commentators, but the motivation behind the Russian incursion has been greatly disputed. The historical significance of the incursion seemed significant to the Americans, but was made even more so by Afghanistan's proximity to Iran and the Middle East where American geostrategic interests had grown in importance since the 1950s because of the area's vast oil resources.[2] In the western world, and particularly the USA, the most widespread view of the Soviet-Afghan War has been of a 'naked act of aggression by a ruthless totalitarian state.'[3] Gregory Feifer has, however, suggested that the decision to intervene was taken in late 1979 in response to the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and Russian fears that the USA would look to Afghanistan as a base from which to mount opposition to the new regime in Teheran. This was reinforced by concerns that Amin was a CIA agent. However, these fears were generated by an over-reliance on flawed KGB intelligence.[4]

In March 1979 the Politburo was unanimous in rejecting an Afghan government request for Soviet military aid in putting down a rebellion in Herat.[5] Yuri Andropov, future General Secretary, said:

> Comrades, I have… concluded we should consider very seriously whether it would make sense to send troops into Afghanistan… I do not think we can uphold the revolution with the help of our bayonets. The idea is intolerable and we cannot risk it.[6]

---

[1]John Young, *America, Russia and the Cold War* (Harlow, 1999), p. 117.
[2]Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The epic quest for oil, money and power* (London, 1991), pp 13-4.
[3]Gregory Feifer, *The Great gamble: The Soviet aar in Afghanistan* (New York, 2009), pp 1.
[4]Christian Friedrich Osterman, 'New evidence on the war in Afghanistan' in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 14/15 (2011), p. 139; Feifer, *Great gamble,* pp 2-12.
[5]Diego Cordovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: theiInside story of the Soviet withdrawal* (New York, 1995), pp 29--37.
[6]David N. Gibbs, 'Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Retrospect.' in *International Politics*, 37 (June 2000), p. 235.

The reluctance of the Russians to mount an invasion is reinforced by a Soviet Central Committee Report of April 1979 describing the hostility among large sectors of the Afghan population to attempted reforms by the PDPA. These measures were being carried out in an insensitive and inept manner causing both offence and chaos among a very conservative population. In particular there was much resistance from religious and tribal leaders. Opponents of the state were already accepting aid, weapons and training from Pakistan and Iran whose governments were hostile to the Kabul regime.[7] By December 1979 the Soviet leadership saw Amin, the driving force behind the unpopular reforms, as a liability and suspected he might be about to realign Afghanistan's foreign policy towards neutrality or the USA.[8]

The above analysis does not contradict a widely-held belief among many commentators that Russia's aim in Afghanistan was to maintain that nation as a buffer state on her borders. It seems likely this was not just a generalised buffer, but to prevent the spread of Islamic fundamentalism into the Soviet Union's central Asian republics with their largely Muslim populations.[9] As early as April 1979, the Soviet Politburo was discussing the growth and dangers of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. As the year progressed the Iranian revolutionary movement became more radicalised generating calls for Jihad, echoed by Saudi Arabian religious radicals.[10] This was aimed against both Arab regimes and the 'infidel' superpowers – on this level, the Russians were well ahead of the Americans in appreciating the perceived dangers of Islamic religious zealotry.

---

[7] *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars* (hereafter WWICS) 'Documents on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan' (http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/e-dossier_4) (12 July 2014).

[8] WWICS, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/e-dossier_4) (12 July 2014); Feifer, *Great gamble*, pp 33-34.

[9] Thomas Paterson, and Garry Clifford, *America ascendant: U.S. foreign policy relations aince 1939* (Lexington, 1995), p. 252; Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and confrontation: American-Soviet relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, 1994), p. 928; Feifer, *Great gamble*, p. 50.

[10] WWICS, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/e-dossier_4).

Soviet political-diplomatic actions taken on the basis of flawed intelligence and relying on speculation about the intentions of the other side was mirrored by the USA. In 1984 the CIA reviewed its intelligence-gathering performance regarding Afghanistan. It was accompanied by a restatement of the basic American attitude to the Soviet Union:

> Fueled by the messianic zeal of true believers, and based on the dogmas of international communism, the Russians have vastly expanded their empire over the last 50 years. Recently their methods have grown more subtle and more sophisticated, but world domination remains the ultimate Soviet objective.[11]

The above extract, which furnished an ideological guide to CIA thinking, sounded remarkably similar to the "Long Telegram" composed by George Kennan in 1946 which, most historians agree, formed the foundations for the Truman Doctrine in 1947.[12] Kennan asserted that the USSR was an inherently expansionist aggressor state bent on world domination which possessed "an underground operating directorate of world communism, a concealed Comintern tightly coordinated and directed by Moscow."[13] Kennan's pessimistic, hostile interpretation then went on to say:

> [Communism]is a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with [the] US there can be no permanent modus vivendi, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken… [The USSR] is impervious to the logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to the logic of force…[14]

Truman's Doctrine of Containment accepted the idea of a "global communist menace" and, based largely upon Kennan's jaundiced view of Russian untrustworthiness, it made co-existence with such a gang of amoral, manipulative liars seem well-nigh impossible.[15]

> Totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States… It must be the policy

---

[11]Lt. Gen William J. McCaffrey, "A review of Intelligence Performance in Afghanistan (1984)." *Central Intelligence Agency.* (http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP86B00269R001100100003-5) (12 July 2014)

[12]John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (London, 2005), p. 29.

[13]George Kennan, 'The Long Telegram' (1946) (www.ntanet.net/KENNAN.html) (12 July 2014).

[14]Kennan, 'The Long Telegram'.

[15]William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American diplomacy* (New York 1988), pp 279-80.

of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures.[16]

From 1947 American foreign policy was informed deeply by an anti-communist ideological imperative, summarised in the Truman Doctrine and added to by Eisenhower's Domino Theory. All foreign-policy decision-making took it into account. Communism was regarded as a deadly rival and existential threat to the USA by every president until the collapse of the USSR. Regardless of whether the threat of communist world dominion was genuine, because it was accepted by policymakers it was sufficient to produce a self-fulfilling prophecy of global antagonism between two ideologies which generated the Cold War. Only when Richard Nixon surprisingly initiated détente with China, was any distinction made between communist parties, regimes or ideologies operating around the time. So deep-rooted and fundamental was this belief in a monolithic communist movement controlled from the Kremlin, that the lack of a differentiated analysis caused dangerous blind-spots in American foreign policy. The Sino-Soviet schism was not recognised until years after it had happened, while the nationalist underpinnings of anti-colonial liberation movements were often obscured by obsessive focus upon the communists among them.[17] Joseph Siracusa's view was that, "America developed an increasingly rigid ideological view of the world – anti-communism, anti-socialism, anti-leftist – that came to rival that of Communism."[18]

Deep into his presidency, Nixon came to realise that the purported homogenous Moscow-led communist movement was actually a group of individual states pursuing their own interests, allying when necessary or forced to.[19] This led him to open dialogue with China, while Gerald Ford furthered the SALT process with the Soviet Union which Nixon and Brezhnev began. Jimmy Carter, however, reverted back to type and readopted the

---

[16] David Reynolds, *America, empire of liberty* (London, 2009), pp 380-1.
[17] Paterson & Clifford, *America ascendant*, pp 85-89.
[18] Joseph Siracusa, 'The 'New' Cold War History and the Origins of the Cold War', in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 1 (2001), p. 154.
[19] Paterson & Clifford, *America ascendant*, pp 188-9.

concept of containment. Yet he had not started off as a Cold-War hawk. For a long time the standard view of US support for the opposition forces in Afghanistan dated it to January 1980, following the Soviet invasion. This has subsequently been challenged by, among others, Peter Bergen who dates the first authorisation by Carter of funding for resistance fighters to July 3 1979.[20] This has been corroborated by one of Carter's national security advisers, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski was a hawkish, virulently anti-Soviet confrontationalist who believed in the rollback of the communist menace, accepting completely that it was a global movement intent on the destruction of the USA. In 1976 he wrote that the Soviets should see America as a "challenge to their legitimacy and thus to their very existence."[21] By 1979 Carter seemed to be enthralled to Brzezinski's judgement. When the Russians entered Afghanistan he told Congress that this was "the greatest threat to peace since the Second World War."[22]

In 1998 Brzezinski gave an interview in which he disclosed not only that aid to the rebels had begun earlier than believed, but also revealed the rationale behind this action:

> It was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention… We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would… That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap… The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, essentially: "We now have the opportunity of giving the USSR its Vietnam War"… [This was] a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire… What is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some agitated Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?[23]

Thus, far from abhorring the Russian invasion, it was actually welcomed and encouraged by the Carter administration. The return to Cold-War thinking was apparent in Carter's State of the Union Address in January 1980. Much of it was given over to a diatribe against the Soviet

---

[20] Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, inc: inside the secret world of Osama Bin Laden* (London, 2002), p. 71.
[21] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "From Cold War to Cold Peace" in G.K. Urban (ed) *Détente (*New York, 1976), pp 264-5.
[22] Reynolds, *America,* p. 505.
[23] Gibbs, 'Afghanistan', pp 241-42.

Union warning of the dire consequences of her incursion into Afghanistan, and this part of the speech has come to be known as the Carter Doctrine. He stated:

> The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance: It contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, a waterway through which most of the world's oil must flow… Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.

It seems incredible that Carter believed the Russians had designs on reaching the Indian Ocean, since standing in their path were Iran and Pakistan, both predominantly Muslim counites, as well as being powerful nations. Andrew Hartman has argued that Carter did believe this, but was nudged in that direction by defence and intelligence reports which were strongly influenced by America's oil interests. Hartman further argues that these reports were embellished in order to achieve the policy shift with which Carter duly obliged.[24]

Right-wing, conservative elements such as Eugene Rostow and Paul Nitze, who had built their careers on an us-versus-them Cold-War foreign-policy approach and were implicated in the above reports, had to work hard to convert Carter to their viewpoint. However, in Reagan they had a kindred spirit who had been a hard-line anti-communist from the 1940s. He believed Richard Nixon was wrong to open dialogue with any communist regime.[25] His was a very black-and-white view of politics. For him the Soviet Union was the "evil empire", an unmitigated malevolent regime whose goal was world domination. He was intent not on containment, but on confrontation and destroying the Soviet "system". A December 1982 Security Council meeting on "Relations with the USSR" chaired by Reagan started with the words "All agree that US policy should contribute to containing and in time reversing Soviet expansionism". Like Rostow and Nitze, he was a member of the Committee

---

[24]Andrew Hartman, '"The red template": US policy in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan' in *Third World Quarterly*, 3 (2002), pp 467-72.
[25]Richard V. Allen, The Man Who Won the Cold War' January 2000, Hoover Digest (http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/7398) (12 July 2014).

on the Present Danger (CPD), a hawkish pressure-group founded during the McCarthy era, doggedly anti-communist, and now dedicated to eliminating détente and going on the offensive against the USSR. [26] The CPD supported Reagan's bid for the presidency, formulated his foreign policy, issued a false report of a "missile gap" favouring the Soviet Union when it was actually the reverse, and persuaded him to advocate huge increases in defence spending. Reagan was duly elected and 33 members of the CPD subsequently served in his administration.[27]

Several commentators have argued that Reagan's foreign policy and arms build-up were the result of collusion between the Department of Defense and its military-hardware suppliers, a much enhanced version of the 'military-industrial complex' which Eisenhower had warned against. Tax-payers bore the burden of cost-plus deals and paid for the research and development necessary for new weaponry, including all the money poured into the Star Wars project. Furthermore, Reagan and his advisers deliberately exaggerated the Soviet threat to justify the escalation and the lavishing of tax dollars on arms firms who in turn provided financial support to the Republicans and lucrative directorships to key insiders.[28] Even John Lewis Gaddis, Cold-War historian and supporter of a hard-line policy said, "Containment has been the product, not so much of what the Russians have done… but of internal forces operating within the US. What is surprising is the primacy that has been accorded economic considerations in shaping strategies of containment, *to the exclusion of other considerations.*"[29] It can be garnered from this that Reagan's foreign policy was driven in large measure by corporate self-interest. However, that does not mean that Reagan and most of his advisers were not genuine anti-communist ideologues.

---

[26]Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out there in the blue: Reagan, star aars, and the end of the Cold War* (New York, 2000), pp 80-2.
[27]Hartman, 'Red template', p. 474.
[28]Fitzgerald, *Way Out There*, p. 243; Hartman, 'Red template', p. 474.
[29]John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford, 1982), pp 356-57.

Reagan's policy towards Afghanistan was an integral part of his foreign policy, the kernel of which was an anti-Soviet crusade usually referred to as the Reagan Doctrine. It is summed up in a statement uttered by Reagan in 1977: 'My idea of American policy toward the Soviet Union is simple, and some would say simplistic. It is this: We win and they lose.'[30] Ignoring Carter's emphasis upon promoting human rights, Reagan appeared to take the line that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend.' This allowed him to support some unsavoury resistance movements including those engaged in terrorism in Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, Cambodia and Nicaragua. He also backed regimes with sound anti-communist credentials, regardless of their own dire human-rights records – South Africa, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and the Philippines among others.[31] Reagan's belief in an international communist movement did not however seem to apply to China whose hostility to the Soviet Union apparently marked it out as one of "my enemy's enemies". From 1980 the USA began selling weapons to China and in return was allowed to operate tracking and listening stations in Xinjiang province bordering Afghanistan. This compensated for the loss of similar facilities in northern Iran two years earlier. Furthermore the CIA cooperated with the Chinese in training Mujahiddin fighters in both Pakistan and Xinjiang.[32]

During the last year of Carter's presidency, about $30 million dollars was approved in aid to Afghan rebels, the money was channelled to the CIA who implemented the covert program, sometimes called Operation Cyclone.[33] When Reagan came into office, the annual budget soared. By 1987 it was $700 million per year.[34] The Afghan rebels were a mixture of tribal peoples, warlords, and religious leaders and acolytes, collectively known as the

---

[30] Allen, 'The Man Who Won'.
[31] Paterson & Clifford, *America ascendant*, pp 258-9.
[32] Yitzhak Shichor, 'The Great Wall of Steel: Military and Strategy' in Frederick Starr (ed), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (New York, 2004), pp 157-8.
[33] Bergen, *Holy War*, p. 71.
[34] Craig Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud* (London, 2004), pp 98-100; . Bergen, *Holy War*, p. 104.

Mujahiddin (holy warriors). The fundamentalist Islamic elements of the Mujahiddin who soon dominated the movement proved particularly attractive to many young Muslims throughout the Middle East and beyond, flooding into the region to aid their perceived Afghan brothers in the fight against the infidels.[35]

The covert war waged by the CIA and authorised by Reagan had profound effects on US foreign policy. The US found intself obliged to enter into close alliance with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, two undemocratic states who fell far short of the ideals for which the anti-communist crusade was supposedly fighting, and who both supported pan-Islamism. Reagan's judgement was that the Soviet Union threatened US interest's more than Islamic fundamentalism.[36]

Refugee camps for Afghanis in northern Pakistan were established by the Pakistani regime of President Zia-ul-Haq and its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. The ISI were the distributors of most of the $3 billion which American taxpayers unwittingly contributed to the Mujahiddin over the next decade, a sum matched by Saudi contributions. These Saudi contributors were Wahhabists, whose sectarian theology asserted that religious beliefs should be strictly prescribed, obligatory, and enforced politically.[37] Their influence and the co-operation of the ISI soon turned these camps into training centres for Islamist warriors. Zia wanted Afghanistan to be a thoroughly Islamised nation in order to create a reliable buffer state on its border – similar to the USSR's view of Afghanistan's role. It was this which motivated Pakistan to recognise the Taliban when it later seized power in Afghanistan.[38] Pakistan insisted that all US funding should be channelled through the ISI who allocated most

---

[35]Unger, *House of Bush*, p. 99.
[36]Hartman, 'Red template', p. 477.
[37]Ahmed Rashid, 'The Taliban: exporting extremism' in *Foreign Affairs*, 6 (1999), pp 22-35.
[38]Hartman, 'Red template', pp 477-8.

of this vast amount of money to extreme fundamentalists among the Mujahiddin.[39] The CIA thus acted as paymasters, and later as trainers, intelligence providers and suppliers of sophisticated weaponry, to some of the most potentially dangerous and fanatical men imaginable.[40]

The policy of the ends justifying the means was evident in Reagan's support for the Mujahiddin. There seemed to be no restrictions on who was supplied with help and weaponry, as long as they were directing their fight against the Afghan regime and the Russians. Peshawar in northern Pakistan became a huge conduit and supply base where resistance fighters were equipped with everything from sniper rifles to C-4 explosives to the most advanced Stinger missiles. Significantly, too, the town became the centre for a burgeoning pan-Islamist movement, attracting thousands of fundamentalist militants from Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front, Egypt's Al Gama'a al-Islamiya, Palestine's Hamas and the Philippines' Moro Liberation Front. It also allowed many thousands more previously unaligned young zealots to mingle and learn from these warriors of Allah. Among those was Osama Bin Laden.[41]

The USA actively sought to unite the forces of resistance and decided that rather than secular unity, Islam would be a more effective cohesive. Advised by the ISI, it also judged that the most extreme groups were most likely to achieve success and backed these. The effect was to create internecine warfare with, for example, Hizb-I Islami killing other less radical resistance fighters and mounting a campaign of extreme terrorist violence within Afghanistan, including throwing acid in the faces of female students not wearing a veil.[42] With such unyielding, uncompromising groups in possession of vast amounts of weaponry

[39]Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: disenchanted allies* (Washington, 2001), p. 252
[40]Bergen, *Holy War*, p. 69.
[41]Unger, *House of Bush*, pp 104-06.
[42]Hartman, 'Red template', pp 478-9.

and funding, after the Soviet withdrawal, a protracted and costly civil war ensued. However a certain unity was created, but in a way that boded ill for future American experience. It is estimated that about 100,000 Muslim extremists from across the globe passed through the CIA-funded camps. Hartman sees this as 'Something akin to a radical Islamic foreign legion… taking shape.'[43] Future American foreign policy and future enemies were being shaped by short-sighted US involvement in Afghanistan based on an anti-communist obsession.

There were also implications for American domestic politics. On taking up the presidency, Reagan appointed William Casey, a fellow-member of the CPD, as head of the CIA. In an unprecedented move he made the position of CIA director a cabinet post, and in that role Casey orchestrated those parts of foreign policy which related to implementing the Reagan Doctrine. This severely undermined the State Department which had always been the American equivalent of a foreign ministry. As well as involvement in the Iran-Contra affair with its subterfuge, concealment from Congressional oversight, unaccountability, illicit arms dealing, and support for Nicaraguan death squads, Casey and the CIA directed the Afghan involvement and therefore effectively set US Middle-Eastern policy, and indirectly US-Soviet relations. CIA control led to the deliberate hampering of diplomatic attempts to broker peace in the region, preferring continued military escalation to negotiation since that was more in line with the Reagan Doctrine of confrontation with the perceived Soviet menace.[44] Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary at the State Department, said, "This was the CIA's war, not State's."[45] The unaccountable power of the CIA eventually caused so much alarm that in 1984 the arch-conservative, Barry Goldwater, condemned Casey's actions; while in 1988 the

---

[43]Ibid, p. 480.
[44]Ibid", 476-77.
[45]Kux, *United States and Pakistan,* 266.

Senate passed a bill obliging the government to inform it immediately of all covert actions being carried out.[46]

Duplicity and hypocrisy permeated the CIA and infected the highest levels of US government. In 1984 Reagan declared that "terrorism has become a frightening challenge to the tranquility and stability of our friends and allies… In recent years a very worrisome new kind of terrorism has developed: the direct use of instruments of terror by foreign states… state-provided training, financing, and logistical support to terrorists."[47] At the same time the US was arming both the Contras and the Mujahiddin who were engaged in terrorism and intimidatory violence against civilian populations.

There is little doubt that the weaponry, intelligence and manpower which Operation Cyclone contributed aided greatly in the fight against the Russians and tipped the balance, especially the use of Stinger missiles which effectively crippled the Soviet-supplied Afghan air-force and prevented its helicopters operating. By 1989 the Russians had decided to cut their losses and withdrew their military forces. The PDPA government struggled on for a further three years, followed by four years of civil war after which the Taliban, aided by Al Qaeda, emerged as rulers of the country, embarking upon policies of violent repression, murder and terror against any dissent. The USA, meanwhile, had abandoned Afghanistan to its fate, only returning in 2001 after in the Twin Towers' attack, to subject the country to massive aerial bombing and occupation by American troops where once the Russians had been condemned for similar actions.[48]

---

[46] US National Archives and Records Administration, '11-124-2: Intelligence and Foreign Policy.' (http://research.archives.gov/description/7283299, 39) (12 July 1914).
[47] Press statement issued by Ronald Reagan, 26 April 1984. (http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB55/nsdd138congress.pdf) (20 July 2014)
[48] Hartman, 'Red template', p. 484.

The great debate which has ensued since the end of Russian military participation in Afghanistan consists of two factors. For those such as Zbigniew Brzezinski it appears that the price of destroying the USSR was worthwhile. Among those on the right of American politics, such as Richard V. Allen, former adviser to Reagan, the end result of the Reagan Doctrine in action was vindication, satisfaction and triumphalism: 'His critics derided him as naive, but Ronald Reagan set out to win the Cold War all the same - to win it, we repeat, not just manage it. Who looks naive now?'[49]

For the Afghan people, the whole 34-year episode can only be regarded as an unmitigated disaster. Millions of refugees, hundreds of thousands and possibly more dead, uncountable numbers injured, the destruction of cities and infrastructure, the sharpening of internecine hostilities and hatreds, a devastated countryside, a population living in fear, its women persecuted for deviation from fundamentalist insistence on their subservient role. Once the war in Afghanistan was over, the fundamentalist Jihadists, now armed to the teeth, were free to turn their attention to other parts of the world, such as Somalia, Yemen, Indonesia, Kenya – and the United States. Al Qaeda and a plethora of other terrorist organisations continued to be supported by Pakistan, by wealthy Saudi Arabians, and by a lucrative and massively increased heroin trade which travelled the same route as the weapons trail into Pakistan but in reverse.[50] Furthermore, they fanned out into the wider world and inflicted devastation on American society during 11 September attacks. This phenomenon is what is known in the intelligence communities as "blowback", the unintended consequences of covert operations.[51] To defend against this charge, those who still see Reagan's legacy as an untarnished triumph argue that the CIA did not arm the dangerous foreign Jihadists flocking to the cause –

[49]Allen, 'The Man Who Won'.
[50]Unger, *House of Bush*, pp 107-8.
[51]Ibid, p. 110.

according to Peter Bergen and others, that was the work of the Pakistani ISI.[52] This however is specious because the CIA funnelled its funding through the ISI – being an arms-length sponsor of terrorists does not absolve you from complicity. Bergen also admits to direct CIA funding of two particularly notorious and powerful Islamists, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, both subsequently designated as global terrorists by the USA.[53]

Drawing the Russians into a war of attrition in Afghanistan did not cause the collapse of the Soviet Union and end the Cold War. It contributed to straining the USSR's finances, but far less than the overall arms race. Furthermore the Soviet Union's fossilised structures were already disintegrating and change was almost inevitable.[54] With the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev, reform and restructuring in a radical but orderly way seemed possible, but with the sudden implosion which occurred, the consequences were far less benign. What resulted was widespread poverty, the collapse of social services and welfare provision, the rise of organised crime, the obscene division of wealth between billionaire oligarchs and the rest, a futile war in Chechnya, and a flawed representative polity. This is scarcely a proud legacy, nor the fact that hundreds of thousands of Afghanis and thousands of young Soviet conscripts had to die to achieve this. But surely the most damning verdict is that the world is *not* a safer place than it was in 1979, and that the so-called Soviet global menace has been replaced by one far more difficult to contain and potentially more destabilising – Islamic fundamentalism, a movement genuinely desirous of remaking the world in its own image or destroying it if necessary.

The power of the Reagan Doctrine to blind American policy-makers to reality is summed up in observations made by Eugene Rostow, one of Reagan's CPD appointees, writing as late

---

[52]Bergen, *Holy War*, pp 66-9; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: the secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden* (London, 2001), pp 58-60.
[53]Bergen, *Holy War*, pp 69-74.
[54]Archie Brown, *The rise and fall of Communism* (London, 2010), pp 587-602.

as 1989, 'The pressures of Soviet expansion are worse than ever… In the Middle East, Soviet policy is the worst it has been in twenty years… Soviet goals are unchanged…'[55] Whether Reagan's accelerated arms race hastened the bankrupting and collapse of the Soviet system is possibly a moot point, but what is certain is that short-sighted adherence to an all-consuming anti-communist foreign policy led directly to the burgeoning of Islamism, generated increased global terrorism, drew the USA more deeply than ever into the Middle East, and stoked up the fires of anti-Americanism in this volatile region - confirming the hornet's nest scenario.

---

[55]Eugene V. Rostow, 'A breakfast for Bonaparte: there is no alternative strategy' in Ted Galen Carpenter (ed), *Collective defence or strategic independence?* (Washington, 1989), pp 3-4.

The impact of John Hume on the first power-sharing experiment in Northern Ireland.

Seán McKillen

The signing of the Sunningdale Agreement in December 1973 represents a seminal moment in the history of the Northern conflict. This agreement paved the way for a devolved power-sharing Assembly and Executive which featured representatives of both communities in Northern Ireland for the first time. The road to this agreement was lined with strife, but this new departure offered the hope of better days to come. Although the institutions of the new devolved government would fall within five months, their establishment represents a major success. Although it is often characterised as a failure when placed in direct comparison to the Good Friday Agreement, foundations were laid during this period which would enable a more comprehensive agreement down the line. For the purposes of this article, the role which John Hume and the SDLP played in helping to establish this new form of governance will be examined.

In order to provide a rounded analysis of this topic, it is necessary to focus on the period from January 1969 to May 1974. This period saw John Hume come into the foreground of Northern Irish society. He was elected as the Foyle MP to Stormont in the February 1969 General Election.[1] He was elected as an independent and joined the opposition benches. 'The Troubles' kicked off with the violence surrounding a planned Apprentice Boys march through Derry city. The fighting which ensued between the residents of the Bogside and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) became known as the 'Battle of the Bogside'. It led to the creation of no-go areas, such as 'Free Derry'.[2] The RUC were completely exhausted as unrest spread across Ulster, particularly in Belfast. There were rumours that the unrest was

---

[1] Paul Bew and Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the Troubles 1968-1999* (Dublin, 1999), p. 13.
[2] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 18.

part of a concerted effort on the part of some members of the Nationalist community to create a conflict which would force the deployment of British troops to calm tensions. This idea took hold soon after the outbreak of violence, and was reported extensively in the various media outlets present at this time.[3]

The arrival of British troops on 14 August 1969 was seen as a victory for the nationalist community, but the feeling of elation would be short lived. Jack Lynch's intervention the previous night brought the Irish Government directly into the conflict, from which they would not be able to extricate themselves.

> It is evident, also, that the Stormont government is no longer in control of the situation. Indeed the present situation is the inevitable outcome of the policies pursued for decades by successive Stormont governments. It is clear, also, that the Irish government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse.[4]

The immediate aftermath of the violence in the Bogside saw a deepening of the community divisions and associated bitterness in Northern Irish society.[5] It also marked the beginning of the British Government taking a more hands-on approach to the affairs of Northern Ireland.[6] These events laid the foundations for the rest of the conflict. Although initially happy at the arrival of British troops, the nationalist community soon came to realise that they were not there to implicitly protect them, and that their role was simply to protect the established order, even in the face of bitter opposition and resentment.[7] The outbreak of serious violence had another lasting effect on Northern Irish society. The failure which the IRA were perceived to have had in defending the Catholic areas in Derry City from hostile intervention on behalf of the RUC led to its decreased credibility in the Catholic community, paving the way for a fundamental split to occur in the organisation. This split led to the creation of a

---

[3] *Irish Press*, 13 August 1969.
[4] Jack Lynch, 'The Irish Government can no longer stand by' in Richard Aldous (ed), *Great Irish speeches* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 133-136.
[5] David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making sense of the troubles: the story of conflict in Northern Ireland* (Chicago, 2002), p. 56.
[6] McKittrick and McVea, *Making sense of the troubles*, p. 57.
[7] Adrian Guelke, *Northern Ireland: the international perspective* (Dublin, 1988), p. 44.

breakaway 'Provisional IRA' in December 1969, which would subsequently attract much more support than the rump 'Officials'. The Provisionals would be instrumental in wreaking havoc throughout the conflict, as they were committed to drawing the British army into an open conflict with the end game of lowering their morale, and forcing an eventual British withdrawal from NI.[8]

With the outbreak of hostilities in late 1969, it became ever more important to find a solution to the problems at the very heart of society. John Hume, and several of his colleagues on the opposition benches recognised that Stormont as an institution could only be useful if it worked for all of the citizens of Northern Ireland. To force through reforms at Stormont, there needed to be a cohesive voice speaking for the largely disenfranchised Nationalist community. Hume began talks with his fellow opposition MPs about forming an alliance to challenge Unionist Rule. On 21 August, the SDLP was officially launched, with Gerry Fitt serving as leader, and Hume taking up the role of deputy leader.[9] With the upsurge in violence, the SDLP began to offer a less coercive approach to solving the North's problems than that being offered by the IRA.[10] Fitt and Hume reached out to all the dissatisfied in the North by promising that the new party would not be sectarian in nature, and would do all in its power to stamp out injustices. They asked the people not to look at the SDLP as a Catholic party, instead a party that would try and bring real reform to Northern Ireland for the benefit of all its citizens.[11] Many viewed Hume as the real leader of the party, due mainly to the fact that most of the parties early and indeed later ideas emanated from him. It was necessary to install Fitt as leader for two reasons: firstly he was the only MP at Westminster and secondly he had an important local machine behind him in his Belfast base, which the SDLP would

---

[8] Guelke, *Northern Ireland: the international perspective*, p. 45.
[9] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 30.
[10] Richard English, *Irish freedom: the history of nationalism in Ireland* (London, 2006), p. 373.
[11] *Irish Press*, 22 August 1970.

need if they wished to grow.[12] Hume was busy behind the scenes early on. He developed

relationships with politicians of all sides in the South, which built up a reservoir of goodwill

towards the fledgling party. These contacts would prove crucial in the coming years,

especially during the Sunningdale Talks and in the build-up to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.[13]

Although the social and political situation looked bleak, Hume remained upbeat about future

prospects, believing that things could indeed change, no matter how difficult things became.

This conviction would be a hallmark of his political career, and his patience and skills would

be needed towards the end of this period to keep the SDLP project alive in the face of the

ever-growing threat of militant nationalism.

> It is my strong conviction, as well as that of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, that the politics of
> Northern Ireland are not hopelessly irrational. They do have a meaning and a structure...Events are, in fact,
> predictable-often, it must be admitted, depressingly so.[14]

As the violence increased throughout 1971, the new Prime Minister of Northern Ireland,

Brian Faulkner began pushing for the internment without trial of people suspected in engaging in

acts of terrorism against the State. These proposals were popular among the hard-liners in his

party, such as Rev. Ian Paisley and James Craig. Hume and the SDLP were vociferously opposed

to the very idea of it, believing that instead of providing security, it would lead to a recruiting field

day for the Provisional IRA. Hume had argued against Internment as early as early as January

1971. He believed that a more acceptable police force was needed in the most troubled areas of the

province.[15] Around this time, Hume began to mull over the idea of power-sharing at Stormont. He

envisaged an Assembly elected through Proportional Representation (PR), with a fifteen member

Executive Council. These ideas would eventually from the basis for the SDLP's negotiating

position during the Sunningdale talks.[16] The Unionists opposed Hume and his vision for the future

of Northern Ireland. They believed him to a be just as embittered as the militants on the

---

[12] Barry White, *John Hume: statesman of the troubles* (Belfast, 1984), p. 100.
[13] White, *John Hume,* p. 105.
[14] John Hume, *Personal views: politics, peace and reconciliation in Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), p. 35.
[15] White, *John Hume,* p. 109.
[16] White, *John Hume,* p. 110.

Nationalist side, and believed that he was fundamentally opposed to the state due to his and his parties declared aim of a united Ireland.[17] They perceived this as a threat to their established dominance, forgetting that the SDLP sought a united Ireland through the consent of both communities in the North as well as the Southern population. Although the Unionist Party felt they were introducing sufficient reforms, such as Chichester-Clarke's campaign for One-man-one-vote, Hume believed they were not moving fast enough. Faulkner introduced proposals for a new committee system at Stormont, whereby the opposition would have an input into some of the administrative affairs of state. The SDLP cautiously endorsed these proposals on 22 June, waiting to see if the reforms would ever take place.[18]

Soon after endorsing Faulkner's proposals, the SDLP abruptly pulled out of Stormont over an incident involving the deaths of two men in Derry city, who were killed by the British Army on 8 July. Hume announced that unless there was an independent inquiry into the deaths of Seamus Cusack and Desmond Beattie, the SDLP would pull out of Stormont indefinitely. With no inquiry in the pipeline, the SDLP duly pulled out on 16 July, just before Internment was introduced.[19] Hume led calls for a rent and rates strike across Ulster, which attracted widespread support from the nationalist community. To emphasis Hume's position of power in the party, he pushed for leaving Stormont against the wishes of prominent SDLP members such as Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin.[20] They were allegedly forced to accept SDLP withdrawal due to Hume's support among grass-roots members and the general public.[21] Hume had considerable ability to debate and articulate Catholic grievances with a force, passion and logic that allowed him to win the community over to his initiatives. It was at this point that Hume abandoned the committee proposals, favouring radical institutional changes

---

[17] Brian Faulkner, *Memoirs of a statesman* (London, 1978), p. 105.
[18] Ibid., p. 35.
[19] Ibid., p. 36.
[20] White, *John Hume,* p. 113.
[21] Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland in the twentieth century* (London, 2003), p. 553.

which would open the door to the future reunification of Ireland through the principle of consent.[22]

'Operation Demetrius' was launched on 9 August, ushering in the era of Internment, but only of members of the nationalist community.[23] Hume was appalled by these events, particularly due to the ineptitude of the searches carried out by the British army. A great deal of damage was done to the properties of people who had nothing to do with the violence.[24] Many Unionists, including Brian Faulkner rejected Hume's criticisms of Internment as they believed the SDLP had pulled out of Stormont due to extremist pressure on Hume.[25] To prove Hume's point about the impact of Internment, the security situation got even worse in the immediate aftermath of its introduction, leading to the arrival of an extra 1,500 British Troops on 7 October.[26] The *Compton Report* into allegations of brutality at the hands of the British soldiers in conducting searches and interrogating suspects was released in late 1971. Although cleared of any wrongdoing in the areas of torture, Section 4 of the report admits to some ill-treatment, leading to a reassessment of future tactics. It proved to be a whitewash however, giving rise to an all too familiar pattern.[27]

30 January 1972 is a date which has been seared into the consciousness of Irish history. On this day fourteen innocent civilians lost their lives when they were fired upon by members of the British Army's Parachute Regiment whilst attending a Civil rights march in Derry city.[28] This event more than any other, helped to radicalise a community that was for

[22] *Irish Press*, 17 July 1971.
[23] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles,* p. 36.
[24] McKittrick and McVea, *Making sense of the troubles,* p. 72.
[25] Faulkner, *Memoirs,* p. 108.
[26] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles,* p. 40.
[27] Great Britain. Parliament. Report of the enquiry into allegations against the security forces of physical brutality in Northern Ireland arising out of events on the 9th August, 1971, [Compton Report], (Cmnd. 4832), (November 1971). London: HMSO.

[28] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 44.

the most part only demanding civil rights which had been denied to them. This savage loss of life, led to an increase in support among the nationalist community for the Provisionals campaign of violence against the State. Internment had served to increase tensions, whilst 'Bloody Sunday' gave rise to an explosion of hostility towards the British Army. Hume, when asked to give his reaction to the day's events gave the following quote: "Many people down there…feel now that it is a United Ireland or nothing".[29] He was commenting on the feelings of the people on the streets of Derry, but nonetheless his comments would be misconstrued for years to come. His job was to hold his community together in the aftermath of a great tragedy.[30] The pressure on him to do so was intensified through collective pressure being exerted by the Provisionals campaign, the British Government, and the Unionists on Faulkner to deal with the North's security problems.

Although the events of the day have become legend, the aftermath of 'Bloody Sunday' was to prove crucial in defining the future of Northern Ireland. Many hoped it would prove to be a watershed moment in Irish history and that the outrage and resentment would give way to a search for solutions. It instead increased nationalist isolation from both the instruments of the state and the British government. It helped to "…harden attitudes, increased paramilitary recruitment, helped generate more violence, and convulsed Anglo-Irish relations".[31] The deterioration of Anglo-Irish relations would be characterised by the Irish government recalling its ambassador from London, and the destruction of the British embassy in Dublin at the hands of a violent mob. If a solution was to be found, then relations between Britain and Ireland would have to improve. This is where Hume and the SDLP came in. Hume and his colleagues had already established contacts with politicians in the South, and had set about trying to bring them on board with their proposals for a new elected

[29] White, *John Hume*, p. 120.
[30] *Irish Times*, February 1 1972.
[31] McKittrick and McVea, *Making sense of the troubles,* p. 77.

Assembly, allowing for both communities to share power together. Hume realised that Stormont could no longer offer the hope of peaceful reconciliation. The SDLP walkout had led to Heath believing that Stormont had lost its legitimacy, and with the security situation deteriorating daily, he believed the time had come to pull the plug in March 1972.[32]

Heath announced the temporary suspension of Stormont on 24 March 1972. It ushered in a period of direct rule. He had summoned Faulkner to Westminster for a meeting about the crisis in the North. Heath asked Faulkner to hand responsibility for security issues back to Westminster, leading to Faulkner resigning in protest. The Unionists had now lost the ability to determine their future, mainly because of their reluctance to offer concessions to the Nationalist community. Heath believed that Internment had failed, and had only served to pour fuel on the fire.[33] March 26 saw the appointment of William Whitelaw as the first Secretary of State for NI. This was a crucial appointment, as he had built a reputation at Westminster as a conciliatory negotiator. His period in office would be marked by his decision to meet with representatives of the Provisionals in secret, in order to show them that the British Government was willing to keep every option on the table to end the conflict. Although the meeting was held in secret, and nothing was agreed, Whitelaw did make one concession; special category status for those convicted of paramilitary activities. It was a show of good faith, yet it would have disastrous consequences down the line.[34]

Whitelaw's appointment had a positive effect on the mood within the SDLP camp. His decision to open immediate negotiations with all those willing to sit down with him impressed Hume. By this time Hume was his parties chief-strategist and saw that in Whitelaw there existed an opportunity for a negotiated settlement. From the time of the prorogue of

---

[32] Ibid., p. 82.
[33] Ibid., p. 89.
[34] Sydney Elliott and W.D. Flackes, *Northern Ireland: a political directory 1968-1999* (Belfast, 1999), p. 506.

Stormont until the Sunningdale negotiations at the end of 1973, Hume and Whitelaw were heavily involved in negotiations about the future of NI.[35] If one is to look at the SDLP's policy document *Towards a New Ireland (1972)*, and Whitelaw's White Paper of *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals (1973)*, one cannot fail to see the similarities in the proposals put forward by both sides. Both propose an elected assembly based at Stormont, with an Executive committee looking after the administrative affairs of state. The SDLP's document outlines a role for the Republic of Ireland in NI along with Britain.[36] The White Paper leaves open the possibility of a role for ROI, whilst also leaving open the possibility of a united Ireland.[37] The suspension of Stormont paved the way for fresh talks and the formulation of an audacious experiment in NI: power-sharing.

The immediate aftermath of the suspension of Stormont was a mixture of joy and despair in Northern Ireland. There was no doubting the joy which the Provisionals felt at the British deciding to take responsibility for security and policing away from the Unionist government at Stormont. They believed that it set them up for direct confrontation with the agents of British control: the army. There was widespread despair on the Unionist benches also, as they had lost the right to govern over the affairs of Northern Ireland independently. Hume and the SDLP looked on with renewed optimism about the road ahead. They had pulled out of Stormont believing that it was not capable of delivering the reforms they believed were necessary. They had held secret talks with the Provisionals, before Whitelaw broke the mould by agreeing to do so also. Although Hume was not liked a great deal by the majority of members of the Unionist party, there was grudging respect for his methods and his actions. Faulkner believed Hume to be a constructive individual who was dignified in his

---

[35] Elliott and Flackes, *Northern Ireland: a political directory,* p. 284.
[36] SDLP. *Towards a New Ireland.* Proposals by the Social Democratic and Labour Party. 1972.
[37] Northern Ireland Office. *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals,* [White Paper], (Cmnd. 5259), (20 March 1973). London: HMSO.

approach in ensuring a fair system of government.[38] What could not be doubted was Hume's commitment to the idea of peaceful negotiation in the face of renewed violence unleashed by both nationalist and loyalist paramilitaries. 1972 represented the bloodiest year of the Troubles by this point, as a total of 496 people lost their lives; mostly through the activities of the paramilitaries.[39]

It was against this backdrop that the need for a resolution of the deadlocked political situation came sharply into focus. Hume had shown through his contacts with the IRA that he was willing to talk to anyone in the hope of curtailing the violence. He had held discussions with Whitelaw, but also chose to talk to his opposite number in the Labour party, Merlyn Rees. Rees was invited to visit Hume in Derry in late 1972 to discuss the on-going stalemate. Hume personally took Rees through the Bogside to inspect the situation on the streets before convening a meeting in Hume's home. Rees would recall later that the meeting had been very informative and that a good relationship had been struck up between the men, which would become crucial in the following year.[40] Whitelaw called together a conference of political parties of NI in September 1972 to discuss options for the future. It was held at Darlington, but only the UUP, Alliance party and NILP attended. Hume and the SDLP had taken the decision to boycott the conference in protest at the continuing policy of internment, demonstrating a continuation of their stance from the previous year. The conference achieved very little as a result without representation on behalf of the nationalist community.[41]

Whitelaw released his White Paper on NI on 20 March 1973. It had evolved since the original Green Paper to encompass several of the SDLP ideas on power sharing, such as an

---

[38] Faulkner, *Memoirs,* p. 201.

[39] David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney, et al., *Lost lives: the stories of the men, women and children who died as a result of the Northern Ireland troubles* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 138.

[40] Merlyn Rees, *Northern Ireland: a personal perspective* (London, 1985), p. 24.

[41] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 55.

elected Executive, and the possibility of a united Ireland through a majority of the population voting in favour, otherwise NI would remain in the UK.[42] Faulkner faced down opposition to the White Paper from within his own party, surviving a vote on rejection of the proposals. Although he triumphed, the closeness of the vote underlined the deep divisions forming within his party. This would be evidenced by William Craig's forming of his Vanguard Unionist party on 30 March.[43] Hume and the SDLP cautiously welcomed these proposals, whilst still holding the abolition of internment as a condition for their re-engagement with the political process in NI. The British government passed the *Northern Ireland Constitution Act* on 3 May, in the hope of speeding up the devolution of powers to a new Assembly. The Act provided for a consultation role for the ROI in NI affairs but was generally vague on the exact parameters of influence.[44] The British government wished to hold elections to the new Assembly as quickly as possible, so as to keep the momentum going towards a possible settlement. Hume was the chief architect of the SDLP's election strategy, moving the party towards campaigning on four main themes: a high powered Council of Ireland, the end of internment, a general amnesty for all those convicted of acting against the state, and the replacement of the RUC in favour of a police force acceptable to the Catholic community.[45]

The Assembly election was held on 28 June 1973. The SDLP came out with 22 per cent of the vote, garnering 19 seats in the Assembly. Hume topped the pole in Derry, cementing his place as the chief representative for the Catholic community in the county.[46] Unionist opposition to the SDLPs proposals centred around the Council of Ireland, despite

---

[42] Northern Ireland Office. *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals*, [White Paper], (Cmnd. 5259), (20 March 1973). London: HMSO.

[43] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 62.

[44] Great Britain. Parliament. *Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973* (18 July 1973). London: HMSO.

[45] White, *John Hume,* p. 141.

[46] 1973 Assembly Election (Thursday 28 June 1973) (CAIN).

the fact that Hume's proposals merely kept the idea of unity by consent on the table as a discussion topic. Hume's own view on the Council was that,

> …the Council would provide a forum for north-south co-operation as well as a means of expression for the Irish Nationalist aspiration, while Northern Ireland would continue to be part of the United Kingdom.[47]

The Assembly met for the first time on 31 July, in spite of a lack of agreement on the formation of an Executive with responsibility for governing NI. It was a crucial step on the road to a deal, as the British were becoming increasingly convinced of the need to devolve powers back to NI to try and ease the tension created by the imposition of direct rule. On 24 September Garrett Fitzgerald, in a speech to the UN General Assembly announced that an agreement had been reached in principle for the formation of an Executive, with reform of the RUC and Civil Service also on the cards along with discussion of the role of the proposed Council of Ireland.[48] The stage was set for negotiations over the formation of an Executive to begin in earnest between the main political parties in NI.

The talks leading to a formation of an Executive began on 5 October, with Whitelaw presiding over a meeting of the SDLP, UUP, and Alliance party representatives. On 9 October, the talks were adjourned for a week, with a broad agreement having being reached on social and economic issues, thus providing the basis for further discussion.[49] When they resumed, discussions were based around security and policing concerns. These proved more difficult to resolve and the talks seemed to be stalling. Faulkner had to deal with growing dissatisfaction in his party, whilst dealing with the SDLP's tough negotiating stance, characterised by Hume. Faulkner would go on to characterise Hume as a "formidable political thinker" based on these talks.[50] Hume and the SDLP had planned meticulously for

---

[47] Hume, *Personal views,* p. 37.
[48] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles,* p. 67.
[49] *Irish Times,* 10 June 1973.
[50] Faulkner, *Memoirs,* p. 205.

these talks, and their level of preparedness caught many on the Unionist side off guard.[51] With sufficient security reforms, the SDLP dropped their demands for the renaming of the RUC. They also won support for the reform of civil service recruitment procedures, which had privileged the hiring of Protestants in favour of Catholics.[52] One of the final stumbling blocks was the composition of the Executive itself. Faulkner demanded a majority on the Executive, whilst the SDLP demanded a 5:5:2 split with the Alliance Party getting two Departments. The SDLP and Alliance were agreed on this proposal. With the talks stalling, Whitelaw sought to break the deadlock by suggesting a revised formula of: 6 UUP, 4 SDLP, and 1 Alliance, with four non-voting members: 2 SDLP, 1 UUP, and 1 Alliance. This was eventually accepted, guaranteeing the UUP majority on the Executive, with and SDLP/Alliance majority in the administration.[53] Heath appointed the Executive on 22 November, with Hume taking on the Commerce Department.

December 1973 opened with Francis Pym becoming Secretary of State NI in place of Whitelaw as a result of Heath's Cabinet reshuffle.[54] He took office on the eve of talks at Sunningdale between the Irish and British Governments, as well as the NI parties in the Executive. Talks focused on the Council of Ireland proposals. The drawn out negotiating process created tensions in Ulster, with people becoming critical of the speed of progression.[55] The main issues outstanding were policing, extradition, ROI constitutional claim to Northern Ireland, and the functions of the Council of Ireland.[56] The marathon talks resulted in an eleventh-hour deal being struck, and a joint communiqué being released on

---

[51] Ibid., p. 209.
[52] Michael Kerr, *The destructors: the story of Northern Ireland's lost peace process* (Dublin, 2011), p. 90.
[53] Ibid., p. 99.
[54] Ibid., p. 109.
[55] *The Times,* December 3 1973.
[56] Kerr, *The destructors,* pp. 122-138.

behalf of the tripartite of negotiators. The role of the Council of Ireland was addressed in section eight of the joint communiqué:

> It would be for the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly to legislate from time to time as to the extent of functions to be devolved to the Council of Ireland. Where necessary, the British Government will cooperate in this devolution of functions. Initially, the functions to be vested would be those identified in accordance with the procedures set out above and decided, at the formal stage of the conference to be transferred.[57]

Hume stuck to his principles regarding the Council of Ireland and policing. The criticism which has often being laid against him is that he succeeded too much at the conference at the expense of Brian Faulkner, who came to regret soon after the concessions he had offered when faced with an ever eroding support base. Hume had also managed to side-line SDLP leader Gerry Fitt, whom it is said did not take an active part in the negotiations, with Hume taking the lead in negotiating for his party but also advising the British and Irish governments.[58] Hume asserted his control over his party and succeeded in becoming an indispensable part of the political process in NI during the course of these negotiations.

> We have undertaken to serve in the interests of Northern Ireland and all its people. This is the spirit in which we shall always act, both individually and collectively. We want the New Year to see the beginning, not just of a new system of Government, but of a new spirit. Let 1974 be The Year of Reconciliation.[59]

1974 started on a positive note, but the positive sentiment in the Executive's first statement would not last long. On 4 January the UUUC rejected the Council of Ireland proposal, leading to Faulkner resigning as leader of UUP on 7 January.[60] It was against this chaotic backdrop that Hume took up his responsibilities as Minister of Commerce in the Executive. Merlyn Rees, soon to become Secretary of State NI believed that Hume took to

---

[57] British Government, Irish Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive designate. *'The Sunningdale Agreement': Tripartite agreement on the Council of Ireland-* Communiqué issued following the Sunningdale Conference (9 December 1973). Belfast: Northern Ireland Information Service.
[58] Kerr, *The destructors*, p. 137.
[59] CJ 4/487, Statement by New Executive, 31 December 1973.
[60] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles,* p. 77.

the job "as if he was born to do it".[61] Even Faulkner was impressed with Hume's performance in his job, commenting on the tremendous energy he showed in working for the good of NI.[62] In his job as Commerce Minister, Hume was tasked with the job of attracting inward investment to the province, as well as new industries and jobs. He set about his task despite the difficult situation existing in the Executive. Faulkner had effectively isolated himself from his supporters by resigning as leader, leading to his and the Executives enemies, such as William Craig and Ian Paisley sensing the opportunity to destroy it. They got their opportunity with the Westminster Election called for 28 February, which effectively acted as a referendum on the Assembly. The results were not good, with anti-Sunningdale candidates taking eleven of the twelve seats available, with only Gerry Fitt retaining his seat for the pro-Sunningdale side.

Hume continued on with his job, and by May was able to report an unemployment rate of 4.8% which was a record low.[63] Hume used his contacts in the United States and in Europe to encourage investment in NI, undertaking exhausting trips to convince investors to give NI a chance.[64] Hume saw that the viability of the Assembly was lessening by the day. He wanted to push through the ratification of the Council of Ireland proposals as quickly as possible. Faulkner's position was becoming more desperate by the day, and the British and Irish governments began to doubt the survival of the Assembly.[65] Hume convinced Cosgrave to try and lessen the pressure on Faulkner by reaffirming the Irish governments wish to see the constitutional position of NI remain static until a majority wished to change it.[66] Hume began to see Faulkner's stalling the ramification of the COI as a way to bring down the

---

[61] Rees, *A personal perspective,* p. 45.
[62] Faulkner, *Memoirs,* p. 241.
[63] White, *John Hume,* p. 160.
[64] *Irish Independent*, April 30 1974.
[65] Kerr, *The destructors*, p. 155.
[66] Dáil Eireann Debate. *Sunningdale Agreement: Statement by Taoiseach*. Vol. 271 No. 2 (March 13 1974).

Assembly in which he gambled his political survival. From this point Hume became very pessimistic about its chances for survival. He even cautioned the British and Irish governments not to make any public statements regarding this matter, so as to make Faulkner announce his intentions.[67] Their following of this plan highlighted Hume's growing standing in the political order.

The collapse of the Executive and Assembly had been forecast long before it finally fell. Its five month existence was plagued by indecision over many issues, most importantly the failure to ratify the Sunningdale Agreement. Pressure from the outside contributed to its demise. On 9 March a 2,000 strong group of UUUC members marched on Stormont to proclaim their intention to take down the Executive.[68] In a letter to British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Rees expressed his scepticism as to whether or not the Executive could survive in the present climate.[69] These sentiments spelt doom. Hume continued to be frustrated by Faulkner's' actions in the Executive.[70] The UWC strike, which would finish off the Assembly, began on 14 May. It came about as a result of their demand for fresh elections not being met.[71] The strike ground NI to a complete stand still as electricity supplies were reduced to dangerously low levels, whilst the UWC enforced and some would say policed a general work stoppage. The failure of the British government to provide a swift response to the strike incensed Hume, who felt as if their failure to become involved was the final piece of evidence to suggest that they believed that the Assembly was doomed to failure. Hume and his party threatened to leave the Executive unless the British government agreed to intervene.[72] Faulkner resigned on 28 May, bowing to pressure from the strikers, which leads

---

[67] Kerr, *The destructors*, p. 163.
[68] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 82.
[69] Rees, *A personal perspective*, p. 59.
[70] *The Times,* April 19 1974.
[71] Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: a chronology of the troubles*, p. 84.
[72] *The Times*, May 27 1974.

to the end of the Assembly and Executive. News of the end of power-sharing was greeted by widespread jubilation in the Protestant community.[73] Even though the Assembly had just come to an end, Hume was already looking to the future, whilst still believing in the idea of power-sharing, but with a more concrete Irish dimension than the one included in the Sunningdale agreement.[74] Sunningdale may have been classed as a failure, but it at least showed that co-operation was possible between both communities. The immediate aftermath of the failure of the Assembly saw a hardening of attitudes on all sides, but I still believe that it was a useful exercise, and one that needed to happen for NI to find a way out of the seemingly never-ending strife and horror.

The impact of Hume on Irish society as a whole has been rightly established and documented. His role in this particular process is often overlooked. Placed in the context of the current process, the Sunningdale experiment continues to be characterised as a failure. As a result, the complexity of the negotiations and their effect on the next three decades of political life in NI has been hidden from general view. Although not the official leader of his party, Hume took an active role in the negotiations. He managed to hold a degree of influence over both the British and Irish governments which helped to stop the derailing of the talks. He operated as a link man at a crucial time in the process. In order to put this right, much more emphasis needs to be placed on unearthing the full historiography of this period. Given the difficulties in the current political process, particularly in the area of legacy issues, it is prudent that we take a closer look at areas that have been covered up by established thinking and simplistic assertions.

---

[73] *Irish Independent*, May 29 1974.
[74] *Belfast Telegraph*, June 1 1974.

Preparing for success: the Irish Republican Army and the Scramogue ambush, 1921

Gerald Maher

The road between the County Roscommon town of Strokestown and Longford Town was the main artery for Crown Forces' motor traffic that moved from north Roscommon and Mayo, west of the river Shannon, towards Longford and Dublin to the river's eastern side. The road was tarred and, consequently, relatively easy to transverse, making it a key communication route for the British forces during the War of Independence.[1] The road, therefore, was busy with Crown Forces' traffic of varying strengths and qualities. To stage a successful ambush on this road would require a depth of preparation and planning that only a well developed and experienced guerrilla unit could execute. A bend on this road was the stage for the Roscommon Irish Republican Army's (I.R.A.) major set piece ambush at Scramogue. This article aims to highlight that the I.R.A. achieved great military successes during the War of Independence through careful and comprehensive planning and preparation that made the best use of the available resources. Using the paradigm of the Scramogue ambush, the article offers a flavour of the many facets of planning and preparing that combined into a successful major set piece I.R.A. ambush.

The Scramogue ambush was probably the most noteworthy engagement between the Roscommon I.R.A. and the Crown Forces. Captain Roger Grenville-Peek was officer commanding (O.C.) of A squadron, 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, a cavalry regiment billeted in Strokestown park house from May 1920.[2] Along with his second in command (2.I.C.), Lieutenant (Lt) Tennant, and a mixed party of the paramilitary Royal Irish Constabulary

---

[1] Seán Leavy (Military Archives, Bureau of Military History, WS 954), p. 13 (M.A., B.M.H. hereafter); Ernie O'Malley, *Raids and rallies* (Dublin, 1982), p. 100; Kathleen Hegarty-Thorne, *They put the flag-a-flyin': the Roscommon volunteers* (Oregon, 2007), p. 85.

[2] Roger Grenville-Peek (National Archives, England, British Army Medal Index Cards, WO 372); *Western Military News*, 30 Mar. 1921; *Morning Post*, 2 Apr. 1921; *Irish Times*, 18 May 1920; Eric Sheppard, *The 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, 1715-1936* (London, 1939), p. 310.

(R.I.C.) and military rank and file, Peek was escorting two Black and Tan/R.I.C. prisoners to courts martial in Longford when they were ambushed at approximately 7:15 in the morning.[3] Peek, Tennant, the driver Private (Pte) Keenan and R.I.C. Constable (Const.) Leslie were mortally wounded. The three other rank and file soldiers who made up the remainder of the escort party were wounded, and the two Black and Tan/R.I.C. prisoners were detained and later executed.[4] In total, all Crown Forces present at the scene were either killed or wounded. The I.R.A. suffered no casualties that morning and they captured all Crown Forces' weapons, including a Hotchkiss machine gun, service rifles, a number of Webley revolvers and over 700 rounds of ammunition.[5] On this evidence, the ambush was a resounding success for the I.R.A., which it was, but their success was not achieved at Scramogue by good fortune or by appropriating 1914-18 style standing armies, but by embracing guerrilla warfare strategies that proved to be impervious to inferior British tactics.

Though the Scramogue ambush was nominally a North Roscommon Brigade operation, proximity and local knowledge saw the inclusion of the Third Battalion South Roscommon Brigade into the plans. It seems that both the 3rd Battalion North Roscommon Brigade and 3rd Battalion South Roscommon Brigade mooted the Strokestown to Longford town road as a potential ambush site, and particularly a stretch two miles east of Strokestown that passed through Scramogue townland. Scramogue was part of the 3rd Battalion North Roscommon Brigade, Scramogue itself making up a company within the Battalion.[6] The Battalion O.C., Seán Leavy, chaired a battalion meeting some time before the ambush that

---

[3] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), pp 16-7; *Liverpool Post*, 24 Mar. 1921; Cormac O'Comhraí, *Revolution in Connacht: a photographic history* (Cork, 2013), p. 111; *Irish Independent*, 24 Mar. 1921.
[4] Luke Duffy (University College, Dublin, Archives, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107) (U.C.D.A hereafter); *Roscommon Messenger*, 26 Mar. 1921; *Irish Independent*, 26 Mar. 1921; Hegarty-Thorne, *They put the flag-a-flyin'*, p. 111; D. M. Leeson, *The Black and Tans: British police and auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence* (Oxford, 2011), pp 150-1.
[5] South Roscommon Brigade H.Q. to Chief of Staff, 28 Mar. 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/38); Frank Simons Interview (Military Archives, Military Service Pensions Collection, RO/265) (M.A., M.S.P.C., hereafter).
[6] North Roscommon Brigade 3rd Battalion (M.A., M.S.P.C., RO/289).

concluded with plans to stage an ambush in Scramogue on the Strokestown-Longford town road. Leavy's input was substantial because he had intimate knowledge of the Scramogue area as he was raised in the townland.[7] The men of the 3rd Battalion South had a similarly rough plan for an ambush on the road, and along with I.R.A. General Headquarters (G.H.Q.) organiser, Seán Connolly, the Battalion officers suggested Scramogue as an ambush location.[8] It is worth noting that the general area both battalions mooted as an ambush location was almost the boundary line between the two Roscommon brigades, therefore, the area was familiar to most of the men.[9] In this light, the suggestion of an ambush on the Strokestown to Longford road may seem to have been obvious, however, the selection of the precise ambush position was in no way arbitrary. It was chosen because of a combination of careful military awareness along with acute tactical cognisance.

Officers from both 3rd Battalions, North and South Roscommon Brigades, convened a meeting at Leavy's house in Scramogue to formulate a joint operation that involved both battalion's A.S.Us. Together they carried out a reconnaissance of the area to locate the most favourable position to set the ambush.[10] The exact spot chosen was precipitated by a crucial piece of intelligence intercepted by the 3rd Battalion North. The military in Strokestown had also identified Scramogue as a danger spot where they were susceptible to ambush, and they suspected a certain position on the road would be the probable location. The I.R.A. intercepted a communication in a mail raid that contained this information from Lt Tennant, who was also the 9th Lancer's intelligence officer (I.O.). The intercepted mail also revealed

---

[7] *Roscommon Herald*, 26 Dec. 1959; Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 13; Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 12.
[8] Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p. 18; O'Malley, *Raids and rallies,* p, 100; Hegarty-Thorne, *They put the flag-a-flyin',* p. 85.
[9] *Roscommon Herald,* 26 Dec. 1959.
[10] Martin Fallon Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131); Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 22; Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p.19.

the young officer's assumption that an ambush would be highly unlikely.[11] The location that Tennant suspected was the Scramogue post office on the eastern or Longford side of Sliabh Bán, a substantial hill that commanded the area.[12] The military concluded that a loopholed hen-house on the site of the post office was likely constructed by the I.R.A. specifically for ambush purposes, and that nearby woods would also be used in an attack.[13] The intercepted mail was critical in the I.R.A's planning for the Scramogue ambush. The I.R.A. not only ascertained that the Crown Forces in Strokestown were somewhat relaxed about the likelihood of encountering an ambush, but either way they had miscalculated the potential location of any such attack. It was this information along with the selection of the ambush location that self-selected the Crown Forces in Strokestown as the prime target for the ambush.

The intercepted mail from Tennant did not dictate that the I.R.A's chosen location for the ambush. Moreover, the 3rd Battalion North Roscommon Brigade had surveyed the post office beforehand and deemed it unsuitable for ambush purposes, while the men from the South Brigade had surveyed many areas along the road, but they neither identified it as a suitable location.[14] The location both battalions agreed on was on the other side of Sliabh Bán, the Strokestown side; the location that was proposed initially in Leavy's early plans.[15] The position was a little over two miles to the east of Strokestown and twelve miles west of Longford town, at a bend on the road that turns sharply to the left into a northward assent, and then gradually turns back eastwards − when travelling in an eastbound direction (See

---

[11] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 9.

[12] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 9; 2nd Western Division III Brigade (South Roscommon) GHQ (1/7/22) (M.A., M.S.P.C., RO/265).

[13] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), pp 9-10; *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954.

[14] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 9; Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 22.

[15] Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p 18; *Roscommon Herald*, 26 Dec. 1959.

Map 1).[16] The position was on higher ground on the foothills of Sliabh Bán, overlooking the main road, which was flanked on both sides by low lying marshy fields. This gave the I.R.A. an excellent position for both attack and retreat.[17] In addition, there was a bye-road that ran south from the bend where some locals lived, including Leavy; some of the houses on this road were incorporated into the I.R.A's plans for the ambush (See Position of Leavy's House on Map 1).[18] Both battalion staffs approved the position as the best location for the ambush and a date was jointly agreed on for the operation.[19]

One of the two greatest strengths and advantages a guerrilla unit can possess is its ability to carry out surprise attacks on an enemy.[20] In order to achieve this, a guerrilla unit must position itself in a strong location from which to spring their attack. The rising ground perpendicular to the main road was chosen as one of the firing positions (F.P.1) for the ambush at Scramogue. From this position, the men were looking down onto the road from about a six-foot elevation.[21] To supplement this position, a shallow trench was dug along the back of the hedge to offer the men in the location better cover, and holes were cut in the hedge to improve visibility and communications from their concealed firing positions (See 'B' on Map 1).[22] The second firing position (F.P.2) was located in one of the houses at the junction of the bye-road and the main road (See 'A' on Map 1). This house was also on raised ground with an excellent view of the main road towards Strokestown. The house was suitably

---

[16] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 12; Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 13; O'Malley, *Raids and rallies*, p. 104; *Kerryman,* 28 Aug. 1954.

[17] Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 13; Luke Duffy Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107);

[18] Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 13; Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 15.

[19] Martin Fallon Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131); Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p, 22; Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 13.

[20] Fitzroy Maclean, 'The setting for guerrilla warfare' in *The RUSI Journal*, 156 (2011), p. 92; Donal Buckley, *The battle of Tourmakeady: a study of the IRA ambush and its aftermath* (Dublin, 2008), p. 38.

[21] Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 13; O'Malley, *Raids and rallies*, p. 103.

[22] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 23; Martin Fallon Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131); Hegarty-Thorne, *They put the flag-a-flyin'*, p. 86.

loopholed to create a strong firing position without jeopardising the men's concealment.[23] This gave the I.R.A. two strong, covered and well-prepared firing positions for the ambush.

The second great strength an attacking a guerrilla unit must have is its ability to retreat quickly into a familiar environment when the need for a hasty withdrawal is necessary.[24] As previously mentioned, the area was familiar to both battalions because of the proximity of the brigade divide line. This also meant that the men, being familiar with the area, would have easier access to and from the ambush location by knowing the quickest and safest routes available to them.[25] The topography of the location afforded the retreating A.S.Us with an exceptional gateway to their preferred areas of dispersal. There was a sunken lane off the bye-road that led directly into cover on Sliabh Bán (See 'C-D' on Map 1).[26] The lane had high banks topped with fences on both of its sides, and the entrance to it was completely obscured from the main road by the loopholed house and a barn that was close to the F.P.1 (See 'C' on Map 1).[27] The barn's entrance was on the side that faced F.P.1, and a second exit was cut in the opposite end of the building to make a protected route to the sunken lane.[28] Holes were also cut in the hedge to the rear of the F.P.1 as a secondary route to the sunken lane in case the preferred route through the barn was compromised (See 'E' on Map 1).[29] However, to combat any threat to a swift withdrawal, a rifle party was detailed to protect both the sunken lane and the ambush party's left flank – the right flank was not deemed a threat for it held no advantage for the Crown Forces – and they were placed at an

---

[23] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p.15; Frank Simons Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137); Martin Fallon Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131).
[24] Maclean, 'The setting for guerrilla warfare', p. 92.
[25] *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954.
[26] Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 13; *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954.
[27] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 15.
[28] Frank Simons (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137); Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 16.
[29] Luke Duffy (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107); Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 23.

observation position on higher ground with commanding views of both the ambush site and the main road approach from Strokestown.[30]

The plans for the withdrawal after the engagement included detailed retreat routes for the volunteers that morning. The two A.S.Us, 3rd Battalion North and 3rd Battalion South, were detailed to return to dugouts in their respective areas.[31] There were sufficient dugouts in both battalion areas; some were constructed during the conscription crisis, while later ones were made specifically to house the A.S.Us as operations in the county proliferated.[32] They varied in their size, location, structure and standard of comfort. Typically, dugouts were capable of housing an average of twelve men and were usually constructed in hillsides, turf banks or beside streams to reduce the risk of being tracked.[33] Furthermore, temporary dugouts were constructed for the specific function of facilitating the I.R.A's dispersal from the ambush location, and to provide the volunteers with additional concealment from the expected heightened Crown Forces' presence in the area following the engagement.[34] Denying Crown Forces' reinforcements easy access to the ambush location was the securest tactic to facilitate a safe withdrawal for the A.S.Us, and the groundwork done to facilitate this exhibited the organisational strength of the I.R.A. in Roscommon.

As attacks on vulnerable police stations began to increase in frequency throughout rural Ireland, the R.I.C. were ordered to begin abandoning their smaller outposts from August 1919, and consolidate in their urban garrison strongholds.[35] In a colossal show of strength, tactical awareness and organisation, G.H.Q. directed a nationwide operation during Easter

---

[30] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), pp 15-6; Joseph McKenna, *Guerrilla warfare in the Irish War of Independence* (Jefferson, 2011), p. 246.
[31] Martin Fallon Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131); *Roscommon Herald*, 26 Dec. 1959.
[32] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 2; Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 2; Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p. 14.
[33] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p 26; Luke Duffy Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107).
[34] Martin Fallon (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131).
[35] Mike Rast, *Tactics, politics and propaganda in the Irish War of Independence*, *1917-1921* (M.A. thesis, Georgia State University, 2011), p. 86.

1920 to destroy abandoned police stations so as to deny the growing military presence in Ireland readymade outposts for operational use. The large-scale nature of the operation resulted in the R.I.C. being denied any major presence in sizable parts of rural Ireland, which yielded the I.R.A. a large degree of freedom to operate in these areas.[36] The North Roscommon Brigade was heavily involved in the Easter operation, with no fewer than seventeen police stations in the brigade area destroyed in and around the date of the operation.[37] The 3rd Battalion South Roscommon Brigade destroyed both R.I.C. outposts in the battalion area in a well-planned operation.[38] After the destruction of the police outposts in the North Roscommon Brigade area, the R.I.C., later reinforced by detachments of Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, was concentrated in the larger urban areas of Strokestown, Roscommon, Elphin, Boyle and Carrick-on- Shannon, with all but Elphin strengthened by military detachments.[39] In addition to the larger towns, the R.I.C. also maintained their positions on the important river Shannon crossing points at Rooskey, Tarmonbarry and Lanesboro.[40]

With the Crown Forces isolated to the few urban strongholds in the county, the I.R.A. could concentrate on denying them access to the ambush zone. Local companies in both 3rd Battalions, North and South Brigades, were detailed via direct communication and dispatch riders to block all possible roads that linked Crown Forces' strongholds to the ambush

---

[36] Rast, *Tactics, politics and propaganda,* p. 97.

[37] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 4; Thomas Lavin (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,001), p. 4; James Dorr (M.A., B.M.H., WS 962), pp 2-3; Seán Glancy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 964), pp 2-3; Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 4; James Feeley (M.A., B.M.H., WS 997), p. 6; *Leitrim Observer*, 10 Apr. 1920.

[38] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 7; Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p. 4.

[39] Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 4; Seán Glancy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 964), p. 3; Bill Doherty Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131); Frank Simons Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107).

[40] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), pp 4-5; Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p 4; Bill Doherty Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/131).

location.[41] Along with the garrisoned larger urban areas of county Roscommon, there was also a major threat from the heavily garrisoned towns of Longford and Athlone.[42] The companies in Kilteevan, Kilbride and Cloontuskert, in the 3rd Battalion South Roscommon area, were detailed to block roads that troops and police from Athlone, Roscommon and Lanesboro were likely to use.[43] In the 3rd Battalion North area, companies in Scramogue, Curraghroe, Kiltrustan, Kilglass and Carniska were detailed to block the roads that led into the ambush position from Longford town, Rooskey, Elphin, Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon and Frenchpark.[44] Obstructions were created using various means and methods, some natural and some manmade. As high dry stone walls bounded the countryside surrounding the ambush position, the volunteers regularly used them to construct their roadblocks.[45] In more sophisticated cases, trees were used for blocking purposes. The Kilglass Company felled trees along a half-mile narrow stretch of the road leading to the ambush site from Rooskey. They explicitly selected a part of the road that was lined on both sides with pinewood trees, whose branches, when interlocked, make their removal extremely difficult.[46] Mainly, though, trenching roads was the I.R.A's preferred method to stymie Crown Forces' movements along the road network.[47]

The portion of the main road on which the ambush site was located, from the eastern side of Sliabh Bán to Longford town was, above all other roads that were blocked on the morning of the ambush, the most important. It was ascertained from scout reports that the only military traffic that could be ambushed had to be travelling in an eastwardly direction,

[41] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), pp 22-3; Luke Duffy (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107); Patrick Mullooly (M.A., B.M.H., WS 955), p. 19; Liam Coyle, *A parish history of Kilglass, Slatta and Ruskey* (Boyle, 1994), p. 139.
[42] O'Malley, *Raids and rallies,* p. 104.
[43] Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS, 661), p. 20; 2nd Western Division III Brigade (South Roscommon) GHQ (1/7/22) (M.A., M.S.P.C., RO/265).
[44] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 23; Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 13.
[45] Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p. 20.
[46] Coyle, *A parish history*, pp 139-40.
[47] Coyle, *A parish history*, p. 139.

that is, going in the direction of Strokestown to Longford town, because the ambush position was precariously vulnerable to traffic coming in a westerly direction; Sliabh Bán obscured any view of the road towards Longford, thus heightening the risk of the I.R.A. encountering a larger than expected enemy force.[48] Fortunately, though, for the I.R.A., intelligence reports were extremely encouraging. Scouts were detailed to monitor all police and military traffic that passed along the road, particularly in the direction of Longford town, and to furnish detailed reports to battalion staff in both brigade areas. The scouts' reports provided comprehensive notes of the times and numbers of all Crown Forces' vehicles that were traversing the road, and it was noted that almost every morning military and/or police trucks travelled from Strokestown to Longford, usually two or three strong.[49] Consequently, the intelligence the scouts gathered furnished the I.R.A. with a likely target, a likely time and at a likely location. To safeguard the vulnerable approach to their position and to make certain, as far as was possible to, that they only encountered the target they wished to, the I.R.A. trenched the Strokestown to Longford town road on the eastern side of Sliabh Bán and an armed party was detailed to protect the obstacle for the duration of the ambush.[50]

The availability of service rifles and ammunition was an ever-present issue for most I.R.A. units in the country, and the Roscommon I.R.A were no exception. But with the detailed plans in place to sterilise the ambush zone of enemy reinforcements, volunteers could concentrate on making the best use of the arms they had at their disposal. To circumvent the obvious shortcoming, a lack of service-type arms, the I.R.A. at Scramogue employed a plan using the natural advantages of the ambush site to make the available small arms effective in the engagement. The loopholed house, F.P.2, was manned with three riflemen and ten men with shotguns. These men were to wait until the first lorry came into

[48] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 13.
[49] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS, 770), p. 22; Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p. 18; Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 12; *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1959.
[50] Frank Simons (M.A., B.M.H., WS 770), p. 23; Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 16.

range of the shotguns before they fired so as the dispersed fire from the shotguns would be effective. The position of F.P.2 in regard to the sharp bend on the road was significant because the lorry had to reduce its speed dramatically to negotiate the bend safely.[51] Two of the riflemen in the loopholed house were ex-British army soldiers and expert shots, who were detailed to disable the first lorry by targeting its driver as it slowed.[52] Six riflemen were positioned in F.P.1 and made up the main firing party. Their orders were to engage any second and subsequent lorries that might be in train with the first.[53] In this arrangement the I.R.A. made best use of the available weapons at their disposal, which was approximately 11 service rifles, 20 shotguns and 2 or 3 revolvers,[54]

The depth of the operation at Scramogue shows additional levels of cooperation when the involvement the other republicans, besides the I.R.A., and non-combatants who were involved that day are considered. At the ambush site, there was a reserve force of ten men armed with shotguns, who were ready to enter the fight if called upon. Additionally, there were six riflemen posted along the lines of retreat to protect the withdrawal and the flanks of the firing positions.[55] Two volunteers were guarding locals who were removed from their homes at the ambush site to a house away from the firing zone.[56] In addition to the I.R.A. men that were present at the location, there were also a handful of Cumann na mBan girls. They ensured all the men in the A.S.Us were fed before the engagement and also that each one was supplied with a day's rations.[57] Furthermore, Teresa McDermott, a trained nurse and

---

[51] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 15; Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 661), p. 21; Frank Simons Interview (M.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137).
[52] Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 14; O'Malley, *Raids and rallies*, p. 106.
[53] Frank Simons Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17/137); Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 14.
[54] *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954; O'Malley, *Raids and rallies,* p. 101.
[55] Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), pp 15-6; Frank Simons Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137); Luke Duffy Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107).
[56] Patrick Mullooly (M.A., B.M.H., WS 955), p. 19; *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954; O'Malley, *Raids and rallies,* p. 103.
[57] Frank Simons Interview (U.C.D.A., O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137); Martin Fallon (M.A., B.M.H., WS 1,121), p. 7.

Cumann na mBan member, was at the ambush location fully equipped to administer first aid if necessary.[58] And finally, there were many civilians involved in varying degrees and capacities. Some helped to feed the men on the morning of the ambush, while others fed and sometimes billeted the A.S.Us before and after the ambush, or tending to them in the many dugouts in the area.[59]

The detailed planning and preparation that transformed a bend on the main Strokestown to Longford town road at Scramogue into a sophisticated ambush site, was achievement by a tactically astute guerrilla unit. The I.R.A. meticulously prepared for the engagement. The selection of the ambush site owes a great deal to the awareness the I.R.A. had of the strong tactical advantages the location offered for a set-piece ambush, while volunteer's local knowledge helped link the location with their preferred lines of retreat. Showing the profound depth of their organisation, the I.R.A. effectively neutralised the threat of enemy reinforcements reaching the ambush zone by blocking the many roads that linked Crown Forces' strongholds to the location. But perhaps the most striking ingredient of the ambush is the combination of all the finer details that coalesced into a sum far greater than its parts. The men were fed and rationed for the day, their well being was considered by having a trained nurse on location, their retreat was probably the most secured aspect of the operation and their concealment afterwards was supplemented with additional dugouts. One would expect this level of detail from imperial standing armies entering combat, but the I.R.A. was no such thing. What the level of detail does highlight, though, is that a trained and organised guerrilla army is a serious threat to any standing army, and is perhaps superior in many aspects of combat than their professional peers.

---

[58] Teresa McDermott Pension Claim (Military Archives, Military Service Pensions, 34/REF/60035) (M.A., M.S.P. hereafter).
[59] *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954; Luke Duffy (M.A., B.M.H., WS, 661), p. 24; Seán Leavy (M.A., B.M.H., WS 954), p. 7; p.14.
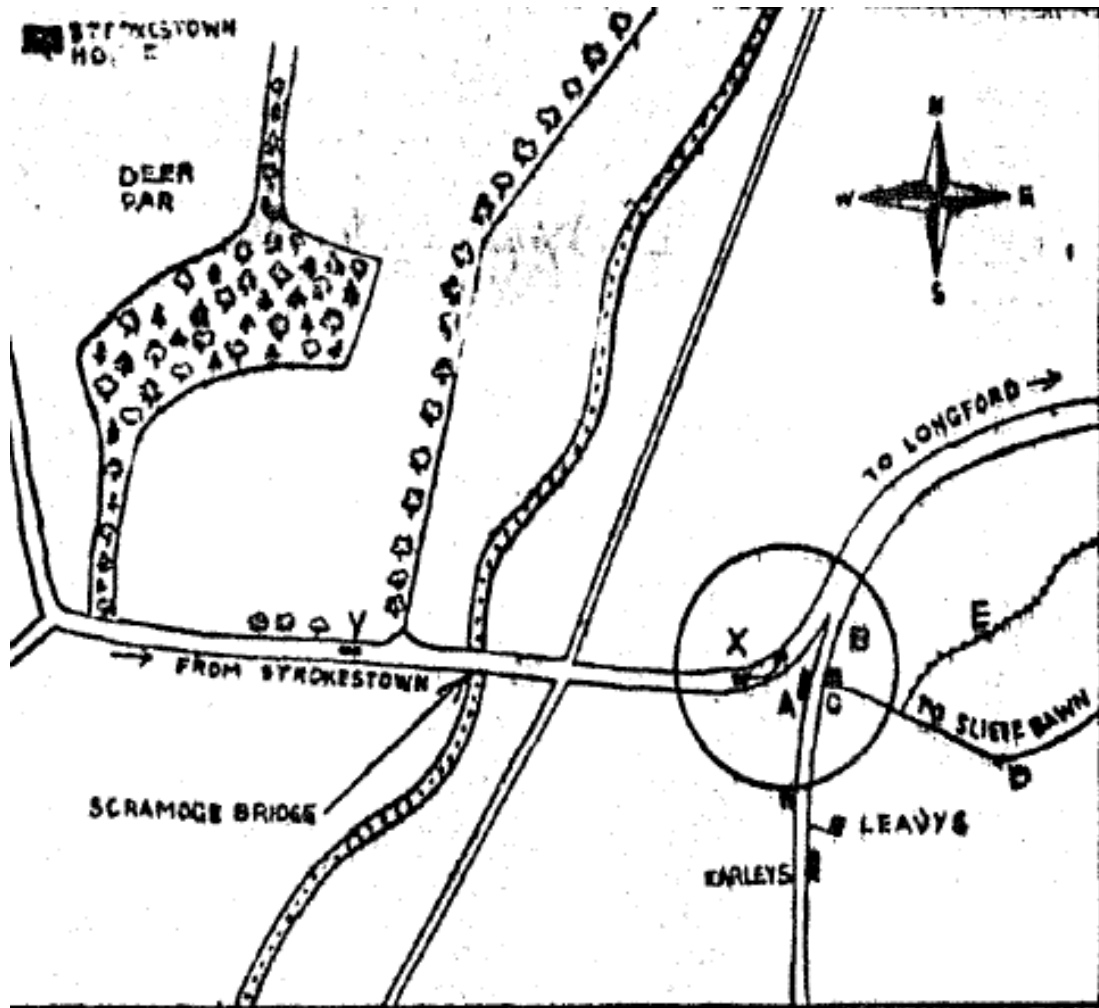
Map 1[60]

---
[60] *Kerryman*, 28 Aug. 1954.

'The greatest collaborator:' Bishop Philbin of Down and Connor and the Provisional IRA, 1970-1973

Nina Vodstrup Andersen

This paper examines the ideological tensions between the bishop of Down and Connor, and the Provisional IRA in the early years of the Northern Ireland conflict. These tensions resulted in a protracted public argument which in many ways exemplifies the difficulties faced by Catholic Church leaders during the conflict. William Philbin (1907-1991) was born in Co. Mayo and served as Chair of Dogmatic Theology at Maynooth before being appointed bishop of Down and Connor in 1962.[1] One contemporary observer felt that though Philbin was 'a saintly man and a scholar,' he had been 'totally miscast' in the role.[2] Rafferty highlighted the enormous respect and influence which the clergy had among the Catholic community, yet noted that the upheavals of the early days of the conflict meant that the church as an institution would have to re-evaluate its own social dominance.[3] Yet it was not primarily the ordinary church-going Catholics of Belfast or Derry with whom the clergy would have to fight for primacy. Evidently, it was the emergence of the Provisional IRA in early 1970 which posed the greatest threat to the influence of the clergy.

In August 1969, Northern Ireland suffered a conflagration of violence on such a scale as had not been witnessed in the area for fifty years.[4] On the afternoon of 12 August, the annual Apprentice Boys parade began to make its way through Derry. The annual Orange parades had usually been the cause of some resentment among the Catholics in Derry, but this year, after months of increasingly violent confrontations between civil rights activists and the RUC, the provocative gestures of the marchers were not met with ridicule or scorn by Catholic bystanders, but with stones and nails. A riot erupted at the scene of the parade, and resulted in an attempted

---

[1] Bernard Canning, *Bishops of Ireland* (Ballyshannon, 1987), p. 123.
[2] Maurice Hayes, *Minority verdict, experiences of a Catholic social servant* (Belfast, 1995), p. 116.
[3] Oliver Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603-1983* (South Carolina, 1994), p. 263.
[4] David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making sense of the Troubles* (London, 2012), p. 54.

invasion of the Catholic Bogside area by the RUC. What followed came to be known as the 'Battle of the Bogside,' three days of street fighting between the Catholics of the Bogside and Creggan estates and the RUC and loyalists crowds.[5] On 13 August, civil rights activists in Belfast decided to defy the Stormont government's ban on marching in order to divert the already thinly-stretched RUC forces away from Derry. Inadvertently, this resulted in serious street battles between Catholics, the RUC and loyalists in Belfast, and the unrest culminated with the burning of hundreds of Catholics homes in north and west Belfast and the deaths of eight people. The violence was centred on the predominately Catholic areas of the Falls Road area in west Belfast and the Ardoyne to the north of the city, where barricades were quickly erected to protect the residents from hostile incursions.[6] Thousands of Catholics fled their homes in fear of arson or massacre, and 'the sight of their pathetic belongings being heaped on to lorries provided one of the abiding images of the troubles.'[7] Out of this violence, the IRA, hitherto defunct, would re-emerge and present itself as the defender of the Catholic community.

In the first days of the conflict, when the British Army was brought in to quell the unrest, Bishop Philbin publicly endorsed the troops as guarantors of protection, and praised and supported the Stormont and Westminster programme of political reform. But it soon became clear that he had wedded himself to a doomed cause. The bishop and his clergy placed great significance on the question of the barricades in the Falls Road and Ardoyne areas, yet this was soon to become a contentious issue. Philbin operated from the conviction that in order to re-establish normal community relations and to preserve the stability of society, the barricades would have to come down, and this view was shared by the other bishops. But unlike them, Philbin personally visited the Ardoyne and Falls Road areas while the negotiations were taking place, and he asked the Catholic residents to 'do the right thing and take [the barricades] down… You will never get

---

[5] Peter Taylor, *Provos: the IRA and Sinn Fein* (London, 1997), pp 47-50.
[6] Ibid., p. 55.
[7] Ibid., p. 56.

anywhere if you maintain these barricades.'[8] This resulted in a public confrontation with local residents, who berated the bishop to his face for his confidence in the army and insistence on the removal of the barricades.[9] Philbin was sufficiently unsettled by subsequent reporting on this confrontation to issue a statement to clarify that he 'took no offence at anything that was said to me, nor indeed, did I hear anything that could be reasonably called offensive… I have no reason to be aggrieved. The whole incident has been absurdly distorted.'[10] But the opposition was serious, one newspaper reporting that Philbin had been 'shouted down by Catholic extremists,' after which he 'finally drove off, weeping, in an army jeep.'[11] The barricades were finally dismantled on the morning of 18 September 1969, but Philbin's public efforts to ensure this outcome had dented his reputation. Eamonn McCann criticised the bishop, whom he thought had acted as the instrument of the British Army. 'With the decisive support of the Catholic hierarchy,' he wrote, 'the army talked down the Belfast barricades by mid-September, when an army Land Rover went through the Falls with Dr. Philbin … perched incongruously in his robes on the passenger seat.'[12]

Whereas the hierarchy, and especially Cardinal Conway and Bishop Philbin, had allied themselves firmly with a programme of political reform and co-operation with Westminster and the British Army to bring about peace, the newly-emerging Provisionals presented their followers with a starkly different vision. Until Ireland would be united as a 32-county republic and the British Army had been expelled, there could never be peace. Philbin's public cooperation with the army and his professed trust in both the Stormont and Westminster administrations made him an object of derision among republicans, but his views of patriotism and the Northern Ireland question were set in stone even before he arrived in Belfast. At the beginning of the IRA's 'Border Campaign',[13]

---

[8] *Irish News*, 17 Sept. 1969.
[9] *Irish News*, 17 Sept. 1969.
[10] *Irish News*, 22 Sept. 1969.
[11] *Catholic Herald*, 19 September 1969.
[12] Eamonn McCann, *War and an Irish town* (London, 1993), p. 127.
[13] From 1956 to 1962, the IRA launched 'Operation Harvest,' intending to attack and destabilise the border area between the Republic and Northern Ireland, with the ultimate goal of ending British rule. Due to a lack of

he had authored a slim booklet entitled *Patriotism*, wherein he wrote that even a heroic death in the name of one's country was not in itself virtuous. He warned against:

> … patriotism … of the type … that seeks to impose on a population a particular régime or way of life in defiance of their expressed will – a still more grievous proceeding if it is done on the theory that the population are somehow disqualified from making any valid decision at all, so that a small group constitutes the only repository of the national will. Thinking along those lines is the reverse of patriotism, it makes for dictatorship and tyranny. It is egotism and desire for power assuming other names and appearances.[14]

Philbin went on to make the perfectly logical if somewhat unconventional argument that if one considered Northern Ireland an illegitimate state because of the partition of the island, then it should follow that West Germany too was not a legitimate state, which nobody could reasonably argue. 'To deny that a nation can establish a lawful government until its full territories are regained or some similar condition realised,' he added, 'is more radically opposed to a citizen's duty than simple disobedience since it asserts what is tantamount to a principle of anarchy.'[15] To Philbin, patriotism of the republican sort was nothing but self-aggrandisement, 'a perversion' of true love of one's country and an arrogant fantasy fed by nothing but inflamed emotions. To his mind, patriotism was unglamorous hard work inspired by Christian charity and the firm grasp of the fact that 'it is the present population of a country whose voice is to be heard in its affairs —not the dead, whose outlook … it is so easy, by arbitrary selection, to misrepresent.'[16] It was with this attitude that Philbin took up his position as bishop of Down and Connor in 1962, and he did not exhibit much patience with those who disagreed with his views on patriotism or the legitimacy of the Northern Ireland state.

Philbin, along with many others, had hoped that the introduction of the British Army would quell the rioting and bring a tentative peace to the streets, and the so-called 'honeymoon' period of good relations between the Catholic community and the troops was cause for some

---

popular support and the policy of internment on both sides of the border, the campaign was a failure. See Peter Taylor, *Provos, the IRA and Sinn Fein* (London, 1997), pp 21-22.

[14] William Philbin, *Patriotism* (Dublin, 1958), pp 8-9.

[15] Ibid., p. 9.

[16] Ibid.

optimism. But it was not to last. The events of the spring of 1970 saw a shift in Catholic perception of the army from peace-keepers and protectors to sectarian aggressors. In late March, serious clashes erupted in Derry and Armagh following an Easter Rising commemoration parade and, at the same time, riots broke out in west Belfast following an Orange parade. The riots lasted for several days and nights, and the soldiers, caught in the middle between the warring factions, were directed by their superiors to adopt a more aggressive approach to the rioters. Subsequently, many Catholics believed that the conduct of the soldiers demonstrated their bias in favour of the loyalists.[17] As usual, members of the clergy came out onto the streets in an attempt to disperse the rioters, but their efforts were to no avail.[18] The 'honeymoon' was over, and, in a perceived battle between the Catholics of west Belfast and the army and loyalists, few seemed willing to listen to the reasoning of the clergy or the bishop.

The struggle for dominance between the hierarchy and the republicans would primarily be played out in statements and counter-statements from the pulpits and in the editorials of Seán Ó Brádaigh, Provisional Sinn Féin's Director of Publicity version of *An Phoblacht*. That spring, the hierarchy in Northern Ireland issued a joint statement warning of the extreme danger to the Catholic community as a whole should anyone provoke further violence during the course of the summer. 'In these circumstances,' the statement opened, 'we feel it is our duty to give expression to certain thoughts and moral principles which we know are already in the minds and hearts of our people as whole.'[19] The hierarchy still regarded themselves as moral leaders and spokespersons, whatever the mood on the streets. 'The overwhelming majority of our people do not want violence,' the statement confidently proclaimed. Rumours had begun to circulate that the Provisional IRA had been deliberately provoking confrontations between the army and Catholic youths, and the hierarchy was forceful in its condemnation, stating that the republicans had

---

[17] Taylor, *Provos*, pp 72-74.
[18] Ibid., pp 73-74.
[19] *Derry Journal*, 22 May 1970.

'absolutely no mandate from the people' and that their campaign of violence was 'a stab in the back' of the Catholic community.[20] The bishops never referred directly to the IRA, but obliquely to 'a handful of self-appointed activists' whose 'evil initiatives are contrary to the law of Christ.' Finally, the bishops underlined once again the necessity of supporting a programme of political reform to ensure peace in Northern Ireland.

But it was too late. Confidence in the reform programme waned further as the violence intensified. Whereas Easter 1970 had marked the breaking point in relations between the Catholic community and the British Army, the events of June 1970 would mark the rise of the Provisional IRA as the self-proclaimed defenders of the Catholic community, thus further undermining the church leaders' appeals for restraint. On 27 June, another Orange parade passed the Catholic and nationalist Clonard and Springfield Road areas in west Belfast, sparking riots which would spread to most of the city throughout the night.[21] The most violent confrontation between the loyalists and the nationalist centred on St. Matthew's Church in the small Catholic enclave of Short Strand, an area vulnerable to hostile incursions. For the first time, the Provisionals were able to respond with firearms, and the lethal gun battle around the church went down in republican folklore as the moment the IRA first re-emerged as an effective guerrilla army after the humiliation of August 1969 and the subsequent rancorous split in the republican movement between the Provisionals and the Officials.[22] Prominent Catholic civil servant Maurice Hayes felt that by 1970, the Catholic Church, though disliking the Officials, had tolerated the Provisionals because at least the Provisionals were not left-wing. He would later state wistfully that:

> I have often thought that the Catholic Church, in their fear of red communism, let the Provo cat out of the bag. They were more comfortable with the good, clean, honest-to-goodness Catholic Irish boys in the Provisionals, even if they did carry the odd gun, than they were with the closet Marxists of the 'official' IRA. Whether wittingly or not, the cat soon became a tiger which was incapable of being caged, controlled or ridden by anyone.[23]

---

[20] Ibid.
[21] Taylor, *Provos*, pp 74-76.
[22] Ibid., pp 74-78.
[23] Hayes, *Minority verdict*, pp 87-88.

Whatever the solidity of Hayes' interpretation of events, his remarks did touch upon an uncomfortable paradox not often discussed at the time. While the Official IRA had taken a dim view of the Catholic Church, some of the prominent leaders within the new more conservative Provisional organisation were devout Catholics and shared the deep antipathy of the Church towards all things Marxist.[24] Indeed, Seán Mac Stiofáin, Chief of Staff of the Provisional IRA, is noted to have regarded the Official IRA as 'godless atheists who were more interested in undermining the influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland than in ending British occupation in the North.'[25] It was a strange irony that while men such as Mac Stiofáin to some extent supported the church, the church most emphatically did not support them, even though it appeared to Maurice Hayes and others that the clergy showed more tolerance towards the Provisionals than towards the Officials. In the pages of *An Phoblacht*, this paradoxical conflict would increasingly be hinted at, if not thoroughly discussed. In the spring of 1970, Deasún Breathnach, a prolific writer who would later serve as editor of the paper, published a series of three articles outlining what he termed 'a Theology of Protest.' Vatican II had heralded a new era of radical ecumenism and solidarity, Breathnach argued, but the Irish church had not gone far enough in implementing the reforms, because the bishops still did not side fully and unequivocally with the poor and the oppressed.[26] In his conclusion, Breathnach argued that in spite of conventional Catholic doctrine, political violence was in fact sometimes not merely excusable, but *required* of devout Catholics in order to protect their community from the forces of oppression.[27] Breathnach was not a peripheral voice in the movement. In the following issue, he was chosen by the editors of *An Phoblacht* to fully explain republican principles, ethics and methods in a long, exhaustive article.[28]

---

[24] Ed Moloney, *A secret history of the IRA* (London, 2007), pp 74-77.

[25] Moloney, *A secret history of the IRA*, p. 77.

[26] *An Phoblacht*, April and May 1970.

[27] Ibid., June 1970.

[28] Ibid.*,* July 1970.

Yet while Philbin and his fellow church leaders might easily ignore Breathnach's rather ponderous pseudo-theological arguments, which after all drew on radical trends that were alien to the Irish church, worse was to come. By the winter of 1970, a new bitterness was directed against Philbin and the other bishops in the pages of the republican paper. In late October 1970, a confrontation broke out between troops and residents of the Catholic Ardoyne area lasting three nights. After it abated, Philbin went to the area to preach from the pulpit of the local parish church. In what was by then a familiar pattern, the bishop lambasted the rioters and offered his analysis of the violence. 'The picture of a Catholic population in conflict with the troops or with other sections of civilians is a false one... You are not partners in what has been happening in recent days,' he told the congregation. The riots, he said, were carried out by a small group of 'foolish and undisciplined young people' who regrettably were being manipulated by 'a minute number of older people [who] are playing shamelessly on the immaturity of the young and directing them to throw missiles while they themselves are engaged in violence of an even more sinister kind.' Philbin ended his sermon by directing the congregation to prevent their young people from 'joining organisations where they will be regarded as bound to execute orders which may be contrary to the law of God.'[29] One may wonder exactly how confident Philbin felt in his assertion that the overwhelming majority of Belfast Catholics felt no hostility towards the British Army. But whether his statement was offered as a genuine interpretation of facts or as an ideal to which the community should aspire, the moral was clear and unsurprising: no amount of grievances could legitimise the IRA, who according to Philbin were an unrepresentative and manipulative presence endangering the very soul of the community. The pattern soon repeated itself, but Philbin's statements made him increasingly unpopular. In January 1971, following a gun battle between British soldiers and the Provisional IRA in the republican stronghold of Ballymurphy in west Belfast, Philbin took to the pulpit of the local Corpus Christi Church to condemn the gunmen and to warn the youth of the area to disobey

---

[29] *Irish News*, 2 Nov. 1970.

'immoral orders' issued to them by the IRA. This angered the Ballymurphy community sufficiently for a delegation of women to take the unprecedented step of marching to the bishop's residence to stage a demonstration and to deliver a letter of rebuke to him. 'The men you spoke of last Sunday,' the women protested, 'are needed here to keep our estate free from crime, protect our homes and keep us from being trodden into the ground… God guide them all, they are doing a great job.'[30] The opposition did not end there. In response to Philbin's sermon, Seán Ó Brádaigh wrote an open letter challenging the bishop to publicly clarify his views on the presence of the British Army in Northern Ireland:

> My Lord Bishop … Do you consider the youth of Ballymurphy to be bound to accept an immoral government (British rule in Ireland is based on aggression and conquest and has always been immoral) and its immoral laws (e.g. the Special Powers Act)? If you consider these laws to be moral and British rule and military occupation of part of Ireland to be moral it would be better if you said so publicly. I look forward with interest to a straightforward answer to my straightforward question.[31]

Ó Brádaigh never got his answer. When approached by reporters for a comment, Philbin claimed he had not received the letter —though it had by then been published in the press, and when the reporters then read the letter to him, he decided he had 'no comment to make on it.'[32] Whatever his views on civil authority and the trustworthiness of the British Army, it is possible that Philbin chose not to reply because he did not want to confer legitimacy on Ó Brádaigh by engaging in a public debate with him. In *An Phoblacht*, however, the actions of snipers, stone-throwers and petrol bombers who had taken on the troops were lauded and the attempts by Philbin to appeal for restraint was condemned as a betrayal:

> [T]he British forces got their answer and so did Dr. Philbin … who came to the aid of British troops with a sermon in the old traditional style of those who condemned Pearse and Connolly and others who claimed that Hell was not hot enough to hold the Fenians. We suppose the time is right for the Bishops to issue another Pastoral Letter to support John Bull's troops in Ireland —800 years of British rule —rule by the gun, rule by the gallows, rule by torture, rule by the right of a robber —a robber rule. What rule is that, Dr. Philbin? Remember —Seventh, Thou Shalt Not Steal.[33]

---

[30] Ciarán de Baróid, *Ballymurphy and the Irish war* (London, 1990), pp 58-59.
[31] *Irish Press*, 25 Jan. 1971.
[32] Ibid.
[33] *An Phoblacht*, February 1971.

More broadly, an *An Phoblacht* editorial summarised the alleged collusion between the church leaders and the British:

> It is not so strange… that prominent churchmen of all the persuasions, condemn Irish violence but not the British violence which inspires it, for prominent churchmen, and especially Roman Catholic ones, always have sided with the British invader against the native Irish ... Irishmen who know their history will not be confused in this day and age by bishops or even the Cardinal himself acting in the role of British sergeant-major.[34]

Old republican grievances were rehashed, bitter memories of the condemnation levelled at the old IRA during the Irish War of Independence, when the church had deemed the IRA a secret society and banned any Catholic from being a part of it. In republican circles, little distinction seems to have been made between the agenda of the hierarchy of the 1910s and 1920s and the motivations of Bishop Philbin and his fellow bishops in the 1970s. The hierarchy had proven themselves to be just as reactionary and just as opposed to the republican movement. Yet a new disappointment was evident in the editorial, which concluded that 'in another sense the traditional reaction of the churchman in defence of the establishment is quite out of tune: certainly, it lacks the realism of Vatican II and it ignores that assembly's appeal to clergymen to range themselves alongside the common people in the struggle for justice.' [35] Both the March editorial and Breathnach's articles reveal the fact that not only had some republicans paid an interest to the decrees of Vatican II, and had made a point of highlighting their disappointment that far more radical reforms than mere changes in liturgy had not been adopted —Vatican II could have been the thing which could unite the old, reactionary hierarchy and the republican movement in joint solidarity and a spirit of rebellion against oppression. In the pages of *An Phoblacht* throughout these years, mentions were often made of the activities of more radical Irish priests who took part in squatting actions in Dublin or who arranged cooperatives in Donegal.[36] The fact that ordinary

---

[34] Ibid., Mar. 1971.
[35] Ibid.
[36] See for example *An Phoblacht*, Apr. 1970 and Jan. 1971.

clergy in places such as Derry had been profoundly inspired by the spirit of Vatican II to work more directly for social justice in their own communities was disregarded by the republicans.

Despite such criticism, Bishop Philbin was unwavering in his damnation of the Provisionals. In an address to the Catholic Young Men's Society, he declared that:

> It is easy to recognise the harm that has been done in visible form —murder, maiming, extortion, destruction, robbery, intimidation and dispossession of householders, demolition of places of worship. The common factor is the currency of an idea that the moral law, the Ten Commandments, can be abolished by private armies, which, in the name of a slogan or political ambition, can become the supreme arbiter of the life or death … Our whole future depends on extirpating this satanic philosophy.[37]

By cruel coincidence, Philbin's statement appeared in the regional and national newspapers on the morning of Bloody Sunday on 30 January 1972, an event which would cause an upsurge of support for the Provisional IRA by the grief-stricken and angered Catholic community.

At the annual Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in October 1973, a resolution was adopted condemning the hierarchy for 'using their religious authority in support of British political efforts in the Six occupied counties.' Special scorn was reserved for Philbin, who was unanimously condemned as 'the greatest collaborator with the British since Maynooth was founded to prevent the spread of revolutionary ideas.[38] There was an air of inevitability to this, not only because of his condemnations of the IRA from the pulpit – condemnations, it must be remembered, which were reiterated by all church leaders in Northern Ireland – but also because he had on several occasions behaved in a way that seemed to demonstrate if not outright support for the British government, then at least a remarkable level of poor judgment, such as when he earned the distinction of being the first Catholic bishop from Northern Ireland to accept an invitation to attend the queen's garden party at Buckingham Palace six months after Bloody Sunday.[39]

Bishop Philbin's doomed efforts to curb the violence and support political reforms were informed by two underlying assumptions. Firstly, despite the injustices of the past, he regarded Stormont as the legitimate government, and Philbin seems to have genuinely believed that the

---

[37] *Irish Times*, 30 Jan. 1972.
[38] Ibid., 22 Oct. 1973.
[39] Ibid., 21 July 1972.

administration could be trusted to reform itself and govern in a just and equitable way – albeit some pressure from Westminster might be needed. He also exhibited great confidence in the intentions of Westminster and the British Army - even while many Catholics increasingly regarded the troops as aggressors. Secondly, the whole hierarchy believed in the goal of 'peace with justice,' a phrase popularised with Vatican II and held to embody the ideal of a well-governed society. Put briefly, this vision could be summarised as a belief that peace in Northern Ireland would naturally result from genuine political reforms that would offer far greater inclusion for the minority in the economic and social life of the province. But also, importantly, that this justice could not be permanently attained until the impulse for political violence had been stamped out. Yet even if Philbin had been personally inclined towards a more radical ideology, the question even at the time must have been: what else could he have done? In terms of Catholic doctrine, for a church leader to encourage his congregation to engage in or support the overthrow of a state would have been unthinkable. Had the cardinal or the bishops publicly declared that the partition of Ireland and thus the existence and authority of Stormont was illegitimate, the political ramifications would have been disastrous, as this would have provided fuel for the flames of loyalist paranoia about 'Rome rule.' Yet as it happened, while Philbin was sincere in his convictions about the political situation in Northern Ireland, his public statements meant that a growing number of Catholics began to regard him as anything from naïve to treacherous, and thus his ability to achieve the goals he had as a community leader was undermined.

Fear of contagion and the spatial orientation of the early modern city

Evana Downes

Throughout the early modern period, a fear of contagion – and, more specifically, of plague – heavily influenced the spatial orientation of early modern cities. Following the ravages of the Black Death in the fourteenth century, European cities began to develop reactive and defensive measures against common contagions – 'diseases [that] are passed from person to person, either directly or through water, air, or inanimate objects'.[1] The imposition of good order – referring, in this instance, to municipal authorities' strategic management of urban spaces and populations – was widely regarded as the only means by which contagious diseases could be effectively contained within the early modern city.[2] This article will examine how contemporary understandings of infection influenced some urban settings. It will begin by contextualising the medical and cultural framework which underpinned how early modern physicians and laypeople perceived disease. It will then assess how urban epidemics governed cities' social geography and structural layout.

During the early modern period, urban populations and their governors dreaded no other contagion to the extent that they feared the plague, an intensely contagious and violent disease which inspired mass panic and social disorder when it developed in an urban setting.[3] Plague was hugely influential in governing the spatial orientation of European cities, particularly during periods of epidemic. A fear of plague – and, more specifically, the public

---

[1] Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and society in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 159; Ibid., p. 177.

[2] It is as a result of 'disorder, and...lacke of direction', opined the Elizabethan Plague Orders of 1578, that individuals, urban or otherwise, 'wilfully procure the increase of this general contagion'. Hoorn's *Pesterdonnatie* (plague ordinance) of 1599 argued a similar point; Elizabeth Tudor, 'Orders, thought meete by her Maiestie, and her priuie Councell, to be executed throughout the counties of this realme, in such townes, villages, and otherplaces, as are, or may be hereafter infected with the plague...' (London, 1578), Early English Books Online, (http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.lib.ul.ie/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841277) (14 September 2014); Lindemann, *Medicine and Society*, p. 161.

[3] Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe 1500-1700* (London, 1998), p. 187; Giulia Calvi, *Histories of a plague year: the social and the imaginary in baroque Florence* (Berkley, 1989), p. 59.

health restrictions such fear initiated – lessened the freedom of the individual citizen by severely curtailing his/her ritual engagement, movement about the city, exchange of household or commercial goods, and customary community ties and responsibilities.[4] An outbreak of plague also tested the social bonds of victims and the members of their families and communities, stripping from them the ability to request or offer support and consolation.[5] As the Barcelona tanner Miquel Parets noted in his 1651 journal:

> Just think about a person who, during other sicknesses, was taken care of by his or her spouse, and was able to see his relatives and friends, and was given everything he needed. And then you see the same person during the plague being nursed by a stranger with no love for him…he had to receive everything from this person without being consoled by another. And many times all this nurse did was to make the patient die more quickly, because the sooner he died the sooner the nurse got…[paid] however much they had agreed on for the [duration of the] quarantine…[6]

The intensity of the social stigma surrounding plague sufferers was such that parish clerks were often reluctant to record plague as a cause of death in their registers. Some even considered it preferable to attribute plague mortalities to the 'French Pox' in an attempt to avert public panic – it was, as the Augsburg councilman Michael Reischner put it, very much 'desirable to keep [the outbreak of plague] quiet'.[7] Despite the fact that increasing numbers of contemporaries – such as Edward Phillips in 1658 – were beginning to understand that the 'French Pox' was transmitted through sexual contact and propagated by immoral, promiscuous behaviour, it remained less of a stigma than was plague.[8] Plague was, therefore, one of the more feared diseases of the early modern period, becoming particularly virulent and disruptive when it was established within a crowded urban environment.

---

[4] Calvi, *Histories of a plague year*, pp 5-6; David Herlihy and Samuel K. Cohn (ed.), *The Black Death and the transformation of the west* (London, 1997), pp 59-60; Allison P. Coudert, 'Sewers, cesspools and privies: waste as reality and metaphor in pre-modern cities' in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Urban space in the middle ages and the early modern age* (New York, 2008), p. 733.

[5] Paul Slack, *The impact of plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London,1985), p. 295.

[6] Miquel Parets, 'Of the Great Sufferings the Plague Caused' in James S. Amelang (trans. and ed.), *A journal of the plague year: the diary of the Barcelona tanner Miquel Parets, 1651* (Oxford, 1991), p. 60.

[7] Robert O. Bucholz and Joseph P. Ward, *London: a social and cultural History, 1550-1750* (New York, 2012), p. 310; Michael Reischner, 'A Plague Year in Augsburg, 1563' in Ann B. Tlusty (ed. and trans.), *Augsburg during the Reformation era: an anthology of sources* (Indianapolis, 2012), p. 266.

[8] 'venereal, n., 2a' Oxford English Dictionary Online, December 2013. Oxford University Press (http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.ul.ie/view/Entry/222116?redirectedFrom=venereal#eid), (17 March 2014).

To address the means by which plague epidemics influenced the social and structural layout of early modern cities, it is first necessary to establish precisely what contemporaries understood to have been the underlying causes of infection. Surviving accounts indicate that the frequent outbreaks of plague that haunted European cities from the 1340s to the 1720s were accredited to a wide variety of factors, ranging from celestial displeasure to the lethal stagnancy of the air that victims were believed to breathe in (and out).[9] Historians and scientists have recently begun to acknowledge the validity of contemporaries' fear of airborne plague. It was recently reported that 'for any plague to spread at such a pace [as it did during the Black Death of the 1340s] it must have got into the lungs of victims...and then been spread by coughs and sneezes.' This finding indicates that pneumonic plague – not bubonic plague, spread by black rat fleas – may have been largely responsible for the heavy mortalities of the Black Death.[10] Writing at the time of London's severe plague epidemic of 1665, the English physician Gideon Harvey attributed citizens' susceptibility to the disease to

> some innate, or adventitious weakness of the Intrails, or vitiate quality and effect of some or all the *non-Naturals*, *viz.* victuals and drink, air, passions, *etc.* or by reason of some external errors, or intemperance, or ill government in the use of the said *Non-naturals*; or mischances, as falls, poysons, *etc*.[11]

In Harvey's mind, plague tended to strike not only individuals who were inadequately nourished or intrinsically susceptible to illness (consumers of unsuitable 'victuals and drink' or possessors of 'innate, or adventitious weakness') and/or lived in unsuitable environments (filled with bad 'air' or other such 'poysons'), but also those who lived contrary to accepted social codes (those subject to outbursts of 'passion', 'intemperance', or 'ill-government').[12] His opinion was echoed by a number of like-minded contemporaries, including the Augsburg

---

[9] Refer to Appendices: Fig. 1; Bucholz and Ward, *London: A social and cultural history*, p. 311; Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present* (London, 1997), p. 124; Calvi, *Histories of a plague year*, p. 59..

[10] *The Observer*, 29 Mar. 2014

[11] Gideon Harvey, *A discourse of the plague containing the nature, causes, signs, and presages of the pestilence in general* (London, 1665), Early English Books Online (http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11810960) (24 February 2014).

[12] Harvey, *A discourse of the plague*,.

physician Achilles Gasser. In his *Short Instruction on the Plague* (1564), Gasser wrote that

since 'all illnesses result from our disorderly and evil lives and our ungratefulness to God',

citizens could avoid infection by seeking clean air, avoiding plague-stricken people,

remaining 'orderly in eating and drinking' and moderating their expressions of 'anger, fear,

resentment' and melancholy.[13] Contemporaries' understanding of what constituted contagion,

therefore, was defined by medical beliefs in the biological, environmental, moral and social

aetiologies of disease. Though physicians largely attributed plague outbreaks to natural

causes, they also acknowledged the role of the divine in its proliferation – the two earliest

references to 'contagion' in the Oxford English Dictionary define it as both a 'contagious

disease or sickness; a plague or pestilence' (c.1398) and a '[hurtful], defiling, or corrupting

contact; infecting influence' (c.1386). As the urban historian Alexander Cowan notes, 'Even

when medical opinion identified natural causes for plague outbreaks, the argument that they

were the result of God's displeasure at sinful behaviour still held sway.'[14] These reinforce the

fact that, in a medieval/early modern context, contagion was perceived as both an outcome of

biological and environmental contamination and as an effect of moral and social

degeneration. This multi-faceted understanding of disease provides the crucial backdrop

against which the spatial orientation of early modern cities haunted by the constant threat of

plague may be assessed.

Contemporaries' fears of contagion derived from widespread beliefs in two prevailing

aetiologies of disease – one dependant on biological and environmental factors, the other on

moral and social behaviours. As a result of this inherent duality, the threat of contagion

governed cities' spatial orientation in two discernible ways – firstly, by motivating political

---

[13] Achilles Gasser, 'Augsburg Physician Achilles Gasser's *Short instruction on thepPlague*, 1564' in Tlusty
(ed. and trans.), *Augsburg during the Reformation era*, pp 270-271.
[14] Cowan, *Urban Europe*, p. 189; 'contagion, n.' Oxford English Dictionary Online, December 2013. Oxford
University Press
(http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/40032;jsessionid=30FDDD113F8E83893572A53B45B1FC03?redirectedFrom
=contagion#eid), (16 March 2014).

efforts to expel or control the movement of 'contaminated' individuals and, secondly, by influencing civic authorities' structural organisation and management of buildings, streets and other urban features. In this way, disease shaped how citizens – whether magistrates or laymen, elites or lower classes, marginal or otherwise – interacted with their surroundings and with each other.

The risk of infection had a profound effect on the social geography of the early modern city and the spatial orientation of various social groups. In their formulation of public health policies, municipal authorities paid particular attention to the regulation of marginal groups they deemed morally 'undesirable' and, thus, more likely to spread contagion.[15] These included prostitutes and beggars, both of whom were vulnerable to scapegoating during times of urban crises.[16] Even during periods of relative peace, prostitutes in Nuremberg were frequently segregated from honourable society and housed together for public health reasons (that is, prior to the city's complete closure of their brothels in 1562), while in Venice, it was determined that 'the best solution and the least harmful to that island [of Rialto] would be for...all whores...[to] repair to the public place and the vaults assigned to them'.[17] In Madrid, penitent houses for 'wayward women' were to be established in

> ...a very appropriate site, but not one that is too isolated or distant from a town, because of the great disadvantages that could derive from that...[Houses] must be strong and well locked, having no window or opening facing in any direction and cannot have access to any other adjoining house...[18]

Attempts to spatially limit and regulate prostitutes' interactions with the rest of the urban population derived largely from the threat of contagion that their disreputable moral and social status was feared to promulgate. In Augsburg, prostitutes were dubbed '*varnden*

---

[15]Herlihy and Cohn (ed.), *The Black Death*, pp 66-67; William Naphy, 'Plague spreading and magisterially controlled fear' in William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (eds.), *Fear in early modern society* (Manchester, 1997), p. 33.

[16] Cowan, *Urban Europe*, p. 159; Ibid., p. 189; Calvi, *Histories of a plague year*, p. 169.

[17] Gerard Strauss, *Nuremberg in the 16th century* (London, 1966), p. 212; The Venetian Sestieri, 'The Rialto brothel and the regulation of prostitution, 1460' in David Chambers, Brian Pullan and Jennifer Fletcher (eds), *Venice: a documentary history 1450-1630* (London, 2012), p. 121.

[18] Magdalaena De San Jerónomo, 'Vagabond women (1608)' in Jon Cowans (ed.), *Early modern Spain: a documentary history* (Philadelphia, 2003), pp 141-142.

freulin' – wandering girls – and deemed as much a source of moral, social and biological contagion as their perceived social counterparts, beggars, were.[19]

Beggars were considered a particularly potent threat to the health of urban populations, since they were both peripatetic – and, as such, capable of spreading disease from one city to another – and morally dishonourable; the living embodiment of 'social infection'.[20] The fear of contagion occasioned by the uncontained movement of tramps was addressed by a number of contemporary laws, including those established within the Habsburg Spanish state. In 1524, Charles I/V (king of Spain/Holy Roman Emperor) issued a royal decree declaring that:

> inhabitants or natives of other areas cannot and will not wander throughout our kingdoms, but rather, each one must begin his native area; and our district magistrates and judicial officials and mayors will be given the necessary resources by our court to carry this out…[21]

The perceived immorality of such people was also scrutinized in state and city laws, with another (undated) Habsburg decree commanding that 'priests and…judges [were] not to grant…[begging] licenses to those poor people until they have…gone to confession and taken communion'.[22] It is a noteworthy aside that this preoccupation with the morality of beggars, Coudert argues, reflected broader convictions that 'society itself could only be kept alive by constantly draining and flushing the alien and contagious bodies threatening to penetrate it.'[23] During plague epidemics, vagrants were usually among the first social groups to be suspected of spreading contagion and subsequently expelled from early modern cities. They were either allowed to wander into the countryside (dispersing contagion elsewhere) or placed directly

---

[19] Kathy Stuart, *Defiled trades and social outcasts: honour and ritual pollution in early modern Germany* (New York, 1999), p. 27.
[20] Alain Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant: odour and the social imagination* (Leamington Spa, 1986), p. 93.
[21] Habsburg Monarchy, 'Laws of the Habsburg Monarchy' in Cowans (ed.), *Early modern Spain*, pp 195-196.
[22] Habsburg Monarchy, 'Laws', p.196.
[23] Coudert, 'Sewers, cesspools and privies', p. 717.

into pest-houses beyond the city walls, such as that of Barcelona's *angels vells* or London's first plague hospital at St Giles Cripplegate.[24]

Contemporaries' fear of infection also governed the spatial orientation and management of some physical structures within the early modern city. This was particularly obvious during periods of epidemic, during which city authorities placed individual houses, religious institutions or streets under quarantine, established pest- and pox-houses outside the city walls, and reinforced the city gates.[25] In his 1722 *Journal of a Plague Year*, Daniel Defoe deemed London authorities' strategic management of streets, private dwellings and pest-houses during the city's 1665 epidemic to have been 'severe' but necessary.[26] He noted that:

> It is most certain that, if by the shutting up of houses the sick had not been confined, multitudes who in the height of their fever were delirious and distracted would have been continually running up and down the streets...I doubt that, should one of those infected, diseased creatures have bitten any man or woman while the frenzy of the distemper was upon them, they...would as certainly have been incurably infected as one that was sick before.[27]

Defoe also praised the thoroughness of authorities' attempts to structurally contain disease, declaring that had

> ...the shutting up of houses been omitted and the sick hurried out of their dwellings to pest-houses, as some proposed...it would certainly have been much worse than it was. The very removing the sick would have been a spreading of the infection...because that removing could not effectually clear the house where the sick person was of the distemper; and the rest of the family, being then left at liberty, would certainly spread it among others.[28]

In Venice, this problem was addressed through the establishment of two different quarantine hospitals — the *Lazaretto Vecchio* and the *Lazaretto Nuovo* — which segregated

---

[24] Refer to Appendices: Fig. 2; Bucholz and Ward, *London*, pp 314-315; Parets, 'How the plague continued in Barcelona', p. 43.

[25] Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*, p. 126; Cowan, *Urban Europe*, p. 187. In other cases, a fear of contagion from other cities or towns prompted uninfected towns to reinforce their own gates against potential refugees. Roy Porter, *London: A social history* (London, 1994), p. 103; Parets, 'Of the measures the city of Barcelona took against the contagion in Tortosa', p. 33.

[26] Defoe, Daniel, *A journal of the plague year*, John Berseth (ed) (Toronto, 2001), p. 123.

[27] Ibid., p. 122.

[28] Ibid., pp 137-8.

the infected sick from the suspected, or re-cooperating, sick.[29] These *lazarettos* (pest-houses) were built on islands situated away from the city.[30]

City authorities also temporarily redrew the spatial orientation of the city's active streets during outbreaks of plague by quarantining some and aspiring to cleanse others of livestock, excrement, rubbish and other sources of biological and environmental contagion.[31] This magisterial policy reflected measures widely prescribed by contemporary physicians, who declared that 'all excrement, filth and stinking nasty things should be cleared out of the houses…yards and…streets' to preserve the purity of the air.[32] The use of cannon fire, the ringing of bells and the setting of bonfires were also used to disinfect and ventilate stagnant city air.[33]

Miquel Parets records that when plague was first identified in Barcelona in 1651, the authorities immediately ordered that affected houses 'be cleaned and fumigated and much clothing there burnt'.[34] This reaction testifies not only to contemporary beliefs in 'miasma' – that is, polluted, impure air – as a cause of disease, but also to fire's usefulness in combating contagion.[35] Defoe notes that one family, having been unpleasantly visited by a person afflicted by the plague, refused to re-enter their house until they had 'burnt a great variety of fumes and perfumes...and made a great many smokes of pitch, of gunpowder, and of sulphur...'.[36] In some cities, controlled fires were set to burn away the remnants of infection

---

[29] Provveditori alla Sanita, 'The plague orders of 1541' in Chambers, Pullan and Fletcher, *Venice: a documentary history*, pp 116-7.

[30] Refer to Appendices: Fig. 3.

[31] Cowan, *Urban Europe*, p. 126; Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant*, p. 92.

[32] Gasser, '*Short instruction on the plague, 1564*', p. 271.

[33] 'Let the Bells in Cities and Townes be rung often, and the great Ordinance discharged, [for] thereby the aire is purified,' wrote the English physician Francis Herring in 1625. Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant*, p. 97; Francis Herring, *Certaine rules, directions, or aduertisments for this time of pestilentiall contagion* (London, 1625), Early English Books Online (http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:52633286) (24 February 2014), image 5.

[34] Parets, 'When they first realised the Plague was in Barcelona', p. 37.

[35] Corbin, *The foul and thefFragrant*, p. 103; Calvi, *Histories of a plague year*, p. 169; Bucholz and Ward, *London: A social and cultural history*, p. 316; Porter, *London: a social history*, p. 103.

[36] Defoe, *A journal of the plague year*, p. 122.

believed to infuse wooden houses, shacks and furniture (set, where possible, beyond the walls); in others, contaminated wooden ships were similarly destroyed.[37] Michael Reischner recalls how, at the end of the 1563-4 plague epidemic in Augsburg, 'we ordered that the wood and all the things [from the Plague House] be brought down…and everything be burnt'.[38]

Sometimes, the outbreak of accidental urban fires provided indirect opportunities for cities to at least partially reorganise entire districts in ways that, intentionally or otherwise, reflected contemporary understanding of disease. These arrangements were frequently overseen by contemporary rulers with an active interest in city planning. In Valladolid in 1561, Phillip II heavily regulated the materials used and structural alignments established in the city's rebuilding of its fire-damaged quarter, while in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London in 1666, the English state decreed that damaged wooden houses be rebuilt in brick or stone; streets, too, were to be widened and cleared of human or animal waste.[39]

In early sixteenth century Lisbon, Manuel I commanded that all medieval *balcoddas* (overhangs) be removed from the city's streets, reasoning that in addition to posing an urban fire risk, they compromised healthy air circulation.[40] He subsequently dictated that Lisbon's timber structures be replaced by whitewashed masonry, for much the same reasons.[41] In this way, the establishment of new norms for building materials and urban spatial alignment – primarily established to lower the incidence of fire – not only contributed to urban structures' gradual replacement of wood with its more 'sanitary' stone counterpart, but also increased the flow of air in the city. These measures, contemporaries believed, allowed miasmas to more

---

[37] Corbin, *The foul and thefFragrant*, pp 101-3; Ibid., p. 98.
[38] Reischner, 'A plague year in Augsburg', p. 270.
[39] Cowan, *Urban Europe*, p. 135; Bucholz and Ward, *London: A social and cultural History*, p. 327; Coudert, 'Sewers, cesspools and privies', p. 720.
[40] Maria Helena Barreiros, 'Urban landscapes: houses, streets and squares of 18th century Lisbon' in Riita Laitinen and Thomas V. Cohen (eds), *Cultural History of Early Modern European Streets* (Boston, 2009), pp 14-16.
[41] Ibid.

easily dissipate, granting citizens the most effective guard against contagion that medical understanding could then endorse.[42]

A fear of contagion governed, in many ways, the spatial orientation of early modern cities. As disease was understood as a moral and medical issue, civic communities responded to epidemics by attempting to assuage God's wrath and limit their contact with natural sources of contagion. Achieving these objectives required municipal authorities to exert control over the positioning of social groups and physical structures within the urban environment. Such measures tended to be reactionary – rather than preventative – during the early modern period.[43] Even during epidemics, the effectiveness of urban health sanctions in different cities remained immensely variable. Though methods to contain infectious disease were similar throughout early modern Europe, the powers of individual civic administrations to enforce them differed significantly. In London, administrative decisions were divided between city governors and the crown, lowering the response time and overall authority of each ruling body.[44] This was not the case in the Italian city of Pistoia, where urban authorities exerted considerable political control over the city's resources and population.[45] This authority empowered Pistoia's governing parties to respond decisively and effectively to the threat of contagious disease.

In most cities, attempts to strategically regulate spatial orientation largely met with failure outside periods of crisis. Long-term, preventative health regulations proved unenforceable (for financial and cultural reasons), and existing patterns of urban ownership and space continued to challenge architects' reimagining of squares, streets, religious

---

[42] Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant*, p. 100; Ibid., p. 98.
[43] Lindemann*, Medicine and society*, p. 159.
[44] Silvia De Renzi, 'Policies of Health: Diseases, poverty and hospitals' in Peter Elmer (ed.), *The healing arts: health, disease and society in Europe 1500-1800* (Manchester, 2004), pp 6-7.
[45] Ibid., pp 5-6.

institutions and houses.[46] Contagion's role in shaping the social and geographical structure of the early modern city was to become increasingly evident in the eighteenth century, as the century's sanitary reforms added new emphasis to the threat posed by infectious disease.[47]

[46] Coudert, 'Sewers, cesspools and privies', p. 720; Cowan, *Urban Europe*, p. 123; Ibid., p. 135

[47] Coudert, 'Sewers, cesspools and privies', p. 733; Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant*, p. 92.

Fig. 1.
Detail of a contemporary print, depicting plague raining down on the City of London, c. 1665.[48]

Fig. 2.
Detail of the extra-mural St Giles Cripplegate (circled), Map of the City of London, c.1560.[49]

---

[48] The Society of Edinburgh Stationers, *Londons Lord have mercy upon us. A true relation of seven mod[ern] plagues or visitations in London* (Edinburgh, 1665), Early English Books Online (http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:52614769) (24 February 2014).

Fig. 3.
Map of the City of Venice, depicting *lazarette* quarantine islands (circled), c.1615.[50]

[49] Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum I* (Cologne, 1574), Historic Cities (http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il/british_isles/london/maps/braun_hogenberg_I_A.html) (16 March 2014).
[50] In this map, the *Lazzaretto Vecchio* and *Lazzaretto Nuovo* – used to accommodate individuals at various stages of quarantine – are marked in French as the *Viel Lazarette* and the *Lazarette le neuf.* From Henry de Beauvau, *Relation iournaliere du voyage du levant faict & descrit par haut et puissant Seigneur Henry de Beauvau...* (Nancy, 1615), Historic Cities (http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il/italy/venice/maps/beauvau_1615_venice.html) (16 March 2014).

Notes on contributors

Elysia Maludzinski: Elysia currently lives in Ottawa, Canada, and received her M.Phil in early modern History from Trinity College Dublin in 2014. Her dissertation was titled 'The Revelation of John Bale: The Conceptualization of Space in Protestant Apocalyptic Thought, 1536-1563' and focused on Bale's consideration of the spatial symbols within Revelation; evil space, transitional space, and expected space, and their application within Bale's apocalyptic vision of the past, present, and future.

Sarah Bartosiak: Sarah recently graduated from Trinity College Dublin with an M.Phil. in early modern History. Her research interests in European cultural history resulted in a graduate dissertation entitled '"An Exciting and Dangerous Adventure of the Self:" Expressions of Identity within Eighteenth Century Irish Travel Narratives.'

Jonathan Best: Jonathan is a PhD student in the School of History and Anthropology at Queen's University Belfast. His main research interest is the history of British intelligence and espionage in the twentieth century and his thesis focuses on the relationship between the British spy novel and real life British intelligence between 1903 and 1991.

Cáthal Power: Cáthal is a final year Arts student in University College Cork. His research interests include the Cold War era in the Middle East, intervention and US foreign policy, as well as US and Soviet relations.

Seán McKillen: Seán is a PhD candidate at the University of Limerick. His thesis is focused on the role of the SDLP in the Sunningdale process in Northern Ireland. Other research interests include political and socio-economic history of twentieth-century Northern Ireland, Unionist politics, the United States and the Northern Irish peace process; Anglo-Irish relations in the twentieth-century.

Gerald Maher: Gerald is a final year student in the University of Limerick. With his military background, Gerald is focusing his research on military tactics and strategy in the Irish revolutionary period. He is a peer tutor in the Regional Writing Centre based at the University of Limerick. Other research interests include American-Irish relations in the twentieth-century.

Nina Vodstrup Andersen: Nina is a PhD candidate in University College Dublin. The title of her MA dissertation is 'Raising blood-stained hands to heaven: the Catholic Church and the IRA, 1916 – 1921'. Her research is supported by the Irish Research Council.

Evana Downes: Evana is a graduate of the University of Limerick, having graduated in 2014. Her main research interests are focused on health, society and spatial constructs in early modern Europe.

The University of Limerick History Society

The History Society was formed in 1997 and in the intervening years has established itself as one of the most vibrant societies on campus, winning various clubs and societies awards. It is involved in organising lectures, seminars, films and field trips, with the committee playing a valuable role furthering the study of history. The first edition of *History Studies* was published in 1999 and has proved to be an important landmark in the development of the History Society. For information on joining the History Society contact ulhistorysociety@gmail.com.

Postgraduate Research Degrees

• **What is a research degree?**	• **Is it right for me?**
• A research degree involves in-depth study of a specific topic which is then written up as a thesis for examination. • You can apply for a Masters by research **Masters (MA or LLM) degree** or for a **Doctoral (PhD) degree**. • On average a research degree takes between two and four years to complete.	• Do you enjoy working independently? • Did you enjoy the research projects you carried out in your degree (e.g. your final year project, term papers)? • Do you have good oral and written communication skills? • Do you expect to graduate with a 2:1 degree or higher?
• **What kind of careers will a research degree lead to?**	• **In what subjects can I do a research degree?**
• Education: research, teaching and management • Civil and public service • Research and consultancy • Publishing • Business • Non-governmental sector • Politics and local government • Diplomatic service • Creative arts and media	• History • Languages & Linguistics • Law • Literature and Cultural Studies • Media and Communication Studies • Politics and Public Administration • Sociology

For information on AHSS Research Degrees contact: niamh.lenahan@ul.ie / 061 202945

Feel free to send informal inquiries to the Assistant Dean of Research, Dr. Eoin Devereux: eoin.devereux@ul.ie /061 202341

**TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE
COURSES 2015-16**

**CULTURE AND
COMMUNICATION**
MA in Creative Writing
MA in Critical Irish Studies
MA in English
Grad Dip /MA in Journalism
MA in Technical Communication and E-Learning **ONLINE OPTION**
Grad Cert in Technical Writing (Distance Education) **ONLINE COURSE**
HISTORY
MA in History
MA in History of Family **ONLINE OPTION**
MA in Local History **Not Running**
LAW
LLM/MA in Human Rights in Criminal Justice
LLM in International Commercial Law
LLM (General)
Bachelor of Laws (Graduate Entry)
Structured PhD in Criminal Justice
**MODERN LANGUAGES AND
APPLIED LINGUISTICS**
MA in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies
MA in Irish/German Studies
MA in Modern Language Studies
MA in Languages and ICT Content Development **NEW!**
MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
Structured PhD in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
Structured PhD in Applied Languages
Structured PhD in New Media and Film
**POLITICS AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION**
MA in Politics
MA in European Politics and Governance
Grad Dip/MA in Peace and Development Studies
MA in International Studies
MA in Ethics and International Affairs **NEW!**
Structured PhD in Politics
SOCIOLOGY
MA in Gender, Culture and Society
MA in Sociology (Applied Social Research)
MA in Sociology (Youth, Community and Social Regeneration)

**For further details contact:
mary.heuston@ul.ie or ahsspg@ul.ie**

116

CALL FOR PAPERS

The editors of *History Studies* invite submission of papers for inclusion in

volume 16, 2015.

History Studies is a journal edited by the postgraduate community in the Department of History, University of Limerick. The journal is refereed by a panel of distinguished Historians and is an established periodical in the field of historical scholarship.

Papers can focus on any aspect of history and should be no more than 5,000 words in length. Papers can be posted as an email attachment.

For details in relation to style sheet or back issues of History Studies please contact the editors at addresses listed below.

Closing date for submissions:

31 August 2015

Email: history.studies@ul.ie

Website: www.ul.ie/historystudies