

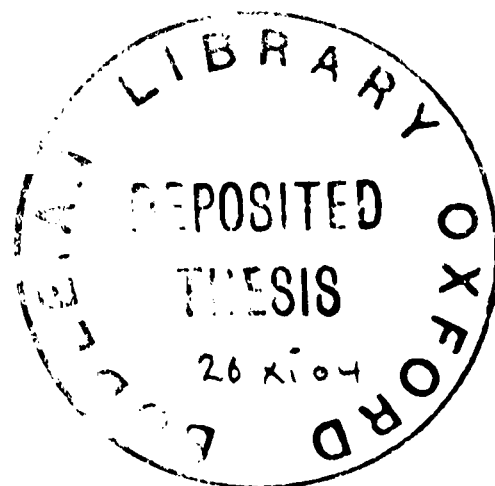
**The Minority Voice:
Hubert Butler, Southern Protestantism
and Intellectual Dissent in Ireland, 1930-72**

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy by

ROBERT BENJAMIN TOBIN

Merton College, Oxford

Trinity Term 2004



The Minority Voice:**Hubert Butler, Southern Protestantism and Intellectual Dissent, 1930-72**

Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Robert Benjamin Tobin

Merton College, Oxford, Trinity Term 2004

Short Abstract

Much has been written about the generation of Southern Irish Protestant intellectuals who played such a prominent role in Ireland's public life from the fall of Charles Stewart Parnell in the early 1890s until the rise of Eamon de Valera in the early 1930s. Very little indeed has been written about the generation of Southern Protestant intellectuals following them, those writers, journalists, academics and churchmen who were born around 1900 and who came of age in the decade following Irish Independence. Though few in number, these people represent an important facet of the young nation's cultural history and serve to refute the blanket assumption that the minority community had neither the will nor the ability to make a contribution to the new dispensation. As a particularly eloquent and stalwart member of this community, the Kilkenny man-of-letters Hubert Butler (1900-91) functions as the touchstone of this thesis, an individual worthy of attention in his own right but also compelling as a commentator on the challenges facing Southern Protestants generally during the period 1930-72. For in these years, Protestants confronted the delicate task of adapting to their changed position within Irish society without in the process forfeiting their distinct identity. As a nationalist eager to participate fully in the country's civic life but also as a Protestant fiercely committed to the rights of spiritual independence and intellectual dissent, Butler often struggled to balance the demands of community with those of autonomy. This thesis explores the various contexts in which he and his contemporaries challenged the normative terms of Irishness so that the criteria for belonging might better accommodate their minority values and experiences. In so doing, Southern Protestant intellectuals of this generation made a valuable contribution to the development of pluralistic values on the island.

The Minority Voice:**Hubert Butler, Southern Protestantism and Intellectual Dissent, 1930-72**

Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Robert Benjamin Tobin

Merton College, Oxford, Trinity Term 2004

Long Abstract

Much has been written about the generation of Southern Irish Protestant intellectuals who played such a prominent role in Ireland's public life from the fall of Charles Stewart Parnell in the early 1890s until the rise of Eamon de Valera in the early 1930s. Very little indeed has been written about the generation of Southern Protestant intellectuals following them, those writers, journalists, academics and churchmen who were born around 1900 and who came of age in the decade following Irish Independence. Though few in number, these people represent an important facet of the young nation's cultural history and serve to refute the blanket assumption that the minority community had neither the will nor the ability to make a contribution to the new dispensation. As a particularly eloquent and stalwart member of this community, the Kilkenny man-of-letters Hubert Butler (1900-91) functions as the touchstone of this thesis, an individual worthy of attention in his own right but also compelling as a commentator on the challenges facing Southern Protestants generally during the period 1930-72. For in these years, Protestants confronted the delicate task of adapting to their changed position within Irish society without in the process forfeiting their distinct identity. As a nationalist eager to participate fully in the country's civic life but also as a Protestant fiercely committed to the rights of spiritual independence and intellectual dissent, Butler often struggled to balance the demands of community with those of autonomy. This thesis explores the various contexts in which he and his contemporaries challenged the normative terms of Irishness so that the criteria for belonging might better accommodate their minority values and experiences. In so doing, Southern Protestant intellectuals of this generation made a valuable contribution to the development of pluralistic values on the island.

Both the Irish Literary Revival and the Co-operative Movement exercised a lasting influence on the thinking of Butler and other post-revolutionary liberal intellectuals. Standish James O'Grady, for example, inspired not only his fellow Revivalists but also later Protestants with his passionate calls for a renewal of Anglo-Irish social responsibility. O'Grady's appetite for controversy and his fearless critique of his own tribe rendered him in Hubert Butler's eyes an exemplar of the Southern Protestant conscience in action. Likewise, Sir Horace Plunkett's longstanding efforts to generate a non-sectarian basis for communal belonging through the Irish Co-operative Movement made a deep impression upon younger Anglo-Irishmen who were committed to reconstruction but unwilling to embrace Catholic nationalist orthodoxies. Perhaps most beloved of the Revivalists among the generation that followed it was the poet, journalist and mystic George W. Russell (AE), who combined O'Grady's visionary impulse with Plunkett's pragmatism. The first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to examining some of the direct ways these three men intervened in Irish society during the period 1900-30 and identifying the particular moral and intellectual legacy they bequeathed to Southern Protestantism in the process. This exercise in genealogical tracing-work is reflective of Butler and his peers' preoccupation with the meaning of roots and inheritance during a time in Irish life when such things were often a source of bitterness towards the minority. His desire to establish and promote a kind of 'fictive kinship' with these precursors, a kinship not contingent on blood but on values, was pivotal to his attempt to salvage strands of the Anglo-Irish tradition from which a positive Protestant identity could then be woven.

Though this study is primarily focused on post-revolutionary Protestant intellectuals who either made Ireland their home or maintained close links with it, such a focus does not preclude attention to their experience of other countries. Indeed, an important challenge facing many of them during this period was persuading their compatriots to take a greater interest in the world they themselves had witnessed abroad. This was no easy task, especially as the craving among some Irish people for an 'authentic' and uncontaminated national culture led them to suspect any

outward orientation as tantamount to betrayal and corruption. Obviously there is nothing exclusively Protestant to being curious about foreign people and customs, and throughout the twentieth century there were, as always, Irish Catholics well-travelled and well-versed in the ways of other cultures. Yet perhaps it was inevitable that Protestants, with their frequent and longstanding ties to England, should be regarded as particularly susceptible to non-Irish influences. Of course, the active participation of the Anglo-Irish in the British imperial project had given them not only a closeness to English life but also a familiarity with conditions across the globe, and this broad perspective in turn affected their perception of their own Irishness. The legacy of this imperial outlook proved a mixed blessing to later Protestants like Hubert Butler, who struggled to retain its international breadth even as they repudiated its reflexive Anglocentrism and expansionist spirit. The second chapter of this thesis, covering the years 1930-45, examines how he and others used their travels and foreign knowledge as a way of placing in a wider context their situation as members of both a former ruling elite and a religious minority. It also looks at how Butler and his contemporaries responded to the rise of totalitarianism in Europe in the thirties and their experience of the national isolation brought about by Ireland's policy of neutrality during the Second World War. The third chapter picks up where the second one leaves off and considers the years 1945-72. Attention here is paid to the ways the Irish responded to the emerging Cold War rivalry between East and West and the ways Butler and other dissidents in turn questioned the prevailing assumptions of the Catholic majority. This section evaluates his critique of mass society on either side of the Iron Curtain and his plea for humane values and individual rights regardless of political polarities. In these two chapters, then, Butler's internationalist viewpoint emerges not as the antithesis of his national identity but as a complement to it, a modern affirmation of an Irish Protestant tradition of cosmopolitanism dating back to the seventeenth century.

While Hubert Butler often found his compatriots provincially minded, he nonetheless relished the intimacy of Irish communal life, particularly the neighbourliness of the countryside.

His decision to settle permanently in Ireland, however, did not mean he was prepared to acquiesce in the increasingly Catholic tenor of Free State society. So as sectarian notions of Irish belonging gained ground during the thirties and forties, he in turn became preoccupied with identifying secular alternatives which could fully accommodate the minority community and bind it more closely to the majority. In promoting these alternatives, he challenged at once the chauvinism of Catholics and the aloofness of Protestants. Chapter Four, incorporating 1930-49, therefore approaches Butler's thinking on community as a form of constructive opposition and looks at the practical ways he tried to build on his vision through local cultural activities in Kilkenny. Moreover, it scrutinizes his relationship with other liberal intellectuals as they all worked to effect a more tolerant and inclusive social dispensation. This section also addresses the Protestant community's evolving sense of national loyalty in the context of, among other things, the Church of Ireland's decision in 1949 to revise its State Prayers to reflect the proclamation of an Irish Republic. The fifth chapter picks up the narrative from 1949-72 and focuses more directly on occasions of public controversy and on the nature of Butler's intellectual dissent. His understanding of his dissenting role as inextricably bound up in his status as an autonomous cultural Protestant is lent particular emphasis. The ostracism he and Owen Sheehy Skeffington endured after the Papal Nuncio Incident in 1952 serves as a springboard for assessing the general condition of free speech in Ireland during this period and for asking whether communal acceptance of Protestants remained contingent on their voluntary self-effacement. The strictness with which the Catholic hierarchy continued to enforce the *Ne Temere* decree throughout the 1950s is likewise important in evaluating the Irish majority's resistance to pluralism, and the fierceness of this resistance is highlighted by a review of the Fethard-on-Sea Boycott of 1957. This event is taken up not only as an illustration of sectarian conflict but also as one of the many occasions on which Butler voiced his profound frustration with his co-religionists for their failure to assert their principles more forcefully. And even as life in the Republic began to liberalize in the 1960s, he remained adamant that Southern Protestants could play a unique part in the forging

of a common future for the whole island, a task which obviously assumed greater urgency and complexity with the re-emergence of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

As with so many other aspects of their heritage, Protestants' relationship to history itself was to prove a double-edged sword after 1930. The perception among many Catholics that a genuinely independent Ireland depended not only upon the attainment of political sovereignty but also on the repudiation of all vestiges of the Anglo-Irish past put nationally-minded minority men like Butler in an awkward position. Both for personal and patriotic reasons, he and others insisted that much about the colonial legacy was inherently valuable and could be profitably integrated into the fabric of the new culture. Protestants therefore had a responsibility to defend the virtues of historical continuity while at the same time to acknowledge the sins committed by their fathers. Yet this seemingly moderate mandate constituted a challenge to the historiographic assumptions of Protestants and Catholics alike, which had long ago congealed into fixed pieties. The emergence of rival sectarian historiographies in Europe since the Reformation is hardly a novel idea, but it is one which has retained its freshness in the Irish context due to the standing parallel between political and religious affiliations. The final chapter of this thesis looks at how this rivalry survived well into the twentieth century, as illustrated by the ongoing debate between the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church over which was the true inheritor of the Patrician tradition. It also attempts, however modestly, to assess how their Protestant heritage may have influenced the outlook and emphases of certain well-known historians from this period.

Out of his commitment to nourishing the bond between past and present in Ireland, Hubert Butler worked to foster an appreciation for historical continuity in a number of ways. The latter half of Chapter Six examines his promotion of 'country scholarship' as a perpetuation of the unsubsidised scholarship of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish gentry and as the basis for his own avowedly amateur pursuit of antiquarianism, archaeology and local history. His antipathy towards the professionalization of the academy is likewise analysed in terms of his moral understanding of the rights and responsibilities afforded by learning and in light of his

struggle to gain recognition for his unorthodox ideas regarding the origins of Irish saint-figures. The 1972 publication of his book on this subject, *Ten Thousand Saints: A Study in Irish and European Origins*, serves as a good stopping-place for the study as a whole, since by then Butler and his contemporaries had largely yielded their role in the public discourse to a new generation. 1972 also stands as a turning-point in Irish life generally, given the repeal that year of key parts of Article 44 in the Constitution, the decision of the Republic to join the EEC, and the winding up of the Northern parliament at Stormont. Though pluralism across the island still had a long way to go as a daily reality, plainly a major shift in thinking had taken place. For over forty years Hubert Butler worked, sometimes alone but often with others, to sow the seeds for this change.

**The Minority Voice:
Hubert Butler, Southern Protestantism
and Intellectual Dissent in Ireland, 1930-72**

Contents	Page
Contents	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abbreviations	iv
Introduction	1
One: An Intellectual Genealogy of Southern Protestantism, 1900-30	20
Two: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism and War, 1930-45	64
Three: Christianity, Mass Society and the Cold War, 1945-72	117
Four: Irish Community and Protestant Belonging, 1930-49	167
Five: Public Controversy and Intellectual Dissent, 1949-72	220
Six: History, Heritage and Scholarship, 1930-72	276
Conclusion	337
Appendices:	
1: Hubert Butler’s Published Writings and Radio Broadcasts	340
2: The Kilkenny Debates: Topics and Participants	351
Bibliography and Sources	353

Acknowledgements

This thesis first took shape in my mind with encouragement from Professor Roy Foster, and it was he who confirmed its promise by agreeing to supervise the research necessary to see it to completion. Throughout the long and sometimes arduous process of my writing it he has been an indispensable resource and guide, and for that I am truly grateful. In the same way I must express my profound thanks to Hubert Butler's daughter and son-in-law, Julia and Richard Crampton, whose support for this project has been unstinting and without whose enthusiasm and hospitality I would never have learned half of what I have during these past years. I also want to thank the extended Butler family, especially the late Gilbert Butler, James and Gilly Butler, Melosina Lenox-Conyngham, Cordelia and James Gelly, Tom Crampton and Suzanna Crampton. Suzanna has my particular thanks for being such a generous and easygoing host during my many visits to Maidenhall. Likewise, I am grateful to Jane de Montmorency Wright, whom I came to know in the course of our working together on the Hubert Butler Centenary Celebration and who has become a lasting friend. Lucy Hone Cross stands out as another person whom I got to know through the Celebration and whose subsequent invitations to lunch in North Oxford were always a pleasant reason to escape the Bodleian. Both Eleanor Burgess and Professor Barbara Wright have been supportive and thoughtful people to talk to throughout the course of this project, as have Bernard Adams, Ian d'Alton, John Devitt and Antony Farrell. For their hospitality and friendship during my various research trips to Dublin my thanks go to Angela Gleason, Martin Kelly, Jenny Mellerick and especially Susan Hood, who has not only been a blessing in her capacity as archivist at the R.C.B. Library but also a wonderful person to get to know. Likewise I owe a debt of gratitude to all those whom I interviewed for this thesis: Maurice Craig, Canon and Mrs. Edward Grant, the Very Rev. Victor Griffin, Professor J.V. Luce, Professor R.B. McDowell, James O'Brien and the late Risteárd Ó Glaisne. All were delightful interviewees and crucial to my getting a better feeling for what life was like in Ireland in the middle of the last century.

Thanks also to Elizabeth Smith and her son, Canon Declan Smith, for recording her reminiscences of Hubert and Peggy Butler.

There are many in Oxford who have made my time here not only educational but also very pleasant. Not least among them are the members of the Oxford Irish History Seminar, especially Ultán Gillen, Matthew Kelly, Marc Mulholland, Ben Novick, Tadhg O'Sullivan and Maurice Walsh. From the Merton College SCR I want to thank Professor Robert Gildea, Philip Waller and the Rev. Simon Jones, all of whom provided both pastoral and practical support. I am grateful to Kate Targett and Robin Watson for country walks that always ended with nice pub lunches, and to Marc Morris, Catherine Sangster and William Whyte for friendships that I value more than I can say. I want also to thank the community of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, which was there for me not just on Sundays but all the week long.

For their assistance during my research I am indebted to the archivists and staff of the Bodleian Library, Merton College Library, the British Library, the Plunkett Foundation, the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, the Burns Library at Boston College, the Houghton and Schlesinger Libraries at Harvard University, the Manuscripts Room at Trinity College Dublin, the Archives Department at University College Dublin, the National Library of Ireland, the Representative Church Body Library and the Kilkenny County Library. For their generous financial support I am also indebted to the Oxford Beit Fund, the Harvard Club of the United Kingdom, the British Association of Irish Studies, the Warden and Fellows of Merton College, and the Overseas Research Scheme. Finally, I want to offer my particular gratitude to Anne van Buren, without whose early support and encouragement this thesis would not have been possible. Likewise, I want to thank my family, who have patiently listened to my unsolicited lectures on Irish history and culture over the years. Above all I am grateful to my parents, who have been with me every step of the way and who have never once doubted. To them this thesis is dedicated with love and in thanksgiving.

RBT

Abbreviations

HMB	Hubert Butler
KAS	Kilkenny Archaeological Society
<i>CD</i>	HMB, <i>The Children of Drancy</i>
<i>EA</i>	HMB, <i>Escape from the Anthill</i>
<i>GW</i>	HMB, <i>Grandmother and Wolfe Tone</i>
<i>LN</i>	HMB, <i>In the Land of Nod</i>
<i>TTS</i>	HMB, <i>Ten Thousand Saints</i>
<i>AIR</i>	<i>All Ireland Review</i>
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Church of Ireland Gazette</i>
<i>CIM</i>	<i>Church of Ireland Monthly</i>
<i>IHS</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
<i>IS</i>	<i>Irish Statesman</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of the Butler Society</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
Harvard	Houghton Library, Harvard University
NYPL	Berg Collection, New York Public Library
Oxford	Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
PF	Plunkett Foundation, Long Hanborough, Oxon.
RCB	Representative Church Body Library, Dublin
TCD	Trinity College Library, Dublin
BP	HMB Papers, TCD
MH	HMB Papers, Maidenhall, Co. Kilkenny
Alpha	Alphabetical correspondence file, MH

Introduction

To the ostent of the senses and eyes, I know, the influences which stamp the world's history are wars, uprisings or downfalls of dynasties, changeful movement of trade, important inventions, navigation, military or civil governments, advent of powerful personalities, conquerors, etc. These of course play their part; yet, it may be, a single new thought, imagination, abstract principle, even literary style, fit for the time, put in shape by some great literatus, and projected among mankind, may duly cause changes, growths, removals, greater than the longest and bloodiest war.

– Walt Whitman, 'Democratic Vistas'.¹

'How do such people, with brilliant members and dull ones, fare when they pass from being a dominant minority to being a powerless one?'² So asked the Kilkenny man-of-letters Hubert Butler when considering the fate of the Southern Protestant community after Irish Independence. As both a product of and spokesman for this culture, Butler posed the question repeatedly over his long life, despite the assumption among many that it had been effectively answered. Politically, the Protestant Ascendancy had been losing its grip in a process almost complete by the time the Irish Free State was established. Economically, while Protestants retained a significant proportion of the country's wealth well into the twentieth century, the trend of disengagement (either forced or voluntary) beginning in earnest with the Land Act of 1881 was never substantially reversed. Religiously, the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 turned the former state religion into a voluntary association that became largely invisible outside Northeast Ulster. And socially, the assumption of Anglo-Irish superiority, while slow to recede in the minds of many Irish people, over time became increasingly the stuff of nostalgia rather than a force actually dictating social norms. All these factors contributed to the general perception that Southern Protestantism as a cultural entity was in a state of terminal decay.³

¹ Walt Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. J.E. Miller (Boston, 1959), 458.

² HMB, 'Protective Colourings', review of Leon Ó Broin, *Protestant Nationalists in Revolutionary Ireland*, in *TLS* 31 Jan. 1986, 108.

³ L.P. Curtis, 'The Anglo-Irish Predicament', *20th Century Studies* 4 (Nov. 1970), 46; Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Kingston, Ontario, 1983), 15-16; Terence Brown, *Ireland's Literature: Selected Essays* (Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1988), 55-6.

Modern Irish literature is littered with retired army majors and maiden aunts slowly rotting alongside the woodwork of their inherited country houses. So compelling has the motif of Anglo-Irish ruin proved to be that it continues to generate a host of novels, memoirs and illustrated histories taking it as a central theme.⁴

Yet as Butler's question intimates, the Protestants who remained in Southern Ireland after 1922, however few their number, were not all reducible to a single type. His distinction between the 'dull' and 'brilliant' members of the community serves as a reminder that alongside the plainspoken and uninspired, an intellectual elite did in fact continue to exist. So F.S.L. Lyons speaks of the 'indomitable minority of the minority' who struggled under the new dispensation to articulate the values and concerns of their community, even when many of their fellows were either too afraid, confused or disillusioned to intervene any longer in public life.⁵ Much has been written about the generation of artists and thinkers known collectively as the Revivalists, those children of the Ascendancy dominating Irish cultural life from the fall of Charles Stewart Parnell until the rise of de Valera's Ireland in the early 1930s. Very little has been said about the generation of Protestant intellectuals who followed them, those born in and around 1900 who came of age under the tutelage of the Revival but whose experience of Ireland was to be profoundly different. These brilliant few of the post-Revival generation, of whom Hubert Butler was one of the most important, constitute both in their persons and their writings a rebuttal of established notions of Anglo-Irish decline. However certain the evidence of its lost political, economic and social predominance, it is not at all as clear that the Southern Protestant tradition experienced an equal diminishment of intellectual vitality in the decades following Independence.

While Hubert Butler (1900-91) is to be the central figure of this thesis, it does not purport to be a biography of him. Rather, it is an inquiry into some of the major social challenges facing his entire community during this period. Yet because of both his unusual consistency and

⁴ For a synthesis of the range of fictional and non-fictional works inspired by the decline of Anglo-Irish rural life, see Peter Somerville-Large, *The Irish Country House: A Social History* (London, 1995), 346-65.

⁵ F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1891-1939* (Oxford, 1979), 105.

forthrightness in confronting these issues and his extraordinary eloquence in doing so, he recommends himself as both lodestar and lightning-rod for any study of the Protestant experience after 1930. By tracking his remarkable range of moral concerns, intellectual engagements and personal acquaintances, one gains a broad framework for understanding the minority position. Of course there are other Protestant intellectuals from this time who merit careful consideration, among them Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973), Monk Gibbon (1896-1987), Ewart Milne (1903-87), Alec Newman (1905-72), W.B. Stanford (1910-84), Geoffrey Phibbs Taylor (1900-56), Chalmers [Terry] Trench (1909-) and Arland Ussher (1899-1980). And though not of a specifically Church of Ireland background, non-conformists Denis Johnston (1901-84), Arnold Marsh (1893-1967) and R.M. Smyllie (1894-1954) are likewise important, as are older Protestants such as Louie Bennett (1870-1956), J.M. Hone (1882-1959), Constantia Maxwell (1886-1962), Lennox Robinson (1886-1958) and George Seaver (1890-1976). By the same token, younger Protestants such as Maurice Craig (1919-), Victor Griffin (1924-), Brian Inglis (1916-91), F.S.L. Lyons (1923-83), H.R. McAdoo (1916-98) and Risteárd Ó Glaisne (1927-2003) should not be overlooked. Lastly, intellectuals of Catholic extraction but crucial to this study are Seán O'Faoláin (1900-91), Peadar O'Donnell (1893-1986), Eoin 'Pope' O'Mahony (1904-70) and Owen Sheehy Skeffington (1909-70), all of whom advocated a pluralist society that could embrace Protestants and who encouraged their participation in its construction. So while Hubert Butler sometimes felt isolated as a minority intellectual, he was never actually alone. Whether they agreed or disagreed with his views, these others shared his concern with the fate of the Protestant community and with the contribution it might yet make to modern Ireland.

Still, given that this circle of Protestant intellectuals comprised such a tiny number of people, why should their particular story matter? Indeed, given its eclipse by the Catholic majority, why should the story of the southern minority itself matter? A basic assumption of this thesis is that in a century moulded by the forces of nationalism and de-colonization, the

experience of any European minority group has the potential to be instructive.⁶ In approaching them from this angle, Southern Protestants have been compared to other imperial minorities ranging from the Germans in Bohemia and the Swedes in Finland to the Greeks in Smyrna and the Muslims in the Balkans.⁷ While theirs was to be a relatively peaceful transition from power to subordination, Southern Protestants shared with these other groups the vertiginous experience of being told they were no longer who they thought they were. And this is where the place of minority intellectuals like Butler proves important, and not because they are representative of their community but precisely because they are not. His co-religionists' anxious and sometimes hostile response to his attempts to be an active citizen in the new state reflected their own ambivalence about their altered status. Conversely, the majority establishment's inability to regard the dissent of Butler and other Protestants as anything but bigotry signalled its deeper fear of a nascent secular intelligentsia which would transcend sectarian categories. Thus the role and significance of the Protestant intellectual remnant after Independence cannot be simply extrapolated from post-colonial theoretical models and other shortcuts through the tangled undergrowth of Ireland's identity politics. As Conor Cruise O'Brien observed as far back as 1972, the binary opposition of *colon* and *colonisé*, still so compelling to many, is in practice a hopelessly inadequate means by which to approach the multiple and often contradictory loyalties at work within Irish society.⁸ If the legacy of Hubert Butler and his generation of Southern Protestant thinkers testifies to anything, it is to the inadequacy of this and other distinctions that would deprive history of its complexity rather than affirm it. For as anomalous figures in a transitional society, these people reveal themselves most clearly in the processes of negotiation and adaptation, and it is there one must be willing to seek them out.

⁶ Ian d'Alton, 'A contrast in crises: southern Irish Protestantism, 1820-43 and 1885-1910', in A.C. Hepburn (ed.), *Minorities in History* (London, 1978), 70.

⁷ R.B. McDowell, *Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists* (Dublin, 1997) vii; Peter Hart, 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland', in R. English and G. Walker (eds.), *Unionism in Modern Ireland* (London, 1996), 94; Marcus Tanner, *Ireland's Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation's Soul, 1500-2000* (New Haven, CT, 2001), 313.

⁸ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *States of Ireland* (New York, 1972), 73.

None of which is to suggest that Butler and his contemporaries were somehow demographic ciphers. But the cultural identity of Southern Protestantism has been so routinely oversimplified and caricatured in the twentieth century that it is important not to presume too much about who these people were.⁹ What can be assumed is that 'Protestant' in the South has almost always denoted a member of the Church of Ireland, and unless otherwise stated, this is a definition adhered to in this thesis. Obviously there have long been representatives of other denominations in the twenty-six counties, but their numbers have always been few within what is already a small proportion of the population claiming an affiliation besides Roman Catholicism.¹⁰ Beyond their common denominational allegiance, though, Southern Protestants cannot be said historically to have comprised a unified entity. As Toby Barnard has recently documented, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was a great social diversity within conforming Irish Protestantism, with the bulk of the population falling into the middling and lower strata.¹¹ Certainly this is a picture at odds with the popular perception that took root in the nineteenth century of the typical Southern Protestant as an Anglo-Irish gentleman presiding over an estate of Gaelic Catholic labourers. This stereotype, while obviously not without foundation, nonetheless points to an important distinction, that between Protestantism and Anglo-Irishness. For the Anglo-Irish have always been only part of the Southern Protestant community, and not all of them have necessarily been either Southern or Protestant.¹² Moreover, as Hugh A. Law reminded readers of the *Irish Statesman* in 1929, the label was not one the Anglo-Irish themselves had chosen but rather had been imposed by those seeking to differentiate them from the 'native'

⁹ Ian d'Alton, 'A Perspective upon Historical Process: the case of Southern Irish Protestantism', in F.B. Smith (ed.), *Ireland, England and Australia: Essays in honour of Oliver MacDonagh* (Canberra, 1990), 74.

¹⁰ In 1926, the total 'non-Roman Catholic' population in the South was recorded as 220,723 [7.4%], of which 5.5% was Church of Ireland; in 1936, 194,500 [6.6%], of which 4.9% was CofI; in 1946, 169,074 [5.7%], of which 4.2% was CofI; in 1961, 144,868 [5.1%], of which 3.7% was CofI; and in 1971, 182,652 [6.13%], of which 3.28% was CofI. W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Irish Historical Statistics: Population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), 49.

¹¹ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven, 2003).

¹² Aside from well-known examples such as the Fingalls and the Moores, one quintessentially Anglo-Irish but Roman Catholic family has been the Magans of Co. Westmeath: see William Magan, *The Story of Ireland: A history of an ancient family and their country* (Shaftsbury, Dorset, 2000).

Irish. Still, Law conceded that the term had become useful for pigeonholing those who generally combined the characteristics of Protestantism, land ownership and a tradition of service to the British Crown.¹³

The ‘plain Protestants’ – the urban working-class, the small farmers, the lesser businessmen and provincial shopkeepers – who did not share these latter two attributes, have tended to get short shrift in the rush to enforce the dichotomy between Protestant landlords and Catholic peasants.¹⁴ Yet a discernible Protestant working-class survived in Dublin into the 1930s, and writers like Sean O’Casey and James Stephens are only among the better-known products of this once vibrant community.¹⁵ Likewise in the countryside, ostensibly the natural habitat of the Anglo-Irish, plain Protestants after Independence carried on much in the way they always had.¹⁶ That such people considered themselves distinct from their co-religionists is made clear by Homan Potterton, who recalls in his recent memoir that ‘we were almost as different to the true Anglo-Irish as we were to Catholics’, noting how variations existed in customs, dress, accents and interests.¹⁷ The distinction of course became blurry at times, and functioning as a mediating presence was that stratum of smaller landlords, large farmers and professional men whom R.F. Foster has usefully termed the ‘middling gentry’.¹⁸ Many of these people were Anglo-Irish but hardly members of the aristocratic elite. On a roughly equivalent plane with them were also the clergy, who enjoyed a social prestige disproportionate to their economic position. If the Big House was the architectural trait of the chief landowner in the district, then the structure reflecting this level of Protestant life was the glebe house or rectory, or even what may be called the ‘little

¹³ *IS* 17 Aug. 1929, 467.

¹⁴ Jack White, *Minority Report: The Protestant Community in the Irish Republic* (Dublin, 1975), 17. One notable exception is Ian d’Alton’s *Protestant Politics and Society in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980).

¹⁵ Martin Maguire, ‘The Church of Ireland and the problem of the Protestant working-class of Dublin, 1870s-1930s’, in Alan Ford et al. (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland Since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), 195-203.

¹⁶ C.I.R., ‘Gigmanity Uprooted’, *The Bell* 11:2 (Nov. 1945), 689-96. See also William Trevor, *Excursions in the Real World: Memoirs* (London, 1993) xiii, 20ff.

¹⁷ Homan Potterton, *Rathcormick: A Childhood Recalled* (Dublin, 2001), 132.

¹⁸ R.F. Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell: The Man and His Family* (Hassocks, Sussex, 1976) xiv.

Big House'.¹⁹ Mixing between clerical families and the middling gentry was natural and frequent, and Trinity College Dublin played an important role in forging links between clergy and laity who, especially after Disestablishment, sustained the Church of Ireland only through close co-operation.²⁰

It was from this particular strand of southern life that the majority of Revival and post-Revival Protestant intellectuals came.²¹ And even when they ceased to reflect the prevailing values of the community that raised them, they still enjoyed the benefits of access and familiarity afforded by caste membership. Thus in the case of the Revivalists, certain shared assumptions that derived from a common background would seem to have facilitated their initiatives as much as material privilege or ideological discipline.²² Recognizing this state of affairs, however, need not lead to Seamus Deane's view that the Revival itself represented a 'strategic retreat from political to cultural supremacy'. Such a scenario presupposes an advanced degree of coordinated self-interest, even to the point of conspiracy, a view for which no historical evidence exists.²³ Indeed, critiques of the Revival such as this not only exaggerate the degree of consensus within Southern Protestantism prior to Independence but also fail to appreciate that, compared to the rest of the minority, the intelligentsia was more receptive to change, more apt to evolve politically, and more willing to engage in open debate with their opponents and critics.²⁴ Relatively speaking they were moderates, insofar as they were looking for ways, however impracticable at the time or seemingly conservative in retrospect, to bridge the cultural gap in Ireland. In order to do so, they

¹⁹ See Maurice Craig, *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size* (London, 1976).

²⁰ R.B. McDowell reports that all but 1% of Protestant clergy were university-educated, and 90% of this number were Trinity men. The rest went to Oxbridge for their training, or occasionally to London or Glasgow. R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland 1869-1969* (London, 1975), 13-15.

²¹ See Vivian Mercier, 'Victorian Evangelicalism and the Anglo-Irish Literary Revival', in P. Connolly (ed.), *Literature and the Changing Ireland* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1982), 59-101.

²² F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (1971; London, 1985), 236.

²³ Seamus Deane, 'Heroic Styles: the tradition of an idea', in Seamus Deane et al., *Ireland's Field Day* (London, 1985), 48.

²⁴ Putting aside the Protestant intellectuals who distinguished themselves by embracing some form of Irish nationalism, the diversity within southern Unionist culture itself should not pass unnoticed. Alvin Jackson has affirmed that this diversity, while apparently a strength, 'acted instead as a cancer which accelerated the demise of the movement and the surrender of initiative to the north'. Alvin Jackson, 'Irish Unionism, 1870-1922', in D.G. Boyce and A. O'Day (eds.), *Defenders of the Union* (London, 2001), 123ff.

often exposed themselves to attacks that more properly should have been aimed at people who never made themselves as vulnerable to public scrutiny. Educated and privileged but never altogether cut off from the everyday realities of Catholic life, these people inhabited a middle ground not just socially and economically, but culturally as well. Far more acutely than either extreme, the more sensitive among them grasped, as did their Catholic counterparts, the urgency with which Irish people of all sorts must be reconciled to each other.²⁵ Their deep and abiding engagement with the vexed question of national belonging was prompted by the specific position they held within Protestant society, just as it also alerted them to the tenuous position of Protestant society as a whole. Hubert Butler and those of the post-revolutionary generation who shared the Revivalists' background also inherited this outlook and not infrequently the sense of obligation that came with it.

Identifying more precisely what constitutes the intellectual formation of Butler and his generation of Protestant middle-class thinkers is a delicate task. To treat it as a fixed entity akin to the *mentalité* model theorized by the *Annales* school is likely to prove self-defeating in this instance, given the rapidly evolving and multi-dimensional nature of any modern intelligentsia.²⁶ Even where such a group would seem most coherent institutionally, as in the fact of their shared Church of Ireland membership, it is necessary to remember that few of them grew up to be conventional believers in what was already a highly individualistic tradition. On the other hand, the Protestant community itself retained a strong if generally ill-defined notion of communal perception that was not contingent on orthodoxy, as evidenced by the Dean of St. Patrick's remark to Lily Yeats at one point that a mutual acquaintance 'has no religion but is an out-and-

²⁵ For a key examination of these pre-Independence 'Catholic counterparts', see Senia Pašeta, *Before the Revolution: Nationalism, Social Change, and Ireland's Catholic Elite 1879-1922* (Cork, 1999).

²⁶ William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (1957; Cambridge, MA, 1979), 9. Toby Barnard has warned against taking for granted the existence of a uniform and contained Protestant mindset even as early as the seventeenth century. T.C. Barnard, 'Crises of identity among Irish protestants 1641-1685', *Past & Present* 127 (May 1990), 47-8.

out Protestant in everything else'.²⁷ So whether or not they conformed to type religiously, politically or otherwise, it is not unreasonable to posit the existence of what Hubert Butler himself called a Southern Protestant 'ethos' underpinning his thought and that of his contemporaries (*CD* 228).²⁸ That modern Protestant writers have displayed specific tendencies and preoccupations traceable to their Church of Ireland background is an argument a number of commentators have already made, from a variety of angles and with varying degrees of success.²⁹ Yet assessing how certain trends or emphases in Irish Protestantism have translated into mental habits common to both religious and secular members of the southern minority is an undertaking where plenty remains to be done. And this is where employing Hubert Butler as a touchstone is again useful as a means of grounding such work in the particulars of one man's experience, however exceptional he might sometimes be. For on this basis it becomes possible at least to contemplate the historical texture of the Southern Protestant sensibility, if not to map its precise dimensions.³⁰

In his 1907 preface to *John Bull's Other Island*, Bernard Shaw boasted to readers that 'in Ireland Protestantism is really Protestant'.³¹ This awareness of the enduringly oppositional nature of their tradition remained crucial to the minority's self-conception throughout the twentieth century. Notwithstanding the advantages they had inherited or the daily commonalities they shared with Catholics, Southern Protestants could never forget the fundamental otherness that sectarian difference imposed upon them and which their dwindling numbers served only to accentuate. Thus while the contentious and dissident urges of Protestantism might mellow in

²⁷ R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1993), qtd. 205.

²⁸ Apposite here is Lionel Trilling's observation of the abiding intellectual and psychological influence religion has even over those who actively repudiate the creed in which they were raised. Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (Garden City, NY, 1950), 290.

²⁹ See especially Edna Longley and Gerald Dawe (eds.), *Across a Roaring Hill: The Protestant Imagination in Modern Ireland* (Belfast, 1985). See also Declan Kiberd, 'Samuel Beckett and the Protestant Ethic', in A. Martin (ed.), *The Genius of Irish Prose* (Dublin, 1985), 121-30; and 'Anglo-Irish Literature: The Protestant Legacy' in Augustine Martin's posthumous collection *Bearing Witness: Essays on Anglo-Irish Literature*, ed. A. Roche (Dublin, 1996), 100-11.

³⁰ Stuart Hughes has written eloquently of the possibility of balancing empiricism with interpretation in undertaking any exercise in modern intellectual history. H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (1958; Brighton, 1979), 7.

³¹ George Bernard Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island* (1907, 1930; London, 1984), 16.

other cultures, in Ireland these qualities retained their sharpness, and a proud commitment to the 'Reformation spirit' persisted not only among Ulster Dissenters but also in the more genteel precincts of the Church of Ireland. Hubert Butler later confirmed as much when he wrote of his community that 'it is the Catholic majority that keeps most of us defiantly Protestant' (CD 228). Out of such apparent contrariness, however, Butler believed his tradition had emerged positively as a champion of personal conscience in Ireland and as an advocate of independent thought. In *Hail and Farewell* George Moore would come to a similar conclusion when considering the sectarian divide, arguing that, in essence, 'Catholicism and Protestantism are attitudes of the mind'.³² Although himself of Anglo-Irish Catholic stock, Moore becomes convinced in the course of his narrative that he must convert to Protestantism, since he believes no truly mature artist can remain subordinate to the Catholic faith.³³ For Butler and Moore alike, then, Protestantism is more than just the denominational affiliation of the minority; it embodies the very principles of intellectual sovereignty and human creativity.

That Protestantism should be assigned this role in the Irish context appears as something of a paradox, given the social and political supremacy enjoyed for so long by its adherents. How could the former Established Church and its cultural demesne be considered the nesting ground for non-uniformity? Central to Anglican theology has always been the idea of the *via media*, of moderation and compromise in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters. A fierce commitment to the right of private judgment has thrived in sustained tension with the recognized necessity of communal stability. Both in religious and political terms, the Protestant Establishment in Ireland always regarded itself as navigating between the Scylla of Catholic authoritarianism and the Charybdis of Calvinistic divisiveness.³⁴ By this way of thinking, the Church of Ireland was the ecclesiological arm of peaceful and orderly government on the island. In the eighteenth century, this striving after temperance was reinforced by Enlightenment notions of reason and balance,

³² George Moore, *Hail and Farewell*, ed. R. Cave (1911; Gerards Cross, Bucks, 1985), 630.

³³ See J.W. Foster, *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival: A Changeling Art* (Syracuse, NY, 1987), 117-41.

³⁴ See, for example, Jonathan Swift's comic allegory, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704).

though affirmation of these values by the Establishment did not result in the relief of either Catholics or Dissenters, whose incorporation it was feared would only destroy a hard-won equilibrium.³⁵ Hence religious and political exclusion were enforced in the name of preserving individual liberty, a contradiction many enlightened Protestants considered morally justified by the circumstances under which they lived.³⁶

The Protestant perspective was to be no less paradoxical after the Union, albeit in a different way. The impact of evangelicalism on bourgeois life across the British Isles proved transformative, and all the more so among middle-class Irish Protestants whose colonial insecurity made them particularly receptive to the certainty of its message.³⁷ So by the time of its disestablishment in 1869, the Church of Ireland was characterized by a rather odd blend of traits, with some of the pragmatism of its eighteenth-century form persisting alongside the devotional zeal with which it had since been imbued.³⁸ What remained constant was a profound distrust of any pronounced hierarchical tendencies reminiscent of the Church of Rome. Here the evangelical movement's emphasis on personal salvation over institutional piety complemented an existing preference for local autonomy, whatever the ultimate reliance upon centralized power structures.³⁹ Evangelicalism had managed to legitimate Protestants' anti-authoritarian streak without actually challenging the logic of their erastian domination. It was in this way that the Church of Ireland managed in the late nineteenth century to emerge as both Evangelical and High Church, radical in substance but conservative in form.⁴⁰ Since then members of the minority have neither enjoyed their ancestors' privilege nor exhibited their intensity, but they have demonstrated

³⁵ Jacqueline R. Hill, 'Popery and Protestantism, Civil and Religious Liberty: The Disputed Lessons of Irish History 1690-1812', *Past & Present* 118 (February 1988), 107.

³⁶ S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1992), 4. See also Ian McBride, "'The common name of Irishman': protestantism and patriotism in eighteenth-century Ireland', in T. Claydon and I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998), 236-61.

³⁷ Terence Brown, *Ireland's Literature*, 63-4. See also Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford, 1988).

³⁸ K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland Since 1800: Conflict and Conformity* (London, 1989), 71.

³⁹ Ian d'Alton, 'Contrast in Crises', 73.

⁴⁰ Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland, 1800-1870* (Dublin, 1978), 50.

moderating impulses in other ways, combining a loyalty to tradition with a distinctly latitudinarian outlook.⁴¹ What may thus be called a *via media* tendency has prevailed among Southern Protestants across the centuries, as evidenced by their instinctual aversion to civic disorder, their embrace of private judgment and their capacity for synthesis and assimilation. Yet even as the ambiguity of their position has encouraged such mediation, accompanying it has often been an abiding sense of doubleness, a feeling of hyphenation plainly reflected in the concept of Anglo-Irishness itself.⁴² By the same token, this ambiguity has also bred a deep ambivalence among some Protestants, a reluctance to choose, which many times in their history has proved a liability as much as a strength.⁴³ All this must be borne in mind when evaluating the ways Hubert Butler and his generation expressed themselves, for whether they ultimately opted to celebrate this complex inheritance or to criticize it, they were always and unavoidably its products.

Of course, in more immediate terms they were also the first heirs of the Irish Literary Revival, which asserted a modicum of intellectual authority well into their early adulthood. As the Revival's undisputed leader, W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) continued throughout the 1930s to exert a strong influence over national literary life, both personally and through collective efforts such as the Abbey Theatre and the Irish Academy of Letters. Yet even as he championed the relevance of the Protestant legacy in these and other social spheres, Yeats's own rhetorical stance was increasingly that of an elegist for a passing way of life.⁴⁴ Indeed, the waning energies of his final decade were to be taken up more by the self-dramatization of poetic creativity than by sustained forays into the arena of Irish cultural politics.⁴⁵ Arguably in the process Yeats facilitated the myth that the Anglo-Irish tradition was somehow dying with him, though as Norman Vance has

⁴¹ R.P. McDermott, 'The Church of Ireland since Disestablishment', *Theology* 73 (May 1970), 222.

⁴² See Andrew Carpenter, 'Double Vision in Anglo-Irish Literature', in A. Carpenter (ed.), *Place, Personality and the Irish Writer* (Gerards Cross, Bucks, 1977), 179-87.

⁴³ J.C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* (London, 1976), 144-52. See also Beckett's 'The Anglo-Irish Tradition in Literature', *Lagan* 2 (1944), 44.

⁴⁴ George Watson, *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival* (1979; Washington, D.C, 1994), 149-50. See also F.S.L. Lyons, 'The Burden of Our History', in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin, 1994), 88.

⁴⁵ R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, II: The Arch-Poet 1915-1939* (Oxford, 2003), 395-495, 611-52.

suggested, it would be erroneous to take these death claims too literally, whatever their source.⁴⁶

All that said, there is no question that in the meantime the Revival generation as a whole had gradually retreated from the public discourse, and emblematic of this passing was the demise of the *Irish Statesman* in 1930. Started by Sir Horace Plunkett (1854-1932) as a mouthpiece for political conciliation and edited from 1923 onwards by the inimitable George W. Russell (1867-1935), the *Statesman* served as the house journal for liberal intellectuals young and old during the early years of the Free State. Nowhere is the transition from the Revivalists to their Protestant and Catholic successors more clearly manifest than in the pages of this paper. Russell, or AE as he was universally known, used his editorial position not only to encourage pluralistic social policies under the new dispensation but also to foster burgeoning literary talents of all kinds.⁴⁷ And while the *Statesman's* folding marked the end to a period of closely cultivated cross-generational and non-sectarian solidarity among Irish progressives, it lived on as a model for similar initiatives long after the Revivalists themselves had gone.⁴⁸

Hubert Butler was a member of the younger generation for whom the end of the *Irish Statesman* came as a turning-point (EA 122). To him, both Plunkett and AE represented the very best of Protestant activism and commitment, and he revered them as mentors in his own development as an Irish nationalist. Their longstanding advocacy of agricultural co-operation and other forms of constructive social and political engagement were to be sources of lifelong inspiration and are subjects to which he returns repeatedly in his writings. Similarly, Standish James O'Grady (1846-1928) is another Revival figure whose combination of Protestant self-assertion and devotion to Ireland's welfare guaranteed him a central place in Butler's moral

⁴⁶ Norman Vance, *Irish Literature: A Social History* (2nd edn.; Dublin, 1999), 215. Attempts to represent the Anglo-Irish literary tradition as having a clear-cut beginning, middle and end remain distinctly unconvincing. See, for example, Julian Moynihan, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1995).

⁴⁷ Frank Shovlin, *The Irish Literary Periodical, 1923-1958* (Oxford, 2003), 22-38.

⁴⁸ While acknowledging the necessity of doing so in any historicist undertaking, Stefan Collini has wisely pointed out the particular artificiality of placing time constraints on a study of ideas and their evolution. Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991), 6.

imagination. Though O'Grady's retirement to the Isle of Wight during the First World War meant he had little direct contact with the post-revolutionary generation, his profound influence on other Revivalists ensured that the impact of his ideas and personality continued to reverberate in the culture. Taken together, O'Grady, Plunkett and AE constitute a major branch in what may be called the intellectual genealogy of Butler and other post-Revival Protestant thinkers. Admittedly, this choice of precursors is highly selective, and again one must beware of overestimating their impact upon the minority's consciousness as a whole.⁴⁹ Yet Butler's conviction that these individuals exemplified a specifically Protestant combination of independent-mindedness and communal dedication still relevant to the larger community requires that they be approached in terms broader than those of his personal admiration for them. Thus, the first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to examining some of the direct ways these three men intervened in Irish society during the period 1900-30 and identifying the particular moral and intellectual legacy they bequeathed to Southern Protestantism in the process. This exercise in genealogical tracing-work is reflective of Butler and his generation's preoccupation with the meaning of roots and inheritance during a time in Irish life when such things were often a source of bitterness towards the minority. His desire to establish and promote a kind of 'fictive kinship' with these precursors, a kinship not contingent on blood but on values, was pivotal to his attempt to salvage strands of the Anglo-Irish tradition from which a positive Protestant identity could then be woven.⁵⁰

Though this study is primarily focused on post-revolutionary Protestant intellectuals who either made Ireland their home or maintained close links with it, such a focus does not preclude attention to their experience of other countries. Indeed, an important challenge facing many of them during this period was persuading their compatriots to take a greater interest in the world they themselves had witnessed abroad. This was no easy task, especially as the craving among

⁴⁹ R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, 22.

⁵⁰ See Benedict Anderson, 'Selective Kinship', *Dublin Review* 10 (Spring 2003), 5-29.

some Irish people for an ‘authentic’ and uncontaminated national culture led them to suspect any outward orientation as tantamount to betrayal and corruption.⁵¹ Obviously there is nothing exclusively Protestant to being curious about foreign people and customs, and throughout the twentieth century there were, as always, Irish Catholics well-travelled and well-versed in the ways of other cultures.⁵² Yet perhaps it was inevitable that Protestants, with their frequent and longstanding ties to England, should be regarded as particularly susceptible to non-Irish influences. Of course, the active participation of the Anglo-Irish in the British imperial project had given them not only a closeness to English life but also a familiarity with conditions across the globe, and this broad perspective in turn affected their perception of their own Irishness.⁵³ The legacy of this imperial outlook proved a mixed blessing to later Protestants like Hubert Butler, who struggled to retain its international breadth even as they repudiated its reflexive Anglocentrism and expansionist spirit. The second chapter of this thesis, covering the years 1930-45, examines how he and others used their travels and foreign knowledge as a way of placing in a wider context their situation as members of both a former ruling elite and a religious minority. It also looks at how Butler and his contemporaries responded to the rise of totalitarianism in Europe in the thirties and their experience of the national isolation brought about by Ireland’s policy of neutrality during the Second World War. The third chapter picks up where the second one leaves off and considers the years 1945-72. Attention here is paid to the ways the Irish responded to the emerging Cold War rivalry between East and West and the ways Butler and other dissidents in turn questioned the prevailing assumptions of the Catholic majority. This section evaluates his critique of mass society on either side of the Iron Curtain and his plea for humane values and individual rights regardless of political polarities. In these two chapters,

⁵¹ George Watson, *Irish Identity*, qtd. 75.

⁵² Reacting against the tendency of other critics to credit Anglo-Irish intellectuals with an especially cosmopolitan disposition, Brian Murphy has insisted the Catholic clergy were the true bearers of European culture in the Free State. Brian Murphy, ‘The Canon of Irish Cultural History: Some Questions’, *Studies* 77 (Spring 1988), 73-4. See also Brian Fallon’s chapter on the devotion to French culture among Irish Catholic intellectuals: *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930-1960* (Dublin, 1998), 123-32.

⁵³ F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy*, 102.

then, Butler's internationalist viewpoint emerges not as the antithesis of his national identity but as a complement to it, a modern affirmation of an Irish Protestant tradition of cosmopolitanism dating back to the seventeenth century.⁵⁴

While Hubert Butler often found his compatriots provincially minded, he nonetheless relished the intimacy of Irish communal life, particularly the neighbourliness of the countryside. His decision to settle permanently in Ireland, however, did not mean he was prepared to acquiesce in the increasingly Catholic tenor of Free State society. So as sectarian notions of Irish belonging gained ground during the thirties and forties, he in turn became preoccupied with identifying secular alternatives which could fully accommodate the minority community and bind it more closely to the majority. In promoting these alternatives, he challenged at once the chauvinism of Catholics and the aloofness of Protestants. Chapter Four, incorporating 1930-49, therefore approaches Butler's thinking on community as a form of constructive opposition and looks at the practical ways he tried to build on his vision through local cultural activities in Kilkenny. Moreover, it scrutinizes his relationship with other liberal intellectuals as they all worked to effect a more tolerant and inclusive social dispensation. This section also addresses the Protestant community's evolving sense of national loyalty in the context of, among other things, the Church of Ireland's decision in 1949 to revise its State Prayers to reflect the proclamation of an Irish Republic. The fifth chapter picks up the narrative from 1949-72 and focuses more directly on occasions of public controversy and on the nature of Butler's intellectual dissent. His understanding of his dissenting role as inextricably bound up in his status as an autonomous cultural Protestant is lent particular emphasis. The ostracism he and Owen Sheehy Skeffington endured after the Papal Nuncio Incident in 1952 serves as a springboard for assessing the general condition of free speech in Ireland during this period and for asking whether communal acceptance of Protestants remained contingent on their voluntary self-effacement. The strictness with which the Catholic hierarchy continued to enforce the *Ne Temere* decree throughout the

⁵⁴ Norman Vance, *Irish Literature*, 51-2.

1950s is likewise important in evaluating the Irish majority's resistance to pluralism, and the fierceness of this resistance is highlighted by a review of the Fethard-on-Sea Boycott of 1957. This event is taken up not only as an illustration of sectarian conflict but also as one of the many occasions on which Butler voiced his profound frustration with his co-religionists for their failure to assert their principles more forcefully. And even as life in the Republic began to liberalize in the 1960s, he remained adamant that Southern Protestants could play a unique part in the forging of a common future for the whole island, a task which obviously assumed greater urgency and complexity with the re-emergence of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

As with so many other aspects of their heritage, Protestants' relationship to history itself was to prove a double-edged sword after 1930. The perception among many Catholics that a genuinely independent Ireland depended not only upon the attainment of political sovereignty but also on the repudiation of all vestiges of the Anglo-Irish past put nationally-minded minority men like Butler in an awkward position. Both for personal and patriotic reasons, he and others insisted that much about the colonial legacy was inherently valuable and could be profitably integrated into the fabric of the new culture. Protestants therefore had a responsibility to defend the virtues of historical continuity while at the same time acknowledging the sins committed by their fathers. Yet this seemingly moderate mandate constituted a challenge to the historiographic assumptions of Protestants and Catholics alike, which had long ago congealed into fixed pieties. The emergence of rival sectarian historiographies in Europe since the Reformation is hardly a novel idea, but it is one which has retained its freshness in the Irish context due to the standing parallel between political and religious affiliations.⁵⁵ Nationalist readings of history have frequently been tied to Catholic images of suffering and redemption, whereby the Irish past is depicted as a series

⁵⁵ Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study in Anglo-Irish Conflict 1780-1980* (London, 1983), 1-14. See also Alan Ford, 'James Ussher and the creation of an Irish protestant identity', in B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (eds.), *British consciousness and identity: the making of Britain, 1533-1707* (Cambridge, 1998), 188-9.

of 'repeated and unspeakable wrongs' which coalesce into a 'mythic continuity'.⁵⁶ From this perspective, history is conceived as unfolding in a circular rather than a linear manner.

Conversely, Irish Protestant historiography has tended to cling, despite all evidence to the contrary, to the conviction that everything since Martin Luther has been an uninterrupted progression away from tyranny and superstition towards freedom and reason.⁵⁷ By its very nature, this school of history expected that each succeeding generation would perpetuate the triumphant procession of Protestant virtue. Both schools fell prey to what Quentin Skinner has labelled the 'mythology of coherence', whereby the would-be interpreter of the past attributes an order and symmetry to ideas and attitudes that never enjoyed such coherence during their formulation.⁵⁸ Thus in each case, a rival pairing of sectarian myths, those of continuity and coherence, perpetuated itself in the community and ensured that little or no common ground could be found with the historical perceptions of the other group.⁵⁹ The final chapter of this thesis looks at how this rivalry survived well into the twentieth century, as illustrated by the ongoing debate between the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church over which was the true inheritor of the Patrician tradition. It also attempts, however modestly, to assess how their Protestant heritage may have influenced the outlook and emphases of certain well-known historians from this period.

Out of his commitment to nourishing the bond between past and present in Ireland, Hubert Butler worked to foster an appreciation for historical continuity in a number of ways. The latter half of Chapter Six examines his promotion of 'country scholarship' as a perpetuation of the unsubsidised scholarship of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish gentry and as the basis for his own avowedly amateur pursuit of antiquarianism, archaeology and local history. His

⁵⁶ Liam Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism* (Belfast, 1996), 182.

⁵⁷ For a classic appraisal of this view, see Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World*, trans. W. Montgomery (1912; Philadelphia, 1986), 39.

⁵⁸ Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8 (1969), 18.

⁵⁹ Relevant here is T.W. Moody's 'Irish History and Irish Mythology', in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin, 1994), 71-86.

antipathy towards the professionalization of the academy is likewise analysed in terms of his moral understanding of the rights and responsibilities afforded by learning and in light of his struggle to gain recognition for his unorthodox ideas regarding the origins of Irish saint-figures. The 1972 publication of his book on this subject, *Ten Thousand Saints: A Study in Irish and European Origins*, serves as a good stopping-place for the study as a whole, since by then Butler and his contemporaries had largely yielded their role in the public discourse to a new generation. 1972 also stands as a turning-point in Irish life generally, given the repeal that year of key parts of Article 44 in the Constitution, the decision of the Republic to join the EEC, and the winding up of the Northern parliament at Stormont.⁶⁰ Though pluralism across the island still had a long way to go as a daily reality, plainly a major shift in thinking had taken place. For over forty years Hubert Butler worked, sometimes alone but often with others, to sow the seeds for this change. Yet as with Protestant intellectual experience overall, it would be anachronistic to read his contribution to this process as a mere stopgap or stepping-stone in the historical progression towards something else. His writings, most often in the form of the periodical essay, demand to be read in the context of the time and place in which they were composed. By the same token, the writings of Butler and other mid-century Protestants offer, even in their subjectivity, a promising and still largely unexplored means for approaching this period of Irish life in all its fullness.

⁶⁰ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), 569. See also Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and its aftermath* (London, 1977), 9.

One: An Intellectual Genealogy of Southern Protestantism, 1900-30

Irishmen dislike erratic personalities. We prefer men who are true to type. We recognise without resentment the existence of various types and we are on the whole fairly tolerant. In Ireland a man may be a Protestant or a Catholic, a Nationalist or a Unionist, without suffering any serious inconvenience. He may choose his fold, but he must be a sheep. We do not like wild animals. And, unfortunately, the man of letters is usually, the man of genius always, an eccentric creature who cannot be kept in an enclosure. He insists on looking at things from odd angles and seeing them not at all as other people see them.

– George A. Birmingham, *An Irishman Looks at His World*.¹

I. Standish O’Grady: Ascendancy controversialist

Writing in 1938, Sir Shane Leslie recalled how Standish O’Grady in his prime had been ‘loved and tolerated in Dublin, but he had no following’.² While possibly accurate, Leslie’s comment sounds ironic now, given that O’Grady is commonly remembered as much for the influence he exercised over younger men such as W.B. Yeats and George W. Russell as he is for his own literary achievements. This fact is due in no small part to the Revivalists themselves, who by so readily acknowledging their particular debt to O’Grady managed to restrict his legacy to the early heroic romances he authored and from which they had derived so much inspiration.³ Yet O’Grady’s retellings of Celtic lore, seminal as they were, represent only one of several phases in a much longer and more varied career. Noting that he outlived the confines assigned him by his standard reputation, Roy Foster has observed how ‘the received story of Ireland writes him out as soon as his allotted part is played’, and how this part does not extend to his later work as an independent journalist from the late 1890s onwards.⁴ It is from the time O’Grady left Dublin for Kilkenny at the start of 1898, however, that one sees him coming fully into his own as

¹ George A. Birmingham, *An Irishman Looks at His World* (London, 1919), 119-20. Birmingham knew whereof he spoke: see Andrew Gailey, ‘An Irishman’s World’, *Irish Review* 13 (Winter 1992-3), 31-9.

² Shane Leslie, *The Film of Memory* (London, 1938), 348.

³ See W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (1955; London, 1987), 219-20.

⁴ R.F. Foster, *The Story of Ireland* (Oxford, 1995), 19. Even now, few scholars have given the later O’Grady any substantial consideration. An exception is Edward Hagan in his recent introduction to Standish O’Grady, *To the Leaders of Our Working People*, ed. E. Hagan (Dublin, 2002), vii-xxvii.

a controversialist and public intellectual. The years he spent advocating increased social responsibility among the Anglo-Irish landlords achieved their climax during this period, and his attempts at cheerleading were replaced by a more confrontational attitude. So while O'Grady clung tenaciously to his anti-modern desire to resurrect what he imagined had been a feudal, rural utopia led by upright Anglo-Irish landlords, with his founding of the *All Ireland Review* in 1900 he was clearly at a crossroads in his whole outlook. By looking into the pages of this neglected weekly journal, one finds him struggling to imagine new terms under which members of the Ascendancy might still find common cause with the emerging Ireland. Combative, contradictory, but above all driven by the desire to see the Anglo-Irish do their duty to their native land, he emerges as a colourful exemplar of Protestant activism and social critique at the dawning of the twentieth century.

Born into a Church of Ireland rectory in County Cork in 1864, Standish James O'Grady epitomized the Protestant middling gentry, as well as some of the key changes it underwent during the Victorian period. As an undergraduate at Trinity College Dublin, he had begun a course in theological study but like W.E.H. Lecky concluded his personal views were too unconventional to permit his taking up Holy Orders.⁵ Instead he trained as a barrister and practiced law only briefly before finding his calling as a journalist. O'Grady's decision to embark upon professional literary activity in favour of the more conventional paths offered by Church and Bar is indicative of a larger trend among his generation of Anglo-Irishmen, and indeed, among similarly positioned young men all across Britain.⁶ In a time when the world seemed ever more interested in reading the newspaper headlines than it did the scriptures, periodical literature was increasingly a forum in which one might hope to command serious attention.⁷ But for an idealist such as O'Grady, there was always more to this choice than a mere

⁵ Hugh Art O'Grady, *Standish James O'Grady: The Man and the Writer* (Dublin, 1929), 34.

⁶ Terence Brown, 'Cultural Nationalism 1880-1930: Introduction', in S. Deane et al. (eds.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry, 1991), ii, 518. See also Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists*, 27-59.

⁷ See John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (London, 1969), 62-166.

striving after popularity; a career in journalism also recommended itself as an alternative pulpit from which to preach his secular but still religiously-inflected message of Irish national redemption. The urge to transfer the moral fervour of his evangelical upbringing to the worldly setting of literature was a manoeuvre for which he found a clear precedent in Thomas Carlyle, who in 1841 had famously identified the man-of-letters as a type of modern hero and alternative priest.⁸ As his later writings were to demonstrate, O'Grady proved capable of unleashing Carlylean jeremiads against those in his community whom he thought should likewise seek to be heroic in their station and who patently were not. Yet his affinity for Carlyle's rhetoric was tempered by a decided lack of malice which ultimately save O'Grady's writings from a descent into Carlyle's rancour.⁹ And here it is important to note how he also derived inspiration from another literary moralist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. For while Carlyle's anxieties over the emergence of mass society led him to dark and often authoritarian conclusions, Emerson took his own reservations about this phenomenon and used them to justify his hopeful teachings on the necessity of self-reliance.¹⁰ The reactionary and progressive strains of thought represented by these two men are both detectable in O'Grady, often dynamic and un-reconciled. What results from this uneasy blend is, among other things, an Irishman with a Carlylean conception of history and an Emersonian optimism about the future.

Not surprisingly, such inconsistencies often generated bewilderment in others. Writing after her friend's death in 1928, Alice Milligan reflected upon 'the duality of O'Grady's mind in its outlook on political happenings in Ireland, Nationalist and Imperialist at one time or alternately as a mood of argumentativeness seized him'.¹¹ This dualism or contradiction similarly led Lady Gregory to joke that O'Grady was a 'fenian Unionist', while Ernest Boyd preferred to

⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. M.K. Goldberg et al. (1841; Berkeley, CA, 1993), 140.

⁹ John Kelly, 'Introduction', in Standish O'Grady, *All Ireland*, ed. J. Kelly (Poole, 1999), n/p.

¹⁰ Significantly, O'Grady was to reprint the entirety of Emerson's essay 'Self-Reliance' in the *All Ireland Review* during June and July 1901.

¹¹ *IS* 11 Aug. 1928, 452.

think of him as an ‘aristocratic Radical’.¹² One trait about which there was no ambiguity, however, was his abiding anti-modernism. Convinced that the developments associated with western progress – urbanization, industrialization, democratization – were eroding the spirit of organic human community, O’Grady longed for a return to a simple rural past wherein the social hierarchy would be preserved and respected.¹³ For obvious reasons the Anglo-Irish gentry as a whole shared in this longing, though few also shared his conviction that profound changes were required in their own behaviour for such an arrangement to remain tenable in the future. This recognition of the need for improved leadership among the ruling classes, coupled with his antipathy to radical activists such as Henry George, led O’Grady to become an enthusiastic supporter of Randolph Churchill’s Tory Democracy movement. Seeing in the initiative a means by which the Irish elite might be coaxed into resuming some of their political responsibilities, he was deeply disappointed when the Conservative establishment failed to support Churchill.¹⁴ Later he would turn with equal vigour to the controversy surrounding the Royal Commission on Taxation, which in 1896 concluded that Ireland had been massively overtaxed since the Act of Union.¹⁵ O’Grady was ecstatic when Irishmen temporarily united in their outrage at this evidence of English exploitation. Moreover, the lead taken on this occasion by Lord Castledown and other prominent Anglo-Irishmen appeared to confirm his fervent belief that the Ascendancy still had a vital part to play in Ireland’s development.¹⁶ Yet the Financial Relations Conference designed to capitalize upon this shared grievance quickly revealed instead the underlying discord among the factions, and the initial momentum was allowed to dissipate. In 1898 O’Grady published *All Ireland* both as a bitter critique of this missed opportunity and as an appeal to the landlords to

¹² Ernest A. Boyd, ‘Introduction’, in Standish O’Grady, *Selected Essays and Passages*, ed. E.A. Boyd (Dublin, 1918), 17.

¹³ For a discussion of other types of Irish pastoral idyll espoused during this period, see Mary Daly, *Industrial Development and Irish National Identity 1922-1939* (Dublin, 1992), 9-10.

¹⁴ See Standish O’Grady, *Toryism and the Tory Democracy* (London, 1886).

¹⁵ See John Kelly, ‘Introduction’, in Standish O’Grady, *All Ireland*, n/p.

¹⁶ Standish O’Grady, ‘The New United Ireland’, *New Review* 93 (Feb. 1897), 132.

assert themselves on behalf of the whole country. If nothing else, the book reveals the tenacity and creativity with which its author clung to the principle of modern Anglo-Irish activism.

In the same year, O'Grady gave up his job as leader-writer for Dublin's *Daily Express* and took over the *Kilkenny Moderator* in the hope, as he explained to Lady Gregory at the time, of turning it into 'a pulpit from which I can preach my doctrine without interference'.¹⁷ In mid-August he wrote her again to boast of his early success and to announce that 'I shall probably start a Dublin daily before Christmas and go on the war path in earnest'.¹⁸ This was a premature expectation, but it shows how committed O'Grady still was to public affairs and how resilient was his optimism. Lady Gregory herself was less sure about the *Moderator* enterprise, confessing worriedly to her diary: 'I think he will ruin himself on it'.¹⁹ One happy by-product of O'Grady's move was the fruitful alliance he developed with two prominent members of the Kilkenny gentry, Ellen, Lady Desart (1858-1933) and her brother-in-law, Captain Otway Cuffe (1853-1912). Already a Theosophist and disciple of William Morris, Cuffe in particular was inspired by O'Grady's call to local service and threw himself into a variety of projects to bolster culture and industry in the area. Over the next twelve years he would organize youth clubs in Kilkenny and Sheestown, build a new theatre, serve as President of the Kilkenny branch of the Gaelic League and as Mayor of the city. With the financial backing and moral support of his widowed sister-in-law he also started Kilkenny Woollen Mills and Kilkenny Woodworkers Ltd., while Lady Desart herself was to spearhead the construction of a city library and the Aut Even Hospital.²⁰ As a result of this flurry of benevolent outreach, Cuffe came to be regarded as something of an eccentric within the Anglo-Irish community, as evidenced by the affectionate but patronizing manner in which he was later portrayed in the memoirs of his niece and nephew.²¹

¹⁷ NYPL (Gregory Papers): Standish O'Grady to Lady Gregory, 10 Jan. 1898.

¹⁸ NYPL (Gregory Papers): Standish O'Grady to Lady Gregory, 16 Aug. 1898.

¹⁹ Augusta Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Diaries, 1892-1902*, ed. J. Pethica (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1996), 165.

²⁰ J.L. McAdams, *Ellen, Countess of Desart and Captain the Hon. Otway Cuffe* (Kilkenny, 1959), 9-30.

²¹ Hamilton Cuffe [the Earl of Desart] and Sybil Lubbock, *A Page from the Past* (London, 1936), 200-1.

Yet there were also Protestants in the area who derived inspiration from this example of localist activity, among them Hubert Butler's family in nearby Bennettsbridge and Lavistown (CD 223-7). During this period of neighbourhood renewal Butler himself was born in October 1900.

Meanwhile, O'Grady had continued to promote his vision of Anglo-Irish social responsibility in the pages of the *Moderator*. In the spring of 1899 he reported to Lady Gregory that 'I am getting a strong grip on the mind and I think the affections of the people...in spite of queer doctrines and oftentimes a liberty no one else could take. How it will all end I don't know'.²² It was not long before he found out. Having already antagonized Lord Ormonde and others with his critique of their conduct during the Financial Relations Conference, O'Grady then worsened his position by spiritedly defending his patrons, the Desarts, in what subsequently became known as the 'County Scandal'.²³ In a complicated set of accusations and counter-accusations, the Colonel of the Kilkenny Militia, a former employee of the Cuffes, became embroiled in a conflict with the family over his defamation of the character of the deceased Earl of Desart. When the Marquess of Ormonde, the Protestant Bishop of Ossory, and the Master of the Kilkenny Hounds all effectively closed ranks behind the Colonel, O'Grady launched a series of tirades in the *Moderator* lambasting the entire Kilkenny elite for its poor moral and civic leadership. This time he had gone too far, though, and soon he found himself shunned by polite Protestant society, those people about whom, in principle and in fact, he cared most. Yet the controversy meant more to O'Grady than social ostracism alone. Never a man of independent means, speaking out and offending vested interests had financial implications for his family, and he was forced to give up the *Moderator* when various writs for libel began to arrive.²⁴ O'Grady's economic vulnerability should not be brushed aside as incidental, for it cuts to the heart of the internal dynamic at work in Ascendancy society. While it may be that he underestimated the reaction he would provoke with his charges, he seems to have made them with a certain faith that

²² NYPL (Gregory Papers): Standish O'Grady to Lady Gregory, 16 Apr. 1899.

²³ See HMB's 'Anglo-Irish Twilight' (EA 75-87).

²⁴ NYPL (Gregory Papers): Standish O'Grady to Lady Gregory, 20 June 1899.

his constituency would at least tolerate his dissent. Reflecting on the communal pressures that faced the middling gentry to conform socially and politically before Independence, Hubert Butler later noted of his own Kilkenny family during this time that ‘we, unlike the Cuffes and Lady Desart, were not in the income group which could afford to be unorthodox’ (GW 23). When pushed hard enough by their intellectual members, the Anglo-Irish made it clear that they were not a community capable of genuine and sustained self-examination, even when an Ascendancy Unionist was the critic.²⁵

With the *Moderator* debacle behind him, Standish O’Grady began 1900 with a new journal and a new attitude. It is worth remarking that the same year he started the *All Ireland Review*, he also published the novel *The Queen of the World*. Whereas all the tales he had written heretofore had looked longingly to the past for clues to an ideal social order, now he proffered a utopian scenario set in the future. The novel, like the paper, demonstrates his renewed determination to look forward to a day when Ireland would no longer embarrass itself through self-pity and helplessness.²⁶ Both likewise serve as a discernible moment in his career when he finally stopped expecting his own community to supply the ‘living heroes’ to lead Ireland; from then on he became open to more innovative and inclusive approaches to its problems.²⁷ The name of the *All Ireland Review* itself, as he explained in the inaugural issue, reflected his desire to find common ground: ‘With regard to public affairs, it is my intention to promote to the utmost a general mutual tolerance, regard, and respect, for the achievement of greater national solidarity and the concentration of power. I shall deal with no politics save those which are indicated by the title’.²⁸ An ambitious agenda, no doubt, but one that again illustrates O’Grady’s willingness to

²⁵ W.J. McCormack’s description of the episode as an ‘absurdity’ and of O’Grady’s behaviour as ‘pathetic’ overlooks both his self-consciously local approach to the scandal and the personal courage required of him in taking a stand, however bombastic his manner. W.J. McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History* (Cork, 1994), 236.

²⁶ Luke Netterville [Standish O’Grady], *The Queen of the World, or Under the Tyranny* (London, 1900).

²⁷ Jerry C.M. Nolan, ‘Standish James O’Grady’s Cultural Nationalism’, *Irish Studies Review* 7 (Dec. 1999), 352.

²⁸ *AIR* 6 Jan. 1900, 1.

reconcile and adapt himself, insofar as he was able, to the extraordinary changes Ireland was undergoing during his lifetime. The *All Ireland Review*, literally a one-man show during most of its seven-year existence, ladled out to its readership on a weekly basis an unpredictable concoction of political commentary, economic theory, literary criticism, theological speculation and personal confession. O'Grady not only wrote nearly all the columns but also handled the paper's other aspects, from advertisement canvassing to proof-reading. The journalist William O'Brien is said to have remarked that it was 'the only paper in the three kingdoms that did not irritate him', and certainly it is true that whatever its eccentricities, no one would accuse the *All Ireland Review* of cuteness or playing up to popular sentiment.²⁹ As O'Grady himself observed shortly after his new venture had got started, 'Nearly all my supporters are of "the savage and solitary" sort. Very few of "the gay and gregarious [sort]"'.³⁰ This would seem to be just how he wanted it; the *Moderator* experience had cured him of the illusion that he could run a conventional newspaper and still write with the intensity and candour that his prophetic instincts demanded. So by June 1902 he wrote to Lady Gregory that 'A.I.R. seems [to be] turning the corner you will be glad to [hear] and nothing looks like stopping me now except things like barbed wire flung after me out of Kilkenny[,] where I had an extra bad time'.³¹

O'Grady flung back a little barbed wire himself in the opening issues of the *All Ireland Review*. Some of his best-known diatribes against the landlord class first appeared as leaders that ran from week to week in instalments, sometimes for months at a time.³² His continued outspokenness served to alienate him further from polite Protestant society, even from some of his friends and family. In 1901, one of his cousins cancelled his subscription to the paper, offended by O'Grady's constant sniping at the gentry. Characteristically, he chose to respond

²⁹ H.A. O'Grady, *Standish O'Grady*, 45.

³⁰ NYPL (Gregory Papers), Standish O'Grady to Lady Gregory, 7 Mar. 1900.

³¹ NYPL (Gregory Papers), Standish O'Grady to Lady Gregory, 1 June 1902.

³² 'The Great Enchantment', for example, first appeared in instalments in the *AIR* and was subsequently reprinted by Lady Gregory in *Ideals in Ireland* (Dublin, 1901). Some of these pieces appeared again when selected by Ernest Boyd for inclusion in O'Grady's *Selected Essays and Passages* (Dublin, 1918).

with an open letter on the front page: 'You are the second of my near relatives who have turned against me in this business – against me who, alone in Ireland, has stepped out to help you and all your doomed order, and, as it were, taken off my coat to the work'. He then addresses what he sees as the larger problem that his cousin embodies: '[Y]ou are bright and intelligent and warm-hearted, but like 99 out of 100 of your class and order, you are either unwilling or unable to think. And that is why you are being destroyed; because you will not think'.³³ But he could now say such things with little or no expectation that he would be heeded. As he conceded in the *Review* several years later, after much internal resistance he had finally 'learned from history that menaced aristocracies never shift their ground till the ground shifts from under them'.³⁴ More painful still was the realization that even Anglo-Irishmen who wanted to shift their ground and make room for the future were finding it ever more difficult to do so. The opportunities for manoeuvre were becoming fewer and fewer, the faith of the majority in the gentry's goodwill diminishing with every passing day. So to a young correspondent, recently come down from Oxford and eager 'to help on the new movement in Ireland', O'Grady explained sympathetically that he belonged to a familiar group: 'You are [of] a class of men, I am one of them myself, who can't do anything and want something to do'.³⁵ This was perhaps the worst part of O'Grady's experience in the new century: he now had the dubious pleasure of watching all his predictions come true, for after the Wyndham Act of 1903, few could argue that the gentlemen of Ireland would ever return to their former standing or influence.³⁶ The writer could not help but compare this steady demise to the glories of their forbears, whose experience, he argued, 'ought to be a kind of Bible and a most sacred record. It was a distinct revelation of divine things, and

³³ *AIR* 2 Feb. 1901, 33.

³⁴ *AIR* 3 Feb. 1906, 321.

³⁵ *AIR* 13 Apr. 1901, 167.

³⁶ As Malcolm Brown has memorably put it, rather than being associated with any heroic last deeds, 'the Irish gentry will be remembered instead for its cheerful non-Yeatsian Benthamite good sense, since it provides history with its solitary example of a social class that took solid money in exchange for its privileges and went away quietly'. Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature* (London, 1972), 300.

revelation was granted as for a moment through their order and their own immediate ancestors'.³⁷

If the Ascendancy that had produced Grattan's Parliament had enjoyed God's blessing, then it would seem that this blessing had at last been decisively withdrawn.

There were those in broad sympathy with O'Grady who nonetheless found his imperious tone irritating at times. Provoked by the *Review*'s assertion in 1902 that their new theatrical initiatives did not constitute a worthy forum for the presentation of the heroic literature, AE told Yeats he had prepared a strong response to O'Grady: 'I tell him frankly that he is not great enough to issue fiats to other literary men and accuse them of decadence in a muddle of confused and contradictory sentences. If he publishes it and replies I hope we shall have a gorgeous row'. Yet later in the month Russell wrote again saying he had not sent the letter after all, because 'I did not on second thoughts like fighting with a friend'.³⁸ As AE's remark suggests, most of O'Grady's supporters were prepared to accept this more trying side of the man as the price of his brilliance and passion. When asked by another reader why he did not solicit more work from other writers to put into the paper, the Editor answered somewhat haughtily that '99 out of 100 of my subscribers joined for personal and not general reasons; and so, the little paper is not a literary paper in a general sense; it is to a very large degree myself, a fact which I think is my *pou sto*'.³⁹ There is some indication here and elsewhere in the pages of the *Review* that O'Grady had at last made peace with his position as outsider and was now prepared to exploit it as best as he could. In 1903 he reflected sententiously that 'A.I.R., as a mere theorist and recluse, is naturally pleased when the practical people, the men of affairs, seem to be going the way he indicates....[B]ut why do we take such a long time to find out things which to the unpractical mind are so obvious?'⁴⁰ The curious mixture of arrogance and self-effacement underlying this remark, typical of O'Grady's writing as a whole, offers yet another instance of the ways the egalitarian and elitist

³⁷ *AIR* 10 Jan. 1903, 17.

³⁸ AE, *Some Passages from the Letters of AE to W.B. Yeats* (Dublin, 1936), 29-30.

³⁹ *AIR* 31 Mar. 1900, 4.

⁴⁰ *AIR* 21 Nov. 1903, 386.

aspects of his character were in constant tension and of his efforts to balance them by assuming the role of soothsayer and dissident. It was a strategy that was simultaneously public service and personal solution to the irreconcilable position in which he found himself as a Ascendancy controversialist.

As the illuminating and frequently entertaining correspondence columns of the *All Ireland Review* testify, though, most of his readers were not so much offended by O'Grady's contradictions and inconsistencies as simply baffled by them. In an exchange entitled 'Isms and Ists', one correspondent wrote earnestly: 'I cannot quite make out to what political persuasion you belong, though I have been reading A.I.R. for a long time....I think you really ought to let us understand where you are and from what point of view you are looking at our affairs'. To which O'Grady responded:

Well, do you know? I think I ought not: ought not to let you understand. Moreover, I have a dislike to being labelled; and that, I see, is what you want. I, on the other hand, want to be free, not ticketed and boxed in and locked up along with other people with whom I have perhaps absolutely nothing else in common except the ticket. Don't try to crowd me in with a lot of 'Ists', for I won't be so crowded.

He then concedes that he has had many such letters in the past but insists that 'I no more understand than you do my "politics", a word which, as you know, rhymes with "knaveish tricks"'.⁴¹ At first glance O'Grady's response may seem flippant, even a little unkind, until one remembers just how dogmatic Irish political orientations had by that stage become. In this sense the *Review* functioned not just as a challenge to the specific proprieties and pretensions of its readership but as a witness to and example of an entirely different way of thinking about Ireland and Irishness: a more liberal, imaginative way of thinking. As he wrote sternly to another reader wanting to know what he meant by all his various opinions:

You are all so used to your life in one or other of our hostile camps that you cannot understand one who belongs to none of these camps; you think because I was born and brought up in one of them and have gone out of it, I must have done so with the intention of going into another, and thence shouting a borrowed war-cry and an adopted Shibboleth....What have I to do with all these camps and factions – I who am coming out

⁴¹ *AIR* 2 Sept. 1905, 312.

to speak for such things as you feel, if not know, that I and my gentle Ariel stand for in this Lost Land; – God, and the King, and Law – the Law of Laws.⁴²

Here, then, was the necessary philosophy of ‘All Ireland’ as much as any practical policy for unity; O’Grady’s ragbag of ideas was his attempt to throw off the constricting dualities that had governed his people’s approach to politics and society and to welcome anyone that might bring Ireland closer to his evolving vision of national self-fulfilment. As he had confided to Lady Gregory in 1904, ‘you know I am ungovernable and no respecter of persons’.⁴³ On the way to this more generous and inclusive notion of Ireland’s future, O’Grady managed to free himself of past loyalties to a degree that bespeaks an intellectual independence not previously recognized in him.

This increasing openness did not mean O’Grady had abandoned his primary allegiances, however, as his comments about Protestantism in the *All Ireland Review* demonstrate. Writing in 1905, for example, he asserted that ‘it is the duty of Irish Protestants...to prove their title deeds by setting an example of true Christian charity towards those from whom they are religiously and politically divided. And by Christian charity we do not mean an “accommodating” spirit, or the sacrifice of principles to a false peace’. He touches here upon a point with which Irish Protestants were to grapple frequently in the years to come. Where exactly did a healthy mutual respect end and the surrender of essential beliefs begin? There was no clear precedent for this kind of negotiation, given that religious and political supremacy had long been indistinguishable in Ireland. Yet the dependence upon England to which his community had resorted since the Union to retain this supremacy had always struck O’Grady as distinctly un-Protestant. To be both fully Irish and fully Protestant, then, the minority must rediscover its Reformation inheritance apart from English influence and reassert an autonomous yet constructive identity. In this respect, his comments on religion reflect not so much a strong anti-Romanism as they do a surfeit of Church of Ireland self-regard. At one point he boasted in the *Review* that ‘what I like best about my own

⁴² *AIR* 12 Oct. 1901, 238.

⁴³ NYPL (Gregory Papers), Standish O’Grady to Lady Gregory, 12 Dec. 1904.

religion is that we check and limit the power of our ecclesiastics; also they on their side show no strong inclination to expand it'.⁴⁴ Arguably it was this obvious pride in his Protestantism that enabled O'Grady to become more open-minded and tolerant, but this same pride and the superior attitude it engendered could give the opposite impression to others. One correspondent was finally moved to suggest that the moralizing tone of the *Review* was directly attributable to O'Grady's religious orientation: 'Irish Protestants have been brought up for so many generations in the fixed belief that their mission in the world is to chastize the follies of poor weak Papishes that it has become inherent in their nature, and they can never for long resist a moral lecture....You are not, I think, a bigot, but you have not outgrown this original weakness of your sect. There is not a number now in which you do not lecture, or nag, or sneer'.⁴⁵

Still, lecturing, nagging, and sneering was often what Standish O'Grady did best, and he continued to do so with more than an occasional flash of brilliance until his health began breaking down in 1907. The following year he was finally relieved of financial worry by being awarded a Civil List Pension, something Lady Gregory had been trying to secure for him for some time.⁴⁶ The *All Ireland Review* thus came to an end, but O'Grady's last decade in Ireland was hardly idle. As his contributions to the *Irish Peasant* after this time illustrate, he continued to move steadily leftward in his political espousals. Eventually he found an ideological niche for himself writing for A.R. Orage's the *New Age*, the organ of English Guild Socialism. This shift to the left is not as strange as it might first appear; O'Grady retained his fascination with some kind of return to medieval feudalism, and once he fully reconciled himself to the fact that such a return would never be initiated by the existing aristocracy, he was free to turn to other means for pursuing this

⁴⁴ *AIR* 14 Jan. 1905, 16. It is noteworthy how this statement anticipates some of Yeats's remarks in his famous Senate speech on divorce twenty years later.

⁴⁵ *AIR* 4 Feb. 1905, 52. Arguing later that O'Grady was not a bigot in the manner of many of his contemporaries, one Catholic commentator denied the anti-Catholic sentiments in his work were deliberately sectarian: 'They were probably written with bland unconsciousness of their falsehood. Certainly he was far from being an enemy of the Catholic population'. Michael Hanley, 'The Strange Case of the Parson's Son', *Hibernia* (Dec. 1949), 30-1.

⁴⁶ NYPL (Gregory Papers), W.E.H. Lecky to Lady Gregory, 1 Apr. 1903.

agenda.⁴⁷ What he retained to the end was a reflexive faith that social problems must be addressed at the most local level, and it was this belief that lent his engagement in public controversy its intensely personal and highly individualistic character. He finally left Ireland for health reasons in 1918, never to return. Soon after, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy of which he had been by turns fervent champion and critic also came to an end. Yet O'Grady's call for Protestant activism was in itself a timeless thing, and his words would stand as both a challenge and a promise to his co-religionists in the decades to come.

II. Sir Horace Plunkett: secular communalist

If Otway Cuffe was one of the few Anglo-Irishmen to live up to Standish O'Grady's ideal of service, then surely Sir Horace Plunkett was another. For Plunkett, serving Ireland was to become something of an obsession. He is now best remembered as the pioneer of the modern Irish co-operative movement, which from its modest beginnings in the early 1890s eventually developed into a network of creameries and other rural ventures that spanned the breadth of the island and incorporated the labours of hundreds of thousands of Irishmen and women. As the main social reform effort to emanate from Protestant ranks during this period, the movement is key to any assessment of what Anglo-Irish leadership could and could not realistically achieve amidst the polarized social alignments of late nineteenth-century Ireland. The relentlessness with which Plunkett sought to develop a coherent agricultural policy for the country made him a familiar figure in Irish public life for over thirty years, but even more specifically in terms of Southern Protestant society, this persistence reflected his ability and, it would seem, his conscious desire to be a hinge figure. So while he was less than ten years younger than O'Grady, Plunkett managed to make a far more comprehensive transition from the Victorian to the Edwardian age. Having begun his public career with assumptions that were essentially imperial, implicitly feudal, and assuredly unionist, by the end of his career Plunkett was unquestionably cosmopolitan in his

⁴⁷ Edward Hagan, *'High Nonsensical Words': A Study of the Works of Standish James O'Grady* (Troy, NY, 1986), 154.

worldview, egalitarian in his ideology, and avowedly if moderately nationalist in his politics.

And while one hesitates to identify him primarily as an intellectual – he was really more a man of action than of ideas – he was wise enough to surround himself with intellectuals and to benefit from their inspiration. Here again he became a hinge between the thinkers and the doers of his age, the *literati* and the politicians, the receding upper classes and the burgeoning new leadership of the Irish majority.⁴⁸

But how did Plunkett manage to position himself in this way? An essential ingredient to his sense of calling was the ability to attract and galvanize others into action on behalf of what he considered the public interest. As AE would later drolly remark, ‘Nature had prepared him for the work he was to undertake by gifting him with every kind of insidious power to drag people out of their own private and proper work and make them do his work instead’.⁴⁹ Certainly some of the success Plunkett enjoyed in his various undertakings lay in an inherited assumption that it was his right to lead others, that it was in fact his responsibility to do so. And that so many were responsive to him and sought his guidance would appear to confirm Standish O’Grady’s belief that Ireland was after all simply waiting for the Anglo-Irish to reassert their position. Plunkett himself remained sanguine about the part the Irish elite might still play in influencing events, but his comments also indicate a certain present-day realism many of his fellow idealists lacked.

Thus in his 1908 pamphlet *Noblesse Oblige* he argued:

The abolition of landlordism, so far from destroying the usefulness of the Irish gentry, really gives them their first opportunity, within the memory of living men, to fulfil the true functions of an aristocracy. They have ceased to be masters; they are no longer dealing with dependants. My appeal to them is that they should recognize this fact, and take their new position as men who, working among others in a rural community, have by their wealth and education special advantages which they desire to use for the common good; and I assure them that for men who are willing and qualified to take that position it will be open.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Oliver St. John Gogarty fondly recalled of Plunkett that he was ‘a prose poet and the leader of leaders of men’, a posture he had assumed ‘by merely adumbrating, never expressing an idea’. Oliver St. John Gogarty, *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street* (1937; Dublin, 1994), 138.

⁴⁹ George W. Russell (AE), *Co-operation and Nationality* (1912; Dublin, 1982), 30.

⁵⁰ Horace Plunkett, *Noblesse Oblige: An Irish Rendering* (Dublin, 1908), 26.

While in practice Plunkett made little real headway persuading the more entrenched members of his class to alter their attitudes and behaviour, nonetheless the intensity of commitment he was able to inspire in those who were receptive to his message ought not to be dismissed or underestimated. The tendency either to regard his co-operative work as a mere by-product of Balfour's policy of amelioration during the 1890s or to assess it purely in terms of its economic results is to ignore the full arc of Plunkett's own development and to obscure his unique moral influence upon both his own generation and the one that followed.⁵¹

Rather than look at Plunkett as just a well-heeled social reformer or failed politician, then, it is equally reasonable to assess him more broadly as a kind of communalist, someone engaged in the perennial challenge of balancing the terms of Irish social belonging. As the third son of the sixteenth Baron Dunsany, he was born into one of Anglo-Ireland's oldest aristocratic families, and with this lineage there came an historical awareness of how the increasingly divided Ireland of his own day was both the product of the past and a departure from it. So he explained in a speech delivered in November 1900 that 'you will still find in Ireland among the old families, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, a traditional tolerance which comes down to them from an age when there was much more excuse for intolerance than there is today. This spirit will explain why some of us Protestants south of the Boyne are haunted with a consciousness that we may yet have some restitution to make to our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen'.⁵² Here a Protestant sense of responsibility for historic wrongs is tied to a belief in and affection for a notion of traditional Irish neighbourliness transcending social and religious difference. And as with Standish O'Grady, one senses here an evangelically-inflected sense of moral responsibility married to an idealized notion of what Ireland once was. Yet there is also a distinct note of pragmatism in the word 'restitution', and here Plunkett asserts his own character. Exposed to the

⁵¹ See Andrew Gailey, *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The experience of constructive unionism 1890-1905* (Cork, 1987), 214-15. For a recent re-evaluation of Plunkett's liberal Unionism, see Carla King, 'Defenders of the Union: Sir Horace Plunkett', in D. G. Boyce and A. O'Day (eds.), *Defenders of the Union* (London, 2001), 137-58.

⁵² *Daily Express*, 21 Nov. 1900, 6.

progressive social thought of John Ruskin and others while an undergraduate at Oxford and then to the rough-and-tumble egalitarianism of the American West during a stint as a Wyoming rancher, he emerged with a far more complex and malleable social outlook than Irish experience alone could have provided him.⁵³ And here it is important to emphasize the significance of Plunkett's cosmopolitanism on his understanding not only of Ireland itself but also its place in the company of nations. From the very beginning of his public activities, his conception of belonging necessarily extended beyond the borders of the island with which he was most concerned.

When Plunkett began to promote formal agricultural co-operation after his return to Ireland in 1889, he was not the first Anglo-Irish Protestant to do so. Since the Union a number of Ascendancy figures had sponsored co-operative social initiatives, not least the remarkable William Thompson, a proto-socialist and feminist who repudiated organized religion in favour of his own dream of non-sectarian co-operative communities. Having meticulously planned the launch of such a community in his native Co. Cork, it was only Thompson's premature death in 1833 that prevented the project's ultimate realization.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the highly successful but short-lived Ralahine community had been started in County Clare by the landlord J.S. Vandaleur after he heard pioneer co-operator Robert Owen deliver a lecture in Dublin. In 1830 he entrusted over 600 acres of land to the Scotsman E.T. Craig to be farmed by Vandaleur's tenants according to Owenite principles. Though the community thrived, it came to an abrupt end when Vandaleur gambled away its lands in a protracted card game.⁵⁵ Not strictly a co-operative venture in itself but also significant during this period as an attempt to organize rural life was the training and dispatch of agricultural advisers across Ireland from late 1847 to 1851. Commonly known as

⁵³ Plunkett's earlier life is ably covered by both his biographers: see Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman* (Oxford, 1949), 1-38; and Trevor West, *Horace Plunkett, Co-operation and Politics: An Irish Biography* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1986), 1-20. See also Lawrence M. Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West* (New York, 1989).

⁵⁴ Richard Pankhurst, *William Thompson (1775-1833): Pioneer Socialist* (1954; London, 1991), 2.

⁵⁵ Patrick Bolger, *The Irish Co-operative Movement: Its History and Development* (Dublin, 1977), 13-23.

‘Clarendon’s practical instructors in animal husbandry’, at the peak of the undertaking there were over thirty such teachers travelling across the island.⁵⁶

Rather than from these and other Irish precedents, though, it was really from the contemporary English co-operative movement that Plunkett derived his inspiration and guidance. Old stalwarts of the English movement such as Edward Vansittart Neale, George Jacob Holyoake and Judge Thomas Hughes made a lasting impression upon the young Anglo-Irishman as he struggled to formulate plans that would be both practically efficacious and morally meaningful.⁵⁷ In Vanisttart Neale in particular Plunkett might identify someone who, like himself, came from a wealthy evangelical background and had found in co-operation an alternative forum in which to express his Protestant-derived sense of ‘secular vocation’.⁵⁸ Yet the fact that the inspiration for the new Irish initiative was not primarily Catholic and nationalist in origin would plague its early efforts, notwithstanding the enthusiastic participation of the Jesuit Father Thomas Finlay in promoting it. As Plunkett, Finlay and others struggled in the early 1890s to generate support for a network of co-operative creameries, they encountered intense resistance from the rural trading class, who regarded their efforts as an attack on its interests. In the war of words that followed, the co-operators launched a protracted critique of these ‘gombeen men’, whom they accused of systematically exploiting the small farmers and labourers. The traders retaliated by emphasizing that most of the co-operators were not only Protestants but frequently unionists to boot.⁵⁹ Under the circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that class, religion and politics should become so rapidly and inextricably bound up in the co-operative movement’s gestation. And as Plunkett

⁵⁶ Gwyn E. Jones, ‘The Origins of Agricultural Advisory Services in the Nineteenth Century’, *Social Biology and Human Affairs* 46 (1981), 99-100.

⁵⁷ Horace Plunkett, ‘Foreword’, in Horace Plunkett Foundation (ed.), *Agricultural Co-operation in Ireland: A Survey* (London, 1931) xi-xii.

⁵⁸ Philip N. Backstrom, *Christian Socialism and Cooperation in Victorian England* (London, 1974), 29-32; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (1930; London, 2000), 154ff.

⁵⁹ Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland*, 103.

was to learn repeatedly in the years to come, this was a combination of forces that no one, however noble his intentions, could afford to ignore or disparage.

Despite this sort of opposition, creameries and credit banks nonetheless proliferated across the Irish countryside as Protestant and Catholic farmers alike began to appreciate their advantages. Among those converted was Hubert Butler's father George, who helped found the co-operative creamery in Bennettsbridge and served as its first chairman (*EA* 96).⁶⁰ Moreover, as rural people in general began to recognize the tangible benefits of co-operation, the movement's claims to disinterestedness gained credence.⁶¹ And meanwhile Plunkett's own reputation for integrity was growing as he immersed himself ever deeper into Irish affairs. Throughout much of the 1890s he served as a highly independent (if not especially effective) Unionist M.P. for South Dublin; however, this stint in electoral politics was cut short by his failure to secure re-election in 1900. His constituents had rightly surmised that Plunkett's commitment to the Union had grown increasingly tenuous since they first sent him to Westminster. But when exactly he embraced Home Rule instead it is difficult to say, so gradual was the process which eventually led to this change of position.⁶² As late as 1909 he was still debating the issue in his diary, and later he expressed surprise at just how long it had taken him to switch his allegiance.⁶³ In truth, whether Plunkett could be deemed a unionist or a Home Ruler appeared to depend very much on the moment and the situation, as well as on who was making the judgment. As his biographer Margaret Digby rightly concludes, he was above all 'that intractable thing, an unyielding moderate'.⁶⁴ The one option he would not countenance was the deliberate sowing of discord in the effort to force the matter of Irish sovereignty. So he wrote rather severely to Lady Gregory at

⁶⁰ George Butler would subsequently testify to the Bennettsbridge creamery's success: see *Agricultural Co-operation in Ireland: A Plea for Justice by the I.A.O.S.* (Dublin, 1911), 109-10.

⁶¹ How much the movement ultimately achieved in economic terms has been a subject of debate, though there is consensus that at the very least it helped counter the agricultural depression that hit Ireland in the late nineteenth century and gave it a good basis from which to face the increased competition of the new century. See Carla Keating [King], *Plunkett and Co-operatives: Past, Present and Future* (Cork, 1983), 65. See also Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1918* (Dublin, 1973), 127.

⁶² W.G.S. Adams, 'Introduction', in Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett* xi.

⁶³ PF (Plunkett Papers): Diary, 23 Dec. 1909 and 10 Feb. 1922.

⁶⁴ Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett*, 293.

one point that ‘what you say about the necessity of supplementing the anti-English feeling of the masses with similar feeling on the part of the classes, if the Irish question is to be solved, may be politically true, but I hope not, as I have no belief in hate as the foundation for anything’.⁶⁵ It would of course be easy to dismiss Plunkett’s conciliatory line as so much fence-straddling, yet to do so would ignore the heavy price he paid for it among the Irish establishment of which he was a part. After visiting the Kildare Street Club in 1911, for example, he noted ruefully that ‘I find I am labelled an enemy’.⁶⁶ What had seemed at first like his eccentric do-goodery was now perceived as a dangerous challenge to the underlying security of his tribe.

For all his willingness to separate himself from his own community, though, there could never be any real question of Plunkett’s being absorbed by the Catholic majority. It was not something he sought, nor was it something that would have been granted. Instead, he tried to reconcile himself to the uncertain status of perpetual social and political limbo. He reported to Lady Gregory in 1906 that ‘I have just heard that Oxford intends to make me an honorary D.C.L. I suppose that that will utterly damn me in the neo-celtic eye. Perhaps, however, as long as I have as bad a name in T.C.D. as the Pope has in Portadown, I may not be altogether outside the beyond’.⁶⁷ Still, the leaders of Catholic opinion had made it clear long before that there were ways Plunkett could never expect to be truly Irish, however committed he might be to the commonweal. Being a Protestant gentleman brought with it certain inescapable limitations in modern Ireland, as he learned the hard way when he published *Ireland in the New Century* in 1904. The controversy that grew up around this book sprang from Plunkett’s ‘sublime tactlessness’ in some of the comments he makes in it about the majority’s religion.⁶⁸ In exploring reasons why the country remains so depressed economically, he attributes certain developmental shortcomings among the Irish to their adherence to Catholicism. Or, more precisely, during the

⁶⁵ NYPL (Gregory Papers): Horace Plunkett to Lady Gregory, 21 Feb. 1908.

⁶⁶ PF (Plunkett Papers): Diary, 10 Oct. 1911.

⁶⁷ NYPL (Gregory Papers), Horace Plunkett to Lady Gregory, 17 May 1906.

⁶⁸ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland*, 209.

ensuing debate he attributed these failings in the 'industrial character' of the people to the particular influence exerted upon them by their clergy. For it seemed to him that the priests had long been combining a message of anti-economic values with an excessive infringement upon political matters. And while he conceded that there had been obvious reasons for the clergy to act as political surrogates for the laypeople in the past, he believed the circumstances no longer merited such interference. That the priests had become accustomed to their special position was by then more a hindrance than a help to Irish initiative and self-improvement: 'The real matter in which the direct and personal responsibility of the Roman Catholic clergy seems to me to be involved, is the character and *morale*...of all the people of this country'.⁶⁹

The distinctions Plunkett was trying to draw between morality and morale, between the Catholic faith and its Irish clerical exponents, were either lost upon or irrelevant to many of his readers.⁷⁰ To them, it was just another example of Protestant bigotry, albeit from a surprising source. Despite his background and politics, few Irish people had previously regarded Plunkett as anti-Catholic. Even Monsignor Michael O'Riordan, whose *Catholicity and Progress* was written largely as a response to *Ireland in the New Century*, noted that Plunkett was not typical of those Protestants who routinely blamed Ireland's woes on Catholic indolence rather than British misrule: 'It is a pity that Sir Horace has let himself be led into the choir to join their chorus, for through many notes he does not chant in harmony with them'.⁷¹ Did Plunkett's statements about the connection between Ireland's economic problems and Irish Catholicism really constitute bigotry? The author himself was prepared to concede, at least in private, that some of his thoughts had been 'wrongly expressed'. He wrote to Lady Gregory while preparing the

⁶⁹ Horace Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century* (1904, 1905; Dublin, 1982), 102-10. Plunkett here anticipates certain ideas about the relationship between religion and economics later developed at length by Max Weber and R.H. Tawney. See Mary E. Daly, 'The Economic Ideals of Irish Nationalism: Frugal Comfort or Lavish Austerity?', *Éire/Ireland* 29 (Winter 1994), 132-48.

⁷⁰ In investigating the impact of clerical influence on Irish economic behaviour, Liam Kennedy has concluded, contrary to Plunkett's assertion, that it 'seems reasonable to regard the Catholic church as making a positive, if modest, contribution to the economy of the nineteenth century'. Liam Kennedy, *Colonialism*, 116.

⁷¹ Michael O'Riordan, *Catholicity and Progress in Ireland* (London, 1905), 339.

forthcoming shilling edition of the book that 'there are some valid criticisms which I must consider....I must also write a preface dealing with a few misapprehensions'.⁷² At no time, however, did he concede that it had been wrong to voice publicly his criticisms of Catholic social behaviour.⁷³

But the level of outrage generated by *Ireland in the New Century* stemmed from more than just the issue of whether he had the right to criticise his compatriots. For in speaking as he did, he had in effect questioned the basic relationship between Catholic cosmology and nationalist mythology, between suffering and liberation, upon which the majority's historical identity was predicated and of which their priests had become emblems. By suggesting there was a basic flaw in this outlook rather than an ultimate solution, Plunkett had attacked Irish Catholic sensibilities in a more comprehensive manner than he himself seems to have realized. It would be wrong to conclude, though, that he had actively sought to undermine or ridicule Catholic belief. Rather, as an admittedly naive secular Protestant, he thought religion could be rendered a more private affair and that a spirit of non-sectarian co-operation could take its place as the basis for Irish solidarity. Yet his temerity in implying co-operation could not only redress material stagnation but also serve as a new basis for community confirmed the suspicion that he grossly underestimated the profundity of existing antipathies. So W.R. McDermott would remark in 1905 that 'if when [Plunkett] speaks of a "true moral foundation" he means a possible common foundation for society[,] he speaks of what, as actual fact, we have no experience of'.⁷⁴ In his zeal to establish an alternative form of Irish belonging, a form in which people like him might fully partake, he had come up against certain fundamental limitations he would devote the rest of his career trying to overcome.

This ongoing struggle for reconciliation and belonging was not for Plunkett exclusively Irish in its dimensions, either in personal or public terms. Indeed, he seems to have regarded

⁷² NYPL (Gregory Papers): Horace Plunkett to Lady Gregory, 29 Mar. 1904.

⁷³ Horace Plunkett, *New Century*, 295.

⁷⁴ *AIR* 29 Apr. 1905, 198.

getting away from Ireland regularly as essential to his efforts on its behalf, for his homeland was something to which he gave but from which he felt he got little or nothing in return. Thus when a friend sent him a book about the American West, he spoke fondly of that faraway place 'where I gathered the health and sense which I used up in my Irish work'.⁷⁵ The United States continued to be a touchstone for him, a place where he went to nurse his fragile health as well as to gather new ideas and fresh impetus. This longstanding trans-Atlantic existence came into its own with the advent of the First World War, during which Plunkett became an unofficial emissary of sorts, shuttling between London and Washington. He spoke of his 'dream of a Pax Anglo-Americana', which he believed would result from an Allied victory and which would ensure a greater balance of power between the Old World and the New.⁷⁶ While he himself remained a natural son of empire, he regarded the United States and the emerging Commonwealth nations as the logical successors to the European dispensation. Rather than obsess over its relative position to the England of the nineteenth century, then, Ireland must look forward instead to its place in the international context of the twentieth. Bernard Shaw summed up the attitude he and Plunkett shared towards Irish national aspirations: 'We must be a free nation; but we cannot be an independent one', he wrote. 'If this war has taught England, France, and Russia, Germany, Austria, and Turkey, and finally even the United States of America, that they cannot afford to stand alone, it is clearly silly for a little country which might be cut out of the territories of any of these powers and sunk in the sea without being missed, to dream this arrogant and inhuman dream'.⁷⁷ Such a cosmopolitan judgment on Ireland's modest place among the world powers could not be easily reconciled with the penchant for self-aggrandizement at the heart of Irish nationalist thinking. So while Plunkett's broader understanding of belonging and community may have extended equally both east and west, to look beyond the island at all was bound to

⁷⁵ Schlesinger Library, Harvard, MC 185, Box 1, fol. 21 (Brooks Papers): Horace Plunkett to J.G. Brooks, 5 Aug. 1924.

⁷⁶ PF (Plunkett Papers), Diary, 8 Mar. 1916.

⁷⁷ Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters, 1911-1925*, ed. D.H. Laurence (London, 1985), 489.

offend some. Although labour leader Louie Bennett affirmed Plunkett's position when she later praised him for having approached Ireland 'from the standpoint of a citizen of the world', she added that this was why, despite all his efforts at conciliation, Plunkett could never truly become an object of affection among the great body of Irish people.⁷⁸

The event that marked the climax of Plunkett's efforts at conciliation was undoubtedly his chairmanship of the Irish Convention of 1917-18. By the same token, the Convention illustrated more clearly than anything else the limitations inherent in his leadership. Ever the realist, Bernard Shaw warned his zealous friend against expecting the Convention to achieve miracles. It was one thing to get the disparate camps of Irish opinion assembled in one place, quite another to get them actually to agree to anything meaningful. With his usual Shavian flourish he wrote Plunkett in August 1917: 'The spectacle of a number of Ulster gentlemen trying to look as if they thought there is a great deal to be said for transubstantiation, confronted by a row of Catholic prelates resolutely looking at the bright side of Martin Luther, may be full of hope for a charitable future for Ireland; but it does not clear the air. You must sooner or later come to business'.⁷⁹ While chairman Plunkett had an unenviable task, and despite the mistakes he made, it is not clear that anyone else could have achieved a great deal more as a result of all those long sessions held in Trinity College. What is extraordinary is the level of optimism he brought to the proceedings, an optimism that bordered on hubris. Even after a quarter century of engagement in Irish affairs, Plunkett could approach the Convention as though it were a forum of open-minded individuals who simply needed to work out a few unfortunate misunderstandings. Thus he could write to the American E.L. Godkin in September 1917 that 'one thing that has come out is the amazing ignorance of each other's real ideas. All this being cleared up and in about two weeks I expect a small committee of the best men will be seriously engaged in drafting a measure to be introduced into the Convention and passed through all the stages of a House of

⁷⁸ Louie Bennett, 'The Plunkett Economic Pattern', in National Co-operative Council (ed.), *Sir Horace Plunkett Centenary Handbook* (Dublin, 1954), 9.

⁷⁹ Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters*, 486.

Commons debate'.⁸⁰ It hardly bears relating here that it took a lot longer than two weeks for the Convention to come to its unhappy end and that no 'small committee of the best men' ever succeeded in drafting a measure of any lasting import.⁸¹ Plunkett indulged the worst behaviour of nearly everyone involved in the process, and then almost without exception these same people blamed him for the ineffectuality of the effort. As he himself observed afterwards, '[P]eople are uncharitable to those who meddle with public affairs[,] especially if they counsel moderation'.⁸² His desire to bring Irishmen together had once again been frustrated, though it must be said that his own lack of political acumen in the face of the recalcitrant Ulstermen and Republicans was at least partly to blame for this failure.

Where Plunkett came closest to achieving the united Ireland of his dreams was at his own home, Kilteragh, which he had built at Foxrock, Co. Dublin in 1905. He confided to his diary the following year that he hoped to use his new residence as a place where he could 'bring Irishmen together to discuss Irish problems'.⁸³ During its brief existence the house did indeed become a place where people from all quarters of Irish life were gathered not only to discuss but also to debate and imagine the country's future. If its size, coupled with Plunkett's own aristocratic tendencies, imbued Kilteragh with something of the atmosphere of a Big House, then it stood as the first Big House born of the new Ireland, one which from the start had been designed with a wholly different social and political landscape in mind.⁸⁴ Hubert Butler was a member of the younger generation who visited Kilteragh before the Civil War and quickly fell under the spell of both the house and its owner. In particular he was impressed to meet so many fellow Protestants who appeared wildly unorthodox but deeply committed to Ireland's well-being.⁸⁵ It thus struck him and many others as a profound tragedy when Kilteragh was burned by Republicans in late

⁸⁰ Harvard, b MS 1083.1551 (Godkin Papers): Horace Plunkett to E.L. Godkin, 17 Sept. 1917.

⁸¹ See R.B. McDowell, *The Irish Convention 1917-18* (London, 1970). See also David W. Miller, *Church, State and Nation in Ireland 1898-1921* (Dublin, 1973), 359-90.

⁸² Harvard, b MS 1083.1559 (Godkin Papers): Horace Plunkett to E.L. Godkin, 21 Oct. 1919.

⁸³ PF (Plunkett Papers): Diary, 6 Nov. 1906.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth, Countess of Fingall, *Seventy Years Young* (1937; Dublin, 1995), 314.

⁸⁵ MH (Ms.): 'Libraries' [7pp, undated (1970s/80s)].

January 1923 as retaliation against Plunkett for serving in the Free State Senate. This was to be one rebuff too many for the old activist. Thereafter he retired to England and devoted himself primarily to the international dimensions of the co-operative movement, disillusioned not only by his personal loss but also by Ireland's ever deeper drift into internecine conflict. Plunkett was also, it must be said, not a little contemptuous of the new nation's preoccupation with asserting its unique identity. When Gilbert Murray wrote in June 1923 to consult him regarding the Free State's fitness for the League of Nations, he claimed bitterly that he was unqualified to comment, partly because he was no longer well enough informed, but also because 'I have become neither O nor Mac Plunkett'.⁸⁶ The dismissive tone of this remark indicates that despite his dedication to them, Plunkett remained baffled by what he considered his compatriots' often trivial cultural concerns. The abiding sense that he did not really wish to understand Ireland as it was, so much as make it into what he thought it should be, is what ultimately prevented him from enjoying greater affection among the mass of Irishmen. One man summed up the prevailing sentiment well when he later concluded of Plunkett that 'he worked hard *for* the Gael, but not *with* the Gael'.⁸⁷ When all was said and done, then, service and belonging were not the same thing, and no amount of one could make up for a lack in the other.

In the end there remained, despite his many public engagements, a fundamental uncertainty or ambivalence in Horace Plunkett. His secretary, Gerald Heard, who was to know him well in later life, claimed that it 'was not that he wished to deceive anyone, and not that he was playing a double game with a clear sense of how he wished it to turn out, but that he did not know where he actually placed himself in the composition'.⁸⁸ Of course devising a place for everyone in the Irish composition was what Plunkett was best at, so there is a certain pathos in the idea that he never found a place for himself. Like the Anglo-Irish as a whole, he could never quite imagine the possibility that he should be merely an Irishman among Irishmen. He loved the

⁸⁶ Oxford, MS. 190, fol. 183 (Murray Papers): Horace Plunkett to Gilbert Murray, 21 June 1923.

⁸⁷ PF (Digby Papers): Eoin O'Keefe to Margaret Digby, 19 Apr. 1950.

⁸⁸ Gerald Heard, 'Epilogue', in Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett*, 301.

country but could never summon up an equivalent affection for its inhabitants. Bernard Shaw saw this essential detachment as the key to his personality, observing in 1948 that ‘Plunkett was a puzzle. He devoted his life to the service of his fellow creatures collectively; and personally he disliked them all. He kept open house in Foxrock for all visitors of note, rich or poor, to Ireland; and he hated all his guests....I liked him thoroughly and always stayed at Foxrock when I went to Ireland even after I found out that his hatred of his guests probably included me.’⁸⁹ Despite the estrangement he felt after the destruction of Kilteragh, Plunkett carried on doing what he could for Ireland until his death in 1932. His main contribution during the 1920s was his patronage of the *Irish Statesman*, which he had resuscitated in 1923 with Irish-American financial backing. The *Statesman* was for him one last attempt at gathering together the best and brightest in the interests of the nation. He confided to Lady Gregory about the paper that ‘there, I hope, will continue to meet the friends who honoured and delighted me in my Kilteragh days’.⁹⁰ This time, though, he left the task of assembling the party in the capable editorial hands of his long-time friend and associate, George W. Russell.

III. George W. Russell (AE): Irish pluralist

Few if any would now join Horace Plunkett’s nephew, Lord Dunsany, in arguing that George W. Russell was a superior poet to W.B. Yeats.⁹¹ Most, however, would probably concede that during his lifetime AE was the more beloved, as in his various capacities as artist, mystic, journalist and communal organizer, he served as a bonding agent, both between the co-operative movement and the Literary Revival and among the liberal intelligentsia at large. He displayed a remarkable capacity for absorbing into his own person aspects of Irish experience that seemed to many of his contemporaries to be irreconcilable. Be it the perceived conflict between what was national and international, Gaelic and Anglo-Irish, traditional and innovatory, AE, as William

⁸⁹ PF (Digby Papers): G.B. Shaw to Margaret Digby, 16 June 1948.

⁹⁰ NYPL (Gregory Papers): Horace Plunkett to Lady Gregory, 10 Feb. 1923. See also R.F. Foster, *The Arch-Poet*, 242.

⁹¹ Burns Library, Boston College (Dunsany Papers): Edward Dunsany to Sidney Arnold, 26 Jan. 1954.

Clyde subsequently observed, ‘went to no extreme that might injure the character’.⁹² This intuitive moderation and lack of dogmatism in political and cultural matters – what Seán O’Faoláin characterized as Russell’s ‘sweet toleration’ – bolstered his reputation as an authentic sage among admirers.⁹³ Yet it was precisely this quality that, in time, would alienate some of the more ardent sections of Catholic nationalist opinion. Initial suspicions of quackery developed into overt accusations that Russell was seeking to undermine political self-realization and even foment anti-Catholic feeling. He did nothing to dispel such charges when he insisted that real freedom for Ireland was contingent not only upon independence from England but also upon the achievement of an ‘intellectual patriotism’, whereby diverse social viewpoints would be welcomed within the new society.⁹⁴ At the same time, such a stance endeared him to many young Irishmen in the 1920s, who regarded him as the warm fosterer of their own intellectual promise and the prophetic visionary of a nation that would someday overcome its divisions and learn to glory in the richness of its complex heritage.

The early adulthood and development of Russell have been comprehensively examined, especially the profound impact Theosophy and American transcendentalism were to have on his long-term outlook.⁹⁵ From early in his career he was clearly conscious of challenging received pieties, religious and national, though there is no evidence that he wished to undermine Catholic faith any more than he wished to block the progress towards Irish sovereignty. There seems always to have been an obvious distinction in his mind between attacking faith itself and questioning how its expression was affecting the larger social order. In 1897 he announced to Yeats that ‘[I] am going to assail the priests in pamphlets, not on theological grounds but on the

⁹² William Clyde, *A.E.* (Edinburgh, 1935), 26.

⁹³ Seán O’Faoláin, ‘Yeats and the Younger Generation’, *Horizon* 5:25 (Jan. 1942), 48.

⁹⁴ *IS* 10 Nov. 1923, 265.

⁹⁵ See Henry Summerfield, *That Myriad-Minded Man: A Biography of George William Russell (A.E.), 1867-1935* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1975), 1-85. See also Peter Kuch, *Yeats and AE: the antagonism that unites dear friends* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1986) and Michael McAteer, *Standish O’Grady, AE and Yeats: History, Politics, Culture* (Dublin, 2002), 104-25.

point of Liberty....I will say fierce things in print to make people's hair stand up'.⁹⁶ In fact, this promise was to a large extent mere boasting to his friend. For though he shared Horace Plunkett's general critique of how the Catholic Church had adversely affected Irish morale, in practice he was cagier about what he said publicly and how he said it. Recalling the outcry that followed Plunkett's comments about the Church in *Ireland in the New Century*, John Eglinton maintained that 'AE would never have so imperilled his cause: he would have approached the subject much more insidiously and have talked first of the sacred earth we tread, and the soil of Erin as Palestine'.⁹⁷ As a member of the Dublin middle-class who had mixed with a wider range of Irish people than Plunkett, Russell was surely more attuned to Catholic sensitivities and more astute in gauging how much pressure could be placed upon them. He demonstrated this awareness when writing to Bernard Shaw in 1914 with reference to some essays he had enclosed, explaining that they comprised 'a subtle attempt...to gild the pill of heresy in the sugar of nationality. When the heretical flavour is perceived on the palate it may be found not so terrible a thing, and the look of heresy pure and undiluted may be accepted on its own merits'.⁹⁸ Thus while he himself never adhered to conventional Protestantism, Russell retained a distinctly Protestant sense of otherness from the majority and with it a desire to suggest new ways of seeing Ireland and the world.

Even so, the alternative spirituality AE developed was sufficiently attuned to contemporary realities that it is appropriate to speak of it as the basis for an Irish 'civil religion', a pluralistic ethos he hoped would transcend sectarian allegiances while replicating their fervour in the interests of national development.⁹⁹ And though he did so in highly unorthodox terms, AE

⁹⁶ AE, *Passages from Letters to Yeats*, 8-9.

⁹⁷ John Eglinton, *A Memoir of AE: George William Russell* (London, 1937), 72.

⁹⁸ Pieces mentioned by name in this letter were 'Renewal of Youth' and 'The Hero in Man'. British Library, Add. MS. 63186.11 (Shaw Papers): G.W. Russell to G.B. Shaw, undated [1914].

⁹⁹ Sociologist Robert Bellah coined the term 'civil religion' to describe how 'a distinct set of religious symbols and practices may arise that address issues of political legitimacy and political ethics but that are not fused with either church or state'. Admittedly, there is a difference between a phenomenon that arises organically from the body politic and a vision of the polity advocated by an individual thinker, but the

was not shy about making explicit the parallel between religious devotion and patriotic service. In 1912 he asserted in the *Irish Homestead* that ‘patriotism is the spirituality of the citizen. Just as the saintly man always acts and thinks with some reference to Deity, so the patriotic man always acts and thinks with reference to the nation. This is in a way a kind of spirituality’.¹⁰⁰ The publication of *Co-operation and Nationality* (1912) and *The National Being* (1916) mark the culmination of Russell’s pre-Independence social writings, with the latter in particular espousing the civil religion that had been germinating in his imagination for over two decades.¹⁰¹ What lends the book a distinctly Protestant flavour is its recurrent concern with defining the individual’s relationship to the community. With transcendentalist language AE argues that ‘in the highest civilizations the individual citizen is raised above himself and made part of a greater life, which we may call the National Being. He enters into it, and it becomes an oversoul to him, and gives to all his works a character and grandeur and a relation to the works of his fellow-citizens’. In an ideal society the citizen is absorbed into something larger than himself, but he need not lose his autonomy or agency as a result. Rather, the power of the ‘National Being’ lies precisely in the variety of its constituency. And so later in the book he insists that ‘we should regard as alien to the national spirit all who would make us think in flocks, and discipline us to an unintellectual commonality of belief. The life of the soul is a personal adventure’.¹⁰² Generating a sense of shared identity without infringing upon this liberty of conscience lay at the heart of AE’s ambitions for Ireland and would become a central concern of Protestant nationalists generally in the years to come.

It was his involvement in the co-operative movement that lent Russell’s aspirations a degree of specificity and counterbalanced his penchant for esotericism. One of the obvious

phrase itself is useful when referring to an ethos, real or imagined, that fits Bellah’s criteria. Robert N. Bellah and Phillip E. Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion* (San Francisco, 1980) xi.

¹⁰⁰ *Irish Homestead* 24 Feb. 1912, 151.

¹⁰¹ In a recently published study of Russell, Nicholas Allen has thoughtfully placed these works in the context of his evolving social thought: see Nicholas Allen, *George Russell (AE) and the New Ireland, 1905-30* (Dublin, 2003), 27-86.

¹⁰² AE, *The National Being* (1916; Dublin, 1982), 11, 130.

attractions of co-operation, as the English Christian Socialists had long before pointed out, was its conformity to familiar Christian concepts of mutuality and neighbourliness.¹⁰³ In *The National Being*, AE posits that although the Irish co-operative movement began in the 1890s as an attempt to improve certain aspects of agricultural life, in the process it laid the groundwork for an entire 'co-operative commonwealth' in which people of all types might someday join. He anticipates that communities run on co-operative principles will eventually spring up across the island as Irishmen realize that their own interests and those of their neighbours are the same, be they Protestant or Catholic. Of course, the key to such collective ventures is their intimacy. Experience has shown that the commitment they require to succeed cannot be imposed from without, whatever the material resources employed. So Russell argues that 'our big countries, our big empires, and republics, for all their military strength and science, and the wealth which science has made it possible for man to win, do not create citizenship because of the loose organization of society'. Instead of trying to emulate these inappropriate and flawed precedents, then, Ireland would do better to develop itself as a federation of tightly-knit local communities.¹⁰⁴ This was a basic message Russell would never tire of promoting, despite all the political upheaval and disagreement in the years to follow.

Having thus persevered amidst revolution and civil war with his calls for a fully integrated approach to the prospect of Irish nationhood, in 1923 AE assumed the editorship of the resurrected *Irish Statesman*. While initially unenthusiastic about this change, he quickly recognized the need for a journal which would not only attract the literary intelligentsia but also make an impact on the new political elite.¹⁰⁵ He confided to J.L. Hammond in July 1923 that 'I want to make [the paper] nonparty in the ordinary sense, educational, goodnatured and

¹⁰³ See, for example, F.D. Maurice, 'Reasons for Co-operation', *Democratic Socialism in Britain*, ii: *The Christian Socialists*, ed. D. Reisman (London, 1996), 13-43.

¹⁰⁴ AE, *National Being*, 61, 135.

¹⁰⁵ Nicholas Allen, *George Russell*, 141-9.

reasonable'.¹⁰⁶ Here 'nonparty' meant supporting the democratic legitimacy of the Free State government against anti-Treatyite claims without necessarily supporting all its policies down the line. The plan was to create an open forum for debate about all aspects of the new state, which in turn would stimulate informed decision-making among the novice policymakers now in charge. Russell worried that Irish people had grown so accustomed to approaching politics from a national ideological perspective that few had developed a corresponding sophistication in the analysis of Ireland's practical problems.¹⁰⁷ Even before he took over the *Statesman*, he had warned his compatriots against mistaking liberation from England for responsible self-governance. He urged them to recognize the importance of the Protestant remnant, from whose ranks a disproportionately large number of educated and professional Irishmen came and whose active participation he believed constituted a vital resource to the nation.¹⁰⁸ In the same way, he was to reiterate constantly Ireland's need to attend to what was happening in other countries, especially smaller ones which faced challenges analogous to its own. '[W]e must become citizens of the planet', he asserted in his inaugural editorial in mid-September. 'We want the Irish harp to sound in the orchestra of nations'.¹⁰⁹ He thus made it a priority to feature contributions which exposed readers to continental ideas and activities. In thanking Myles Dillon in 1924 for a piece he had written on contemporary life in Germany, AE told him that 'I am always glad to have anything that throws light on conditions in Europe'.¹¹⁰

Apart from its emphasis on political maturation and international awareness, the *Irish Statesman* also served as a forum for socially engaged Protestants to register dissenting viewpoints. Just as he had in *The National Being*, AE himself continued to advocate a spiritual

¹⁰⁶ Oxford, MS. 19, fol. 41 (Hammond Papers): G.W. Russell to J.L. Hammond, 10 July 1923.

¹⁰⁷ Liam O'Dowd, 'Neglecting the Material Dimension: Irish intellectuals and the problem of identity', *Irish Review* 3 (1988), 11.

¹⁰⁸ AE, 'Lessons of Revolution', *Studies* 12 (Mar. 1923), 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ *IS* 15 Sept. 1923, 3-5.

¹¹⁰ National Library of Ireland (Dillon Papers): Ms. 33039: G.W. Russell to Myles Dillon, 26 Feb. 1924. Just several examples from among the many foreign-subject articles published are Arnold Marsh on Austria (3 Nov. 1923, 235 and 10 Nov. 1923, 271); E.M. Cunningham on Denmark (14 Feb. 1925, 733-4); and B.C. Waller on the role of small nations in the League of Nations (18 Aug. 1928, 467-8).

but non-sectarian dispensation whenever possible and became increasingly critical of the Cosgrave government as it moved to demonstrate its fealty to the Catholic hierarchy. Echoing Wolfe Tone, he opined more than once that ‘the aim of statesmen must be to build up a nation in which there shall be no longer Protestants or Catholics, but only Irishmen’.¹¹¹ When in the early months of 1925 the government introduced a resolution to outlaw divorce in the Free State, various Protestants stepped forward to voice their dissatisfaction with the direction the country was taking regarding civil liberties. While not in itself a bread-and-butter issue for most Protestants, divorce became a litmus test of just how tolerant of different values the Free State would prove to be. More inclined to direct provocation than AE, W.B. Yeats seized upon the occasion as an opportunity to demand greater openness and rigour in the public discourse. In ‘An Undelivered Speech’, which appeared in the *Statesman* in mid-March, he announced that as a Free State Senator he would resist any prohibitive legislation, not because he was so concerned about divorce *per se*, but because the effort to ban it was an assault on the whole principle of pluralism. Consequently, he considered it a duty to stand up and require that certain conversations take place: ‘As a people we are superficial, our Press provincial and trivial, because as yet we have not considered any of those great political and religious questions which raise some fundamental issues and have disturbed Europe for generations’.¹¹² The speech Yeats actually delivered in the Senate when the debate on divorce took place later in the year was more deliberately partisan in tone, emphasizing the cultural estrangement between the Anglo-Irish Protestant and Gaelic Catholic traditions by famously declaring that ‘we against whom you have done this thing are no petty people’.¹¹³ His performance appears to have irritated other Protestants as much as it did Catholics, albeit for different reasons. James Douglas, a senator and

¹¹¹ *IS* 31 Oct. 1925, 232.

¹¹² *IS* 14 Mar. 1925, 8-10. For an examination of how the relationship between religion and liberalism had developed elsewhere in Europe, see Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990).

¹¹³ *The Senate Speeches of W.B. Yeats*, ed. D.R. Pearce (London, 1960), 92-5. See also Ian d’Alton, ‘A Perspective upon Historical Process’, 81-2.

prominent Quaker businessman who often played a mediating role within the government, was annoyed by what he saw the self-defeating nature of Yeats's gesture. A capable politician, Douglas was more interested in extracting practical concessions from the majority than in scoring oratorical hits off it.¹¹⁴ Yet however little Yeats did to advance the cause of mutuality on this occasion, it must be said that he did manage to register a quiet resentment already growing among many Protestants regarding their social status in the Free State.¹¹⁵

That public protests such as Yeats's were rare among Protestants is at least partly due to lurking fears among them that some sort of pogrom might erupt if they did not tread carefully. In fact, there was little real evidence that such a thing would come to pass. Despite various house burnings and occasional physical attacks on Protestants (mostly in County Cork) during the early 1920s, it is remarkable how little personal violence was perpetrated against the minority compared to that resulting from revolutions elsewhere.¹¹⁶ The famous occasion when a Church of Ireland delegation called on Michael Collins to ask whether Protestants would be permitted to remain in the Free State is memorable precisely because in retrospect there seems so little reason for that level of anxiety. As frustrating and alienating as their position in the country had become for many Southern Protestants, life on the ground could have been much worse than it was.¹¹⁷ In his eagerness to encourage conciliation, AE praised the Church of Ireland General Synod in 1925 for striking a more optimistic tone during its proceedings than it had in years past. He greeted this change as a sign that old wounds were starting to heal: 'Things, it is true, have not gone in the

¹¹⁴ James G. Douglas, *Memoirs of James G. Douglas (1887-1954)*, *Concerned Citizen*, ed. J. A. Gaughan (Dublin, 1998), 116-17. See also Donal O'Sullivan, *The Irish Free State and Its Senate* (London, 1940), 167-8.

¹¹⁵ R.F. Foster, *The Arch-Poet*, 296-300.

¹¹⁶ That said, the ramifications of the War of Independence and the Civil War for Southern Protestants cannot be generalized. Most of the extreme violence against Protestants took place in the Bandon Valley of County Cork, as has been documented in Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1998), 273-92. By contrast, David Fitzpatrick notes that while 'the psychological pressure was terrible' for many County Clare Protestants during this time, none was in fact murdered, and unlike their counterparts in Cork, 'Clare Volunteer leaders did their best to suppress anti-Protestant bigotry'. David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (1977; Cork, 1998), 66-7.

¹¹⁷ Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism I: The Anglo Irish and the New Ireland, 1885-1922* (Dublin, 1972), 288.

Free State exactly as the minority desired; on the other hand, neither have they gone entirely as the majority intended. All sides have to reconcile themselves to compromises'.¹¹⁸ Compromise for the majority meant accepting that Ireland would never be purely Gaelic and Catholic. For the minority it meant overcoming the vague but lingering distaste it had for the majority and giving Ireland, for good and for ill, its undivided loyalty. As R.N.D. Wilson wrote regarding traditional Anglo-Irish affinities within the Protestant community: 'The hyphen is gone. Partition is complete, and those of us who devoted much nicety to balancing ourselves between two stools must now abandon our antics and squat firmly – presumably wherever we find the fewest tinctacks'.¹¹⁹ Such arguments on behalf of integration had the obvious power of historical imperative to recommend them, but that more Protestants did not embrace their logic should not come as any particular surprise. The sheer loneliness they felt in the Free State, the sense that they had become outcasts in their own country, meant they often acted in ways that compounded rather than alleviated their isolation. Thus the atmosphere of compromise and concession AE advocated often remained outside the imaginative range of those most likely to benefit from it.

After the divorce debate, the next major civil liberties issue to arise was that of censorship. As word got out that the Minister of Justice was preparing a censorship bill for debate in the Dáil, AE warned that 'we might exclude everything bad, but if we create nothing good we are only the Laodiceans of culture, and the intellect of the world, rightly, will have nothing but contempt for us'.¹²⁰ However much he opposed censorship, though, he also made a point of expressing sympathy with those turning to it as a solution. Of the authoritarian impulses fuelling the bill he opined that 'this sinister mentality is an inheritance from a time when we were a suppressed nationality; and having for centuries suffered from coercion, it is natural enough that we should employ the methods which were employed against ourselves'. Not only is it understandable, but he goes on to add that 'it is astonishing that the majority of people in this

¹¹⁸ *IS* 20 June 1925, 453.

¹¹⁹ *IS* 26 Dec. 1925, 492.

¹²⁰ *IS* 15 Jan. 1927, 447.

country, considering their past history, have displayed so much tolerance, and after the fever of conflict have settled so quickly into a general mood of good nature and good will'.¹²¹ This is an excellent illustration of AE's strategy of balancing criticism with affirmation, of taking care not to become so contentious as to lose his footing among the body politic. Belittling proponents of censorship as infantile or philistine would do no good and only lead to greater rigidity. In contrast to his old friend Yeats, then, his social commentary during this period displays the subtler strategy of appealing to a perceived generosity of spirit among the Irish people. In the event, the especially draconian version of the Censorship Bill first proposed was rejected by the Dáil. By mid-July 1929, when a revised form of the legislation had been agreed upon, AE announced with a certain relief that 'on the whole, we have managed things much better than at one time seemed possible, and the fact that this was accomplished by the good sense of a body of representative Irishmen who set themselves to discover a middle way, encourages the hope that something will be done to keep in check for the future the zealots whose antics have made us a laughing-stock of the outside world'.¹²² Though many liberals felt the new censorship hardly constituted a *via media* in absolute terms, it is nonetheless revealing of Russell himself that he should so eagerly represent the result as such.

The part the *Irish Statesman* played not just in advocating free speech but also in setting the standard for its use among the younger generation of Irish intellectuals is of central importance to its legacy. AE's habit of nurturing the talent and aspirations of new writers developed in the 1920s into something of an institution in its own right. Yet his role as arbiter and spokesman for the intellectual community naturally elicited criticism from within the ranks as well as from without. The poet Geoffrey Phibbs, for example, found the *Statesman* a disappointment almost from the start. The paper had only been in print for a month when he announced to Thomas MacGreevy that 'the *Irish Statesman* is dead. Please God putrefaction will

¹²¹ *IS* 8 Sept. 1928, 6.

¹²² *IS* 20 Apr. 1929, 126; and 13 July 1929, 367. Regarding the evolution of the censorship legislation in the 1920s, see Michael Adams, *Censorship: the Irish Experience* (Dublin, 1968), 13-63.

set in soon, then perhaps they will bury it'.¹²³ When MacGreevy replied by claiming he had not read it, Phibbs responded: 'You are very right not to read the *Irish Statesman* – I do so but can find no reason *why* I do: unless it is that by reading it one encourages one's own self-esteem!!'¹²⁴ There was a certain amount of callow posturing in this exchange, however, given that both Phibbs and MacGreevy went on to become regular names in the journal's pages. Others were less shy about confessing their enthusiasm. Hubert Butler, who since the age of sixteen had been quietly struggling on 'my poor broken branch of Irish nationalism', found in the *Statesman* both encouragement and companionship amidst his perplexing existence as a young Protestant nationalist.¹²⁵ Feeling hopelessly out of step with his avowedly unionist family, he argued endlessly with his mother about the direction of Irish politics. At one point in their debate he finally promised to send her some copies of the *Statesman* to read, since among nationalist papers 'it is the only educated weekly, almost the only educated paper in Ireland, so it ought to disarm criticism'.¹²⁶

Besides being devoted readers of the *Irish Statesman*, educated young Protestants like Phibbs and Butler also played an important role during these years as librarians in the Carnegie Rural Libraries network. Although Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust had been funding the construction of free libraries in Ireland since 1897, it was not until Horace Plunkett became the Trust's Irish trustee that a concerted effort was made to co-ordinate the libraries' activities.¹²⁷ In 1915 Lennox Robinson was appointed Organizing Librarian, which meant that aside from heading up the Central Book Repository in Dublin, he oversaw the creation of county libraries that would serve as distribution centres for books to schools and other educational institutions in rural areas. In attempting to make books more available throughout Ireland, Robinson quickly encountered a series of interrelated problems. The first and most

¹²³ TCD, Ms. 8117/61 (MacGreevy Papers): Geoffrey Phibbs to Thomas MacGreevy, 23 Oct. 1923.

¹²⁴ TCD, Ms. 8117/62 (MacGreevy Papers): Geoffrey Phibbs to Thomas MacGreevy, undated [late 1923].

¹²⁵ MH (Letterbook, 'Letters Home, 1910-1939'): HMB to Rita Butler, 4 May 1922.

¹²⁶ MH (Letterbook, 'Letters Home, 1910-1939'): HMB to Rita Butler, undated [c.1925].

¹²⁷ See Brendan Grimes, *Irish Carnegie Libraries: A Catalogue and Architectural History* (Dublin, 1998).

fundamental was that not everyone defined the concept of a library in the same way. Writing in *Better Business* in 1918, he felt obliged to assert that ‘a library is a collection of books and not a building’.¹²⁸ Working with local communities to make library resources available and to encourage a respect for learning became an obvious way for idealistic Irishmen to make a contribution to the National Being. Looking back on the dynamism of those earlier days, Robinson later boasted that ‘for our librarians we picked young men and women of education and intelligence, not necessarily demanding from them technical library qualifications’.¹²⁹ Hubert Butler was to be a perfect case in point. Well on his way to a disappointing degree in Classics from St. John’s College Oxford, he had no sure plans about the future save an abiding desire to return to Ireland and do some good. Towards the end of his life he remembered having met AE several times while visiting Dublin but regretted that as a shy youth he had failed to get ‘some good out of him’, which he only managed afterwards when reading Russell’s books.¹³⁰

Yet when Butler called on Horace Plunkett at Kilteragh, the older man immediately identified in the intelligent but tentative Kilkennyman a worthy candidate for the libraries project. The writer recalled that this crucial encounter then took on an unexpected twist: ‘[Plunkett] told me in his bumbling way that I should work for Ireland....But immediately afterwards his secretary, Gerald Heard, took me out into the garden and told me I should do nothing of the kind. Ireland was ‘recessive’ (an interesting new word for me), it fed on its past, I would have absolutely no effect here. I would wrack my brains to pieces uselessly and meet nothing but jealousy and obstruction’.¹³¹ Undoubtedly Heard was reacting to the unhappy example of his employer’s own experiences, but the vignette also summarizes in rather comic form the conflicting voices, literally and figuratively, playing upon the mind of a young Protestant during

¹²⁸ Lennox Robinson, ‘Odious Comparisons’. *Better Business: A Quarterly Journal of Agricultural and Industrial Co-operation* 4 (Nov. 1918), 24-6.

¹²⁹ Robinson continues that soon he had gathered ‘a band of workers whose names fill me with pride because they were of my picking’, among them Geoffrey Phibbs, Frank O’Connor, R.N.D. Wilson, Hubert Butler, Samuel McEntyre and Helen Roe. Lennox Robinson, *Curtain Up*, 110-11 (London, 1942).

¹³⁰ Lilliput Press, Dublin: HMB to Chris Agee, 30 Dec. 1985.

¹³¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/534/1-2 (BP): Notebook, ‘H. Plunkett’ [1970s].

this time in Irish life. Butler himself was conscious that even though ‘heredity and tradition were in my favour’ – he was the eldest son in his family and stood to inherit its property – as an intellectual, he was not really the sort of person expected to stay on after Independence. ‘Perhaps because my ideas about living in Ireland were romantic rather than agricultural and practical, there was relentless pressure on me towards England. In the twenties every young Anglo-Irish Protestant felt it’.¹³² Ignoring the general trend as well as Heard’s whispered warnings about the future, Butler signed on as an assistant librarian with the Carnegie network. Of his decision he reflected that ‘I was not by birth or inclination a townsman and this seemed to me at the time the most congenial and useful work which I could do in my own country’ (*GW* 248). In this way the same basic aspirations and convictions that had fired Plunkett’s imagination for over forty years were passed on to one who would long outlive him.

The eruption of the ‘Carnegie Row’ in Dublin brought this promising interlude to an abrupt end. When a new literary magazine called *To-morrow* was launched in the autumn of 1924, it featured a short story by Robinson entitled ‘The Madonna of Slieve Dun’, which tells of a young rape victim who in becoming pregnant then deludes herself that she will give birth to another Christ. Having already appeared in the United States some years earlier, the story’s republication in Ireland caused an immediate uproar. Plunkett’s old co-operation ally Father Finlay resigned from the Carnegie Library Advisory Committee on which he served alongside Robinson, and President Cosgrave even contemplated suppressing *To-morrow* when told the story had the potential to ‘pervert the nation’. When the Advisory Committee met to discuss the crisis, the Provost of Trinity, J.H. Bernard, threatened to join Finlay in resigning if Robinson were not removed from his post. After much debate, the Provost did indeed resign, Robinson was dismissed, and eventually the Committee dissolved itself, with the result that the Carnegie Trust

¹³² MH (Notebook): ‘Beginning’ [undated (c. 1980s?)].

transferred the County Libraries headquarters to Dunfermline in Scotland.¹³³ For the librarians in the provinces, the whole episode was disastrous, leaving them feeling abandoned and bereft of focus. Frank O'Connor later recalled his anger at Robinson for publishing his 'silly little story', while Hubert Butler went so far as to characterize him as 'something of a villain' for allowing it to bring about the downfall of the libraries network, knowing as he should have that it would collide with 'Irish piety and prudery' (*EA* 147-8).¹³⁴ Butler's reading of the episode is significant, because it exposes an unresolved tension in his thinking between a fierce commitment to the right of dissent and a reverent desire to advance AE's 'co-operative commonwealth'.¹³⁵ For his own part, AE, who as another member of the Advisory Committee sought to mollify the situation, told Ernest Boyd afterwards that 'it was silly I think[,] but it called the defunct moral conscience into animation'.¹³⁶ Yet somehow this optimistic remark seems to trivialize what was in fact a major defeat for the liberal intelligentsia at the hands of majority opinion. For if the result of Robinson's gesture was a high price to pay for the exercise of free speech, arguably the price itself testified to the urgency of paying it.

By 1929, even the *Irish Statesman* began to stumble under the pressure of mounting social dogmas. The author of an edition of collected folk songs which had been called 'slovenly' and 'incompetent' in the paper then sued it for libel, resulting in a long court case. A parade of expert musicologists and folklorists were called as witnesses to determine if these epithets constituted fair criticism.¹³⁷ From his exile in England, Horace Plunkett dismissed this pretence of scholarly debate as simply an excuse to attack the *Statesman* politically.¹³⁸ The fight was not only about cultural or political loyalties, though; once again it was also about the larger question

¹³³ For more on this episode, see *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916-1930*, ed. L. Robinson (London, 1946), 272-82. See also R.F. Foster, *The Arch-Poet*, 272-3.

¹³⁴ Frank O'Connor, *My Father's Son* (1968; Belfast, 1994), 36. Peggy Vowles, 'Hubert Butler and the First Years of the Library Service in Coleraine', *The Bann Disc: Journal of the Coleraine Historical Society* 2 (1995), qtd. 64.

¹³⁵ MH (Ms.), untitled/ re the County Libraries, 3 [11pp., undated (late 1980s?)].

¹³⁶ Healy Collection, Stanford, Ms. 11/184 (Boyd Papers): G.W. Russell to Ernest Boyd, 19 Nov. 1924.

¹³⁷ NYPL (Russell Papers): G.W. Russell to W.T.H. Howe, 19 Feb. 1929.

¹³⁸ PF (Plunkett Papers): Horace Plunkett to Shan F. Bullock, 15 Nov. 1928.

of whether intellectual life would be permitted to carry on unmolested in the Free State. AE therefore wrote to Bernard Shaw in February 1929 that 'I have plenty of educated Catholic friends who were in terror lest the paper should stop and they worked very hard to keep it alive. They hate the censorships and the secret sectarian societies – Catholic masonry – and like me to fight their battles for them'. At least at this stage of the proceedings, AE was still resolved to carry on, joking that 'I want to stick here until I am deported or starved out....Quite a number of journalists live by attacking my heretical ideas. I would deprive them of a living if I left'.¹³⁹ Yet within a year, he had changed his mind. This was the second libel action the *Statesman* had been through, and the time and money required to fend off legal assaults were taking their toll. There had also been a conflict with some of the American sponsors as to the extent of their financial commitment to the paper, and by February 1930 AE made it clear to Judge Campbell, the secretary of the *Statesman*'s American committee, that he did not wish to try to wrangle another infusion of cash out of it. Moreover, he felt that the journal had played its allotted part and that changing conditions in the country had made this a logical time to stop: 'I think the paper did good work. It helped to stabilize opinion at the start of the Free State and I think Ministers realize the help it gave and were grateful. It was at first the only paper which gave the Free State a reasoned support. Now the press has come round and what the ministers want is a party organ to back them up right or wrong. I could not do that'.¹⁴⁰

News of the *Irish Statesman*'s demise elicited predictably impassioned responses. According to Austin Clarke, among those who had come to see the *Statesman* as a corrupting force, 'a howl of primitive delight greeted its disappearance'.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, there were those like Ivor Brown who, writing in the London *Observer*, mourned the loss of a paper which 'in times of tumult...has given a sounding-board to the quiet and considered voice'.¹⁴² The

¹³⁹ British Library, Add. MS. 50548.198 (Shaw Papers): G.W. Russell to G.B. Shaw, 21 Feb. 1929.

¹⁴⁰ PF (*Irish Statesman* Papers): G.W. Russell to Richard Campbell, 20 Feb. 1930.

¹⁴¹ W.R. Rodgers, *Irish Literary Portraits* (London, 1972), 200.

¹⁴² *Observer* 6 Apr. 1930, 16.

Statesman's end likewise symbolized for Irish intellectuals the general sense that, despite their best efforts, the Free State was slipping irretrievably into a rut of provincialism. So James Stephens would complain to Sir William Rothenstein in 1930 that 'one lives very much off the track here in Dublin'.¹⁴³ Yet even as his own public career was coming to an end, AE retained a remarkable eagerness to find signs that the Irish were gaining intellectual confidence. He confided to Bernard Shaw: 'I have been astonished to find the fierce anticlerical spirit growing up here among the educated Catholics. I think there will be an explosion of this within the next few years. There are so few Protestants now in the Free State that by the nature of things an internal fissure in the predominant religion is necessitated'.¹⁴⁴ It would, of course, be much longer than he predicted before any such fissure manifested itself clearly. And the old certainty that he was somehow the beloved heretic of Catholic Ireland was no longer possible to take for granted. A sort of Catholic triumphalism had set in, the fierceness of which he had not fully appreciated before.¹⁴⁵ Regarding this shift AE would lament to Yeats that 'Ireland seems to be in my eyes like a lout I knew in boyhood who had become a hero and then subsided into a lout again'.¹⁴⁶ After his wife's death and a trip to the United States, Russell went to England to rest and seek medical attention. In his sickbed in Bournemouth, he turned to the older poets for comfort, particularly the Anglican divine George Herbert.¹⁴⁷ Despite surgery his condition continued to worsen, and in mid-July 1935 he died in his sleep.

The genuine love many had for AE is illustrated by the glowing tributes that appeared after his death.¹⁴⁸ But a reaction against him set in quickly as well. Denis Devlin made it clear to Thomas MacGreevy that he had always remained wholly unconvinced by Russell, whom he

¹⁴³ Harvard, b MS Eng 1148.1430.1 (Rothenstein Papers): James Stephens to William Rothenstein, 3 Aug. 1930.

¹⁴⁴ British Library, Add. MS. 50548.198 (Shaw Papers): G.W. Russell to G.B. Shaw, 21 Feb. 1929.

¹⁴⁵ Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY, 1985), 99-100.

¹⁴⁶ AE, *Passages from Letters to Yeats*, 62.

¹⁴⁷ C.C. Coates, *Some Less-Known Chapters in the Life of A.E. (George Russell). Being the Substance of a Lecture Delivered at Belfast, November, 1936* (Dublin, 1939), 7.

¹⁴⁸ As just one example among many, see the tributes by Alice Milligan, H.F. Norman, P.S. O'Hegarty, and T.A. Finlay, in the *Dublin Magazine* 10 (Oct.-Dec. 1935), 1-7.

referred to as ‘that awful methodist illuminé hot-gospeller AE!’¹⁴⁹ The bilious Sean O’Casey was similarly unsympathetic, later dismissing the worth of both his literary efforts and his social activism.¹⁵⁰ More overtly sectarian critics were pleased by what they saw as the necessary ‘destruction of the idol’ that was now underway.¹⁵¹ As early as 1921, the Catholic convert Aodh de Blacam had condemned publicly Russell’s spiritualism as a ‘neo-paganism which...has led more than one promising intellect to disaster and counts its fruits in bodily and spiritual evil’.¹⁵² Resuming the campaign to discredit Russell after his death, de Blacam explained that through AE the *Irish Statesman* had given ‘almost unpardonable offence’ to Catholic readers because it subscribed to the ‘theory of unbounded liberty of utterance’. This supposed denial of all restraint was a natural by-product of Russell’s willingness to see the spirit at work ‘in every man’s ungoverned desires’. From here de Blacam makes the extraordinary assertion that ‘such is the natural end of Protestant subjectivity. When Dr. Rosenberg in Nazi Germany insists that history shall be rewritten to suit the Nordic theory, he is at one with AE in the Protestant position, that what you want to believe you may believe; facts no longer are stubborn things’.¹⁵³ De Blacam’s attempt to link AE to Nazism via ‘Protestant subjectivity’ is nothing short of bizarre. AE’s mystical belief in earthly existence as a symbolic order was never invoked as a spiritual or moral justification for any explicit political programme, nor did he ever identify any such programme as the culmination of that order.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, his long-held commitment to the integrity and efficacy of the individual conscience was antithetical to the mob mentality he observed taking

¹⁴⁹ TCD, Ms. 8112/9 (MacGreevy Papers): Denis Devlin to Thomas MacGreevy, 15 Mar. 1936.

¹⁵⁰ Harvard, b MS 1787.41 (Reynolds Papers): Sean O’Casey to Horace Reynolds, 15 Mar. 1950.

¹⁵¹ Conor Malone, ‘Mr. Tierney on Mr. Russell’, *Catholic Bulletin* 28 (Jan. 1938), 39.

¹⁵² *Irish Independent* 25 Apr. 1921, 6.

¹⁵³ Aodh de Blacam, ‘AE As I Knew Him’, *Irish Monthly* 63 (Sept. 1935), 609-11. See also Michael Tierney, ‘A Prophet of Mystic Nationalism – A.E.’, *Studies* 26 (Dec. 1937), 568-80.

¹⁵⁴ The old co-operator Harry Norman addressed this point after Russell’s death. While he recognized that AE’s Co-operative Commonwealth bore ‘at least a superficial resemblance to the Corporative State’, he argued that AE had ‘anticipated fascism only to turn away from its overbearing claims upon a policy whose highest virtue is spiritual spontaneity’. H.F. Norman, ‘George Russell’, Horace Plunkett Foundation (ed.), *Year Book of Agricultural Co-operation: 1936* (London, 1936), 22-3.

shape under the fascist regimes, leading him to reaffirm his repudiation of fascism in the foreword to Joseph O'Neill's 1935 novel *Land Under England*.¹⁵⁵

So however troubled AE's liberalism may have been at times or however strong his thirst for social stability within the Free State, the implication that he advocated some kind of Protestant-inflected authoritarianism does not stand up to even cursory examination. What seems to have irritated some of his Catholic contemporaries more than anything is the degree of confidence he brought to his advocacy of certain ideas, and indeed, to the process of public debate itself.¹⁵⁶ With his happy faith in the National Being and his vision of a 'civil religion' that would liberate the Irish from sectarian strife, his eloquent testimony to the virtues of the Anglo-Irish past and his colourful evocations of a future 'co-operative commonwealth', AE's legacy proved more powerful and lasting than he himself could dare to hope. His name, like those of O'Grady and Plunkett, was to resonate in the pages of the writers who insisted on complicating the public discourse throughout the following decades. In a country obsessed with acts of consolidation and exclusion on all sides, they, like Russell himself, wanted their differences to matter only insofar as they helped Ireland to grow. A correspondent writing in the columns of the *Irish Statesman* in 1929 summarized their position well when he asserted that

In the eyes of the world, the inhabitants of the Free State are not Gaels or Anglo-Irish, Roman Catholics or Protestants, Nationalists or Unionists, but Irishmen all, and to the world, judging critically of the worth of Irish literature, or any portion of it, those differentiations of race, religion and politics matter only in so much as they illumine the point of view which the individual writer chooses as a pivot of orientation.¹⁵⁷

It is armed with this more generous criterion for assessing the nature of Irish cultural contributions that one may approach Hubert Butler and those other young Southern Protestants whose own intellectual lives began in earnest after 1930.

¹⁵⁵ AE, 'Foreword', in Joseph O'Neill, *Land Under England* (London, 1935), 6. Henry Summerfield also notes how at the end of his life AE bemoaned how the twentieth century was an 'age of power' preoccupied with the organization of the state. Henry Summerfield, *Myriad-Minded Man*, 280.

¹⁵⁶ Margaret O'Callaghan, 'Language, nationality and cultural identity in the Irish Free State, 1922-7: the *Irish Statesman* and the *Catholic Bulletin* reappraised', *IHS* 24 (Nov. 1984), 236ff.

¹⁵⁷ *IS* 31 Aug. 1929, 510.

Two: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism and War, 1930-45

[T]hat literary men and men of thought are still impelled to leave the country in order to 'find themselves' may be taken in association with a statement which is sometimes made, that Ireland has not as yet emerged properly out of the Middle Ages. To speak candidly, if cosmopolitanism be a fault, it has not always been the fault of these gifted sons of Ireland, from the time of Scotus Erigena, that they have become cosmopolitan, since they, as a rule, have remembered that they were Irishmen, while the mother-country has never had the heart to take much pride in pure intellectual achievement.

– John Eglinton, 'The De-Davisisation of Irish Literature'.¹

I. Cosmopolitanism for a small nation

'Expatriation is the badge of all the tribe of Anglo-Irish literary men', wrote Daniel Corkery in his 1931 book *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature*, 'and in nearly all cases it is a life sentence'. He then lists by name those whom he considers 'wild geese of the pen', Irish writers who have left Ireland since Independence. Most of those he mentions are from a Protestant background, and their steady departure during the 1920s only confirms for Corkery his conviction that these people were never really Irish at all. Rather, he concludes, they are merely the latest – and it would seem, the final – manifestation of a culture that had always been transitory and self-contained.² While it is certainly true that a large number of Protestant writers and intellectuals did leave Ireland after 1922, their experiences and motivations were rarely so straightforward as Corkery suggests. The process by which those who did eventually sever their ties with Ireland was often a long and slow one, while others who went abroad did so only for a time and then returned to settle. In his eagerness to dismiss the very reality of Anglo-Irishness, Corkery ignores the complex attitudes these writers held not only toward expatriation but to foreign exposure in all its forms. Yet these attitudes constitute a significant and revealing aspect of post-Revival Protestant culture in particular and of post-revolutionary Irish intellectual life in general.

¹ John Eglinton, *Bards and Saints* (Dublin, 1906), 36.

² Daniel Corkery, *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (1931; Cork, 1966), 4-7.

As a Protestant intellectual coming of age at the time of Independence, Hubert Butler was acutely aware of how expressions of Anglo-Irish internationalism would inevitably be bound up in that group's historic associations with British imperialism. As a nationalist he was critical of his community's ongoing preference for 'imperial horizons' in favour of the more immediate concerns of their own land. Their tradition of service to the Empire had left them with a view of the world out of step with their new status as citizens of a small modern state. But he also regarded the majority's devotion to the universalist claims of Roman Catholicism as an equally unhealthy and distorted basis for an Irish worldview. Irish Catholics, he felt, should focus less on their membership in a global church and more on their unique spiritual abilities and problems. To Butler, therefore, it seemed that 'the whole island was tilted eastwards' towards London and Rome (*EA* 1). The challenge facing his generation of intellectuals was to re-conceive Ireland's place in the world beyond these inherited supranational allegiances. In looking back on the task he and others had undertaken, he reflected that 'the old strands of affection and loyalty had to be unravelled and woven tenderly into a new pattern', one which would dispense with British imperialism and Catholic universalism alike, as well as with the racist ideas that tended to proceed from them (*EA* 150). Of course, both these allegiances were perpetuated in part by Ireland's compulsion to compare itself to England, another aspect of Irish international thinking that he abhorred. He thought instead the country ought to assess itself alongside the Succession States, to which it was much more analogous in terms of size, resources and development than it was to Britain and the other western powers. The real test, then, was to remain fully Irish while also engaging in the world fully and fruitfully at the same time.³

Clearly some of the ideas Butler was to develop about how to be both Irish and internationalist were refinements and elaborations on the thinking articulated by the Revivalists whom he so revered. Yet his admiration for his predecessors did not blind him to ways he felt

³ Relevant here is Stephen Howe's reappraisal of Ireland in the context of the Succession States in *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford, 2000), 153-4.

they sometimes failed to balance their nationalist and internationalist aspirations. In the case of Bernard Shaw, for example, Butler felt that while he was a perceptive satirist of petty-minded nationalism, the dramatist fell prey to the opposite affliction of 'pseudo-cosmic thinking'. He explains that 'those who practice it are like men in a submarine who scan the ships but ignore the sharks and the swordfish, the coral and anemones a few yards away from them'. Butler concludes of Shaw that during his career he developed 'the stigmata of the *deraciné*' and cites his ill-fated campaign for international spelling as the work not of a cosmopolitan but of a man who simply became de-nationalized. He believed other Irish writers resembled Shaw in developing a 'rootless, expatriated sound', exemplified by 'Joyce's learned gibberish, O'Casey's staccato Stalinism and Yeats's intercourse with yogis'. As great as these writers' work was, Butler nonetheless wonders: 'Were these really serious experiments in literature, art, politics and religion? Or were they just the symptoms of a wild, nervous recoil from the narrow loyalties of a country which criminally failed to give nourishment to their tremendous talents?' Even Ireland's most brilliant minds could not always achieve the intellectual equilibrium they sought between their personal need for cultural stimulation and their country's jealous demands on their affections (*LN* 234-6).

Of course, the Irishman who struggled most with this dilemma was not a Protestant at all, but his example of conflicted exile was to become emblematic for Irish intellectuals, regardless of their background. The purposeful way in which James Joyce repudiated Ireland and then continued obsessively to dissect both his love and hate for it made him a symbol of the unhappy and seemingly irresolvable condition in which internationally-minded Irishmen found themselves. So Elizabeth Bowen could claim when Joyce died in 1941 that 'the shy thin man with the thick spectacles belonged to us, and was of us, wherever he went', even as she lamented how 'in Ireland we breed the finest of natures, then, by our ignorance, our prejudice and our cruelty drive

those finest natures from our shores'.⁴ When considering why Joyce decided to abandon his native land for permanent exile, Hubert Butler offered a more dispassionate explanation: 'As a young man Joyce had a clearly conceived ideal – he believed that Ireland could realise itself by becoming more European[,]...and the choice must have presented itself to him frequently of being a European in Ireland or an Irishman in Europe. The second alternative was chosen only when it was clear that it was the least impossible of the two'. Although he clearly admires Joyce's integrity and independence, Butler is not deceived as to the price he ultimately paid for his choice: 'an exile is a maimed and mutilated being', he states flatly, adding that 'Joyce clung too closely to his past to create for himself a new social personality in the land of his banishment. Austria, Italy, Switzerland, and France had no place in his art except as neutral tinted countries from which the fierce and coloured emotional conflicts of his native land could be observed and described in detachment'.⁵

Returning to Daniel Corkery, then, it is important to recognize that his statement about the departure of Anglo-Irish writers was made in a context in which neither living in modern Ireland nor leaving it was considered an easy or obvious solution for the creative intellect. His determination to interpret the departure of Protestants as evidence of their 'false' Irishness ignores the degree to which the strictures of cultural nationalism had made life in independent Ireland difficult for all intellectuals, regardless of background. It also implies that the outside world had nothing to offer Ireland at this critical moment in its development, a self-destructive notion that continued to plague nationalist thinking long after political freedom was achieved. At the root of such xenophobia and insularity was an ongoing preoccupation with England and the urge to develop an Irish identity undefiled by English influence. This in turn engendered an obsession with cultural authenticity which, in its extreme form, perceived almost any expression

⁴ Elizabeth Bowen, 'James Joyce', *The Bell* 1:6 (March 1941), 49.

⁵ MH (Ms.): 'James Joyce in Trieste', 3-4 [9pp., undated]. For discussion of the same issue, see 'The European Joyce', in Denis Donoghue, *We Irish* (Brighton, 1986), 89-99. See also John McCourt, *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste, 1904-20* (Dublin, 2000).

of cosmopolitanism as either self-hatred or imperial complicity. So Desmond Fennell could argue as late as 1959 that 'the Irish become exiles but seldom travellers, except in the service of England, when they have already come to feel themselves as Englishmen'.⁶ The perception that going forth to see the world was by definition a habit of the imperial English rather than of the nationalist Irish clearly would not encourage patriotic young people to try it.⁷ Fennell's remark also highlights the deeply negative historical associations many Irish people had developed with leaving the country, since venturing forth had more often than not been under terms of economic duress and frequently meant permanent emigration.⁸ Thus, the more thickly the Irish spread to the four corners of the earth, the more zealously did nationalist rhetoric emphasise nativism as an index of true Irishness. Nor would the residue of this logic drain away overnight. Writing in 1937, for example, journalist Mairin Mitchell made the familiar case that 'if Ireland was late to think internationally it was because she was for so long repressed nationally'.⁹ Although it is plain that Ireland's relationship to England did dominate the formation of its world-view historically, it is less clear how long and to what degree this factor may be judged an actual inhibition of Ireland's positive interaction with other cultures after Independence.

Thus the mistrust some Irishmen displayed towards cosmopolitanism in the post-revolutionary period grew out of a heritage of both ideological and material constraints. Meanwhile, however, other parts of Europe had likewise been undergoing radical changes through the democratizing process brought about by the end of First World War. The creation of the Succession States from the rubble of the old empires, combined with the rapid improvement in communications and transport, meant large numbers of people across the continent were exposed to other cultures to an unprecedented degree. It was in recognition of this reality that an

⁶ Desmond Fennell, *Mainly in Wonder* (London, 1959), 9.

⁷ Apposite here is a comment made by Professor R.B. McDowell, that some thought there was 'something rather English' in Hubert Butler's interest in foreign peoples and his desire to help them in their distress. Interview with R.B. McDowell, Dublin, 11 Sept. 2001.

⁸ Liam Kennedy, *Colonialism*, 201, 220.

⁹ Mairin Mitchell, *Storm over Spain* (London, 1937), 244.

ageing Horace Plunkett observed in 1929 that 'hitherto, "the nation" has been the few who could afford to get into touch with the many of another nation....Now all is changing'.¹⁰ The autonomous people of the Irish Free State demonstrated an ambivalent and uncertain attitude to this new situation: they were clearly a product and beneficiary of the post-war pattern, but not surprisingly remained deeply suspicious of the freer and more wide-ranging cultural exchange that came with it. Thus an Anglo-Irish Protestant like Hubert Butler, possessing both nationalist convictions and cosmopolitan values, had a unique perspective to offer at this stage of Irish intellectual development. If, as F.S.L. Lyons insisted, the whole objective of the Anglo-Irish Revivalists had been to fashion a culture which 'would avoid equally the extremes of abject servility to alien modes and complacent contemplation of native modes', then surely young Protestants like Butler were well placed to carry on their work.¹¹

Paradoxically, not the least of their qualifications was that so many of them had enjoyed an English education. They understood England from the inside and were for the most part inoculated against the extreme emotions with which many of their Catholic compatriots approached it.¹² The other advantage enjoyed by this generation of English-educated Irishmen was their exposure to the atmosphere of confidence and certainty the Empire had engendered among its ruling classes. Many of the inter-war British elite were more unapologetically cultured than their parents had been, and the pastime of travel developed an almost cultic status among them.¹³ In such a social environment, a young Protestant intellectual like Butler could develop a wide range of interests married to an assumption of immediate possibility. Yet for all these marks of English belonging, and even though his people had been a cornerstone of the imperial tradition that had made his privileges possible, the young Anglo-Irishman abroad could never forget his fundamental difference. He could never fall prey to the unconscious chauvinism of

¹⁰ PF (Plunkett Papers): Notebook, 'Notes for book' [undated (c.1929)].

¹¹ F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy*, 172.

¹² MH (Ms.): 'Two Utopias', 5 [parts of three drafts, 11pp., 1984].

¹³ Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York, 1980), 76-7.

which Ethel Mannin accused the average Englishman abroad, who remained ‘always incapable of realising that it is he who is the foreigner’.¹⁴ Given this feeling both at home and abroad that they did not entirely belong, the Anglo-Irish Protestant community produced individuals in an excellent cultural position to mediate between Ireland and the outer world during this period of major international changes. While certainly in many other analogous settings such a ‘mediating potential’ was to be lost or squandered in the decolonization process, it was just this sort of potential Hubert Butler believed was his to offer and which he hoped his countrymen would someday come to accept.¹⁵

It was out of this conviction that he also turned to the past and found inspiration in the example of an Anglo-Irish predecessor like James Bouchier. Bouchier was a late nineteenth-century journalist, whose years of reportage in Eastern Europe led him to champion the unpopular cause of Bulgarian freedom. In a tribute essay, Butler admires Bouchier’s international engagement precisely because it was not that of a political partisan but that of ‘a warm-hearted and intelligent foreigner, an Irishman who rose above the prejudices of his nation, his class and his profession, and who tried always to speak the truth about Bulgaria even when it made him enemies’. Both the man’s individual integrity and his willingness to place his sympathies at the service of a small people whose fortunes were considered inconsequential lend him heroic status in Butler’s eyes. He concludes that while Bouchier may have been a ‘spiritually isolated’ figure as a result of his views, this was a noble isolation, inevitable for anyone ‘at war with the cynical imperialism of the great powers to which small peoples like the Bulgars were continually sacrificed’ (*GW* 151, 154).

¹⁴ Ethel Mannin, *All Experience* (London, 1932), 263.

¹⁵ Mary Louise Pratt speaks of the ‘mediating potential’ of a figure like Albert Camus, who as the product of the Franco-Algerian settler community found himself in a roughly analogous position culturally to Anglo-Irish intellectuals. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), 223. Similarly, Anglo-Irishman and colonial servant Randal Sadleir, having stayed on in the 1960s as a transitional figure in the newly established Tanzanian government, later speculated that his friendship with his Afro-Arab boss derived partly from their shared sense of hybridity. Randal Sadleir, *Tanzania: Journey to Republic* (London, 1999), 276.

It was because Butler believed he occupied a similar position and had the potential to play a role similar to Bourchier's that he did not apologize for his privileged social background. Rather, he tried to exploit it in ways that he thought would prove ultimately beneficial to Irish life, recognizing that the outlook his education and opportunities had given him was not something his less fortunate Catholic counterparts would develop overnight. What he later argued regarding the old Croatian nobility in Yugoslavia was clearly a logic he wished to apply to his own community: 'Only an educated minority, whose patriotism is reinforced by sensibility or pride, has the power to assimilate foreign culture without being overwhelmed or corrupted by it' (*GW* 171). He rejected the Gaelic Catholic recipe for Irish nationality for many reasons, but certainly chief among them was its total inability to conceive of cosmopolitanism as a positive trait or to afford the cosmopolitan citizen a legitimate national function. In his masterful 1941 essay 'The Barriers', he confronted this issue and articulated in philosophical terms why people equipped to partake in positive foreign interactions should be recognized as exercising a patriotic service, not accused of disloyalty or inadequate Irishness. 'A nation cannot be created negatively by elimination or strategic retreats into the past', he writes. Rather,

it must crystallize round the contemporary genius that interprets it. The interpreters will be those who can see the national life as well as live it. To acquire this detachment, they will need to have access to other forms of society, so that they can see their lives objectively and in totality from the threshold, and unless they can obtain from their own country this approach to other civilizations, by spiritual channels or by personal contact, their allegiance either to their country or to their interpretative mission will weaken. (*GW* 33)

Here is a summation of why cosmopolitan values mattered so much to Butler as an Irishman dissenting from the dominant nationalist definitions of identity. Particularly important is that he does not limit 'access to other forms of society' to what he calls 'personal contact'. He also speaks of contact through 'spiritual channels', a deliberately vague term connoting the myriad ways Irish people might encounter and appreciate foreignness without actually leaving their own

land. True internationalism therefore does not consist solely of foreign travel.¹⁶ Moreover, he insists that those individual members of Ireland's 'contemporary genius' specially prepared to fulfil the cosmopolitan's national function must be permitted the freedom to maintain the delicate balance between their 'allegiance' and their 'interpretive mission'. Through imaginative engagement with the vices and virtues of his own inheritance of Anglo-Irish ambivalence, Butler emerges here with an eloquent case for why any modern Irish intellectual should be encouraged to engage fully with the world at large.

His own long and diverse engagement with foreign cultures began slowly and was not without its frustrations. Though he was to make his first continental tour in 1925 as the tutor and companion to an English admiral's son, it was not until the autumn of 1927 that Butler finally succeeded in setting out on his own. On this trip he made his way through Italy before setting sail for Egypt, where he had secured a post teaching English.¹⁷ Although he appears to have found this experience something of a personal disappointment, life in the British Middle East made him conscious for the first time of the many subtle ways imperial domination could express itself. In notes he took either during his stay or sometime not long after, he reflected on how consolidating economic, political and social control over a subject people was only part of the process of dehumanizing them:

Later on, of course, come the museums and the excavations, the professors and the scholars, but still the natives view with contempt and suspicion the foreigners, who rummage superciliously in their dustbins but are bored by their everyday domesticities. The new imperialism may be more insidiously sterilising than the old one. Its instrument is not the bayonet but the surgeon's needle. Its policy is not to terminate but to embalm the corpses of Eastern culture, of the pharaohs and rajahs and mandarins with still a trace

¹⁶ Butler expanded on this point many years later when writing to his brother-in-law, Tyrone Guthrie. 'You travel a lot[,]...and so you have come to think of the "man of the future" as a sort of cosmopolitan spaceman', he told Guthrie. Yet to Butler, given his experiences of Irish provincialism, it was important to be both sensitive and realistic about how most people might best become acquainted with other points-of-view: 'The present day problem is how to bring knowledge and broad views and interests to people without completely dislodging them and disorientating them. It's no good bringing people to the idea, you have to bring the idea to the people'. TCD, Ms. 10304/597/700 (BP): HMB to Tyrone Guthrie, 25 June 1955.

¹⁷ In determining the chronology of Butler's life in the 1920s, I am indebted to Eleanor Burgess's work-in-progress, 'Hubert Butler of Maidenhall' (2001).

of colour and shape, preserved indefinitely in the sharp vital fluid that has drowned them.¹⁸

At a very early stage, then, Butler recognized a trend that would preoccupy him the rest of his life, whereby modern scholarship, with its growing emphasis on specialization, both encouraged and was susceptible to the bureaucratizing tendencies of the modern age. Instead of acting as a bulwark against the impersonal and the anonymous, professional learning all too often collaborated with the political ideologies exploiting them. Such seemingly innocuous co-operation would later strike him as deeply complicit in the most horrific crimes committed against humanity in the twentieth century.

Having failed to discover in Egypt what he was looking for, Butler travelled on to Cyprus in early 1928. There he made the acquaintance of fellow Irish Protestant Monk Gibbon. Gibbon, the son of a Dublin clergyman, had recently spent two years teaching at the École Anglaise at Châteaux d'Ex in Switzerland and was coming to the end of a year spent travelling with his friend Alister Mathews.¹⁹ During their stay in Cyprus, Gibbon, Mathews and Butler agreed they would travel together in Greece, an interlude Butler refers to in the opening paragraphs of his essay 'Return to Hellas'. It was to prove a bittersweet moment for a man who had studied the classics since boyhood; as he said of it in retrospect, 'I had never enjoyed anything so much, but I felt very angry that my education had been back to front. Here was the jam at last after I had stuffed myself to repletion with dry bread'. The intuitive feeling his Irish country childhood had given him for the immediate and the local was finally vindicated by the very place his education had made so abstract: 'Had I known of all this before, the fragrance of myrtle and mule-droppings, the memory of roast sucking-pig and retsina would have reconciled me to knowledge, which till then had flowed in a contrary direction to my curiosity' (*EA* 220). Intellect and experience might now come together in his life in a way they had not done before. He and his companions were fortunate that in Greece 'it was still the days before mass tourism', so that

¹⁸ MH (Notebook): 'Some notes on trip to Russia' [late 1920s/early 30s].

¹⁹ Gibbon recounts his and Mathews's adventures in his book *Mount Ida* (London, 1948).

much of their travel was done on foot and even further enhanced by the hospitality of Greek villagers who would take no payment for the shelter and wonderful meals they provided the young men along the way.²⁰

After returning to England and Ireland, Butler set off again in the spring of 1929, this time to Vienna in order to learn German and to work on his writing, which during this period took the form of fiction and plays.²¹ While there he also began to correspond with Susan Margaret [Peggy] Guthrie (1906-96), sister of his Oxford friend Tony Guthrie. After staying in Austria for some time, Butler described to Peggy how his sense of foreignness had started to recede: 'I'm gradually losing the abroad feeling and take things for granted – this is rather sad in ways – i.e. one doesn't now think people just *wonderful* because they have badger's tail in their hat'. This loss of novelty had its compensations, however. As his German improved and he became more confident, Butler delved deeper into the subjective realities of the society around him. While staying at a resort outside Vienna, he came across some surviving members of the Austrian *ancien régime*, among them a retired colonel and his wife, an insurance director, and some elderly aristocrats. As they sat around reminiscing about the First World War, Butler was enthralled. He told Peggy that 'it was so exciting hearing all the "noble" answers back to Nurse Cavell and [the] Lusitania, because they were *just* the equivalent of English Insurance Directors and Colonels and Frau Molligs down even to the details, only all upside down and back to front'.²² One wonders how many Englishmen at the time would have been able to appreciate this inversion, or how many Irishmen at the time would have even tried.

The advantages of being a cosmopolitan from a small country were daily becoming clearer to Butler. He relished the freedom from all the assumptions, positive and negative, to which the British traveller was frequently subject. Yet just as the Irish themselves tended to

²⁰ *Irish Times* 6 Nov. 1987, 15.

²¹ Although this study is restricted to Hubert Butler's non-fiction writing, abundant manuscript material survives in the form of stories and plays and is located both at TCD and at Maidenhall.

²² TCD, Ms. 10304/625/204/4 (BP): HMB to Peggy Guthrie, undated [late 1920s].

assume travel was an English pastime, so people in other countries sometimes had difficulty grasping that an Irishman in their midst was not simply some variant Englishman, nor wanted to be. In his 1933 travelogue *Raggle-Taggle*, for example, Walter Starkie (1894-1976), tells of meeting a man who assures him he will be popular among the Hungarians of Debrecen because he is English: 'I hastened to assure him that I was not English, but Irish, but he did not understand the distinction, though he acquiesced in calling me British'.²³ Butler stubbornly resisted any such compromises; the nationalist in him insisted on fully asserting his Irishness abroad. He recounted later how when travelling through small towns in Yugoslavia, he would often meet local people who had organized themselves into various xenophile associations. 'When I said I was Irish, sometimes my new friends looked interested, sometimes perplexed and disappointed. Those with cosmopolitan aspirations...were mystified by this unnecessary flaunting of provincialism when I could have passed myself off as an Englishman'. He explains that 'they themselves were often at pains to explain to me that they were only Yugoslavs by some accident of geography, spiritually they belonged to some great centre of culture and civilisation, Chicago, Vienna, London'. And yet, he concludes, 'those who were contentedly Yugoslav accepted me readily as an Irishman and for my part the more provincial they were the more I liked them. I was glad that I belonged to an insignificant nation'.²⁴ If such a statement sounds idealistic, there was a also hard logic underpinning it which Butler had derived from observing how large and small peoples got along in the world. He concluded that coming from Britain or any powerful country encouraged its citizens to be normative in their judgments and reconciled them more easily to the mass culture which the educated individual must assiduously combat. In contrast, coming from a smaller nation like Ireland was a blessing to be relished: 'the citizen of the small state may find it easier to be a humanist and a cosmopolitan than the citizen of a state whose language and whose

²³ Walter Starkie, *Raggle-Taggle: Adventures with a Fiddle in Hungary and Roumania* (London, 1933), 147. See also *Spanish Raggle-Taggle: Adventures with a Fiddle in North Spain* (London, 1934).

²⁴ MH (Ms.): 'Yugoslav Clubs', 12 [16pp., undated (c. late 1940s)]. Portions of this piece were published under the title 'Friendship: Personal or Official', *Peace News* 22 July 1949, 4.

influence stretch over continents. It is harder for him to change his skies without also changing his mind when he travels. It is essential for him to be supple, receptive, empirical'.²⁵ These were precisely some of the qualities that Butler had been cultivating during his sojourns in the 1920s and which he would apply during the most important period of his travels, the 1930s.

II. In Russia and Eastern Europe

Hubert Butler and Peggy Guthrie married in early June 1930 and shortly thereafter set off for a honeymoon at the Latvian resort of Riga Strand. Butler had been learning Russian for the last few years with the help of some London friends and had repeatedly attempted to get the necessary visas to enter Russia, but without success. Efforts to secure permission during their stay in the Baltic States were to prove equally unsuccessful, yet in the meantime he became fascinated by Riga Strand itself. Once a chic watering-place for the pre-war Russian elite, it had since lost much of its glamour, but in Butler's eyes it took on a renewed significance as a site where the old and new Europes now met each other. In what appears to be his first full-length essay, entitled 'Riga Strand in 1930', he explains that what makes the resort interesting is its status as 'the holiday ground not only for Letts but for all the newly liberated peoples of the Baltic. There one may meet Estonians and Finns, Lithuanians and Poles, bathing side by side with Germans, Russians and Swedes, who were once their masters'. As a post-revolutionary Irish Protestant he possessed an acute sensitivity to the cultural politics at work between former ruling classes and their erstwhile subjects, regarding the processes of social adjustment taking place in the various Succession States as naturally analogous to those the Irish were undergoing in the Free State. He makes the comparison explicit when he notes the similarity between the triangular relationship of the English, the Ascendancy and the Irish peasantry in Ireland and that of the Russians, the Baltic Barons, and the native Letts in Latvia (*CD* 4-5).

What he writes here is not primarily about the past, though, nor is it intended as an exercise in sociological abstraction. What matters most to Butler in this and subsequent essays is

²⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/168/7 (BP): 'An Irish Council' [undated (c.late 1945/early 1946)].

how larger-than-life social and political changes – the stuff of history – affect the everyday existence of people living through them. Recalling the splendour of Riga Strand in tsarist times, he asks rhetorically: ‘Where now are her wealthy St Petersburg patrons, where is St Petersburg itself?’ The colony of Russians residing at Riga Strand in 1930 consisted of those once wealthy patrons who had managed to escape the Bolsheviks but in so doing had lost forever their life in Russia. Butler explains that under the circumstances such people ‘have to be thankful for a refuge from their own countrymen among a people they have always despised, and to get jobs in Latvia they set themselves to learning Lettish, a language they have always regarded as a servant patois’. One hears in these lines the emergence of that style that characterizes all Butler’s writing, an authorial voice that is calm and direct in its assessments, yet somehow manages never to lose sight of the pathos or humour that pervades nearly every human situation. As was the case when he had met the old aristocrats in Austria the previous year, he is obviously capable of sympathy for these people, who strike him as the sad human detritus of a crumbled empire. He is not blind to their snobbery or their occasional cruelty, but neither does he reflexively condemn it; rather, he seeks to evoke something of the psychological confusion that impels it. ‘Life is very hard but they contrive often to be gay and self-confident and outrageous. They still take short cuts across flower-beds if they belong to Jews, and are condescending to Letts at tea-parties. They are ingenious at finding ways to restore their self respect’.

The Jews at Riga Strand are equally compelling to Butler as an extraordinary manifestation of the new European dispensation. In the pre-war days they were not even permitted at the resort; but now, he says, since ‘the fashionable specialists have no prodigal Caucasian Princes to diet in their sanatoria, they have to haggle with Jewesses about mud-baths and superfluous fat. The disinherited have come into their own, and the Jews have descended like locusts on Riga Strand’. Again the essayist demonstrates his ability to capture in just a few lines the competing emotions at work in this time and place: the congratulatory phrase ‘the disinherited have come into their own’ clashes squarely with the panicked rejoinder that ‘the Jews have

descended like locusts'. The conflicting sentiments expressed here may too reflect a certain ambivalence in Butler himself about the general societal upheavals of which he was both observer and participant. He concludes the essay with the particularly potent image of a group of Jewish boys sitting around a bonfire one night on the beach, their faces lit up by the firelight. 'Persecution has hardened them and given them strength to survive war and revolution and even to profit by them and direct them', he muses. 'Perhaps it is they in the end who will decide the future of Riga Strand' (CD 8, 10-11). As he was to learn firsthand before the decade was over, there was a terrible and unexpected irony latent in these words.²⁶

After their trip, the Butlers returned to the Guthrie family home in Co. Monaghan, where Peggy could look after her mother and Butler could finish a translation he was making of the Russian novel *The Thief* by Leonid Leonov.²⁷ This was a considerable undertaking, and one which demonstrates the high level of proficiency he had already attained in his grasp of the language.²⁸ Writing of Leonov in 1946, he noted that he had been attracted to him not least because his revolutionary faith appeared dependent less on soulless theorizing than on the 'sentiment and romantic loyalties' rooted in traditional peasant life (LN 194). The motivations for Leonov's work, if not its conclusions, corresponded to Butler's own views about the importance of local relationships as the only happy basis of society. In fact he had long been struck by certain similarities between Irish and Russian culture and recalled half a century later that on that basis alone 'it was inevitable that I should wish to go to Russia'.²⁹ His curiosity had also naturally been aroused by the Revolution itself and the tremendous impact it had made on political attitudes throughout the West. Yet he admitted that upon reading *Das Kapital* as a student he had found Marx 'an out-of-date bore' and that he left the Socialist Society at Oxford

²⁶ Terence Brown has attempted to place 'Riga Strand' in the wider context of Butler's *oeuvre* in 'Butler and Nationalism', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 94-6.

²⁷ Eleanor Burgess to Robert Tobin, 26 April 1999.

²⁸ Leonid Leonov, *The Thief*, trans. HMB (London, 1931).

²⁹ MH (Ms.): 'Russia (autobiographical)', 2-4 [5pp., undated (1980s)].

after only a short period because he knew nothing about economics.³⁰ Through his Irish predecessors Plunkett and Russell, Butler was eventually drawn to a very moderate form of socialism, repudiating what he saw as the dehumanizing tendencies inherent in Marxist thought. Besides the writings of the co-operators, he would also credit Bertrand Russell's 1920 book *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* with convincing him that society could be radically altered without resorting to the violent tactics of the Bolsheviks. Of this period he recalled: 'I fancied myself then as I do now, as a liberal and a socialist, but I have never seen how you can form any useful economic or political theories without turning men into units, whereas it is as independent individuals that we express ourselves and individualism disrupts all theories'. Thus it was 'in an enquiring frame of mind' he had begun to learn Russian in the late 1920s, all the while 'remaining politically uncommitted'.³¹

Butler's detached attitude to contemporary Russian politics was not shared by the many other would-be visitors to the Soviet Union. With the ideological popularity of Communism in the twenties and thirties, going to Russia became a kind of pilgrimage for the western intelligentsia. This was the heyday, in the words of Irish journalist Denis Ireland, of 'those feminine-looking young men in dirty flannel trousers' who enforced socialist orthodoxy within London literary circles.³² It was probably due to his reluctance to abide by the established pattern for touring Russia, that of signing up with an Intourist group excursion, that Butler had encountered so many difficulties securing a visa. Kate O'Brien complained of these package tours that they were 'not tours with the old meaning. Their impulse is newly projected. They are a gesture towards our future uniformity, not an escapist search for novelty, individualism or the past. They are a busman's holiday of sociologists and moralists, not pleasure-trips for idle

³⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/642/241 (BP): HMB to the Editors of the *Irish Times* and *The Bell*, 13 Oct. 1947. The letter was never published.

³¹ MH (Alpha): HMB to James Forsyth, 18 July 1976.

³² Denis Ireland, 'Reflections on the Death of a Novelist', *Envoy* 3:8 (July 1950), 36.

pleasure-seekers'.³³ Book after book issued forth from these outings, and by 1930 the trend had become so well known that Liam O'Flaherty prefaced his own, *I Went to Russia*, with the candid admission that he had visited purely in order to collect material for a political study: 'It pains me to admit it, but it is the truth. I set out to join the great horde of scoundrels, duffers and liars who have been flooding the book markets of the world for the past ten years with books about the Bolsheviks'.³⁴

Another intellectual eager to see the great Soviet experiment in action was Archibald Lyall, and this he did upon the invitation of Butler, who was finally prepared to yield to Intourist. After having at last managed a brief foray to Moscow by himself in the spring of 1931, he then arranged that he, Peggy and Lyall should embark together on one of its group tours in early autumn 1932. In his account of this adventure, *Russian Roundabout*, Lyall relates how he and the Butlers called first at Leningrad, then proceeded with their party to Moscow and other cities.³⁵ Not surprisingly, Lyall represents Butler's reaction to the U.S.S.R. as far from simple. Conscious of the liberation that the Revolution has ostensibly brought to the masses of Russian people, nonetheless Butler instinctively mourns the passing of the old regime, so rich in associations, that has been necessary for this transformation to take place. When, for example, the trio of travellers observe working families relaxing in the gardens of the Winter Palace, Lyall attributes to Butler the Gibbonian comment that 'it would have made me rather sad, I think, to see the golden-haired barbarians sitting on the ruins of the Capitol at the end of Rome, even though I knew Rome was thoroughly decadent and the barbarians in the end were to build up a better civilisation

³³ Kate O'Brien, *Farewell Spain* (1937; London, 1985), 3.

³⁴ Liam O'Flaherty, *I Went to Russia* (London, 1931), 9.

³⁵ In Lyall's book the Butlers are given the name 'Curtis'. Archibald Lyall, *Russian Roundabout: A Non-political Pilgrimage* (London, 1933), 2-23. During his stay in Russia Butler would likewise meet the writer Pamela Travers, whose book *Moscow Excursion* similarly evokes the mood among western visitors to Russia in the early thirties. Travers was to become one of the Butlers' closest friends. See P.T. [Pamela Travers], *Moscow Excursion* (London, 1934).

themselves'.³⁶ Here the classically-minded Anglo-Irishman is represented as reacting to the scene with an instinctive emotional conservatism, but a conservatism in tension with an intellectual honesty which recognizes the necessity and even ultimate advantage of social change.

Butler himself would describe the inevitable dismay he experienced when the Leningrad of his imagination, one derived from the great Russian novels of the nineteenth century, came into direct contact with the present-day reality. Walking along the streets of the city, he writes, 'it is impossible for the bourgeois visitor to avoid sentimentalising as he elbows his way along, however proletarian his sympathies. He wonders whether Nevsky does not cry for rattling carriages, shining horses and lovely ladies. As he passes under the arcade of the Gostiny Dvor[,] richly dressed phantoms linger among the arches and flutter past him into discreet shops. Closer inspection will reveal the shops to be displaying a few white cabbages on doubtful linoleum swarming with flies'. And yet, he adds with heavy irony, 'sentimentalists can ignore such trifles of fact'.³⁷ That Butler did not pretend to transcend his own liberal middle-class values out of solidarity with the Soviet cause means his writing about Russia is blessedly free of the political rhetoric that mars much western commentary from this period. This lack of pretence also relieved him of the need other intellectuals had to locate in Russia a justification for the ideological commitment they had made to Marxism, and later it spared him the deep disillusionment that those same people underwent when Stalinism proved so brutally corrupt. At the end of his life he thus reflected that 'I was born a bourgeois and this, like being born an Irishman or a Frenchman, a Protestant or a Catholic, is, I believe, an indelible experience. It is something you cannot shed by adopting a new set of ideas'. In acknowledging that he never moved very far from his own social group, he continues: 'I am proud that I found this out very early, because it helped me to enjoy Russia. I went there as a bourgeois, worked there as a bourgeois, and returned as a bourgeois through the same door which I went in. In the meantime, I

³⁶ Archibald Lyall, *Russian Roundabout*, 41. See Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life and Writings*, eds. A.O.J. Cockshut and S. Constantine (1796; Hartnells, Bodmin, 1994), 170-1.

³⁷ MH (Ms.): 'A Stroll Around Leningrad', 2-3 [7pp, undated (c.early/mid-1930s)].

had been very happy and interested and have never had any of those bitter feelings towards Russia in which many once-passionate communists, who have “lost their faith”, indulge’.³⁸ This lack of bitterness was to play a significant part in Butler’s attitudes later on, during the Cold War, when some of the most vitriolic attacks on Communism emanated from those who had once been its passionate apologists.

It was upon returning to Leningrad from the guided tour that Butler decided to accept an offer from his acquaintance Nikolai Mihalitch Archangelsky to remain for a time as an English teacher. Archangelsky, who had studied at Reading University with Butler’s cousin Willy de Burgh, had returned home out of political conviction to live in Leningrad with his widowed mother. Butler thus said goodbye to Peggy and Lyall, who boarded the ship back to London, and took up residence at the Archanglesky flat. He was welcomed into his host’s teaching brigade, a loose affiliation of English instructors who shared out pupils and jobs. The members of his group all came from wealthy families and found themselves teaching languages as a result of the changes wrought by the Revolution. With the help of his brigade, Butler quickly assumed responsibility for a group of private pupils, as well as for teaching nightly classes at the Techmass and Goskurs Institutes. In his 1984 essay ‘Peter’s Window’ he notes that, as the last of the tourists disappeared from the city at the end of the season, ‘I felt like a privileged member of the audience who goes home with the actors after the play’ (*EA* 313).

Of course, what made his extended stay possible was his fluency in Russian, an ability coveted by other westerners who perceived that the official tours presented only a sugar-coated view of Soviet life.³⁹ This obsession with locating authenticity was part of the larger rebellion against the uniformity and banality of tourism itself, but ironically, as Butler was quick to notice, this attempted defiance could sometimes take on an acquisitive and grasping quality. His own first published account of his time in Russia, the 1946 piece ‘The Teaching Brigade’, received

³⁸ MH (Ms.): ‘Russia (autobiographical)’, 1 [5pp., undated (1980s)].

³⁹ Ethel Mannin, *Forever Wandering* (London, 1934), 173.

special praise from Anthony Powell, who remarked that it 'should be read by all who enjoy chunks of Soviet life as it is lived'.⁴⁰ In literary terms this piece suffers by comparison to the later and better-known 'Peter's Window', but even so, it makes a unique contribution to the overall picture of Butler's experience in Leningrad which ought not to be ignored. Writing shortly after the end of the war, Butler's treatment is less wide-ranging and impressionistic, focusing primarily on the ways totalitarianism was slowly suffocating each of his highly individualistic friends. To this end the essay takes as its centre of gravity not Nikolai Archangelsky but rather the army officer Dmitiri Kardin. Kardin assumes the role of protagonist in 'The Teaching Brigade' because he is the quintessence of what Butler would later call the 'Organization Man', that amoral figure whose capacity to subsume his personality to any ideology or hierarchy, however arbitrary or cruel, means that inevitably he will thrive. In keeping with this appraisal, Butler remarks of Kardin that 'each time he appropriated from me a new English phrase I felt as if I had been pickpocketed. It had ceased to be mine, and belonged to the Military Academy, where he was an instructor.' Elsewhere he relates how when they first met, Kardin was busily revising a pre-revolutionary grammar of English conversation, so that the tourist's average questions were no longer about theatres and laundries but about workers' wages and factories.

Butler also reveals that as time went on, he realized he could have seen none of his acquaintances regularly without the consent of the G.P.U. (the secret police) but suspects probably only Kardin would have bothered keeping a record of their uneventful encounters. 'I had to admire the insight of the G.P.U. in employing him', he writes. 'The horror and efficiency of Gestapo and G.P.U. lie in the use they make of ordinary people, whom we meet everyday, the busybody, the village gossip, and above all the officially-minded person, like Dmitri, who will obey any order given by a superior rather than consult his humanity or intelligence.' Even so, he concludes that Kardin meant no harm and that his presence probably enabled the brigade to carry on unmolested. 'If I have made him sound unworthy, it is because I am thinking of my other four

⁴⁰ Anthony Powell, 'Periodical Prejudices', *The Spectator* 8 Nov. 1946, 488.

companions in the Teaching Brigade, who had so much greater integrity and courage than he had, and whose voices I do not believe I shall hear again'. He consoles himself at the end of the piece with the conviction that these 'were not ordinary people' and 'ordinary probabilities do not affect them', but has to concede 'in any country under any government, the man who thinks for himself suffers, the Dmitri Kardins flourish'.⁴¹ By contrast, the end of 'Peter's Window' does not emphasize the triumph of the 'Organization Man' but instead eulogizes his victims. It recalls Butler's brief return to the U.S.S.R. in 1956, during which he managed to visit Leningrad in order to search for his old companions. His inquiries yielded only vague information suggesting most of them probably died during the Purges: 'I had learnt very much what I had expected to learn, which was nothing. I was sad not only for my friends but for anyone who leaves the world anonymously, surrounded by hostile or uncaring people' (*EA* 337). The anger and defiance underpinning the earlier piece has been replaced here by a more modest lament for the individual sufferings of those he had come to know and love personally.

'Peter's Window' owes much of its immediacy and coherence to Butler's appreciative portrait of his host Archangelsky, whom he fittingly refers to by his family nickname, Kolya. Building the piece around his daily life in the Archangelsky flat means that he himself enjoys a stronger presence in the narrative, but it also helps him achieve an overall intimacy of tone missing from 'The Teaching Brigade'. The piece is studded with moments of domestic humour that add to its atmosphere far more effectively than any number of descriptions of crowded trams or barren shops could manage. Appropriately, then, Butler represents as the crisis point in 'Peter's Window' the row he and Kolya eventually have over their living arrangements. Their differences were never overtly political, he insists, for topics of conversation were always too firmly rooted in the realm of the mundane: 'These were the things we talked about in Leningrad in 1931 [*sic*]: spoons, buttons, macaroni, galoshes, macaroni again. I don't believe I ever heard anyone mention Magnetogorsk or the liquidation of the Kulaks or any of the remote and

⁴¹ HMB, 'The Teaching Brigade', in R. Greacen (ed.), *Irish Harvest* (Dublin, 1946) 15, 19-20, 25.

monstrous contemporary happenings to which by a complicated chain of causes our lifestyle and our macaroni were linked'.⁴² That said, he does speculate that the intensity of Kolya's reaction to his domestic complaints stems from deeper misgivings he has about being an educated, Anglophile Russian who has chosen to live in the squalor of Stalinist Leningrad. Butler recalls how at one stage Kolya stayed up all night reading Forster's *A Passage to India* only to announce despairingly at breakfast that 'I'm Aziz. I'm an Asiatic'.⁴³ Their argument is severe enough that Butler storms out into the winter cold, only to discover that he cannot find a hotel room anywhere. At last he resorts to calling late at night on the British Consul, Reader Bullard, whom he had met previously. Although Bullard graciously takes him in, Butler nonetheless considers seeking refuge a failure to live by his own principles: 'I could easily persuade myself that I had an official claim on him, but I loathed going to him, as I would to the GPU. I thought I had the courage and skill to treat most human problems as personal ones, but the moment I appealed to authority to help me out I was like a man on a tightrope who thinks of falling'.⁴⁴ The image is an important one, registering the symbolic weight Butler has attributed to the whole enterprise. However kind Bullard has been to him, he cannot but regard the consul as simply a more pleasant manifestation of the bureaucratic world he has consciously sought to escape through the difficult yet genuine relationship with Kolya (*EA* 323-6, 330).

Butler goes back to the flat the next day. Although he and Kolya formally make peace, he knows that he 'would never be forgiven that night at the consulate', and indeed, their

⁴² In another, unpublished piece about Russia, Butler remarks that 'Russians themselves do not discuss Communism in the home and are surprised at the interest and enthusiasm or the horror of the foreign visitors. They are as bored as an Englishman would be should a party of foreigners come over to find the exact workings of the national government. Why do all these people, I was repeatedly asked, want to see our bakeries, our creches? Have they none at home?' MH (Ms.): "'Those Russians'", 4 [21pp., undated (1930s)].

⁴³ In writing elsewhere about Dostoevsky, Butler would credit the novelist with drawing attention to the 'burdensome sense of inferiority towards the West which makes the Russian sometimes too meek, sometimes insanely proud and suspicious' (*LN* 176).

⁴⁴ Bullard's recently published diaries corroborate Butler's version of these events. He records first meeting Butler on 6 September 1932 and then how on the night of 23 October, Butler appeared at the consulate late at night seeking shelter. R.W. Bullard, *Inside Stalin's Russia: The Diaries of Reader Bullard, 1930-34*, eds. J. and M. Bullard (Charlbury, Oxon, 2000), 135, 146.

relationship is never the same again. Having decided to leave Russia when the term ends, Butler agrees with Kolya to finish his time at the flat but notes that ‘I was a foreign critic now not a friend and he would step coldly from argument to argument, like rungs on a ladder....He was never unfriendly but he had become a different person, conscientious, informative and rather dull’. The personal rapport he has worked to foster has dissolved, and though the essay does not end for a few more pages, Butler manages to convey that the guiding spirit of his adventure has deserted him. What is left is the process of disentanglement and farewell. Before he leaves, he does manage to witness a major procession commemorating ‘the Fifteenth Anniversary of Socialist Construction’, which by its very nature returns him to the Russia of impersonal exteriors. Yet because those he has come to consider friends are all participating, Butler eagerly watches the rows of marchers filing by: ‘I wanted to see if there was anyone I knew, and how they were affected by this performance. Organized in processions, those whom we have known as complex individuals shed colour and character. Also there is some unconscious tabu that we violate every time we look at our friends in their public moments, which are often the moments of deepest privacy’. Ultimately his frustrated attempt to reconcile the warmth of those he has encountered individually with the total effacement they have undergone in this totalitarian setting provides a more telling indictment of Communism than any political argument ever could (*EA* 331-3).

Butler thus returned home from his Russian sojourn armed with a far clearer picture than most foreigners of real life in the Soviet Union, coupled with an emphatically non-ideological affection for the individuals he met there. What he did not return with were either horror stories or triumphant anecdotes, for these he believed would only compound rather than mitigate the isolation which their system had already inflicted upon the Russian people. So he noted that ‘we think of all the struggles of the Russians on an economic plane, we imagine them wrestling with percentages, tustling with the tractor output and the five year plan – seen through a fog of statistics they seem rather an abstract people, and yet life in a Soviet city is actually as varied as

in any other part of the world'.⁴⁵ He knew that the prevailing mood would not make it easy to persuade most westerners that the Russians had a human face. Rather, he characterized the situation as one in which increasingly 'Russia and Communism are established as levers in the political life of other countries and topics of conversation in every home. Exotic, eastern bogies, they haunt the most peaceful suburbs and it is too late now for mere argument to exorcise them'.⁴⁶ Confronted by this mounting anxiety and irrationality, what other means was there to lend Russia the humanity he himself had seen so well? One opportunity presented itself the following year when he undertook a new translation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* for his brother-in-law Tyrone Guthrie to stage at the Old Vic. When it appeared in October 1933, the production, starring Charles Laughton, proved a resounding popular success.⁴⁷ Introducing the translation in its published form in 1934, Guthrie praised Butler's attempt to convey 'the behaviour, as well as the language, of these Russians of thirty years ago in such a manner as to make them seem recognizable, natural, lovable human beings, as little as possible removed from ourselves because remote in time and place'.⁴⁸ In this sense, *The Cherry Orchard* served as a salutary reminder that the uniquely Russian contribution to the humanist tradition ought not be forgotten amidst political rivalry or national estrangement. As Butler himself comments in 'Peter's Window' regarding the legacy left by figures such as Chekhov, Tolstoi and Dostoevsky in the age of Bolshevism: 'I do not believe that the creations of genius die without issue or that, because of a change of government, cities start to breed a different type of man. They dress differently and feed differently, and that is all' (EA 325).

With his obvious talent for languages, in 1934 Butler next managed to secure a scholarship from the School of Slavonic Studies in London that sent him to Yugoslavia. He spent

⁴⁵ MH (Notebook): 'Some notes on trip to Russia' [late 1920s/early 1930s].

⁴⁶ MH (Ms.): "'Those Russians'", 4 [21pp, undated (c.1930s)].

⁴⁷ The production was enthusiastically reviewed: see *The Times* 10 Oct. 1933, 12; *Daily Telegraph* 10 Oct. 1933, 10; and *Evening Standard* 10 Oct. 1933, 20.

⁴⁸ Tyrone Guthrie, 'Introduction', in Anton Che[k]hov, *The Cherry Orchard*, trans. HMB (London, 1934), 3.

much of the following three years there, teaching at the Anglo-American-Yugoslav Society in Zagreb and travelling extensively, and in the process became fluent in what was then known as Serbo-Croat. How he first developed this interest in the Balkans is not exactly clear, though a few of his acquaintances appear as likely catalysts. One possible spark to his curiosity may have been his cousin Theo Butler and Theo's Oxford friend E.R. Dodds. As he relates in both 'The Auction' and 'Divided Loyalties', Butler held these two young men, just slightly older than he, in deep admiration for their outspoken Irish nationalism and their sceptical attitude in 1914 towards the British war effort (*GW* 23-4, *EA* 95-6). In his memoir *Missing Persons* Dodds himself later described the pressure he and Theo had been put under to enlist and how instead they volunteered as medical orderlies at the British Eastern Auxiliary Hospital in Belgrade, where an outbreak of typhus had taken hold.⁴⁹ Given the influence his cousin and Dodds exercised over the young Butler's imagination, it is not unreasonable to suppose that stories of their Serbian adventures planted a seed in his mind that would bloom in later years.

A much more recent inspiration for Butler's interest may have been his friend Archie Lyall, who before accompanying him to Russia had travelled in Yugoslavia and produced the 1930 travelogue *Balkan Road* as a result. If, as Cyril Connolly would later fatuously claim, the region was something their generation had 'discovered', then certainly this increased interest derived partly from the common belief the Great War had been triggered by inscrutable Balkan forces culminating in the Sarajevo *attentat* of 1914.⁵⁰ Maria Todorova speaks of the 'balkanist discourse' that developed during the interwar period, in which the region was characterized by stereotypes of extreme violence and racial inferiority in order to explain its role as the source of the worldwide hostilities.⁵¹ This reputation for savagery was sufficiently commonplace that Lyall felt it necessary in his book to reassure readers that the Balkans were not any more dangerous for

⁴⁹ E.R. Dodds, *Missing Persons: An Autobiography* (Oxford, 1977), 36-52.

⁵⁰ Cyril Connolly, *The Evening Colonnade* (London, 1973), 23.

⁵¹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 1997), 123. Arguably other forms of 'balkanist discourse' had been established long before the First World War: see Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London, 2000), 1-16.

visitors than elsewhere: 'The natives only shoot their friends and acquaintances, and they seldom interfere with strangers'.⁵² In her monumental *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia* (1942), Rebecca West observed another longstanding aspect of the 'balkanist discourse', whereby well-meaning English people 'constantly went out to the Balkan Peninsula to see who was in fact ill-treating whom, and, being by the very nature of their perfectionist faith unable to accept the horrid hypothesis that everybody was ill-treating everybody else, all came back with a pet Balkan people established in their hearts as suffering and innocent, eternally the massacrée and never the massacer'.⁵³ It was against such side-taking and caricature regarding Yugoslavia that Butler was to strive for the next half-century, working through his many Balkan writings to extricate and identify certain patterns of experience from the morass of history and to place them alongside the contemporary realities he witnessed during his visits there.

One of his most memorable essays seeking to evoke this bond between past and present in the Balkans is 'The Last Izmirenje'. In it he relates how in the spring of 1937 he ventured into the mountains above Kotor in Montenegro to attend an *izmirenje*, a traditional reconciliation ceremony by which a blood feud was to be ended. Although the murderer in this particular case had served a criminal sentence passed down by the Yugoslav courts, this punishment had not pacified the family of the murdered man. Only this elaborate ritual of repentance and forgiveness, the first to be held in a generation, would fully satisfy them. Later, in a more general piece entitled 'Yugoslavia: The Cultural Background', Butler explained why he still attributed so much significance to the event. Arguing analogically that Montenegro was 'the Gaeltacht of Yugoslavia, where the last traces of a southern Slav culture survive', he believed that its patriarchal society 'is doomed as surely as is the Gaeltacht', and therefore some sort of record of

⁵² Archibald Lyall, *The Balkan Road* (London, 1930), 157-8.

⁵³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia* (1942; Edinburgh, 2001), 20. Butler and West crossed paths briefly during their respective Yugoslavian sojourns. Butler wrote to his wife that he had met West and her husband, and that 'she, like so many others, is writing a book about Yugoslavia, or rather she says "Me in Yugoslavia"'. MH ('Letters Home, 1910-1939'): HMB to Peggy Butler, undated [1936?]. West also mentions the meeting, referring to Butler simply as 'an Irish friend'. *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, 285.

the proceedings had been imperative. With 'The Last Izmirenje', written shortly after the event, he sought to provide a record not only of the actual goings-on but also one which reflected their symbolic meaning, for he believed the experience 'revealed some of the spiritual torment of Yugoslavia' (*GW* 164). He begins by acknowledging that the murderer, Stevo Orlovich, who 'was evidently in an agony of shame and embarrassment about the ceremony he was going to have to go through', nonetheless 'was sufficiently collected to make it clear that he wasn't pleased to see us' (*EA* 265). There is no anthropological pretence in Butler's account; throughout the narrative he is visible as a self-confessed interloper whose own presence will, he knows, only contribute to the likelihood of the tradition's demise. The inherent conflict here between an outsider's identification of a cultural phenomenon as 'authentic' and the survival of the organic environment which made such a phenomenon possible in the first place is one Butler cannot deny, and indeed, he regards such a conflict as one manifestation of Yugoslavia's broader crisis of modernization.⁵⁴

Yet it is not the presence of outsiders that Butler considers primarily responsible for this transitional crisis. Increasingly the Montenegrins themselves have learned about and begun to explore the world beyond their own hills and pastures. While waiting for the ceremony to begin, he meets one of Stevo Orlovich's relations, who has learnt to speak English while working in the copper mines of Montana. When Butler tells the man that he is Irish, the response comes: 'Montenegrin mans should do like Irishmans...raise hell, holler!' (*EA* 265). The moment has its obvious comic value, but it also epitomizes the particularly subtle form of intrusion to which this traditional culture finds itself subject. In order to articulate his instinctive sense of commonality with another small European people seeking to assert itself, it is ironic that the Montenegrin resorts to a medium of expression defined by the American experiences of mobility and

⁵⁴ By the same logic, Butler would later praise the political dissident Milovan Djilas's account of his Montenegrin boyhood in *Land Without Justice* for its intimate yet dispassionate portrayal of 'a primitive society in violent collision with the sophistication of the West'. HMB, 'Tito's Marxist Heretic', review of Milovan Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, in *Peace News* 21 Nov. 1958, 6.

assimilation. More surely than any foreigner could, it is natives returning from Montana and elsewhere whose influence will slowly but irretrievably alter the outlook and vocabulary of their people from the inside. In the 1937 piece 'In Dalmatia', Butler observes an even more extreme case of this process by which the immigrant returns to his 'backward' homeland as the agent of modernity. He recalls meeting an engineer who, after having emigrated to the U.S.A., comes back to Herzegovina to visit his parents: 'He was shocked to find that his sisters wore "silly clothes" and he had spoilt all his four suits in the mud on his father's farm'. Psychologically, the engineer has become a stranger to his own people, and in a final irony, Butler implies that some day the engineer's descendants may well come in search of the very 'authenticity' he now spurns. He remarks how just when the new American was bemoaning his family's condition, 'the same day a Cunarder had landed in Ragusa [Dubrovnik], and its passengers had ransacked the town for "silly clothes" which, in Ragusa, it has already become profitable to fake' (LN 87). In pointing out such paradoxical situations, Butler attempts to evoke the ways in which the peoples of Yugoslavia must now wrestle internally with cultural disjunctions more insidious and threatening to their traditional social structures than anything previously imposed upon them during successive centuries of colonial rule.

Despite his awareness of the subtle ways in which the authority of the old Balkan customs is being eroded, once he has witnessed the *izmirenje*, Butler is sure that the blood feud has in fact been settled for good. He believes this because the ceremony continues, at least for the moment in this particular place, to be relevant to the scale and nature of the relationships it has always been intended to mend. The ritualized repentance of Stevo Orlovich in the presence of the assembled families has given the injured party a power that no prison sentence in an anonymous court could provide: an opportunity to grant forgiveness. 'Most European law is based on compensation and punishment', Butler reflects, while 'Montenegrin custom on the other hand takes into account forgiveness which English law ignores, and because of that, when *izmirenje* passes away, as pass it must, an important element of justice will have gone with it' (EA 269). In

a peasant society still based on longstanding and intimate social bonds, this personal quality of justice-through-forgiveness cannot be replaced by the more impartial and therefore largely impersonal notions of justice that the West has evolved. And while he recognizes that the reconciliation ceremony must inevitably die out as these local intimacies loosen, Butler plainly regards this prospect as a loss to be mourned, a diminishment of humanity which western culture has already experienced as a result of its developmental choices.

There is an undeniable element of idealization at work in 'The Last Izmirenje', though it would be wrong to assume the writer is oblivious to this fact or to dismiss the impulse as nothing more than romantic primitivism. He celebrates the Montenegrin custom precisely because he knows it is doomed to extinction in the mechanized world growing up all around him; the essay thus serves as much as a warning about the future as it does as a eulogy for the past. What travelling to this remote corner of the world brings into bold relief for Butler is how modernization, with its accompanying bureaucratization and anonymity, will imperceptibly rob all human communities of their unique gifts. As what he has just witnessed recedes into the imaginative realm of utopian desire, he permits himself one wistful remark, noting that 'by the time our car had drawn up at the town Katana, the *izmirenje* at Grbalj was like something that happened in a dream'. He immediately undercuts any drift towards sentimentality, though, forcing himself back into a cool contemplation of the likelihood there would be no more such ceremonies: 'The "good men" in the Homburg hats were getting self-conscious about it and I am convinced I heard the murderer and his brother grumbling about the journalists behind the chapel wall. I was glad he didn't know that someone had suggested bringing a film apparatus'. And he adds in conclusion: 'Nowadays, too, one can always interrupt blood feuds by going to Butte, Montana' (EA 269). With the erosion of communal identities were coming more and more opportunities to elude one's social responsibilities. It was not long before political leaders throughout Europe were to seize upon this moral vacuum and exploit it in unimaginably monstrous ways.

III. Fascism and the advent of world war

The prevailing sense of helplessness and disorientation that modern life engendered in many Europeans is one common explanation for the rising popularity of fascism and Nazism.⁵⁵ As early as 1931 Butler himself had registered forebodings about developments in Germany, as when he wrote to his mother while passing through Berlin: ‘There’s an awful feeling of something being about to happen here. Very grave situation politically, I believe. Frightful unemployment and hunger, and the government not able to cope with it. I think we are very happy and lucky to live in Ireland’.⁵⁶ Another Irish Protestant alert to these political currents was the classical scholar W.B. Stanford, who in 1937 was chosen to represent TCD at the centenary celebrations for the University of Athens. These festivities, at which some of the leading Hellenists of Europe and North America had gathered, went on under the watchful eye of the fascistic Metaxas regime. Inevitably this lent a strange air to the proceedings, for the Greek government had suppressed much intellectual freedom, even to the point that professors had been prohibited from lecturing on certain ‘subversive passages’ in ancient Greek literature. Stanford recounts that ‘though the political tensions were perceptibly fraught’, everything managed to go on without incident, save a minor but symbolic moment during a performance of Sophocles’s *Antigone*. When the actress playing Antigone spoke the line, ‘It is in the nature of tyranny to love base gain’, Stanford recalls that the ‘Athenians in the audience applauded and cheered loud and long, a thrilling assertion of Greek democratic feeling, and a brave gesture against a ruthless government’.⁵⁷

Coming to terms with fascism was not easy for Butler. Reflecting on the popularity of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* in the mid-thirties, he could not conceal his contempt for the man or the book, yet he recognized that both were symptomatic of a deeper issue that must not be ignored: ‘[I]t is clear that some great unhappiness is trying to express itself....It is not the cry of the

⁵⁵ See, for example, F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (1967; London, 1970), 79-87.

⁵⁶ MH (‘Letters Home, 1910-1939’): HMB to Rita Butler, undated [June 1931].

⁵⁷ W.B. Stanford, *Memoirs* (Dublin, 2001), 180-1.

oppressed or the hungry, it is of the excluded. How else can we explain the tremendous influence of this book which in its analysis seldom goes below superficial appearance, and which is without intellect, charm or vision?' (*GW* 158). Undoubtedly Hitler had tapped into a powerful source of German discontent, an underlying sense of deprivation that was exacerbated by but not wholly attributable to the economic turmoil of the Weimar Republic. In an essay he wrote around the same time called 'Fichte and the Rise of Racism in Germany', Butler steps back from the contemporary phenomenon of Nazism and examines the history of German nationalism in order to track the logic of this collective grievance. In the writings of Fichte he identifies a moment in German self-definition when racism replaced nationalism and thereby set Germany on the calamitous course it now pursued with such determination. In positing a racist basis for German identity, Fichte sought both to diagnose his people's communal dissatisfaction and to offer a remedy for it. So Butler comments that 'Fichte's assertion that the Germans are not "a people" but "the people" was a stupendous attempt to create a national spirit, to dynamite a nation out of Christendom'. The perversely retrograde need of the Germans to manufacture a racial uniqueness they never had, he concludes, was destined to fail and in the process could only bring chaos to Europe and further grief to the Germans themselves. Thus Hitler, 'the man with the basement approach to the minds of others', might promise the Germans national greatness but only would succeed in undermining the tower of civilization they already enjoyed (*LN* 76, 84).⁵⁸

Butler believed principled people must act decisively before such destruction had been permitted to take place. Here he looked to the example of the German pacifist and journalist Carl von Ossietzky (1888-1938), an early and vocal opponent of Hitler who was interned at the Esterwegen prison camp in 1935. Despite being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936, Ossietzky remained imprisoned. After repeated beatings and deprivation, he was transferred to a hospital when diagnosed with tuberculosis and succumbed there to the disease in May 1938. That

⁵⁸ This phrase is reminiscent of sentiments expressed by Simone Weil regarding Hitler around the same time: see Simone Weil, *Selected Essays, 1934-43*, ed. and trans. R. Rees (London, 1962), 144.

Ossietzky remained a relatively obscure figure after the war despite his courage did not surprise Butler, who reasoned in a tribute that 'history is written by survivors and most of those who survived until 1939 had had to make many moral and political adjustments in order to do so'. Ossietzky stands out in Butler's estimation precisely because he protested publicly against that which he considered evil at a time when it was still possible to ignore these things or to rationalize their presence in German life. Moreover, he was not prompted by any special interest as the basis for his actions: 'Ossietzky was not forced into resistance by violence like the Jews, nor by political theory like the Communists', says Butler. Instead he acted out of a faith in peaceful liberal principles, or as one of his contemporaries put it, because he was a true *Bürger*, 'a civilian defending the rights of civilians'. This defiant insistence on a non-aligned humanitarianism in the face of a regime determined to destroy the individual consciousness made Ossietzky a lasting hero in Butler's eyes, for he confronted not just the Nazis but the whole tendency of the age. Yet Ossietzky had been forgotten like many people in the twentieth century who 'struggled in solitude against mass movements'. Indeed, precisely because they rejected the terms of mass existence, 'it is inevitable that the mass media, through which we now obtain the most of our information, should ignore them' (CD 182-4).⁵⁹ When Butler later became convinced that Catholic institutional chauvinism was posing a serious threat to individual conscience in Ireland, it was thus only partly as a member of the Protestant minority that he spoke. It was also as a European liberal and pacifist emulating Ossietzky that he sought to assert the rights of all people against exclusivity and domination.

Throughout the 1930s, Irish Protestant intellectuals and intellectuals in general watched with mounting distress as the Vatican negotiated accommodations with the fascist and pro-fascist regimes seizing power throughout Europe. In fact the Vatican's diplomatic efforts did little to

⁵⁹ Ossietzky's posthumous reputation was to gain in stature after Butler wrote his tribute in 1964. The Universität Oldenburg, situated not far from Esterwegen, was officially named after Ossietzky in 1991, and an edition of his complete writings was published in Germany shortly thereafter: see Carl von Ossietzky, *Works*, 8 vols., eds. W. von Boldt et al. (Reinbek, 1994).

prevent anti-Catholic tendencies from arising in either Italy or Germany, but much was forgiven in the name of defeating international Communism. Such moves confirmed the opinion common among Irish Protestants that the Roman Church was, whatever its ominous warnings about the dangers of Marxism, irretrievably hostile to democratic values and fundamentally sympathetic to authoritarian governments working to stamp out individual liberty. Writing in 1937 for the Irish Christian Fellowship, the Rev. Fred Rea reasoned:

Catholicism finds itself at home with the idea of Fascism precisely because it believes that it is more important to make men hold the truth and obey the discipline than to help them to find it. True Protestantism believes that it is better to have self-rule than good rule. In upholding democracy it has no illusions that thereby the country will be better ruled than under a benevolent dictatorship. It rejects dictatorship and affirms democracy because the former denies and the latter affirms the spiritual freedom of man.⁶⁰

Irish Protestant concerns about the impact abroad of what Butler termed the ‘militant ecclesiasticism’ of the Catholic Church was focused particularly on Spain. This was not only because of the Civil War raging there and recent reports of Spanish Protestants being persecuted by Franco’s forces. Their interest in the status of their co-religionists dated back to the early support the Church of Ireland had provided the Spanish Reformed Church and the Iberian Protestant movement in the late nineteenth century.⁶¹ In Ireland, this specifically religious identification inevitably assumed an oppositional edge and to some extent dovetailed with dissident political support for the Spanish Republic. Ireland’s leftist community, with whom Butler would make common cause when he settled in Ireland in the 1940s, was at this time a tiny but fervent group.⁶² Conversely, the Irish hierarchy’s genuine fear of communist incursion is clear from the public statements it issued throughout the thirties.⁶³ The bishops’ support for

⁶⁰ Fred Rea, ‘Protestantism in the New Ireland’, in Irish Christian Fellowship (ed.), *Looking at Ireland* (London, 1937), 58.

⁶¹ R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland*, 94-7.

⁶² Besides well known figures such as Peadar O’Donnell, Frank Ryan and George Gilmore, one should not forget Frank Edwards and Michael O’Flanagan, the latter of whom was virtually alone among Irish clergy in challenging the assumption that Franco was the defender of Christianity. See Manus O’Riordan, *Portrait of an Irish Anti-Fascist: Frank Edwards 1907-83* (Dublin, 1984). See also Denis Carroll, *They Have Fooled You Again: Michael O’Flanagan (1876-1942), priest, republican, social critic* (Dublin, 1993).

⁶³ Mike Cronin, *The Blueshirts and Irish Politics* (Dublin, 1997), 30.

Franco was echoed by the general public, a fact which makes Eamon de Valera's refusal to be swept up in this anti-communist feeling all the more remarkable.⁶⁴

One Southern Protestant who went to serve the Republican cause in Spain was Ewart Milne, whose pieces in the short-lived *Ireland To-day* (1936-8) are remarkable for their highly personalized response to the events taking place there.⁶⁵ *Ireland To-day* proved to be one of the few Irish publications openly critical of Franco, a stance which ultimately led to its premature demise.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the *Irish Times* had also taken a pro-Republican line on Spain under R.M. Smyllie, who became its editor in 1934. While his personal sympathies would always remain staunchly British, Smyllie possessed a broadly European intellectual perspective and worked hard during these years to improve the *Times*' coverage of international events. Writing under his usual pen-name of 'Nichevo', for example, Smyllie himself produced a series of articles in 1938 about a trip he had recently made to the area he calls 'Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia', also known as Carpatho-Russia.⁶⁷ Part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before being absorbed into Czechoslovakia after the First World War, this remote region fascinated Smyllie with its 'hotch-potch of races'. He was especially attuned to the ways in which political change had left certain types of people behind to carry on within the decaying evidence of their former glory. Telling of a visit he makes to an old Magyar lady in her crumbling manor house, he notes that 'in the Republic, there are many upholders of the old *régime*, whose lot has fallen in stony places. Although the Czechoslovak Government is meticulously fair to its minorities,...it would be too

⁶⁴ With the Spanish Civil War (Non-Intervention) Act of February 1937, Ireland officially declared itself neutral and forbade Irish enlistment on either side, a stricture obviously ignored. The Act was not the message of non-belligerent support for Franco that some Catholics had desired of their government. See Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork, 1999) 135-70. See also Robert A. Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Manchester, 1999).

⁶⁵ See especially C.E. [Ewart] Milne, 'Medley in Spain', *Ireland To-day* 2:9 (Sept. 1937), 41-8. See also Ewart Milne, *Drums without End* (Portree, Isle of Skye, 1985), 9-11.

⁶⁶ See Frank Shovlin, *The Irish Literary Periodical*, 67-95.

⁶⁷ The articles were later published in pamphlet form: see 'Nichevo' [R.M. Smyllie], *Carpathian Contrasts* (Dublin, 1938). Half a century later Butler would also write about this land in 'A Three-Day Nation: Alexei Gierowski and Carpatho-Russia' (1990). In this essay Butler pays tribute to *Carpathian Contrasts* (which he mistakenly refers to as *Carpathian Nights*) but is critical of what he considers it excessively pro-Czech point-of-view (LN 159).

much to expect that the Hungarians should be enthusiastic about the new order of things'. He is quick to acknowledge the obvious parallel here between the Magyars and his own Irish Protestant community, remarking that 'although they live in the homes of their ancestors, they feel themselves as strangers in a strange land. Nobody could blame them. Coming from Ireland, I certainly could not'. Smyllie ends the passage with a remark that underlines the sympathy he feels for these dislocated people, while it issues a general challenge to the smug or self-righteous who might discount the upheaval they have endured: 'Life can be very ruthless; and if you look for such little tragedies in Central Europe you will find them in abundance'.⁶⁸ Like Butler in his encounters with aged aristocrats in Austria, exiled Russians in Riga, or the old bourgeoisie of Leningrad, he finds in these people rough analogies which help him clarify his thoughts about the internal dynamics of his own society.

It was out of his ongoing determination not to be complacent about the tragedies of Europe that Hubert Butler went to work on behalf of Austrian Jews after the *Anschluss* took place in March 1938. While his wife and young daughter remained in Ireland, he arranged to volunteer at the Friends' International Centre in Vienna, which was labouring to get as many Jews out of the country as possible. Arriving in July, he found a city in disarray. American journalist C.L. Sulzberger, who was there at the same time, recalled that Vienna then 'combined the less pleasant features of menagerie and charnel house'.⁶⁹ Butler settled quickly into the routine at the Friends' Centre. The Quakers' efforts to help 'non-Aryans' escape was part of a pattern of 'indiscriminate humanitarianism' they had exercised amongst victims of political intolerance in Austria throughout the tumultuous 1920s and '30s.⁷⁰ Given his own emerging commitment to constructive pacifism, this was a logical match for Butler. In charge of the Centre was the American activist Emma Cadbury (1875-1965), for whom he quickly developed both admiration and affection. He was also impressed by the Quaker-led communal life in which he was

⁶⁸ 'Nichevo', *Carpathian Contrasts* 7, 36-7.

⁶⁹ C.L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles: Memoirs and Diaries 1934-54* (London, 1969), 41.

⁷⁰ Hans A. Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness* (Columbia, MO, 1997), 89.

partaking, 'with our cold showers and readings from [J.G.] Whittier after breakfast and Maine biscuits'.⁷¹ It was an ascetic existence with an unceasing flow of paperwork. Between the invasion and the outbreak of war, the office handled 11,000 applications and successfully facilitated the departure of 4,500 individuals.⁷²

Butler later admitted that despite such pressure and difficulty, he had been more content in Vienna than at any other time in his life. 'It is strange to be happy when others are miserable', he mused, 'but all the people at the *Freundeszentrum* in the Singerstrasse were cheerful too. The reason surely is that we have always known of the immense unhappiness that all humanity has to suffer. We read of it in the newspapers and hear it on the radio but can do nothing about it'. And while he reasoned that 'most people tied to a single job or profession die without exercising more than a tenth of their capacities', while he was in Vienna 'for many months all my faculties were engaged and I exercised an intimate control over the lives of a great many people, and I believe I helped them' (CD 197). In coming directly to the aid of these particular people in this particular place, he was also doing something to combat the dehumanizing trends afflicting all of western society. He was a civilian trying to save other civilians from the jaws of an anonymous death. Employing the same logic, he considered elsewhere why so many Jews themselves appeared to share this sense of exhilaration: 'The worst sorrows are the private, incommunicable ones, and possibly the happiest Jews were those whose private troubles were suddenly submerged in a great cataclysm. What had been small or squalid had all at once become public and dramatic. The world, they felt, was watching'.⁷³

Not long after his arrival in Austria, Butler was chosen to attend the international conference at Evian which the League of Nations convened in July to discuss the plight of Jews

⁷¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/625/197 (BP): HMB to Peggy Butler, 10 Aug. 1938.

⁷² J.O. Greenwood, *Friends and Relief* (York, 1975), 267.

⁷³ TCD, Ms. 10304/417/2 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'on sadnesses and happinesses' [undated]. Certainly news of the situation had reached the Irish Protestant community: an article appeared in the *Church of Ireland Gazette* in July 1938 outlining both the plight of the Viennese Jews and the efforts being made by the Friends and other organizations to help them. *CIG* 22 July 1938, 409.

within the Third Reich. Years afterwards his assessment of the gathering was that ‘every government had sent representatives to decide what could be done, and were all were so prudent that nothing was done at all’.⁷⁴ He was especially discouraged by the attitude of his own government’s representatives, summed up by one of them with the comment: ‘Didn’t we suffer like this in the Penal Days and nobody came to our help’ (*CD* 198). Butler returned to Vienna angry and disheartened by this failure of the liberal democracies to act. One of the practical initiatives in which he was to have a guiding hand was the creation of the *Kagran Gruppe*. The *Gruppe* had banded together on the premise that it would emigrate collectively to a host country where it could then establish itself as an agricultural co-operative settlement. It was in the context of the *Gruppe* that Butler became friends with Erwin Strunz, a left-leaning journalist who had converted to Judaism upon marriage to his wife, Lisl. Strunz describes Butler at that time as ‘a tall aristocratic looking Irishman with kind blue eyes that could quite easily flash with righteous indignation’.⁷⁵ In the wake of the Munich Agreement in September, Butler wrote home in deep melancholy about all ‘the misery and horror and bullying that will now start in Sudetenland and the hordes of new fugitives that will arrive....It is an abject historic surrender of the great Democracies to dictatorship’.⁷⁶

Eventually most members of the *Gruppe* got out of Austria, but not in the way its organizers had intended. The group settlement scheme was a decided failure. Some members ended up in Britain, while Butler was instrumental in getting the Strunzes and many others into Ireland.⁷⁷ He did so through his involvement in a body later known as the Irish Co-ordinating Committee for the Relief of Christian Refugees of Central Europe. Launched officially in December 1938 with Professor T.W.T. (Theo) Dillon as Chairman, the Committee was formed in

⁷⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/417/6 (BP): untitled/ ‘on sadnesses and happinesses’.

⁷⁵ Erwin Strunz, ‘My Connection with the Kagran Group in 1938’, 2 [undated]. [Courtesy of Mrs. Julia Crampton.]

⁷⁶ MH (Alpha): HMB to Peggy Butler, 30 Sept. 1938.

⁷⁷ Lawrence Darton, *An Account of The Work of the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, 1933-1950* (London, 1967), 49.

an effort to pool the energies of various Irish charitable organizations working on behalf of refugees, as well as to liaise with the Department of Justice, which oversaw the nation's refugee admission policy. There also remained the practical consideration of where to house refugees once they had been admitted into Ireland. Among those whom Hubert and Peggy Butler persuaded to provide housing for the Kagan *Gruppe* were Arland Ussher, Sir John Keane, Stella Webb, Terry Trench and Phillip Somerville-Large, while many of the children were enrolled as boarders at the Newtown School in Waterford. As their friend Elizabeth Smith recently reminisced, the Butlers' friends were to become accustomed to these appeals for help over the years: 'They were always collecting people – refugees – and bringing them to stay,...finding them jobs or finding them a home and generally rescuing them'.⁷⁸ Other people who supported the work of the Committee were James Douglas, Arnold Marsh, Catholic Archbishop MacRory and Protestant Archbishop Gregg. Despite some of its successes, though, the Committee's effectiveness was seriously undermined by its own lack of consensus and by the government's determination to keep refugee numbers as low as possible.⁷⁹ To what degree this niggardly attitude was the product of coordinated anti-Semitism remains open to debate. Overt bigots like Father Denis Fahey and the T.D. Oliver Flanagan may have been extreme in their views, but they were certainly not alone.⁸⁰ There can be no question that the government gave non-Jewish refugees priority treatment and that the Irish never attempted to face squarely the enormity of the problem facing Jews on the Continent. Reflecting on his experiences during 1938-39, Butler

⁷⁸ Interview with Elizabeth Smith, Co. Kerry, Winter 2002.

⁷⁹ Two scholars who have reviewed Irish refugee policy from this period agree it was parsimonious at best, even if one accounts for the country's limited resources. See Katrina Goldstone, "'Benevolent Helpfulness'?" Ireland and the International Reaction to Jewish Refugees, 1933-9', in M. Kennedy and J. M. Skelly (eds.), *Irish Foreign Policy 1919-66: From Independence to Internationalism* (Dublin, 2000), 130-5. See also Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork, 1998), 138. By contrast, one might point to the relative success of the Refugee Resettlement Farm in Millisle, Co. Down, where Jewish refugees, mostly children, were settled from 1938-48. Marilyn Taylor, 'Millisle, County Down: Haven from Nazi Terror', *History Ireland* Winter 2001, 34-7.

⁸⁰ The hysterical diatribes of Father Fahey about a conspiratorial relationship between Judaism and Bolshevism commanded a steady if muted sympathy among some Irishmen in the late thirties. See Denis Fahey, *The Rulers of Russia* (Dublin, 1938). After the war, Fahey would serve as the mentor to the lay founders of the Maria Duce movement. J.H. Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923-1979* (2nd edn.; Dublin, 1980), 163.

concludes in his essay 'The Kagan Gruppe': 'Hitler brought into the world misery such as no man has previously conceived possible. It had to be combated. The British were slow to observe this. The Irish never did' (CD 197).

As the war-clouds over Europe broke into a storm, Irish Protestant intellectuals made widely different choices about how to respond.⁸¹ Some chose to participate directly, while others decided to remain in Ireland or come back upon the outbreak of hostilities. Monk Gibbon, for example, took the latter course when the school where he taught in Co. Dorset was forced by the war to relocate to Canada. Rather than go to North America, he managed to secure a new teaching post in the west of Ireland and eventually settled for good at Sandycove, Dublin in 1948.⁸² Staying home did not necessarily mean these people were unengaged in the war psychologically, though; for them, Éire's declaration of wartime neutrality may have been necessary and even justified, but it was never an excuse to become passive. Hubert Butler's own sentiments in the months before the war reveal a set of conflicting emotions and impulses. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1938 he had busied himself in Vienna, London and Ireland with the Kagan *Gruppe*, but by the following spring, when war was all but certain, he began to worry about his family's own position. In a pessimistic moment in June 1939 he wrote to his wife: 'I think the Irish situation is most threatening and the future for people like us and our homes in Ireland pretty dark....Unless some effort is made to stop all this hate and stupidity[, it] will certainly be directed against the few remaining Anglo-Irish, as there are no Jews, Communists, Freemasons, etc. to be used as scapegoats'.⁸³ If in retrospect this seems an alarmist response, it is perhaps more understandable when one remembers that Butler had already seen the homes of family and friends burnt in the early twenties and then watched the victimizing tactics of totalitarian regimes elsewhere throughout the thirties. He had become preoccupied with

⁸¹ See, for example, Terence Brown, 'Louis MacNeice and the Second World War'; and John Fletcher, 'Beckett and the Second World War: *In Memoriam, 1906-1989*', both in K. Devine (ed.), *Modern Irish Writers and the Wars* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1999), 165-77, 178-88.

⁸² Monk Gibbon, *The Pupil: A Memory of Love* (Dublin, 1981), 111ff.

⁸³ TCD, Ms. 10304/625/231/2 (BP): HMB to Peggy Butler, undated [June 1939].

identifying the subtle and seemingly innocuous ways in which persecution begins in all societies and was frightened by what might happen to a vulnerable minority like his own if conditions in Ireland were to become unbearable. In this respect, his travels had taught him certain lessons that he could not easily cast aside.

Amidst this anxiety Butler even flirted briefly with the possibility of joining the war. Armed with his talents as a linguist, he arranged to meet an officer in British Military Intelligence, who made it clear that his services would be welcomed. He confided to Peggy, however, that he still hoped above all to live in Ireland, where they might yet ‘patch up something new and work out some life that would answer to what one believes in’.⁸⁴ Whatever its obvious attractions as a means of fighting Hitler, joining the British army would contradict all of Butler’s ideals about developing an internationalist yet fully autonomous Irish identity. And while it might seem much less heroic than partaking in the great confrontation with fascism, there was much that needed doing in neutral Éire. The tendency of many Irishmen, Protestant and Catholic, to denigrate or overlook the opportunities for service in their own land struck him as evidence of a prevailing unimaginateness as to what their neutrality might mean. Of one Protestant acquaintance who was thinking of joining up in Northern Ireland, he later wrote: ‘I can’t see why the Irish army isn’t adequate – but he has such a depressingly British line on so many things.... I think it’s just a burst of provincialism that considers Piccadilly, or rather Sydenham and Egerton Crescent, as the hub of [the] world – hence lack of self-confidence in [our] own nation and efforts’. Then he added dryly, ‘I daresay he’s a bit bored and wants a bit of life and doesn’t think organising whist drives for Volunteers enough’.⁸⁵ Recognizing as he did here the mundane and seemingly futile aspects of their defence preparations, Butler nonetheless held firm to the principle that it was at this modest level that real nation-building must begin if the Irish were ever to come fully into their own.

⁸⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/625/232/1 (BP): HMB to Peggy Butler, undated [Summer 1939].

⁸⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/625/158/1 (BP): HMB to Peggy Butler, undated [Oct. 1940].

Whatever practical decisions they made during the war, nearly all Anglo-Irish Protestant intellectuals found the experience forced them to confront, in W.J. McCormack's words, 'a host of untested assumptions about identity national and personal, about responsibility in its moral and aesthetic forms'.⁸⁶ Elizabeth Bowen's case provides a particularly clear illustration of how the divergence between Irish and British war policies made the already difficult business of sustaining dual loyalties increasingly untenable. Admitting in 1942 that she had always found the practice of dividing her time between England and Ireland 'a highly disturbing emotion', she now contrived a way to continue her commuter existence despite the general prohibitions on travel.⁸⁷ At the start of July 1940 she informed Virginia Woolf that the British Ministry of Information had accepted her offer to visit Éire periodically in order to assess public opinion towards the war.⁸⁸ The reports she produced as a result are perceptive but highly impressionistic, and it is unlikely they had any discernible effect on Whitehall's policy towards Ireland. Their chief interest lies in what they reveal about Bowen's evolving relationship to her native land. In them she demonstrates an intellectual comprehension of the arguments made on behalf of neutrality, but more often than not her tone suggests an inability truly to empathize with her compatriots' sense of themselves. Even if one keeps in mind the audience for whom Bowen was writing, the readiness with which she presents the Irish point of view not on its own terms but rather as a deviation from British expectation is noteworthy.⁸⁹ Perhaps because he was much more certain of his essential Irishness than was Bowen, Hubert Butler had little time for his friend's aims and activities. After her death he dismissed the 'absurd appointment' she had secured, recalling how during one of her visits he mischievously took her to meet a local Catholic canon, 'who paced up

⁸⁶ W.J. McCormack, 'Irish Gothic and After 1820-1945: Introduction', in *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols., eds. S. Deane et al. (Derry, 1991), ii. 853.

⁸⁷ 'The Bellman' [Larry Morrow], 'Meet Elizabeth Bowen', *The Bell* 4:6 (Sept. 1942), 425.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree: Writings*, ed. H. Lee (New York, 1986), 214-16.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Bowen, 'Notes on Eire': *Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill* [sic], 1940-42, eds. J. Lane and B. Clifford (Aubane, Co. Cork, 1999), 12.

and down the room praising Mussolini and all he had done for Italy'.⁹⁰ By a sad irony, the nature of Bowen's efforts to stay in touch with Ireland during the war ultimately served only to exacerbate her growing sense of estrangement from it.⁹¹

That neutrality should become for the Irish not only a pragmatic foreign policy but also the latest symbolic assertion of their freedom is not surprising in the light of history. Less immediately explicable but bound up in this political dimension is the advanced degree to which it should also come to serve in the popular consciousness as a confirmation of Catholic Ireland's spiritual purity. Placed by geography and circumstance in a position to avoid hostilities which in any case they could do little to influence, the Irish frequently represented their good fortune instead as a sign of moral superiority over those countries engaged in fighting. This attitude had already become so pervasive by November 1939 that Ernest Greening of the *Church of Ireland Gazette* was moved to comment:

[T]here is a marked tendency, and an increasing one, for speakers and writers in this country to be proud and swell like the frog in the fable. Irish neutrality is spoken of as though our keeping out of the war were the result of our own superior virtue. Other nations may be led by their own fear and greed or by the incompetence of their politicians into a strife which is the last resort of barren minds, but we, happily, have the sense to see through all the hollowness of their pretensions, and we keep out.⁹²

In fact this posture of spiritual aloofness derived primarily from an ongoing fear of cultural contamination by England, but under the circumstances it was easily extended to anyone or anything to do with the war. This recoil from the whole outside world led Elizabeth Bowen in one of her reports to liken Ireland to a person trying to avoid an infectious disease. In this mentality, she suggested, 'war is not entered but "caught" – or picked up – just as, passively and unwillingly, one catches or picks up measles'.⁹³ It was because of this particularly supine tendency that Butler was disappointed in his compatriots' neutrality, even though he was a

⁹⁰ MH (Alpha): HMB to Victoria Glendinning, 4 Sept. 1975.

⁹¹ Roy Foster has perceptively explored the subtleties of Bowen's Irish identity from various angles. See 'The Irishness of Elizabeth Bowen' in *Paddy and Mr. Punch*, 102-22; see also 'Prints on the Scene: Elizabeth Bowen and the Landscape of Childhood' in *The Irish Story*, 148-63.

⁹² *CIG* 10 Nov. 1939, 594-5.

⁹³ Elizabeth Bowen, *Notes on Eire*, 20.

passionate supporter of the policy itself. 'Irish neutrality was ignoble', he argued later, 'since it was based not on repudiating war but on dodging it'.⁹⁴

IV. Life under the Emergency: 'The Barriers' and 'The Two Languages'

Hubert Butler's own uncertain situation at the start of the war was largely resolved when he inherited the family home, Maidenhall, in January 1941. Having spent so much of their married life moving from place to place, Butler and his wife now had a permanent residence and could depend on the stability and continuity it afforded. As their friend Pamela Travers wrote shortly after learning the news: 'I love to think of you being settled in your own place at last and building up a true life from your own centre. Having once got that you can wander as far and as often as you like because you are attached to the centre by a strong secure thread'.⁹⁵ The house was to serve this important function for the rest of their lives. With this new security, Butler began to involve himself more intimately in Irish affairs. In July 1941 he published in *The Bell* the essay 'The Barriers', in which he sought to distinguish the wisdom of Ireland's political neutrality from the folly of cultural isolationism. 'Just as our island is physically protected from the sea', he writes, 'there is an ocean of indifference and xenophobia to guard our insularity and to save us from foreign entanglements. Whatever its political value, culturally this self-sufficiency has been and will be a disaster to Ireland'. In making this assertion, however, he does not take lightly the colonial legacy that has made cultural autonomy such a fixation for the Irish. He recognizes how historically the exclusive interaction of two countries, such as that between a dominant England and a defensive Ireland, has virtually guaranteed destructive cultural inequities. Yet rather than attempt to redress this imbalance by turning in on itself, a move sure to impede its growth further, Butler believes a young nation like Ireland can consolidate its development only through regular exposure to outside ideas and perspectives. 'The problem of a struggling national culture is thus an international one', he insists, though he also concedes that

⁹⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/267/4 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'on God and prayer, religion, Irish neutrality' [undated].

⁹⁵ MH (Alpha): Pamela Travers to Hubert and Peggy Butler, 6 Jan. 1941.

those countries Ireland turns to must not be ones with whom relations are tainted by past condescension or abuse. A nascent people can retain its integrity 'only if the spiritual channels by which it can communicate with foreign cultures are kept free and its intercourse is equal and reciprocal'. Ireland must not allow its historic relationship with England to prevent its now living and learning with the rest of the world (*GW* 32-4).

Self-sufficiency, then, is a dream fuelled by bitterness over the past and can only prove illusory. Citing the analogous experience of the Succession States, Butler recalls how 'these little states were formed to protect and foster small cultural units. They failed. Everything that was unique and spontaneous in their national life was smothered behind the barriers reared to protect it'. Though he acknowledges that the middle of a world war is hardly the most auspicious moment for Ireland to take practical steps in averting this fate, he does believe the current isolation shows just how necessary such steps will be once peace returns. 'The war has forced on us a cultural self-sufficiency more complete than the most fervent separatist could have imposed by law', he observes. 'Now that we have seen its dangers, we can fight against them'. Meanwhile the Irish have been given an unexpected opportunity to reassess the barriers they have erected within their own minds (*GW* 34-6). This sense of intellectual obligation and possibility at home prompted Butler to discourage Irishmen from investing their collective emotions in external events that, for the time being at least, were beyond their control. While some have felt ashamed about Ireland's neutrality, he notes elsewhere that 'others again will feel unduly grand like Achilles sulking in his tent....Two conflicting habits of mind will result from this which are likely still further to impoverish our national spirit and to weaken our solidarity – false shame and false arrogance'.⁹⁶ Both were simply reinforcing psychological barriers that needed to be torn down before Ireland could achieve the dignified position among the nations it so badly craved.

As Butler himself must have realized, such soul-searching would appeal neither to the popular imagination nor to a government whose approach to neutrality relied heavily upon a

⁹⁶ MH (Notebook): untitled [black patterned softcover, undated (c. 1940s)].

general ignorance of the realities of Ireland's international position. It remains a central irony of the war period that this enforced ignorance should in turn rely so much upon the success of England's war effort in order to continue.⁹⁷ Only if the Allies withstood German military aggression could Ireland still indulge its belief that both sides were equally threatening to its sovereignty and similarly bereft of merit. As Arland Ussher wrote acerbically in the autumn of 1944: 'Like the Pope who saw in the first stirrings of the Reformation merely "a quarrel of monks", Ireland sees in the totalitarian eruption a mere "clash of rival imperialism", a "capitalist war", or some such childishness'.⁹⁸ That the Germans might not exercise the same restraint towards Ireland were they in Britain's place was a point the leadership worked to obscure and on which the people were content to equivocate. The aggressive censorship enforced by the government for the duration of the war was central to the construction and maintenance of this alternative perception of reality. Fearful that too much knowledge of German brutality towards other small nations might galvanize the Irish people into an abandonment of neutrality in favour of the Allies, the government assiduously blocked reports of Nazi atrocities. In this manner the censorship cultivated a 'moral neutrality' among the people to undergird the political neutrality already in place.⁹⁹ This 'moral neutrality' was perpetuated by the Irish themselves through their natural scepticism of English motives and their readiness to disregard any stray reports of Nazi

⁹⁷ Joseph Lee provides an especially stringent assessment of this aspect of Irish thinking during the war. See J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989), 262-3.

⁹⁸ Arland Ussher, 'The Neutral Nation', *New English Weekly* 28 Sept. 1944, 184.

⁹⁹ Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society* (Cork, 1996), 6.

atrocities as British propaganda.¹⁰⁰ Arguably the censorship was so effective in the manipulation of Irish public opinion that it functioned as a form of propaganda in its own right.¹⁰¹

Aside from the *Irish Times*, one of the major outward-looking publications during the war was the *The Bell*, founded by Seán O'Faoláin in October 1940. Self-consciously assuming the mantle of pluralist and internationalist values left behind by the old *Irish Statesman*, the magazine worked hard to remind its readers that they did not exist in a cultural vacuum. Perhaps inevitably, as a result it was dismissed by hard-line nationalists as anti-Irish. When the young Conor Cruise O'Brien was asked in 1945 to summarize public opinion of *The Bell*, he noted that while many people were grateful that the journal focused so much attention on life elsewhere, there remained others who regarded it as nothing more than 'hack journalistic pro-British Empire blub' bent on 'kow-towing to [the] English market'.¹⁰² Of course, *The Bell* had already provided numerous arguments, Hubert Butler's 'The Barriers' among them, favouring a balance between the cultural imperatives of domestic coherence and foreign stimulation, but such appeals for moderation were unlikely to persuade extremists. Butler himself continued to explore the issue of national equilibrium in more broadly social terms with an essay he submitted to *The Bell* in the autumn of 1943 entitled 'The Two Languages'. It is one of the most intellectually challenging pieces he

¹⁰⁰ Conor Cruise O'Brien has recently recorded that while many Dublin intellectuals assumed Britain and France would ultimately win the war, they retained the assumption that even in the event of a German victory Ireland's sovereignty would be respected because it was neutral. O'Brien attributes this particular naiveté to the foundational assumptions of the nationalist mentality: 'Irish nationalists were conditioned to think of imperialism – primarily *British* imperialism – as the source of most of the evil in the world. The idea that Nazism differed from all previously known forms of imperialism as AIDS differs from the common cold was quite a new idea and unassimilable within our culture'. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Memoir: My Life and Themes* (Dublin, 1999), 89-91.

¹⁰¹ Donal Ó Drisceoil, 'Censorship as propaganda: the neutralisation of Irish public opinion during the Second World War', in B. Girvin and G. Roberts (eds.), *Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance* (Dublin, 2000), 164.

¹⁰² 'Scrutator' [Conor Cruise O'Brien], 'Verdict on the "The Bell"', *The Bell* 10:5 (Aug. 1945), 435. It is remarkable that this simplistic view of *The Bell* should persist even now. Gerry Smyth, for example, recently characterized O'Faoláin's editorial stance as 'a tacit acknowledgement of metropolitan cultural leadership, as "Irish" experience looks to comprehend itself in the "universalist" terms made available by "non-Irish" sources'. Gerry Smyth, *Decolonisation and Criticism: The Construction of Irish Literature* (London, 1998), 117. Yet it must be obvious to anyone who has read *The Bell* that O'Faoláin was far more sophisticated in his understanding of foreign influences than Smyth's derivative postcolonial theorizing here permits. Trapped in an unwitting 'West Britonism' he most certainly was not.

ever wrote, and its subtlety of approach led the magazine to reject it as too allusive for a general readership.¹⁰³ This is unfortunate, because careful scrutiny of ‘The Two Languages’ yields valuable insights from Butler about how the cosmopolitan conscience ought to conceive its individual moral function in relation to the collective demands of Irish national solidarity.

Butler begins the essay with the premise that the size and scope of traditional human communities have evolved naturally in keeping with the limits of personal sympathy and neighbourly concern. Such associations bind together for the purposes of mutual care and assistance and over time achieve a cohesion that clearly delineates the borders of belonging. This organic process of consolidation thus serves to protect individuals from the overwhelming moral demands external circumstances might place upon them were they to remain totally unaligned. So he asserts that ‘an aggregation of men exposes a smaller surface of sensibility to outer impressions than does a loose collection of individuals’. Nonetheless, he notes that despite this fundamental sociological reality, ‘we go on expecting that states and governments should show the same susceptibilities as those who compose them. We expect them to be sensitive to appeals to pity and honour, and when they are unresponsive, to exhibit signs of shame. In fact it is only through the fissures in the fabric that such influences travel. A solidly built state will show only a surface reaction’. Recently the Irish state had been subject to this spurious logic because it was one of the few small modern states to have asserted its neutrality and been spared violation by the warring powers. Given the circumstances, where was its compassion for its suffering counterparts on the Continent? Yet Butler considers the Irish government’s stony-faced stance of moral neutrality to have been obvious and reasonable for an institution which, by definition, should care only about its own self-preservation. Moreover, he speculates that given the relative newness and fragility of Éire’s sovereignty, the Irish people themselves should be grateful for the apparent confidence of their state, since as individuals they remain deeply uncertain as to its future and insecure about their own unity. Consequently, in Ireland ‘we welcome every sign of

¹⁰³ See *GW* 43-9.

solidarity and are proud that the cleavages in our state have not gone so deep as to violate its integrity. Control has not passed from the body to its members' (*GW* 37-8).

This assertion that there is a difference in moral obligation between the state and its citizens is a crucial distinction for Butler. 'Men as individuals can be chivalrous, generous, impressionable', he reiterates, 'but a community of men can accept no obligation that threatens its existence. At the first sound of war we have seen the small modern state abjure all the enlightened sympathies of its citizens, contracting into a tight ball like a hedgehog at the bark of a dog, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, smelling nothing'. Given that the Irish state appears to be pursuing this absolutist position so assiduously, it is noteworthy that at the same time scores of Irishmen, either through active war service or otherwise, should have taken on overtly partisan opinions. He concludes that individuals have felt free to participate in the war 'because we have always been realists about our state, however many delusions we have had about the Irish nation. We have grown up with it and never thought of it as transcending common experience or giving more than a vague and precarious expression to that corporate existence of which we believe ourselves capable. We have never made it the guardian of our social conscience or expected it to speak prematurely with the voice of the National Being' (*GW* 39). It is telling that Butler should at this moment invoke AE's concept of the National Being, because this is just where his own argument seems to part company with the actualities of contemporary popular feeling. Just as Russell's ideal of a pluralist and co-operative commonwealth never bore much relation to the majority's aspirations for an Irish Catholic nation, so Butler's emphasis here on a detached attitude to the war-time state mistakes the feelings of a minority for those of the whole. The readiness with which the majority happily answered the government's declaration of neutrality with its own rhetoric of moral purity suggests there was a greater ideological correlation between state and populace than Butler is wont to acknowledge. Similarly suggestive is the docility with which that majority acceded to a censorship bent on concealing the occasional manifestations of

dissent that did exist. A 'guardian of our social conscience' is precisely what most Irish people expected the state to be during the war years.

As the essay reaches its climax, it becomes clearer why Butler should stress the gap between the objective priorities of the state and the individual sentiments of its citizenry. If there existed no occasions of disjunction between the two, then it would be difficult to defend the state's moral neutrality while still ascribing a positive value to cosmopolitan thinking, which by its very nature draws attention to the outside world the state has chosen to ignore. So Butler concludes that in Ireland 'it is only as individuals, as free elements on the surface of our state, that we respond to the moral climate of the world', a statement which advances his argument through the narrow passage between patriotic loyalty and personal concern. In doing so he defends those Irishmen with outward-looking tendencies, even as he recognizes that the state can only retain its integrity because among the body politic 'there is an ultimate impermeable core of obtuseness and self-sufficiency, which is at once our shame and our salvation'. In other words, there are two ways of being Irish, outward-looking and inward-looking, and only by carefully balancing the two can the moral equilibrium of the nation be maintained. 'That is the explanation', Butler reasons,

why many Irishmen feel profoundly and personally implicated in the moral problems of Europe and at the same time are passionate supporters of Irish neutrality. Wireless sets, newspapers, tell them of free nations like their own being destroyed, of men being bullied and tortured, of free minds being enslaved, but they feel that it is they themselves and not their nation who are being addressed. They do not wish their neighbour across the hill to be coerced into feeling this shame or into pretending to feel it. For such feelings are the price that is paid for a range of interest and sympathy wider than his. They stand on the periphery of the nation, he at the core. Their hearts are not warmer than his, merely the warmth ranges outwards and not inwards and is more widely diffused.

This is a key moment in the development of Butler's thought, for he is striving to reconcile his own cosmopolitan values with a recognition of local ones. So he asserts that 'there is an outer and an inner language talked in every state and if no one is coerced into talking a language other than his own, the life of a community will be preserved even when its material existence is threatened'. Here he has formulated the terms for an Irishness which even amidst the pressures of

war he believes can be dynamic yet coherent, relying as it does on a symbiotic relationship between internal and external social forces. It is not too much to say that this postulation of two languages also serves as an assertion of Butler's own un-hyphenated Irish identity, for through it he can understand his status on the periphery not as a product of Anglo-Irish difference but rather as a variant of full Irishness, an Irishness completely dependent on that of his less cosmopolitan neighbours. It is therefore not with condescension that he speaks of those who exist psychologically at the core of the nation, but rather in appreciation of their rootedness. Moreover, he acknowledges that people like himself who exist on the periphery and act as gatekeepers to other cultures only retain a meaningful national role so long as those at the core are allowed to carry on unmolested. Only if the essential solidarity of the nation is safeguarded will those on the edges 'represent more than themselves and become in a true sense the interpreters of the National Being' (*GW* 39-43).

As Hubert Butler was exploring the moral relationship between Irish neutrality and cosmopolitanism at home, some of his fellow intellectuals were busily testing its perimeters through their activities abroad. Certainly this was the case with Francis Stuart (1902-2000), who famously opted to spend the entirety of the Second World War in Nazi Germany. Although afterwards he was to remain studiously vague about the nature of his relationship to the Nazi regime, Stuart's willingness first to write scripts for William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) and then, from 1942-44, to broadcast himself to Ireland over German airwaves, suggests a man who was driven by more than just the tide of circumstance.¹⁰⁴ Another Irishman engaged in the ostensibly 'neutral' activity of broadcasting was Denis Johnston, who worked for the BBC as a radio journalist accompanying the British forces in the field. As he explains in his war account *Nine Rivers from Jordan*, Johnston chose to maintain his neutrality under these conditions by going

¹⁰⁴ For an evaluation of Stuart's intellectual engagement with authoritarianism and anti-semitism both before and during the war, see Brendan Barrington's excellent introduction to *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart 1942-1944*, ed. B. Barrington (Dublin, 2000), 1-60. See also David O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices* (Belfast, 1998), 103-41.

about unarmed.¹⁰⁵ He sticks to this policy until the war's end, when quite by chance he comes across the recently liberated concentration camp of Buchenwald. The horrors he witnesses there finally prompt him to declare his open support for the Allied cause in the only way he knows how: '[F]aced with Buchenwald', he explains, 'I abandoned my previous pose of holier-than-thou neutrality, and took possession of a gun. The men who had just broken open that monstrous place were carrying guns, but for which the gates would have remained shut. Why then should I presume to remain in the category of the unarmed?'¹⁰⁶ Johnston's symbolic gesture demonstrates that he recognizes, however belatedly, that he has been party to a conflict with profound moral ramifications underlying the more obvious political ones. As he wrote in 1950, '[I]t was my stumbling upon Buchenwald that brought me face to face with something that could not be denied any longer. Here in this concentration camp was the final piece of data that far transcended any question of conflicting ideologies. What it amounted to was a matter of being either for or against the human race'.¹⁰⁷

With Germany's final surrender in June 1945, there came at last an end to Ireland's enforced isolation and fresh hopes that the country could resume political, economic and social relations with other nations. But how exactly the Irish would fit into the post-war dispensation was not altogether clear. A general sense of uncertainty and ambivalence about their position predominated in the summer of 1945. In the leading article of *The Bell* for July, Seán O'Faoláin captured the mood of the moment: 'We emerge, a little dulled, bewildered, deflated. There is a great leeway to make up, many lessons to be learned, problems to be solved which, in those six years of silence, we did not even allow ourselves to state'.¹⁰⁸ Writing to Tyrone Guthrie around

¹⁰⁵ Denis Johnston, *Nine Rivers from Jordan* (London, 1953), 60.

¹⁰⁶ Denis Johnston, *The Brazen Horn* (Dublin, 1976), 158.

¹⁰⁷ Denis Johnston, 'A Decade in Retrospect: 1939-1949', *The Month* 3:2 (Feb. 1950), 91. See also Bernard Adams, *Denis Johnston: A Life* (Dublin, 2002), 204ff.

¹⁰⁸ Seán O'Faoláin, 'The Price of Peace', *The Bell* 10:4 (July 1945), 288. F.S.L. Lyons echoes O'Faoláin's sentiments in his famous summary of the Irish wartime experience: 'The tensions – and the liberations – of the war, the shared experience, the comradeship in suffering, the new thinking about the future, all these things had passed [Éire] by. It was as if an entire people had been condemned to live in Plato's cave, with

the same time, Hubert Butler tried to articulate his own tangle of emotions amidst the return of peace. Responding to the considerable criticism heaped upon Ireland in recent weeks by a victorious Britain, he felt constrained to justify the neutrality policy: 'On the whole I believe de Valera has acted in accordance not only with the country's wishes but with its best interests, which he is right in putting first, as does every national leader'. Despite such arguments, however, he knew that the logic of the inner Ireland was unlikely to make sense when applied to the conditions of the outer world. It was a question of balancing the two languages again. 'Ireland is so very small and unimportant in world affairs', he explained. 'All the same it is to us our home and the centre of many of our hopes and thoughts, and naturally our concern about it all will appear a bit exaggerated outside but quite understandable here'.¹⁰⁹

Not surprisingly, a place Butler found more sympathetic to the Irish position was Switzerland, which he managed to visit not long after the war had ended. There a thoughtful Irishman might engage in candid conversations about the vices and virtues of neutrality without being pre-judged. Yet even under such favourable conditions as these he felt that the Irish still had something to answer for: 'The Swiss have been actively at peace', he mused, 'while we have been passively and a bit shamefacedly not at war'. Observing the multitude of humanitarian organizations based in Switzerland, he reflected afterwards that the visiting Irishman might be forgiven for regarding his nation's neutrality 'as an ignoble hole-in-corner affair based on small evasions and duplicities by which his own skin might be saved. It was without idealism or assurance'.¹¹⁰ Nor was Butler alone in his feeling that despite the precious gift of six years' peace, Ireland had failed to emerge with even a modest notion of the part it might play in post-war Europe. Seán O'Faoláin once again summed it up well when he wrote to Arnold Marsh: 'I

their backs to the fire of life and deriving their only knowledge of what went on outside from the flickering shadows thrown on the wall before their eyes by the men and women who passed to and fro behind them. When after six years they emerged, dazzled, from the cave into the light of day, it was to a new and vastly different world'. F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland*, 557-8.

¹⁰⁹ MH (Alpha): HMB to Tyrone Guthrie, undated [Summer 1945].

¹¹⁰ MH (Ms.): untitled/ re Irish and Swiss neutrality, 1 [14pp., draft w/ notes, c. 1946].

have heard people wonder if it would make any difference now to the civilisation of the world if Ireland sank to the bottom of the sea. Where are our justifications for existing? That is not a pessimistic or rhetorical question. It is a Voltairean challenge to you'.¹¹¹ The old pre-war penchant for defining itself over and against the colonizer England was rapidly losing its rhetorical force as Britain itself struggled with economic malaise and the terminal decline of the Empire. Moreover, the pious conceit that the Irish had taken the moral highroad in staying out of the war began to ring ever falser as reports of German atrocities now flooded into an Ireland no longer shielded by heavy censorship.¹¹² In order to develop a constructive (and not merely reactive) international identity for the second half of the century, then, the Irish would have to come to terms with a very different world from the one they effectively exited in 1939. Not only were the Manichaeian distinctions of their traditional two-island outlook increasingly irrelevant, but beyond them a whole continent lay in physical and spiritual ruins, the lessons of which had still to be confronted.

¹¹¹ TCD, Ms. 8400/142 (Marsh Papers): Seán O'Faoláin to Arnold Marsh, undated [mid-1940s].

¹¹² J.J. Lee, *Ireland*, 267.

Three: Christianity, Mass Society and the Cold War, 1945-72

The tree is to be known by its fruits. Societies are not Christian because the majority of their members are baptised, or because, on public occasions, they pay a ceremonial tribute to Christianity. Nor should the criticism of totalitarian regimes be based primarily on the fact that, while tolerating docile and discreetly conducted Churches, they are officially anti-Christian. In their case, also, the important point is the practical effect of such regimes on the spiritual vitality of the personalities moulded by them.

– R.H. Tawney, 'A Note on Christianity and the Social Order'.¹

I. Composite villainies: making sense of the Second World War

That the western world had been altered psychologically by the scale and nature of the suffering inflicted during the Second World War was undeniable. And as was the case everywhere, thoughtful people in Ireland grappled to articulate the nature of this legacy. In a piece entitled 'The Augury of the Atom Bomb', Arland Ussher asserted that 'the scientific massacres of Poland have left a wound in the civilised man's psyche which, like the bite of a rabid dog, cannot easily be healed'.² Likewise, Denis Johnston spoke of the persistent feeling of 'mental confusion' and 'spiritual nausea' engendered by the war which was to linger long after the last shot had been fired.³ Yet even as they reckoned with these realities, Irish intellectuals could not help but be thankful that they had impinged so little on Ireland itself. Critical as he had sometimes been of his compatriots for their wartime exceptionalism, Ussher conceded afterwards that neutrality had spared Éire from more than just bombs: '[I]t is a good thing that one country at least should be able to resist the de-individualising tendencies of the time', he admitted, 'and we are in the fortunate position of being an island, separated a little from the European complexity'.⁴ Writing the preface to *Irish Harvest* in 1946, Robert Greacen echoed these sentiments, noting that in Ireland 'the *totality* of individual consciousness is still taken as a matter of course, as opposed

¹ R.H. Tawney, *The Attack and Other Papers* (1953; Nottingham, 1981), 170-1.

² Arland Ussher, *Postscript on Existentialism and Other Essays* (Dublin, 1946), 63.

³ Denis Johnston, 'A Decade in Retrospect: 1939-1949', 88-9.

⁴ TCD, Ms. 9004 (Ussher Papers): 'The Mind of Ireland and the Face of Europe' [broadcast; undated].

to the increasing *totalitarianism* of modern society'.⁵ Blessed as they were in this respect, if Irishmen were to have any genuine appreciation for what the world had been through, they would have to face the cruel fact that the very concept of individualism itself had been defiled. And of course the most horrific manifestation of this defilement was the annihilation of the Jews.

While the Irish were not unique in their initial incredulity at the revelations of the Holocaust, their recent isolation made the process of recognition all the more bitter. Free at last to speak his mind, Canon Ernest Greening of the *Church of Ireland Gazette* in May 1945 opined that one of the worst aspects of the censorship had been that 'no Irish pen was allowed to protest against the crucifixion of Israel' and concluded 'it is one thing to forbid discussion upon the delicate subject of neutrality; it is another to keep silence about a deliberate attempt to exterminate a whole nation'.⁶ It is perhaps not so surprising that once they were presented with the full facts of Nazi brutality, many Irishmen simply refused to believe such things were possible. Hubert Butler, in recalling how Kilkenny people greeted the news of the liberation of Belsen with a mixture of flippancy and denial, remarked: 'whether you believed it or not, the whole affair was utterly beyond our imaginations. We had to treat it as either a lie or a joke' (*GW* 206-7). Nor did such resistance to the truth die easily. While travelling through Ireland in the mid-1950s, the German writer Heinrich Böll still felt obliged to perform 'political dentistry' on many of the Irishmen he met, pulling out the rotten teeth of equivocation about Nazism and Hitler, bogies whose evils they still insisted had been manufactured by British propaganda.⁷ Others clung to the notion that whatever cruelties the Germans may have inflicted upon the Jews, the English had anticipated them in their oppression of the Irish and other colonial peoples. But such arguments failed to grasp the essential point. No matter how bad British misrule was at times, never did it generate whole new categories of calculated inhumanity in the way Nazism

⁵ Robert Greacen, 'Report from Dublin', in R. Greacen (ed.), *Irish Harvest* (Dublin, 1946), 14.

⁶ *CIG* 18 May 1945, 11-12.

⁷ Heinrich Böll, *Irish Journal*, trans. L. Vennewitz (1967; London, 2000) 10, 38-40.

did.⁸ The cool determination with which the Nazis prosecuted their aims is part of what lent their deeds a new dimension of awfulness. Butler related this bureaucratic administration of cruelty to the whole depersonalizing tendency of the age when he observed that ‘we live in a world of neat classifications in which what we are and feel is of little account compared to what someone writes in our passports or baptismal registers or examination reports....In Europe whole peoples have been several times uprooted and exchanged in the past few years, after a glance or two at their papers and passes’. Then, to bring the point home to his compatriots, he added with an especially potent reference to Irish history: ‘Cromwell was a pettifogging bumbler, judged by modern methods’.⁹

It was in his efforts to comprehend how totalitarianism had managed to gain such a strangle hold on European civilization that Hubert Butler produced some of his finest writing during the post-war years. These pieces serve both in form and content as an eloquent rebuttal of the insidious forces they seek to expose, and like those of George Orwell, Butler’s essays erect ‘a defensive landmark of plain meaning’ against all the jargon and pretence afflicting so much twentieth-century discourse.¹⁰ Though not actually composed until 1967, ‘Thalburg Revisited’ is a logical starting-point in a review of this work, because in it Butler returns to those early days when Hitler and his henchmen might still have been stopped, if only more people had joined Carl von Ossietzky in actively opposing them. Inspired by William Sheridan Allen’s study of one small German town in the early 1930s, the piece reassesses why so many otherwise decent citizens first tacitly endorsed the Nazis through their silence and then actively supported them

⁸ Hannah Arendt drives home this point in her monumental work, *The Rise of Totalitarianism* (1951; 2nd edn., San Diego, 1979), 444.

⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/95/1 (BP); untitled/ archived as ‘The Old Ascendancy and the New Ireland’ [undated].

¹⁰ Norman Dennis and A.H. Halsey, *English Ethical Socialism: Thomas More to R.H. Tawney* (Oxford, 1988), 95. See also Hugh Kenner, ‘The Politics of the Plain Style’, in N. Sims (ed.), *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1990), 183-90.

when it had become unpopular or dangerous to do otherwise.¹¹ ‘Most of us are surrounded by pleasant, respected well-educated people and we think we know them’, Butler begins the essay. ‘In fact they are the enigma of the century and very little effort has been made to discover why a little pressure, rightly applied, will turn us all into a pack of terrified and self-deceiving morons and bullies’. The purpose of this meditation is not, as the very general terms of these opening lines make clear, to identify this ‘enigma of the century’ as a unique product of German pathology. Indeed, Butler makes explicit his assumption that it is a universally human problem to contend with when he draws a direct parallel between the community under discussion and his own: ‘Thalburg is a charming little north German town’, he writes, ‘about the size of Kilkenny’. From this opening he then rehearses the gradual stages by which the Nazi Party worked its way, through a combination of seduction and menace, into a position of unassailable local power in Thalburg. He is especially adept at showing how the so-called ‘good Germans’ – respectable people like teachers, lawyers, doctors and clergy – all allowed their complacency and fear to tie their hands, till the small compromises they made led to bigger and bigger ones. Sounding much like his eighteenth-century compatriot Edmund Burke in this regard, he asserts: ‘[N]onsense is always nonsense and when sensible men acquiesce in it, it turns into something monstrous and cruel’ (CD 171, 181).

With the same tools of social and moral dissection Butler pursues his analysis of Nazi tactics in ‘The Invader Wore Slippers’. Originally published in the November 1950 issue of *The Bell*, the essay remains one of the few serious attempts to broach the uncomfortable topic of how the Irish would have coped with Nazism had it landed on their shores.¹² For all the talk – no doubt much of it justified – about the brave resistance Éire would have mounted had it been subject to a violent foreign occupation, little attention was paid to the more subtle ways the

¹¹ William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: the experience of a single German town, 1930-1935* (London, 1966). Relevant here, too, is the more recent book by Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1996).

¹² J.J. Lee, *Ireland*, 282n.

Germans had managed to subjugate small peoples during the war. Here Butler challenges not the courage Irishmen would have displayed if faced with brutality but the likelihood their struggle should take place along such clear-cut lines in the first place. When invasion was still a real possibility in the early years of the war, he notes, 'it never occurred to us that for ninety per cent of the population the moral problems of an occupation would be small and squalid. Acting under pressure we should often have to choose between two courses of action, both inglorious'. Despite tight censorship controls, it was inevitable that British news reports should circulate in Ireland which highlighted the bloodiest aspects of Axis aggression, making it natural for the Irish to assume a German invasion would be terrifying, characterized by the Nazi jackboot. And yet, Butler writes, 'We did not ask ourselves, 'Supposing the invader wears not jackboots but carpet slippers or patent leather pumps, how will I behave, and the respectable Xs, the patriotic Ys, and the pious Zs?'''. This sentence is a brilliant rhetorical manoeuvre and an encapsulation of the whole essay. With one deft stroke, the writer imprints upon the minds of his readers a bizarre and therefore memorable image that will stay with them and to which the substance of his moral challenge will always be attached. At the same time, he introduces a troika of types – the respectable Xs, the patriotic Ys, and the pious Zs – with which he suggests most people may be loosely identified. If one reviews examples of how ordinary people elsewhere behaved under Nazi domination, 'by a little careful analogy and substitution we can see ourselves, and a picture of our home under occupation emerges with moderate clarity' (*EA* 103). In a remarkably short span of time, Butler has ushered his readers to a place of self-examination they hardly bargained for three paragraphs earlier.

Having set the stage in this way, Butler moves on to tell his compatriots that they would have been just as susceptible to German tactics as those who were actually conquered. What made the Nazis so dangerous was the relentless cynicism with which they second-guessed the weaknesses of their victims and then exploited them to the full. It is hubristic to presume it would have been any different in Ireland. Insisting that 'we Irish were not more complex than

anyone else', Butler surmises that 'finding indulgence where we had been led to expect violence, [we] might easily have been tricked into easy-going collaboration'. Still irritated by Éire's complacency and lack of realism during the last war, he is adamant that lessons must be learned from the experiences of others not so lucky as the Irish. So he insists that even in times of peace, 'small peoples should become specialists in the art of non-cooperation with tyranny. It is the only hope we can play when the great powers clash, and we are hopelessly untrained in it' (EA 104).

He then turns to the specific cases of German occupation in the Channel Islands, Brittany and Croatia, which offer illustrations of the Xs, Ys, and Zs dominant in each respective place. These three cases are also useful because each left behind a wealth of newspaper documentation, an excellent record of the particular ways the Nazis manipulated the hopes and fears of the locals. The evidence of the *Guernsey Post*, for example, shows that the Nazis learned to beat the 'respectable Xs' of the Channel Islands at their own game. The islanders proved adept at overlooking occasional announcements about the deportation of Jews provided the authorities did not interfere with the usual notices about cricket scores and social gatherings. So Butler observes that 'lubricated by familiar trivialities, the mind glided over what was barbarous and terrible'. After the war, many of the islanders testified to how polite the Germans had always been to them, about which Butler similarly comments: 'Such behaviour is plainly more formidable than the jackboot[;] we are hypnotized by the correctness of the invader into accepting invasion itself as correct. The solidity of our resistance is undermined by carefully graded civilities, our social and racial hierarchies are respected'.¹³ This was particularly effective with the British, he argues, because they were eager to disassociate themselves from the Irish labourers who came to work the tomato harvest, as well as the Russian prisoners whom the Germans had transported there. In their desperation to maintain a sense of social superiority, they would rather align themselves

¹³ A recent study of the German occupation of the Channel Islands largely confirms Butler's portrayal of the relationship between the invaders and the invaded: see Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule 1940-1945* (London, 1995), 191ff. Also apposite is Robert Gildea's excellent *Marianne in Chains: In Search of the German Occupation, 1940-1945* (London, 2002).

with pleasant enemies than with unfortunate allies. Thus the Germans conquered the islanders with their very genteelness of their occupation (*EA* 106-7).

What is striking about 'The Invader Wore Slippers' so far is the apparent coolness of Butler's tone in discussing these matters: he has the disturbing ability to make his argument all the more ominous by the sheer empiricism of his approach. Having demonstrated how easily the respectable are fallen, he proceeds to the 'patriotic Ys', whom he sees best exemplified by the Breton separatists. With these people the Nazis employed a double-edged approach, first encouraging and then strangling the separatist movement as it suited them. In this case Butler remarks of the Germans that 'they led the Bretons the sort of dance that cannot be done in jackboots'. More to the point, he maintains that 'the Nazi policy in regard to Ireland would have been equally agile and ambiguous. The Celtic nationalist would, as in Brittany, have been regarded as a valuable tool for undermining a non-German hegemony, but of decidedly less value for the reconstruction of a German one. The nationalist would have been manoeuvred, not kicked, out of his privileged position'.¹⁴ Once the nationalists had served their purpose in Ireland, he believes it would have been the respectable Xs – 'the Anglo-Irish *Herrenvolk* of Ulster and the Dublin suburbs' – who would have proved the most co-operative in the establishment of German authority. This assessment is remarkable not least for its unflattering appraisal of Butler's own community. He predicts that the Germans would have treated the Anglo-Irish to 'a dazzling display of "correctness"' by which they would be lulled as easily as the Channel Islanders had been. By the same token, the Celtic Irish would have found their prestige proportionally diminished. Given the Nazi obsession with race theory, 'the inevitable bias of German correctness would have been towards the Anglo-Saxon, towards bridge and fox-hunting, and

¹⁴ Helmut Clissmann, the Abwehr agent assigned to train IRA men should the Germans attempt to infiltrate Northern Ireland, later asserted: 'Hitler would have sold the Irish down the river. I would have told the Irish that their freedom was coming. I would have been a Lawrence of Arabia. It happened to several friends of mine, with the Bretons and the Walloons. Their freedom was promised but then, when the Germans had what they wanted, the separatist groups were abandoned. Northern Ireland would have been given to a "Vichy"-type government in London. Hitler did not want to harm the British Empire'. Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939-45* (Dublin, 1983), qtd. 380.

away from the Irish, from ceilidhes and hurley matches and language festivals'. Whatever anthropological interest the Germans might take in Irish culture or whatever lip-service they might pay to Irish nationalist ideals, Butler can only suppose that 'in the Nazi hierarchy of races the Irish would not I think have ranked high'. In the end, the identity distinctions Irishmen had been fostering among each other for centuries would have provided the Nazis with nearly endless opportunities to foment internal rivalries and frustrate efforts at pan-Irish solidarity (*EA* 108-10).

Nonetheless, Butler does not linger over this point, because he is convinced that in Ireland 'ultimately more attention would have been paid to our piety than to our patriotism' and 'many of the pious Zs would have responded to skilful handling'. The precedent he cites for how the pious respond to occupation comes from Yugoslavia, the place he knew best of the three he is discussing. It was through the short-lived Independent State of Croatia that the Germans demonstrated their 'technique of perverting piety' to their own ends. Conceding the wartime events that took place there are in another category altogether from the muted compliance documented in the Channel Islands, Butler evokes a distinction with a characteristically potent turn of phrase: 'When an incendiary sets a match to respectability, it smoulders malodorously, but piety, like patriotism, goes off like a rocket'. The rocket launched in the Yugoslavian case was 'the regicide ruler' of Croatia, the devoutly Catholic Ante Pavelitch, who, with minimal encouragement from the Germans and Italians, became 'the epitome, the personification, of the extraordinary alliance of religion and crime'. No jackboots were required in subjugating the Croats because Pavelitch and his henchmen happily wore jackboots of their own, to the point that even the Nazis themselves found the Ustashe's appetite for violence distasteful. Of Pavelitch's ruthless campaign forcibly to convert all the 'schismatic' Serbs to the faith of the majority Butler remarks solemnly: '[H]e applied the simple creed of One Faith, One Fatherland, with a literalness that makes the heart stand still. It was an equation that had to be solved in blood'. Amidst all the barbarity and terror, the civic leaders, the intellectuals, and the churchmen did next to nothing:

‘The protests of the Xs, the Ys and the Zs were scarcely audible’ (*EA* 110). Once again the decent people had allowed themselves to be compromised.

This account of the Croatian compulsory conversion campaign marks the dramatic climax of the essay. Butler’s earlier, almost clinical tone is sharpened by the moral outrage he plainly feels towards both the perpetrators of these crimes and all those who stood by and let them happen. Pavelitch’s fanatical piety demonstrates how easily the fusion of religion and nationalism can turn creeds into blacklists and devotions into death verdicts. Only the naive and inexperienced can still believe that the old verities will be spared distortion under conditions like these. Thus while in Zagreb reviewing the wartime newspapers, Butler came to an essential realization: ‘it was not the human disaster but the damage done to honoured words and thoughts that was most irreparable. The letter and spirit had been wrested violently apart and a whole vocabulary of Christian goodness had blown inside out like an umbrella in a thunderstorm’. Language itself has been occupied by the totalitarian invader; all the assumptions of civilized society have been shamelessly exploited in the cause of their destruction. On this note of anguished recognition ‘The Invader Wore Slippers’ draws to a close. However diverse the three examples in the essay may appear, of course the only real difference among the Xs, Ys, and Zs is the way this corruption has been insinuated amidst the most cherished pretensions they have about themselves. An unflinching honesty about these vulnerabilities is required of small countries like Ireland if self-knowledge is the only means they have of deflecting the predatory instincts of larger ones. Butler ends with the assurance that although such realism is not a substitute for ‘the will or courage to resist tyranny’, even so ‘it will prevent us from dispersing our strength in fighting against shadows. By learning from which direction the most insidious attacks are likely to come, we may acquire the skill to forestall them’. It is a pragmatic and guardedly hopeful conclusion to an otherwise grim lesson in the anatomy of human weakness (*EA* 110-13).

If well-bred commanding officers of the occupying forces were unexpected figures to emerge from the German war machine, another were those Butler was fond of calling ‘desk murderers’. More than any other, this was the type he saw as the most dangerous product of totalitarianism, dangerous because superficially they always seemed so innocuous. In a piece he wrote for the *Irish Times* in 1956 called ‘The Human Beast’, he questioned the post-war tendency to fixate on the overt sadists among the Nazis – ‘the Beasts’ – much in the way he had already challenged the assumption that all German occupations had relied on the jackboot. Rather, he maintained, ‘the Beasts played so sensational a part simply because the better-class German did not like to be personally involved in the squalid details of a great and glorious plan for the reconstruction of Europe. A superior chef does not haunt the abattoirs, and there was very little sadism at headquarters’ (LN 140). One desk murderer in whom Butler took particular interest was Andrija Artukovitch, who served as Pavelitch’s Minister of the Interior in Croatia and was instrumental in the compulsory conversion campaign, yet who ‘deplored the disorderly and sadistic way in which his instructions were carried out’. As proved the case with so many other war criminals, Artukovitch was thoroughly respectable, and for Butler it is precisely this ‘correlation of respectability with crime that nowadays has to be so carefully investigated’ (EA 284). In his essay ‘The Artukovitch File’, a riveting combination of moral fable and detective story, Butler tells of his efforts to learn how Artukovitch, having fled the Balkans at war’s end, passed a year in Ireland before making his way to the United States. How could someone with so much blood on his hands have been permitted freely to walk the streets of Dublin? Butler can only conclude after interviewing various people with whom the Croat came into contact that they had little or no awareness of his recent past, assuming he was simply another Catholic refugee from Communism. Yet someone in either the Irish government or the Irish hierarchy had to have known who this man was and purposely facilitated his stay (EA 293-305).¹⁵ The episode serves

¹⁵ The Americans harboured Artukovitch as part of their Cold War strategy against the Eastern Bloc. Butler notes at the close of the essay it was not until 1986 that they cooperated with the old man’s

for Butler as another example of how decent people in the modern age, either through cultivated ignorance or active self-deception, become apologists for iniquities that would otherwise appal them. Or, as he was to put it later, such situations illustrate ‘the strange way in which charity turns into connivance and tactfulness into lies’.¹⁶

Another figure who was to confirm all Butler’s theories about the correlation between respectability and crime was Adolf Eichmann, whom the Israelis abducted from his Argentine exile in 1960 to prosecute him for war crimes in Jerusalem. Butler himself was eager to attend this much-publicized event in a journalistic capacity but unable to secure sponsorship for the trip.¹⁷ He had to content himself instead with an enthusiastic endorsement of the views expressed by Hannah Arendt, whose coverage of the trial for the *New Yorker* culminated in her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Here Arendt coined her famous phrase ‘the banality of evil’ to express the same idea Butler had developed independently, that men like Eichmann could organize such atrocities not because they were psychopaths but because their personalities had become subsumed by an unswerving devotion to routine and their self-expression wholly dependent on the regurgitation of cliché.¹⁸ In a series of articles he wrote in 1962 entitled ‘The Final Solution’, Butler affirmed that Eichmann was ‘unutterably banal’, and this was what had made him such an effective functionary in the Nazi apparatus: ‘He was extremely well-adjusted, he was wonderful on committees, knowing the right people to approach and the right “public image” to present. With a minimum of friction and hysteria he manoeuvred his Jews on to the conveyer belt that bore them to destruction’. What made Eichmann different from the Beasts who later claimed guiltily only to have been following orders, or even the top Nazis who at Nuremberg had embarked upon tortured rationalizations for their actions, was that he neither tried to soften the impact of his story nor even showed any remorse that his careful co-ordination of transport was

extradition and he was finally tried for war crimes in a Yugoslav court (*EA* 305).

¹⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/424/7 (BP): ‘Kilkenny Essays’ [1967].

¹⁷ TCD, Ms. 9031.336 (Ussher Papers): HMB to Arland Ussher, 21 Aug. 1960.

¹⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1965; London, 1994), 252.

essential to genocide. Butler speculated that ‘at his trial everyone must have hoped that Eichmann would stammer and lie and contradict himself, but he never really felt guilty or understood what had happened. He had been completely integrated into a criminal society so that the demands it made on him in the name of duty could not be recognized as crime’ (GW 208, 212).¹⁹

One of the many terrible events to be recounted during the Eichmann trial was the deportation from Paris to Auschwitz of 4,051 Jewish children in the summer of 1942. Held for four days without food at the Vélodrome d’Hiver in Drancy, on the outskirts of the city, the children’s transportation was approved by Eichmann only after Pierre Laval, Premier of Vichy France, had endorsed the move. Arendt thus notes that ‘the whole gruesome episode was...the outcome of an agreement between France and Germany, negotiated at the highest level’.²⁰ In one of his most disturbing essays, ‘The Children of Drancy’, Butler returns to this historical moment to ask why such an overwhelming instance of innocence betrayed had been allowed to fade into obscurity. ‘No one seems interested’, he laments. ‘I believe we are bored because the scale is so large that the children seem to belong to sociology and statistics. We cannot visualize them reading Babar books, having their teeth straightened, arranging dolls’ tea parties. Their sufferings are too great and protracted to be imagined, and the range of human sympathy is narrowly restricted’ (CD 186-7). Certainly this essay is central to the Butler *oeuvre* on its own merits, but also because it brings together some of the key themes running through all his international writings. Ever since his visit to Egypt in the 1920s, he had been conscious of how the specialization of knowledge and the bureaucratization of society were functioning to erode individual consciousness and undermine traditional human relationships; totalitarianism had only been the logical, albeit extreme, manifestation of this trend. The reason desk murderers like Artukovitch and Eichmann managed to perform their tasks so efficiently was of course because

¹⁹ Touching on this aspect of collective psychosis is Eric Hoffer’s influential work, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (1951; New York, 1989), 100-1.

²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 164.

they kept a safe distance from the actualities connected to their paperwork. Yet in this respect their behaviour was not atypical. Rather, they were simply grotesque examples of the ‘Organization Man’, a sociological description for those who, like Butler’s old Leningrad acquaintance Dmitri Kardin, adapted easily and unthinkingly to any political dispensation out of an instinct for self-preservation (*GW* 208).²¹ In logistical terms, scores of people had to assist the Nazis in small ways for them to achieve their goals on the scale which they did. In the case of the Children of Drancy, Butler therefore argues that ‘to kill and burn 4051 children after transporting them to Poland was a huge co-operative endeavour, in which thousands of French and German policemen, typists, railway officials, gas-fitters and electricians were engaged. It was composite villainy, and when you try to break it down there are no villains, just functionaries as neutral and characterless as the clusters of ink blobs of which a press photograph is composed’ (*CD* 187).

The anonymity and abnegation to which these people submitted was the mirror image of that inflicted upon the victims themselves. Just as no one person could be identified as the villain in the piece, neither could any one child’s sufferings be comprehended humanely. As an outsider trying to make sense of the tragedy, Butler is thrown back upon his faith in the intimacy of local life, where the scope of one’s neighbourhood and one’s innate capacity for sympathy remain roughly commensurate. When individuals try to extend their compassion beyond the natural boundaries of the things they can know directly, it necessarily becomes as abstract as the suffering they are seeking to mitigate.²² ‘No one likes thinking on these lines’, Butler concedes. ‘Yet observe how even pity can become helpless and sometimes destructive when it is divorced from deep personal concern and becomes a public matter. Public pity forms committees, sends

²¹ Butler does not indicate whether he was aware of American sociologist William H. Whyte’s 1957 book *The Organization Man*, which posits generalities about the type of person arising in western society specially conditioned to excel in bureaucracies. William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (London, 1957).

²² In his essay ‘Maria Pasquinelli and the Dissolution of the Ego’, Butler reiterated that ‘in the extension of our sympathies, or, as the psychologists say, the dissolution of our ego, there is a limit beyond which it is unwise to proceed. We are emotionally qualified to identify ourselves with large masses of men. Such an identification, unless it is, as with most men, perfunctory and shallow, will only lead to hopeless and futile acts of anguish’ (*LN* 103). This essay appeared in a shorter form in the *Dublin Magazine* under a different title: see HMB, ‘Istria and Maria Pasquinelli’, *Dublin Magazine* 23 (Jan.-Mar. 1948), 27-32.

tinned meat, secures entry visas, but the beating of its collective heart can be heard from miles away and it is easily eluded'. For all its well-meaning efforts, then, Butler can only surmise that 'public pity' operates as the unwitting flipside to 'that Faceless and Mysterious Collective Iniquity against which we are powerless'. The way to combat these massive evils is not to launch ever larger counter-attacks of altruism against them; rather, it is to focus on individual situations and people near at hand. 'It is because we do things in the big way that the Wicked Man has now become so elusive and almost an abstraction', he observes, so that 'the chain of responsibility lengthens every day' (CD 191-3).

What has facilitated this process of abstraction is the continual advance of science. Unlike C.P. Snow in *The Two Cultures*, Butler cannot see scientific achievement as the great hope of the future, because he regards it as deeply complicit in the trends of dehumanization.²³ '[I]n the international field', he argues, 'science is more often used as an instrument of hatred than of neighbourly love', and by 'instrument of hatred' he means not only the construction of ever more devastating weapons but also the rapid dissemination of ideology and the organization of mass action (CD 188, 192). When he speaks of 'science', then, he is really using the word interchangeably with 'technology', a conflation of meaning with which some might reasonably take issue. His basic point, however, remains the same: the culture growing up around the scientific method shows itself routinely unprepared to answer the ethical problems of social alienation which it has played such a central role in creating. So Butler quotes approvingly José Ortega y Gasset's assertion in *The Revolt of the Masses* that 'technism, in combination with liberal democracy, had engendered the Mass Man....Modern science has handed over the command of public life to the intellectually commonplace' (CD 190).²⁴ In the technocratic world

²³ Charles Snow was far from alone in his Wellsian expectations about the technocratic future. For an excellent overview of the historical context for Snow's 'two cultures' argument and the famous controversy it engendered between Snow and F.R. Leavis, see Stefan Collini, 'Introduction', in C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge, 1998) vii-lxxi.

²⁴ It is through reading Ortega y Gasset that Butler may have arrived at his opinion that science devoid of cultural context becomes nothing more than technology: 'Technism and science are consubstantial, and

of the twentieth century, the masses have become armies for the demagogue and the dictator to command, and the scientist's innovations for amoral progress become the Organization Man's implements of destruction.

And so Butler clings to the faith that if more Frenchmen in the neighbourhood of Drancy had resisted the deportation of the children whose cries were audible at night, perhaps the children might have been spared. To bolster this idealistic stance, he cites the relative success of the Danes and the Bulgars in frustrating efforts to deport Jews from their midst during occupation. 'They are no doubt individually as wicked as the rest of us', he posits, but in such small countries like Denmark and Bulgaria 'wickedness still has a name and an address and a face'. Personal responsibility for the fate of others cannot be shirked at such close quarters, nor will transgressions go unpunished indefinitely. Butler concludes with a characteristic mixture of acerbity and pathos: 'At the Gare d'Austerlitz the Children of Drancy were surrounded by the most civilized and humane people in Europe, but they were scarcely less isolated and abandoned than when they queued up naked for their "shower-bath" in the Polish forest' (CD 194). While he himself would never claim to have a decisive explanation for how such a thing became possible, Butler grappled with the moral ramifications of the Holocaust and totalitarian war more comprehensively than any other twentieth-century Irishman.

II. 'Militant Ecclesiasticism' and the Iron Curtain

The question facing all thinking Irishmen after the war was how their country could reintegrate itself positively into a European society riven by feelings of exhaustion, acrimony, and guilt over the cataclysm it had just weathered. One obvious way, as ever, was to encourage the Irish public to resume an engagement with other cultures through internationally-oriented periodicals. Aside from the continuance of *The Bell* under the new editorship of Peadar O'Donnell and of the *Dublin Magazine* under the indefatigable Seamus O'Sullivan, the Cork-

science no longer exists when it ceases to interest for itself alone, and it cannot so interest unless men continue to feel enthusiasm for the general principles of culture'. José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, authorized trans. (1930, 1932; London, 1993), 83.

based *Irish Writing* was started in 1946, with its young editors, David Marcus and Terence Smith, emphasizing in the first issue the importance of recognizing the Irishness of writing done by Irishmen living abroad.²⁵ Similarly, *Divinity* was launched in May 1945 by a group of Protestant churchmen with the stated purpose of encouraging the Church of Ireland to look beyond itself to the larger social and theological currents of worldwide Anglicanism.²⁶ It was in the pages of this new magazine that the Rev. R.E.C. Browne of St. Columba's College reminded readers that 'an Anglican Irishman is a member of the Church of Ireland and of the whole Anglican Communion. He is also a European'. Before the war, it had been easy to forget these levels of belonging, so preoccupied were Protestants with the changes in their own community's circumstances. Plainly this was no longer possible: 'We thought we lived in a lake', Browne concludes, 'but now we find ourselves in a boundless ocean'.²⁷

Exactly what sort of boat to launch into this boundless ocean became a topic for debate among the intellectuals when O'Faoláin published a piece entitled 'An Irish Council' in the October 1945 issue of *The Bell*. In it, he advocated the creation of a cultural body to be modelled on the British Council, working by similar methods to educate people abroad about Irish life, literature and art. Otherwise, he wrote, this important work of diffusing knowledge about Ireland would still be left 'to the comparatively rare and wholly accidental activities of a few individuals'.²⁸ Having functioned as just such an individual during his travels in the 1930s, though, persuaded Hubert Butler that only by keeping cultural exchange informal would it avoid the taint of institutionalism and retain its authenticity. As he recalls in 'The Barriers', it was observing the fate of various xenophile clubs in Yugoslavia that showed him how, once such initiatives grew in stature and success, they frequently fell prey to a host of unwanted agendas. Whereas the clubs began as convivial gatherings where townspeople might chat with visiting

²⁵ David Marcus and Terence Smith, 'Foreword', *Irish Writing* 1 (1946), 7.

²⁶ Editorial Note, *Divinity* 1:1 (May 1945), 3.

²⁷ R.E.C. Browne, 'Neurosis in the Church of Ireland', *Divinity* 2:3 (Nov. 1946), 64, 68-9.

²⁸ Sean O'Faoláin, 'An Irish Council', *The Bell* 11:1 (Oct. 1945), 559.

foreigners, increasingly ‘big halls were hired to hold big audiences gathered to listen to bigwigs with titles and other recommendations based on public services. The faint smell of power politics pervaded the atmosphere; reciprocity gave place to rivalry, personal exchange to diplomatic courtesies. The scheme changed beyond recognition under official patronage and international snobbery’ (*GW* 36). Once he read O’Faoláin’s editorial, Butler wrote his friend a lengthy letter outlining his objections to the idea of an ‘Irish Council’. To begin with, it was erroneous to think the British Council was really as interested in the equal and open exchange of ideas as it was in the propagation of an essentially chauvinistic vision of Britain. Driving the point home, he wrote to O’Faoláin that ‘an Irish parallel to the British Council would not please you at all, I fear. The B[ritish] C[ouncil] is just the Gaelic League translated into Anglo-Saxon, and adapted for the external rather than the internal market’. If independent Ireland was about anything, surely it was not about replicating the imperialistic tendencies of its former colonizer. ‘However much you hate De Valera’s isolationism’, Butler reasoned, ‘you must surely be grateful that he has cut adrift from this humbug about bringing culture and civilisation to lesser breeds’.²⁹ Geoffrey Taylor was inclined to agree with Butler on this point, affirming that O’Faoláin’s scheme was ‘anglomime’ in its assumptions and thus inappropriate to the scale and style of any genuinely Irish undertaking.³⁰

Whatever else O’Faoláin’s editorial achieved, it inspired Butler to think more generally about why ostensibly benign organizations such as the British Council struck him as accentuating rather than bridging the cultural gaps separating nations. In a piece intended for publication in *The Bell*, he explained that in a post-war world polarized by the competition between two rival political philosophies, such state-sponsored bodies could not possibly hope to function unaffected by the ideological contest now underway. ‘The present campaign for cultural relations is not so straightforward and benevolent as it sounds’, he warned. Writers and artists in particular must beware lest their participation in such efforts placed them in situations where their intellectual

²⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1168 (BP): HMB to Seán O’Faoláin, 11 Oct. 1945.

³⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1439 (BP): Geoffrey Taylor to HMB, 16 Oct. [1945].

integrity was compromised, since even ‘the most scrupulous can travel down this primrose path without apprehensions as to where it is leading’.³¹ To support his thesis, Butler recalled the dark picture painted in Julien Benda’s *La Trahison des Clercs* of intellectuals increasingly drawn into the service of national propaganda machines and thereby committing the ultimate treason against their calling.³² Under the Cold War dispensation, any official ‘cultural ambassador’ was certain to be regarded with suspicion and thus would only exacerbate feelings of mistrust. If such a person ‘is paid by the country which sends him he is thought to be a spy’, Butler mused, while ‘if he is paid by the country that entertains him he is thought to be a dupe. He does not bring friendship with him, he does not bring peace. Nobody trusts him, nobody believes him’. For all his scepticism, though, Butler knew that the traditional alternative he represented had problems of its own. However bureaucratic and prone to political infiltration the new model for cultural exchange might be, there was no denying that through it a greater number of people than before could enjoy some form of international exposure. So he puzzled to himself: ‘How can we reproduce in a democratic age the free social intercourse, the liberal interchange of views, ideas, experiences which were often possible in an aristocratic one? Relatively few people can afford independent travel[,] and the old tradition of private hospitality to strangers of enquiring minds...has almost disappeared. The unofficial traveller is dying but he must be revived at all costs’.³³ Because of his determination to keep alive this tradition of personal contact, after the war Butler embarked upon another round of travel and international inquiry of his own. In so doing, he was setting the stage for what was to be the most dynamic and most controversial period in his life.

³¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/168/8 (BP): ‘An Irish Council’ [undated (c. late 1945)]. The piece never appeared in *The Bell*.

³² Julian Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals* [*La Trahison des Clercs*], trans. R. Aldington (1928; New York, 1969), 27. A recent study of the *Kulturkampf* waged by American intelligence services in post-war Europe demonstrates just how close to the truth Butler’s predictions were to be. See Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London, 1999).

³³ MH (Ms.): ‘Yugoslav Clubs’, 10-11 [16pp, undated (c. late 1940s)]. A piece drawing on both ‘An Irish Council’ [see above] and ‘Yugoslav Clubs’ appeared under the title ‘Wanted: Unofficial Travellers’, *Peace News* 1 July 1949, 2. Portions from ‘Yugoslav Clubs’ also form the basis for Butler’s ‘Friendship: Personal or Official’, *Peace News* 22 July 1949, 4.

In the early part of 1946, the TCD historian R.B. McDowell called on Hubert Butler at Maidenhall in the company of a friend. Having listened to Butler's talk of his forthcoming trip to Yugoslavia as they sat looking out at the gentle fields of the surrounding countryside, McDowell's companion remarked once they had taken their leave, 'why would you ever wander from Kilkenny to go to a place like the Balkans?'³⁴ On the surface of things it was a reasonable enough question. Not only had the region been ravaged by war, but it was now under strict Communist control; it was hardly the first place most people would choose to visit once travel restrictions had been lifted. Yet it was natural enough that Butler should want to learn the fate of the peoples and places he had grown to love during his sojourn there in the mid-thirties. In so doing he was also pointedly repudiating the anti-Communist fervour taking hold of Irish society. Although Catholic Ireland had always demonstrated a hostility to Communism, this aversion was becoming hysterical as both Rome and Washington worked overtime at promoting the Red scare. Butler had predicted as soon as the war had ended that Ireland's anti-Communism would serve as a convenient means of overcoming lingering ill-will caused by its neutrality and lend it a basis for the commonality it desired with other western countries.³⁵ So by returning to Yugoslavia and then working to explode myths and misconceptions about life behind the Iron Curtain, he placed himself in principled opposition to popular feeling throughout the West. His insistence that the citizenry of the Eastern Bloc ought not to be demonized because of their governmental system, coupled with his investigations into the moral corruption of the Roman Church's actions during the war, led Butler to reject the whole framework on which Cold War thinking was based. As a result, his pacifism crystallized and his critique of what he called the 'militant ecclesiasticism' of Catholicism became increasingly vocal.

Advocating a humane attitude towards Communist countries was not a new cause for Butler. Ever since his time in Leningrad he had encouraged his compatriots to distinguish

³⁴ Interview with R.B. McDowell, Dublin, 11 Sept. 2001.

³⁵ MH (Alpha): HMB to Tyrone Guthrie, undated [Summer 1945].

between the Russians and the Stalinist regime that ruled them. Likewise, even though Stalin was no longer an ally against Nazism, it was important not to forget the enormous sacrifices the people of the Soviet Union had made in winning the war. The *Church of Ireland Gazette* was sufficiently troubled by the tendency to conflate the people and their political system that in 1947 it reminded its readers that while ‘it is easy in these days of the veto and the “iron curtain” to make Russia the modern villain’, it was only right ‘when thought naturally turns to the sorrows and suffering of war...to remember that she had and has a very large share’.³⁶ Surely informal encounters with individual Russians was still the best way to defuse all the propaganda and undermine stereotypes with evidence of living, breathing human beings. On one occasion during his post-war travels, Butler had this belief confirmed in exemplary fashion when he shared a train compartment with the Russian consul at Split. Although their exchange began uneasily, with time they settled into a more affable and candid conversation. This meeting led him to remark later that as ‘a sociable and inquisitive people, the Russians do not enjoy the isolation into which a conflict of principle has forced them’. Thus for those genuinely interested in mutuality and committed to the well-being of the Russian populace, he was convinced the best policy was to demonstrate ‘that other communities can criticize themselves and flourish’ and continually to emphasize ‘the cultural inter-dependence of nations and the international character of genius’ (CD 33, 36). While such advice was bound to strike many Cold Warriors as hopelessly naive, very few of them demonstrated Butler’s confident willingness to meet people from Communist countries on their own ground.

Returning to Yugoslavia in the summer of 1946 for the first time since 1937, Butler was of course aware that the country had altered dramatically in the intervening decade. Evidence of the political upheaval was everywhere. When visiting the Dalmatian island of Korcula, for example, he came across a sight whose palimpsest form illustrated the rapid evolution the region had undergone. ‘As we walked back to the boat’, he recorded,

³⁶ *CIG* 7 Nov. 1947, 1.

we met, facing the sea, a large white wall, on which successive occupants of Korcula had scraped and stencilled their slogans. There was a scar on the plaster where a blunt human head that must have been Mussolini's was peeled away and under it a few letters of 'Duce, Duce' were discernible. Fading away below it was a slogan that had been superannuated rather than repudiated. 'While Tito fights, the king gets married'. And another, which, I noted gratefully, was fading also: 'It is the duty of every honest man to unmask traitors!'³⁷

As informative as this illustrated history of recent Yugoslav politics might be, though, it did not answer the question Butler found most pressing. Given the myriad religious, ethnic and cultural differences characterizing the Yugoslav peoples, how could Tito's regime expect to reconcile them all in a way Pan-Slavic nationalism had so signally failed to do? He was certain the 'frail bridge of a common language' was still not enough and looked in vain for indications that the Communists had discovered 'the formula of spiritual unity' (*GW* 164). Moreover, in their revolutionary zeal they had repudiated the old intelligentsia with whom Butler had a natural kinship and in whose sophistication and humaneness he had always placed his greatest hope. In a report he delivered to the War Resisters International Conference in 1947, he recalled the poignant stories he heard from these people about their reversal of fortune. 'The business of living from one day to the next was absorbing all their energies', he noted. 'They had often lost their jobs or their incomes and had no surplus leisure for thinking of abstract problems or international movements. All their efforts were bent on securing some sort of future for their children or elderly relatives'. As a progressive moderate with socialist sympathies, Butler could only regard this rejection of the educated as a crass mistake. It was also a sad historical irony, because 'most of these people were liberals by temperament, left-wing rather than right, so that their extinction by the Communists is a cruel tragedy' (*LN* 105).³⁸

Although he was quick to defend the Yugoslav intelligentsia on principle, he did not deny that many in its ranks had proved ineffectual in combating the evil deeds committed during the

³⁷ MH (Ms.): 'On Korcula' [4pp., undated (late 1940s)].

³⁸ Other pieces in which Butler explores the social changes in post-war Yugoslavia and the fate of intelligentsia in particular are 'Some Encounters: Zagreb 1946' [1946] and 'Two Faces of Post-War Yugoslavia: Belgrade and Split' [1948] (both in *GW* 187-205).

war. In his 1947 essay 'In the Adriatic', Butler marvels at the astonishing ease with which Pavelitch seduced both the Croatian intelligentsia and the old Austrian-Hungarian gentry into complicity with his regime, rendering them all but helpless when it came time to combat the compulsory conversion campaign (CD 19-21). But he reserved his greatest moral opprobrium for the churchmen who were not just complicit in the slaughter but sometimes its active sponsors. As he mentions in 'The Invader Wore Slippers', it was during this first return visit to Yugoslavia that Butler learned the degree to which the Croatian hierarchy had tacitly accepted the brutal treatment of the Orthodox Serbs and how little it had done to prevent some of its clergy from encouraging it. Although estimates have fluctuated substantially over the years, it is currently believed that approximately 487,000 Orthodox Serbs were murdered by the Pavelitch regime in the process of 'offering' them conversion to the Catholic faith.³⁹ At the centre of this awful episode and the controversy succeeding it was the Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. When the Yugoslavs arrested him after the war, Stepinac quickly became a martyr figure in the West, depicted as a valiant witness for Christ in the face of Communist oppression. In fact, Butler himself saw no evidence of religious persecution or even anti-Church propaganda during his post-war tour of the country.⁴⁰ On the contrary, Tito made it clear he was reluctant to prosecute Stepinac for condoning war crimes, something to which his government resorted only after the Vatican ignored its repeated pleas to recall the Archbishop to Rome (LN 138).⁴¹ If this intransigence was designed to discredit the Communists in the court of world opinion, Butler believed it would have the opposite effect on the Yugoslavs, among whom

³⁹ Jonathan Steinberg, 'Types of Genocide? Croats, Serbs and Jews, 1941-5', in D. Cesarani (ed.), *The Final Solution: origins and implementation* (London, 1994), 175. Butler provides a more anecdotal account of the compulsory conversion campaign in his 1947 essay 'Father Chok and Compulsory Conversion' (GW 181-6).

⁴⁰ MH (Ms.): 'Fiume II' [4 pp., undated (c. late 1940s)].

⁴¹ Stepinac was tried in Zagreb in the autumn of 1946 for 'collaboration with the enemy and anti-national activities during the occupation', for which he was sentenced to sixteen years' hard labor, loss of civic rights for a further five years, and confiscation of his property. Tito renewed his offer to release Stepinac even after the Archbishop's conviction, provided he left Croatia. The Vatican continued to reject this offer, which it regarded as an implicit acknowledgement of his guilt. HMB, 'Prison Interview with Archbishop Stepinac', *Peace News* 29 Dec. 1950, 3.

knowledge of the Catholic Church's duplicity was widespread. So he later commented that 'the ecclesiastical patronage (connivance [or] complicity is too weak a word) of force not only helped to bring communism to the Balkans but also gave it immense prestige'.⁴²

Nor did it take long for Butler to conclude that the Vatican's increasingly confrontational stance towards Communism was about more than ideology; it also served to divert attention from its own record of appeasement and inaction during the war. He was not alone among Irish Protestants in feeling this way. In its January 1946 editorial, the *Church of Ireland Monthly* had remarked that 'it is not difficult to make a case against the Vatican as a Power which claims so much and which did so little – which risked nothing and sought refuge in silence, at the time of so many crises in world history'.⁴³ One reason the Stepinac case became particularly contentious was because it tended to highlight not only the Archbishop's ambiguous relationship with Pavelitch but Rome's as well. As Carlo Falconi and others have since documented, Vatican officials were better attuned to what was happening in Croatia than they later cared to admit.⁴⁴ And as in the case of the Hungarian Cardinal Mindszenty, if it were conceded that the primate of a national hierarchy had behaved improperly, what would that say about the Pope himself? Butler was deeply disturbed by this refusal of the Church to admit its culpability in various injustices and by its hypocritical representation of itself as the champion of Christian morals in the face of a godless Red menace. In a report he delivered to the War Resisters International Conference in 1949, he therefore argued that where Catholic churchmen were being prosecuted in Eastern Bloc countries, there was no such thing as 'a straight fight between Communist and Christian values'. Rather, he maintained that 'the protagonists in each case undoubtedly believed that the interest of their Churches could be forwarded by wars, *coups d'état* and physical force.

⁴² TCD, Ms. 10304/396/6 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'Forgiving those who trespass' [undated].

⁴³ Unsigned, 'The Papacy – Yesterday and To-day', *CIM* Jan. 1946, n/p.

⁴⁴ Carlo Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII*, trans. B. Wall (London, 1970), 257ff. More recent studies corroborating Falconi's findings on Croatia are Jonathan Steinberg, *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust 1941-1943* (London, 1990), 80ff.; and John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London, 1999), 249ff.

They were champions of that militant and political ecclesiasticism which it is our duty to censure'. Unaligned peace advocates were bound to show that the rhetoric pitting a Christian West against a Communist East was the spurious invention of those dedicated more to the preservation of the institutional Church than to the Gospel of Christ. There did indeed exist a division of people and ideas, Butler asserted, but it was not where these ecclesiastical politicians had placed it: 'It runs along no geographical frontier....[F]or the vast majority the ideals of Stepinac and Mindszenty are every bit as antipathetic and totalitarian as the ideals of Karl Marx' (LN 124, 132).⁴⁵

Although Hubert Butler had never been a conventional Christian believer, his resentment of the Church's self-serving propaganda provoked him to speak out more directly about what he took genuine Christian behaviour to be. Writing in 1949, for example, he explained to the editor of the *Central European Observer* why, as a liberal adherent to Christian humanism, he believed himself well positioned to bridge the gap between Communists and conservative Christians: 'As I am not a communist, it is the Christian way which interests me most and I have concentrated most criticism on Christian mistakes. I know this has laid me open to strong criticism as a renegade and a dupe. But there is a good Christian answer to it; we are supposed to take the beam out of our own eye before we deal with the mote in our brother's'.⁴⁶ What makes such remarks significant in this context is that they reveal the way Butler's cosmopolitan ethos was inextricably bound up in traditional Christian notions of universalism and neighbourliness. Here his Protestant background clearly informs his devotion to a form of human mutuality that is at once individualistic and decentralized while still radically inclusive. And though it would be mistaken to claim that his increasing reliance on Christian vocabulary in his post-war writings reflected a move towards greater personal orthodoxy, there is no question that as he became more

⁴⁵ Relevant here is Butler's 1947 piece entitled 'Yugoslav Papers: The Church and Its Opponents' (GW 176-80).

⁴⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/12a (BP): HMB to 'Mr. Alexander' [Editor, *Central European Observer*], 20 Aug. 1949.

vociferous in his plea for international peace, Butler engaged ever more seriously with the radical implications of the Gospel. To a greater extent than many of his avowedly religious compatriots, he took to heart the demands Christ's teachings placed on social and political behaviour, recognizing that 'the doctrine of pacifism is so revolutionary in Ireland as to be frightening'.⁴⁷ He referred to himself wryly as 'a fellow-traveller of the Society of Friends' and testified to the reassurance he derived from the Quakers' steadfast example. Yet he knew he remained essentially alone as an 'unclassified fighter for peace' whom neither Irish Catholics nor Protestants really knew how to categorize, save as a crank.⁴⁸ In the late 1940s he thus turned to organizations such as the London-based *Peace News* and the War Resisters International out of a desire to express a liberal Christian response to the Cold War which might by-pass the equivocation and falsity he associated with the mainline Churches. As he was to reiterate over and over again, it was only when western Christians began to practice what they preached that they could expect to break the deadlock with the Communists, for then, he argued, 'communism will not have been defeated, it will have been superseded'.⁴⁹

Meanwhile the twin cult of Cardinals Stepinac and Mindszenty was gaining steadily in Ireland. In 1946 the Dáil had passed a unanimous resolution of protest at the imprisonment of Stepinac, and it did the same again in 1949 when a Hungarian court convicted Mindszenty.⁵⁰ In the spring of that year a crowd of 150,000 gathered in Dublin to demonstrate against Mindszenty's imprisonment, a mass gathering that horrified Butler. 'The May Day meeting of 1949 was one of the great obscenities of history', he wrote later, 'an occasion of massive lying

⁴⁷ HMB, 'Letter from Ireland', *Peace News* 4 Mar. 1949, 3.

⁴⁸ HMB, 'Pacifism in Ireland', *Peace News* 13 May 1949, 3. In the same journal he would later write that 'there are, of course, peace meetings in Dublin, but they are attended principally by middle-aged Quakers, by foreigners, by two or three Protestant clergy, who are by no means in favour with the more orthodox members of the flock. Then there is perhaps a handful of young radicals who give to the respectable a pretext for saying that the gathering is Communist-inspired'. HMB, 'Ireland and Neutrality', *Peace News* 7 Mar. 1958, 5.

⁴⁹ HMB, 'A Sordid Chapter of Church History and Cardinal Seper', *Grille: The Irish Christian Left* 2 (Autumn 1968), 30.

⁵⁰ For a review of the Communist 'show trials' of Stepinac, Mindszenty and Father Tiso of Slovakia, see Owen Chadwick, *The Christian Church in the Cold War* (London, 1992), 60ff.

and hypocrisy, which I trust that Ireland will never see again'. Describing how the Mayor of Dublin and Speaker of the Dáil addressed the meeting from a platform over which stood a large placard reading 'WE STAND FOR GOD', he explained that 'what I loathed was not what anyone said, but the massive unanimity with which it was uttered; the attempt to drown the voice of truth, which is always quiet, with bands and anthems and tramping feet'.⁵¹ Although he was reluctant to believe that such gross displays really reflected the sentiments of the majority of Irish people, he nonetheless concluded that 'the disagreement of those who are too cowardly or too discreet to express their views has no validity and, therefore, I am justified in taking the demonstrations at their face value' (LN 91). Those who thought he was being bigoted or simply overreacting seemed to Butler to have failed to learn even the most basic lessons of the past decade. 'Millions of devout Protestants and Catholics had seen Hitler, Mussolini and Pavelitch as God's Hammers and had piously turned a dozen countries into His Anvils', he insisted. Yet despite all the evidence, few Irishmen were willing to countenance the possibility that through their militant Catholicism, 'the godly might turn Ireland too into an anvil'. Far from being a protection against the mentality of the 'Ant-Hill', though, Butler knew religion had proved all too often to be one of its surest foundations.⁵²

That the cause of the Iron Curtain cardinals should assume such proportions in Ireland indicated to Butler that something unresolved played upon the nation's conscience. In 1948 he speculated on the reasons the Stepinac trial in particular had generated so much feeling: 'It was as though after six years of discreet silence we had at last found a subject about which we could safely vent our repressed indignation....Some would say that we dared so much because we were not likely to be punished for our candour. I think it would be more true to say that fundamentally we were idealists and suspected that ideals had played a subordinate part in the war from which we had abstained' (LN 90). Irish authorities were not slow to exploit this untapped source of

⁵¹ MH (Ms.): untitled/ re the Dublin May Day Meeting of 1949, 1-2, 5 [6pp., undated (late 1970s)].

⁵² HMB, 'Escape from the Ant-hill', *Treblin Times* 1 (Sept. 1973), 2.

enthusiasm in order to consolidate their own position. In his preface to Count O'Brien's popular work *Archbishop Stepinac: The Man and His Case*, the Archbishop of Dublin, John C. McQuaid, assured the faithful that by his imprisonment Stepinac had become 'but another symbol of the unending persecution of the One, True Church'. At the same time, McQuaid announced with an astonishing blend of casualness and condescension that 'the position of an Archbishop-Primate in a country like Yugoslavia, at a period such as that which we have witnessed, necessarily required the Archbishop to enter into relations with every movement and every manner of person'.⁵³ Those troubled by accusations of Stepinac's co-operation with the Pavelitch regime obviously could not be expected to appreciate the subtle manoeuvres by which ecclesiastics exerted their influence over those in power and selflessly sullied themselves so as to preserve the purity of the Church. That many Irish Catholics developed a sincere depth of feeling for Stepinac there is no doubt. Writing to Arland Ussher in December 1951, for example, the artist Blanaid Salkeld spoke of the comfort she derived from knowing that 'amidst the storm of shifting values and falling verities about us – we still have the photographs of Archbishop Stepinac's gentle serenity. Yet he is heart-broken: his sorrow is past mending....It is a bad season; we must hope something will change the universal weather'.⁵⁴

In this particular outpouring of emotion, however, Salkeld badly misjudged the sympathies of her audience. Recalling elsewhere how he had discussed at length the nature of Catholic belief with Blanaid's brother, Cecil Salkeld, Ussher commented derisively to his fellow Protestant Joseph Hone: 'No wonder War and factory-slavery stand at the end of the whole Era'.⁵⁵ Indeed, not a few Irish Protestants wondered how the Roman Church could claim to be the defender of peace and freedom against Communism when it was itself so aggressively authoritarian. So a Church of Ireland clergyman, Canon Ernest M. Bateman of Blackrock, wrote

⁵³ John C. McQuaid, 'Foreword', in Anthony Henry Count O'Brien of Thomond, *Archbishop Stepinac: The Man and His Case* (Dublin, 1947) v.

⁵⁴ TCD, Ms. 9039.3383 (Ussher Papers): Blanaid Salkeld to Arland Ussher, 9 Dec. 1951.

⁵⁵ TCD, Ms. 9034.1749 (Ussher Papers): Arland Ussher to Joseph Hone, undated [early 1950s].

to the *Irish Times* in February 1950: 'Is it sufficiently recognised that the Papacy is the father and mother of totalitarianism, and that Hitler merely transferred to the political and social spheres the principles which Rome has developed through centuries of autocracy? Rome is fighting a battle to the death with Communism to-day, simply because there is not room on the earth for two totalitarian systems, both of which claim world domination'.⁵⁶ Although they might have been uncomfortable with his combative tone and extreme claims, it is likely many of the canon's co-religionists quietly agreed with the general thrust of his argument. In a more reasoned but equally emphatic statement, poet Ewart Milne later remarked with irritation: 'Would those who are still looking for [bulwarks against Communism] please note that the greatest "bulwark" against Communism is *not* the Catholic Church! It is the Protestant "individual conscience" and its "freedom of choice" that is the greatest bulwark. Consider: if you *have* freedom of choice you cannot and must not choose anything that might, just might, deprive you of it – such, for instance, as the Catholic Church or the Communist Party'.⁵⁷ This dogged affirmation of the individual conscience as the only genuine antidote to authoritarianism, religious or political, had long been a central tenet of Irish Protestant identity, though it is significant that Milne should invoke it here in the broader context of Cold War ideology. In so doing, he makes explicit a supposition that Butler only implies in his writings, that to develop a truly autonomous international outlook, the Irish must become less slavishly Catholic and perhaps even a little more Protestant in their thinking.

III. The Papal Nuncio Incident

Operating on the principle that 'ignorant nonsense is as culpable as malicious nonsense', Hubert Butler worked hard after his 1946 trip to Yugoslavia to publicize what he had learned

⁵⁶ *The Liberal Ethic*, (ed.) Irish Times (Dublin, 1950), 78.

⁵⁷ Ewart Milne, 'Notes from a journal', *Irish Writing* 35 (Summer 1956), 101. Butler himself remarked in a review of the 1950 book *I Believed* by the Communist-turned-Catholic Douglas Hyde that 'there is much non-stop traffic nowadays between Rome and Moscow', which he called 'the two authoritarian termini' of the age (LN 241).

about the Croatian forced conversion campaign.⁵⁸ There were consequences to this activity. After he delivered a talk on Radio Éireann in September 1947, he was attacked in the *Catholic Standard*, a fiercely anti-Communist weekly with strong corporatist and vocationalist leanings. The editor, Peadar O'Curry, was to become one of Butler's primary public opponents in coming years. After successive skirmishes in which O'Curry accused him of being a Communist, Butler's solicitor advised him that he had grounds for a libel action against the paper.⁵⁹ Only the threat of proceedings curbed the *Standard's* attacks. Undaunted, at the end of 1950 Butler arranged for the *Church of Ireland Gazette* to publish a series of translations of the Croatian documents he had uncovered in Zagreb, hoping their appearance would stimulate debate and answer some of his critics. To his grave disappointment, he received little or no reaction.⁶⁰ Around the same time he got an opportunity to travel to Yugoslavia again, and in the company of a Quaker delegation he managed to interview Stepinac at the prison in Lepoglava. An initial report of the visit appeared in *Peace News* at the end of December 1950, followed by another, more comprehensive account printed in the *Church of Ireland Gazette* in April 1951.⁶¹ When Butler asked the Archbishop why he had not done more publicly to try to stop the conversion campaign, Stepinac only repeated what had been his stock reply to such queries throughout his trial: '*Notre conscience est tranquille*'. And yet, as Butler insisted in his second account, someday the Catholic Church would have to supply an honest answer to the question, one he considered 'of supreme importance to all thinking Christians' (LN 136-7).⁶²

⁵⁸ Butler sought several times to publish something in *The Bell* regarding the conversion campaign, but with no success. See TCD, Ms. 10304/643/2 (BP): HMB to Peadar O'Donnell, 4 Sept. 1950.

⁵⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/642/23 (BP): J.H. Montgomery to HMB, 6 Mar. 1948.

⁶⁰ The series, entitled 'The Compulsory Conversion Campaign of 1941', appeared in three instalments: *CIG* 15 Dec. 1950, 10-11; 29 Dec. 1950, 4-6; and 5 Jan. 1951, 6-7. Butler later said of one of Stepinac's particularly incriminating letters which he had translated and published, that 'nobody in the British Isles, at a time when so much was written and said about the imprisoned Archbishop, ever commented on it, quoted from it, or wrote to me to enquire how I had secured it' (EA 276).

⁶¹ HMB, 'Prison Interview with Archbishop Stepinac', *Peace News* 29 Dec. 1950, 3. See also HMB, 'A Visit to Lepoglava', *CIG* 20 Apr. 1951, 6-7 (LN 135-8).

⁶² To this day the Vatican has remained unwilling to consider Stepinac anything but a Christian victim of Communism. In light of this fact, it is perhaps not surprising that the most fervently anti-Communist of popes, John Paul II, beatified the cardinal in Croatia in October 1998.

Given that he framed his investigation of these controversies in terms of Christian integrity, it is ironic that Butler was so often suspected of being a Communist himself, or as he put it to one correspondent, ‘a very insidious sort of crypto-communist’.⁶³ It was an irony which for the most part he took in his stride, cognizant that it resulted from a larger political realignment whereby the Western left scrambled to adapt itself to the Cold War dispensation. So he could remark to Peadar O’Donnell in 1950 that ‘to-day I find that very many of those whom I knew to be communist or near communist are in response to the prevailing mood more anti-communist than myself who have never been one’.⁶⁴ He was less sanguine, though, when even close allies like O’Donnell and Seán O’Faoláin failed to appreciate his unique perspective. The response he got from these two men is significant not only for itself but as a reminder that despite the united front they showed against philistinism and insularity at home, liberal Irish intellectuals often disagreed about international issues. This became especially clear when O’Donnell succeeded O’Faoláin as editor of *The Bell*, with the latter complaining to Butler that he could not be associated with his successor’s ‘concealed communism’.⁶⁵ Squeezed between the pro-Soviet socialism of one and the avowed anti-communism of the other, Butler learned – as his hero Horace Plunkett had fifty years earlier – that a genuine moderate satisfies no one. O’Donnell wrote to Butler in August 1950 congratulating him on his brave criticism of the Catholic Church but at the same time wished he would cease his ‘damnable anti-sovietism’.⁶⁶ Butler stood firm: ‘If I didn’t introduce irrelevant though sincere criticism[s] of Stalinism when I feel them’, he replied, ‘I’d just have the label “fellow traveller” *permanently* tied to me as now only occasionally [it is]....I am constantly finding myself edged out of things because of suspected

⁶³ MH (Alpha): HMB to ‘Mr. Sokorac’, 7 Jan. 1950.

⁶⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/643/2 (BP): HMB to Peadar O’Donnell, 4 Sept. 1950.

⁶⁵ Maurice Harmon, *Sean O’Faolain: A Life* (London, 1994), 148-9.

⁶⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/643/20 (BP): Peadar O’Donnell to HMB, 27 Aug. 1951.

Communist sympathies....It will be too bad if I am edged out of other things because of suspected *anti-communist sympathies*'.⁶⁷

Likewise he managed to run afoul of O'Faoláin the next year. It happened when Honor Tracy, an English journalist based in Dublin and O'Faoláin's intimate friend, delivered two broadcasts on the BBC's 3rd Programme in the autumn of 1951 about her recent visit to Central Europe and the Balkans. When the transcripts of the talks appeared in *The Listener*, Butler wrote a scathing letter to the editor, charging Tracy with arrogance and complacency in her comments. A lively exchange then took place in the correspondence columns when O'Faoláin sprang to Tracy's defense, accusing Butler of trying to justify the ruthlessness of Tito's regime.⁶⁸ Writing to Butler privately, O'Faoláin exclaimed: 'Tito is a brave man. He is also a thug. If you won't for ever say so you collaborate in his cruelties. WHY WERE YOU SO ANNOYED WHEN TRACY SAID HE WAS A THUG? You seem to me to be lacking in frankness about the Jugs.... [W]e do take sides, of course, and I thought you were a practising Christian?'⁶⁹ While he was perhaps not a practicing Christian in the accepted sense, Butler had certainly been trying to practice the Christian virtues when he challenged Tracy's dismissive stereotypes. But if even so fine an intelligence as O'Faoláin's could not or would not see his point of view, he must have realized just how alone he really was.

The climax of Butler's public engagement in the Cold War debate came with what is now known as the Papal Nuncio Incident. On the evening of 31 October 1952, he was invited by his good friend Owen Sheehy Skeffington to attend a meeting of the International Affairs Association at Dublin's Shelbourne Hotel. Accompanying them was a visiting American writer, Paul Blanshard. The speaker at the gathering was Butler's old opponent Peadar O'Curry, Editor of the *Standard*, who read a paper entitled 'Yugoslavia – the Pattern of Persecution' in which he

⁶⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/643/21 (BP): .HMB to Peadar O'Donnell, 2 Sept. 1951.

⁶⁸ Honor Tracy, 'Vienna to Zagreb: A Change of Climate'. *The Listener* 1 Nov. 1951, 728-9; and 'Yugoslavia: A Time of Flux', *The Listener* 8 Nov. 1951, 773-4. The correspondence subsequently appeared on 22 Nov. 1951, 887; 6 Dec. 1951, 971; and 20 Dec. 1951, 1067.

⁶⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1178 (BP): Sean O'Faoláin to HMB, undated [Dec. 1951].

reviewed the ways the Catholic Church had been mistreated by the Communists. When O'Curry had completed his address, the chairman attempted to end the proceedings without opening the floor to questions but was forced to relent when Sheehy Skeffington and other members of the Association objected. At this point Butler stood up to speak. He had, by his own reckoning, managed to utter 'only a few sentences when a stately figure rose from among the audience and walked out. It was the Papal Nuncio, of whose presence I had been unaware' (EA 272-3).⁷⁰ The chairman hastily ended the meeting, and the next thing he knew, Butler was surrounded by reporters. He had let the lid off a Pandora's box.

The outcry that ensued was prodigious. All the major Dublin newspapers featured the story. The Irish edition of the *Sunday Express* announced in a banner headline: 'Question from man in audience starts diplomatic row: THE POPE'S ENVOY WALKS OUT'. Given this sudden onslaught of negative attention, Butler held his ground as best he could. He explained calmly that 'I meant no offence to the Nuncio. I took no sides with Communism, and I have no wish to insult the Catholic Church. I myself am a Protestant. I have been in Yugoslavia and stayed there for some time. I understood this was a meeting of a private study circle and I was anxious to give the facts I had about Yugoslavia'. When asked in turn whether the Nuncio had any further comment to make, his spokesman announced that 'His Excellency considers he has made sufficient protest by his action in leaving the meeting....The serious implication in the incident is that it was an affront to the Holy See's representative in a Catholic country'.⁷¹

⁷⁰ According to Butler, the first sentence he uttered at the meeting was: "'Would not Mr O'Curry admit that the first charge of persecution against the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia came not from the communists but from the Orthodox Church?'" From whence he proceeded to argue that 'Pavelic's government in Croatia was what we might expect here in Ireland, if power were to fall into the hands of Maria Duce against which Mr O'Curry had so courageously protested. And I said that in the view of many Archbishop Stepinac, though a kind and gentle man, had been used by this gang, which had been responsible for the compulsory conversion campaign[,] one of the worst in European history'. It was then he planned to quote from a book he had brought with him, *The Martyrdom of the Serbs*, but at that moment the Nuncio walked out and confusion ensued. TCD, Ms. 10304/241/15 (BP): 'The Pattern of Persecution' [undated]. Paul Blanshard provides his own eyewitness account of the Incident in *The Irish and Catholic Power* (London, 1954), 191ff.

⁷¹ *Sunday Express* 2 Nov. 1952, 1.

Whether or not Butler's statements contained any truth in them was rarely if ever addressed.⁷² Indeed, his veracity was of such limited interest that in reporting the Incident, both the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Press* managed to muddle the most elementary facts of his case.⁷³ Thus as an indicator of the state of Irish internationalist thinking during this time, the Incident reveals just how much the maintenance of Roman authority still dictated popular judgment about the world at large. Butler's own hometown newspaper, the *Kilkenny People*, made this plain when it wrote that 'the Apostolic Nuncio is himself well aware of the Red technique, having seen it in all its hideousness in Rumania and, while Mr. Hubert Butler has sojourned extensively in the Slav territory and has, no doubt, considerable knowledge of conditions there, that knowledge is hardly to be compared with the knowledge which a Papal Diplomat is in a position to acquire'.⁷⁴ Nearly twenty years of close study of Yugoslavia and its immensely complex culture was simply not enough to override this determined provincialism in the service of institutional loyalty.

Amidst all the obloquy, there were occasional voices of public support for Butler and his attempt to inject some informed dissent into the conversation about Stepinac. After the weekly *Irish Catholic* printed a fierce attack on him as its leading article, for example, one correspondent demanded: 'Even conceding that Mr. Hubert Butler may have a bee in his bonnet, is that any reason why he...may not express unpopular opinions about Yugo Slavia, where he has lived, to those who have never been within the bawl of an ass of Tito?''⁷⁵ Butler's allies were similarly supportive in defending his right to free speech within Ireland, but even they did not always fully grasp why the substance of what had happened in Croatia mattered so much to him. When in the

⁷² One of the few who actually addressed the substance of Butler's version of events was John Murray, S.J., in *Studies*. Although he did not allude directly either to Butler or to the recent Incident, Murray scoffed at the suggestion that 'the measures against the Church were the result, not of religious persecution, but of punishment for a disloyal attitude during the war'. John Murray, 'Tito and the Catholic Church', *Studies* 42 (Mar. 1953), 24-5.

⁷³ Both papers misreported the episode in exactly the same way: 'Mr Butler then rose and asked Mr. O'Curry if he were aware that the first acts of persecution in Serbia were not sponsored by Communists, but by the Orthodox Church [*sic*] and that Archbishop Stepinac had been made the dupe of a gang'. *Irish Independent* 1 Nov. 1952, 1; and *Irish Press* 1 Nov. 1952, 1.

⁷⁴ *Kilkenny People* 8 Nov. 1952, 5.

⁷⁵ Desmond Ryan, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Catholic* 5 Mar. 1953, 1.

wake of the Incident he found himself systematically ostracized in his local area, his friend Eric Dorman O’Gowan complained that the priests and politicians were ‘balkanizing Kilkenny’.⁷⁶ This was surely an exaggerated way of describing what had happened, but it did indicate a primitive recognition of the interrelatedness Butler himself perceived between the conversion campaign and the controversy he had provoked in trying to expose it. He conceded later that ‘what happened in Kilkenny seems very trivial and parochial[,] and what happened in Zagreb is tragic, alien and confused. And I cannot expect others to search as hopefully as I do for some clue by which both can be interpreted’. In looking for this clue, Butler insisted he was attempting not to portray himself personally as a martyr but to pin down the dangerous pattern he detected in Roman thinking.⁷⁷ At root, he believed that the Catholic Church’s perennial willingness to engage in ecclesiastical politics had resulted in the awfulness in Croatia and, on a much smaller scale, in the recent unpleasantness he had endured in Ireland.⁷⁸ It was an insight that transcended both places, and as such it required the detachment of an international perspective to appreciate but a local commitment to make meaningful. In this sense, the Incident was Butler’s ultimate expression of his cosmopolitanism.

Although it is clear that the fall-out from the Papal Nuncio Incident wounded Hubert Butler and made him more circumspect than hitherto, it did not fundamentally alter his faith in this ethos. Even amidst the social and economic malaise of the 1950s, he was convinced that Ireland could realize a deeper national coherence (and perhaps stem its chronic flow of emigration) if only it would exchange its delusions of grandeur for more modest but attainable goals. Thus in his 1955 piece ‘Crossing the Border’, he upbraided Irishmen again for their continuing lack of curiosity about the experiences of other small peoples: ‘[W]e are Europeans’,

⁷⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/636/13 (BP): Eric Dorman O’Gowan to Hubert and Peggy Butler, 19 Nov. 1952.

⁷⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/241/8 (BP): ‘The Pattern of Persecution’ [undated].

⁷⁸ I have attempted elsewhere to elucidate the relationship Butler perceived between the abdication of Christian responsibility in wartime Croatia and the manipulation of popular opinion by the Irish Church in the 1950s. See Robert Tobin, ‘Did the Nuncio Wear Slippers?: Hubert Butler and Protestant Dissent in 50s Ireland’, in P.J. Mathews (ed.), *New Voices in Irish Criticism* (Dublin, 2000), 205-12.

he reminded them, 'and England does not now stand between us and Europe....We are stupidly, snobbishly uninterested in other small nations, yet we have more to learn from them than from the large ones' (*GW* 67). Similarly, he lamented that, despite the creativity of the Revival and the achievement of Independence, Irish intellectuals now seemed all too ready to revert to a provincial reverence for the English metropolis. Patrick Kavanagh was an especially poignant example of a brilliant Irishman whose frustrations with his native land led him to mythologize London to an absurd degree.⁷⁹ Butler understood that Kavanagh's disillusionment was partly a reaction to the straitjacket of cultural nationalist ideals, but he was not prepared to excuse what in 'Envoy and Mr. Kavanagh' he calls the 'neurotic tantrums' in which the poet indulged as a result. He marvels at the bizarre state of affairs by which Irish writers like Kavanagh will dismiss the whole Revival heritage as the foul aftertaste of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, even as they happily do talks for the BBC or even propaganda for the British Council. Sustaining such a flagrant contradiction, he muses, requires 'spiritual and intellectual acrobatics for which there are few parallels outside central Europe' (*EA* 156). This was not the growing pains of a nascent internationalism; it was a form of post-colonial self-hatred. So the Quaker educator and economist Arnold Marsh could mourn how 'in every village the vestiges of the old order are losing ground, while still we are not tending towards any genuine cosmopolitanism. We are as self-centred as any other people though without the others' cultural security'.⁸⁰

While sophisticated Catholics were grappling with how to broaden the terms of their Irishness to include more European dimensions, their Protestant counterparts of necessity faced a different task. Much more decisively than Independence, the Second World War had sounded the final death knell for Anglo-Irishness as a tenable way of being, an attitude, a lifestyle. Between Ireland and England, even between Éire and Northern Ireland, there had been such a decisive break over the war that it was impossible to sustain the dual loyalty many Anglo-Irish Protestants

⁷⁹ Anthony Cronin, *Dead as Doornails* (1976; Oxford, 1987), 83-4.

⁸⁰ TCD, Ms. 8327/3/4 (Marsh Papers): 'On Being European', *Yesterday, Today and Forever* [unpublished, undated].

considered their birthright. The necessary ambiguity was now absent. Those who tried to evade this fact did not add to their cosmopolitanism so much as assure their deracination. For as Butler had intimated in 'The Two Languages', to be truly international, one still needed a core sense of national or at least local identity on which to base such external associations. In reality, the postwar Anglo-Irish could no longer claim to possess this essential ingredient when living on either side of the Irish Sea. Deprived of those mail-boat consolations they had retained right up to the war (or in Elizabeth Bowen's case, right through it), Anglo-Irish intellectuals found that what had once seemed like freedom had now turned into something more lonely and disconsolate. So Anthony Cronin recalled that when he met Louis MacNeice in London after the war, 'he seemed indeed something of a beached figure, one who belonged to an era that had ended in hiatus, without a country other than a part of literary London and a particular corner of Cosmopolis that was really no man's land'.⁸¹

Those who remained in Ireland, as did Butler himself or his friend Arland Ussher, were often happy enough to disassociate from the term Anglo-Irish and to be known simply as Irishmen who were also Protestant.⁸² This was partly a political and social statement, but admittedly it was also a stance made easier when one had the ready means for staying put. Ussher admitted to being 'a natural stylite' who had been lucky enough to pass the prime of life on his inherited Waterford estate.⁸³ Yet Monk Gibbon was another Protestant content to remain rooted in Ireland and who did so without the benefit of family property.⁸⁴ While he accepted that some of his fellow Protestants left Ireland due to a relative lack of wealth or opportunity, Butler had little patience with those who, in doing so, then represented themselves abroad as the

⁸¹ Anthony Cronin, *Heritage Now: Irish Literature in the English Language* (New York, 1982), 200.

⁸² When interviewed by Larry Morrow in 1950, Ussher maintained that given his family had been in Ireland nearly nine hundred years, the label 'Anglo-Irish' was singularly inappropriate. Larry Morrow, 'Arland Ussher', *Envoy* 3:8 (July 1950), 7.

⁸³ Arland Ussher, *Spanish Mercy* (London, 1959), 34.

⁸⁴ Gibbon did produce a series of narrative travel guides about Central Europe in the 1950s, though it is obvious from their style and format that these books were the product of short holidays rather than extensive geographical or intellectual explorations. See Monk Gibbon, *Swiss Enchantment* (London, 1950); *In Search of Winter Sport* (London, 1953); *Austria* (London, 1953); *Western Germany* (London, 1955); and *The Rhine and Its Castles* (London, 1957).

country's spokesmen or ambassadors. This struck him as a self-serving manoeuvre for coping with personal misfortune. In a piece he wrote in 1955 entitled 'Reflections of an Unjustified Stay-at-Home', he was severe with such people: '[T]he Irish intellectual *emigré* often has his own dream world, and one of its hallucinations is that by escaping from the struggle he raises himself above it, he "sees both sides", he mediates, he interprets. But the fact is, goodwill travels as badly to-day as it travelled 150 years ago. No amount of cross-channel solicitude can compensate us for the day-to-day co-operation of active minds and hearts'.⁸⁵ The young editor of the Protestant magazine *Focus*, Risteárd Ó Glaisne, was more conciliatory but expressed basically the same point of view when he wrote that 'the Anglo-Irish can indeed help to increase understanding [between England and Ireland]. Not, however, I think, by failing to recognise their immediate loyalties. People who do that are generally – and understandably – rejected by both worlds; or, at least, not happily accepted by either'.⁸⁶

IV. The great sameness: mass society, East and West

The final phase of cosmopolitan activity in Hubert Butler's life commenced after the Papal Nuncio Incident. Although he remained deeply concerned about the peoples of Yugoslavia and what the future held for them, he now turned his attention to other subjects and to other places. When, for example, he was invited in 1956 to join an Irish cultural delegation visiting China, he eagerly accepted the offer. Here he permitted his insatiable curiosity to override his reservations about the sort of 'official travel' that just such a tour represented. For a veteran independent traveller, joining the delegation was indeed a compromise, but it was one Butler approached with a wry scepticism and a certain sociological detachment, regarding it as something of a novel experience unto itself. When writing afterwards about the visit, he did not assume that its format had been self-evident or normative, but instead he drew attention to it as an

⁸⁵ HMB, 'Reflections of an Unjustified Stay-at-Home', *Twentieth Century* 158 (Oct. 1955), 314-15. Butler's essay was written in response to Iain Hamilton's 'Confessions of a Justified Emigré', *Twentieth Century* 158 (Aug. 1955), 99-111.

⁸⁶ Risteárd Ó Glaisne, 'Our World', *Focus* Mar. 1958, 25.

expression of post-war intercultural relations and their organization. With this perspective, he could compare the circumstances of his trip to those under which he would likely have made it a generation earlier:

In the old days a visit to China was a relatively simple affair and you were not expected, after a month's sojourn, to have formed any private opinions. Uncle Fred was in the Shanghai Police; Cousin Harold was in a bank in Canton and Aunt Alice was in Fukien province teaching in a mission school. They were all strongly opinionated people and would have been very snubbing to any relative who started, after a few casual meetings with Chinese, to have independent views. The idea of a cultural delegation to China would have seemed to them preposterous. They are all gone now and an easy, if at times unreliable, channel of communication is blocked for ever. We have to form our own opinions without any friends, relations, compatriots to help us, and we are definitely expected to express them. (*CD* 48)

This is a deceptively light passage, poking as it does an ironic finger into the ribs of Uncle Fred and Cousin Harold. Yet even as Butler conveys his distaste for the illiberality and presumption of such people, in the last line he also casts doubt on the current situation that has replaced them. One need hardly wish for the return of imperial domination to recognize that, however inadvertently, it had created openings for sustained interaction with other cultures that formal delegations and package tours could not possibly replicate. Of course the presence of western tourists in a country like China was far less intrusive than that of their colonizing forebears, but their understanding of it must perforce be more superficial. Was this change really all to the good?

Already laden with such doubts about the whole enterprise, Butler derived little reassurance from the other members of the delegation, despite the promising assemblage of personalities it brought together. The designated leader was the Irish-language scholar David Greene of TCD, followed by the artists John Bourke, Hilary Heron and Anne Yeats. The writers included were Butler, Arland Ussher and the leftwing English journalist R.M. Fox, a long-time resident of Ireland. Whether through accident or design, then, the group was overwhelmingly secular and Protestant in composition. The unrepresentative nature of this little band was not lost on Ussher, who later joked to Bourke: 'I "have to laugh" when I think of us as delegates –

delegated by whom, in God's name? "The Irish Cultural Reprobates" it should have been – reprobated by the whole Irish people!⁸⁷ Though their shared status in Ireland as outsiders and free thinkers may have been one reason they initially came together, it did not help the group develop any coherent notion of why they were on the trip or what they hoped to get out of it. Butler found this tentativeness irritating and complained in a letter home of the 'naive priggishness' characterizing his companions' reactions to what they were seeing. Fox, whom he described as 'a dear little hideous Great Russell Street ultra cockney idealist', he credited with at least showing a certain amount of intellectual engagement.⁸⁸ While Butler could not share Fox's starry-eyed admiration for the great communist experiment, he was nonetheless sympathetic to his determination to gather as much information as possible about the social and economic reforms it had instituted.

True to form, Butler devoted his own energies to learning what he could about how minority groups and former elites were faring beneath the surface of Maoist society. Without in any way condoning its tactics or philosophy, he was willing to concede that Communism had generated the necessary momentum to free China from the political stagnation in which its own traditions and Western exploitation had trapped it. At the same time, he could still reflect that 'in so tremendous a cataclysm it is difficult to count the casualties or to estimate how soon, if ever, the new energy which has been released can repair the damage which has been done. Whole classes have disappeared – landlords, bankers, scholars, civil servants, priests; and such things do not happen without appalling wastage and suffering' (CD 58). As he had done so often during his travels, Butler used the sojourn in China to revisit the universal question of how societies can progress without resorting to the extreme and often inhuman solutions of revolution. In this case he was particularly concerned about the condition of Chinese Christians, and through contacts he had made before leaving Europe, he arranged to meet several leading churchmen. They assured

⁸⁷ TCD, Ms. 9031.216, (Ussher Papers): Arland Ussher to John Bourke, 20 Aug. 1957.

⁸⁸ MH (Letterbook, 'A Visit to China'): HMB to Peggy Butler, 7 Sept. 1956. See Fox's own published account of the trip, *China Diary* (London, 1959).

him that they were not subject to persecution or intimidation because of their beliefs, and he concluded that they were being truthful.⁸⁹

There could be no doubt, though, that China was now a country primarily dedicated to the cult of uniformity. When the delegation was invited to watch one huge parade, Butler recounted how ‘we stood five hours at the Gateway of Heavenly Peace watching many thousands of soldiers and sailors march past in the pouring rain. Their legs moved like pistons, their white gloves like bobbins in a weaving machine. There was not a solitary mistake or misadventure to relieve the awful tedium’ (CD 62-3). No other activity provoked Hubert Butler’s aversion quite so much as the procession or mass demonstration. It resurfaces repeatedly throughout his writings as the very emblem of the totalitarian age, be it in Leningrad in 1932, Dublin in 1949, or Beijing in 1956. With what elsewhere he refers to as its ‘makeshift comradeship’, he sees this sort of public display as the antithesis to genuine community, a false collectivism that obviates the individual conscience without in the process generating any real neighbourly concern (LN 103). Despite his thoughtful and longstanding criticisms of Communism, though, Butler’s estimation of China itself was to be less sure-footed than that of any other place he visited. Frustrated by his inability to speak the language and ever mindful of the extraordinary age and sweep of Chinese civilization, he accepted that even the most dedicated enquirer could take home only fragments of comprehension after a month’s stay.⁹⁰ The comparative disjointedness of his written impressions suggests that he was both attracted to and baffled by China, but above all respectful enough of its complexity to venture only modest conclusions about its inner state of being.⁹¹

What the visit to China confirmed for Butler once again was the inherent hollowness of cultural exchange as it was being pursued in the second part of the twentieth century. Yet the

⁸⁹ MH, (Letterbook, ‘A Visit to China’): HMB to Peggy Butler, 12[?] and 17 Sept. 1956.

⁹⁰ MH, (Letterbook, ‘A Visit to China’): HMB to Peggy Butler, Sept.-Oct. 1956.

⁹¹ The piece entitled ‘In China’ is comprised of a series of articles that appeared in the *Irish Times* in November 1956, along with one printed in *Peace News* in August 1957 (CD 48-66).

‘official travel’ that the delegation represented was but one manifestation of a deficiency of which mass tourism was a far grosser symptom. Just as he had feared, travel of the kind he had done before the war had been almost completely replaced by something inorganic and devoid of spontaneity, another sign of the mechanization overtaking all aspects of life. Thousands of people could visit a country and never really see it, and he was distressed by their passive willingness to partake of this charade. As the Irish delegation had made its way across the U.S.S.R. en route to China, he noted how ‘one Brobdignagian air palace was much like the next’, finding such places akin to modern-day Potemkin villages whose velvet curtains and pot-plants effectively concealed everything an inquisitive foreigner might want to see (CD 41). Similarly, Monk Gibbon regarded the development of commercial air-travel as an example of how technological advances not only facilitated but reinforced social engineering. He thought that ‘from the moment you first enter the chromium-plated precincts of the air-port you feel you have become a piece of merchandise carefully scheduled, carefully labelled, handled with a delicate and detached solicitude and duly delivered when the moment comes....People do as they are directed in a subdued, almost hushed and herded manner’.⁹²

But if totalitarian regimes took advantage of technology to impose uniformity and to restrict access, the ‘free world’ used it in other, subtler ways to enforce a different hegemony. Arland Ussher interpreted the regimentation that now characterized travel as a way of bolstering the rampant consumerism dominating western capitalist society. In his book *Spanish Mercy*, he observes that curiosity has been replaced by an impulse to commodify and acquire, a desire not so much to experience another culture in its unpredictability as to catalogue its advertised highlights for one’s photo album. In the process, he says, ‘the world becomes a stack of postcards’, and eventually indistinguishable tourists will simply be visiting indistinguishable countries.⁹³ Butler saw this phenomenon in action when he and his wife visited Greece in the early fifties, an episode

⁹² Monk Gibbon, *Swiss Enchantment*, 12.

⁹³ Arland Ussher, *Spanish Mercy*, 32.

he records in his 1961 essay 'Return to Hellas'. In contrast to the trip he had made on foot across the Peloponnese in the 1920s, he recalls a package tour they joined that took them all over the place in a fraction of the time. Of this gathering of middle-aged visitors Butler says 'we knew well how banal we were' but at the same time claims that 'we were conscious of our power'. Through the construction of highways, hotels and other amenities, Greece was straining to turn itself into a tourist-haven that would ensure its place within the American-dominated political and economic sphere. It is the cultural impact of this orientation that concerns Butler: he is aware how all this effort at convenience and accessibility is in fact doing little to promote cultural appreciation or mutuality on the ground. Indeed, quite the reverse appears to be happening. Although the days of overt colonialism are past, through mass culture the West, and the U.S in particular, has evolved a more insidious form of imperialism. So he remarks that in the old days 'an unrefined people had to be put in some sort of political strait-jacket and culture had to be pumped in by resident expatriates', while under the current dispensation 'such progress has been made in the canning and sweetening of culture that huge concentrated doses, capable of neutralizing the toughest insularities, the most obstinate regional idiosyncrasies, can be dumped anywhere by anyone, and they will be greedily absorbed' (*EA* 221, 229).

Examples of this impersonal process of ingratiation popped up repeatedly during the trip. When the tour travelled to Crete, Butler noticed how the charabanc-driver would turn on American pop music whenever he got the chance. The music, he comments, would 'transport him to distant lands and remote experiences more effectively than we, the raw unsweetened products of those lands, could ever do'. The mundane reality of the West in the form of troublesome tourists was obviously not nearly so appealing as the ready-made, packaged version that technology piped in through every radio and cinema. Butler finds confirmation of his theory when their bus passes the American air-base near Mallia and the driver 'wrinkled his nose to illustrate how aloof the Americans were'. Thus he concludes rather sadly that 'Cretans and Anglo-Saxons meet each other like shadows beyond the Styx'. Later, on Rhodes, he came across

what he considers another potent illustration of this disjunction between mass culture and personal contact when he glimpsed a Hollywood film crew shooting a movie. 'In a few months the film will rise like a rocket and encircle the globe', he speculates, 'and before the last vibration of this mighty effort of the human imagination has died down enough gold will have been stirred round to rebuild the Colossus of Rhodes ten times over'. Yet what is the lasting import of these Herculean undertakings? Whose unique vision of life is finally shared through them, or for whom can they serve as anything but a soporific diversion from the less glamorous but still authentic immediacies of one's own existence? Of the people in the film crew itself Butler remarks that 'they had the constipated look of men who have consumed more irrelevant experience than they can digest....And this is happening to most of us the whole time. Impressions from far away as soft as snowflakes are choking up the channels of perception, making sharp corners into curves, generalizing what is particular, reducing everything to a boundless colourless uniformity'. So while Communist society might subdue individuals through repression, capitalist society lulls them into a hazy acquiescence with the erosion of all that makes their experience distinctive (*EA* 230-1).

As the intrusions of mass tourism and mass culture became pervasive, though, so the demand for what might be considered the authentic and unmediated increased among more selective travellers. The game of searching out 'real' or 'unspoilt' culture was by no means a new one, but it took on a more mercenary aspect as the opportunities to play it became fewer and fewer. In wandering away from the coastal towns and into the Rhodian countryside, Butler happened upon some isolated villages that appeared largely unaffected by Hollywood film crews and to be populated by peasants who were 'the sediment which half a dozen infusions of foreign culture have failed to dilute'. Of such people he remarks that 'sophisticated foreigners in revolt from their age find a certain sweetness in their mummified traditions. There is an epicene pleasure in watching others believe things which we no longer believe ourselves' (*EA* 232). As his tone suggests, Butler had little patience for such romantic primitivism, which he took not only

to be shallow but also deeply patronizing. Three years after publishing 'Return to Hellas', he took British sophisticates to task in a similar fashion for their unreflective celebration of bull-fighting. In the piece 'On Loving Bulls', he suggests that 'for half a generation now the English have wearied of their own complex humanitarianism and are often envious of the unorganised sensibilities of less fortunate people'. He then reels off the usual arguments made by cultivated outsiders in defence of the custom: '[T]he bullfights are acceptable because they are Spanish, traditional, indigenous; they demand courage and skill and grace; they help us shed our insular prejudices'. Butler is not primarily concerned here with condemning bull-fighting – which incidentally he does – but with unmasking the complacency with which foreigners glorify someone else's barbarity in a false gesture of cosmopolitan appreciation (*CD* 165-8). For him, internationalism hardly means a holiday from one's own ethical values, and it is ultimately self-serving condescension not to expect from others what one expects of oneself. Indeed, to apply such a distinction is to employ a logic perilously close to that of the Victorian imperialists, which many of these same people would claim to despise.

'On Loving Bulls' resulted from one of several visits Butler and his wife made to Spain, the first of which took place in 1958.⁹⁴ As with Greece, he found there an outlying European country where the interface between native culture and capitalist modernization had yielded up some strange combinations. What gave Spain an added resonance was that its Civil War, which had so exercised the hearts and minds of Butler's whole generation, was only twenty years in the

⁹⁴ Although he was never to know it, whether Butler should be permitted to travel after his 1956 trip to China became a subject for discussion among the Irish authorities. When he requested a renewal of his passport in late 1957, his application received special attention because the Department of External Affairs had placed him on its 'Stop List' as 'a person suspected of communist leanings, largely because of his visits to Iron Curtain countries and notably to Red China'. When a recommendation was solicited from Colonel R.J. Callanan of G2, Ireland's military intelligence branch, Callanan responded: 'Mr. Butler has been known to us for some years. He is not, we believe, a Communist although leftish in his views on certain matters....His interests are cultural and historical rather than political'. In his report Callanan refers to the Papal Nuncio Incident and then concludes that 'in all the circumstances, I feel that I cannot offer objection to the issue of a new Passport'. The passport was duly renewed, though the interlude demonstrates that the accusations of Communist sympathy to which Butler was subject were something more serious than just name-calling. NAI ref. A55/7 (Dept. of Foreign Affairs Papers): Colonel R.J. Callanan to J.A. Belton; and J.A. Belton to the Minister of External Affairs, both 9 Jan. 1958.

past. While he recognizes in his essay 'Escape to Spain' that 'today Spain's problems are primarily her own', he also confesses that 'middle-aged people find it hard not to feel implicated in them still'. That a land which had so recently symbolized Europe's hopes for democratic progress was now ruled by a proto-fascist regime busily courting foreign tourists Butler takes to be the most damning indictment possible of the current dispensation. He cannot conceal his disillusionment on this point when he remarks that 'those who truly loved the Western democracies have been replaced by those who love only their pounds and dollars', and he is doubly disgusted that so many visitors should be oblivious of this fact (*GW* 221, 225). Elsewhere he presents an unflattering portrait of the Northern European holidaymakers who have flocked to Tenerife and other such resorts: 'They sit and drink in awninged cafes, perched above the black shore or press into the concrete glories of the lido for a safe dip. Here, as on a butcher's slab, red flesh is exposed in unappetising abundanceAll races and classes are equal in sun-worshipping circles and well-born Teuton snobs rub amicable shoulders with bird-fanciers from South Shields'. Meanwhile, he concludes, 'the locals muse gracefully on the fringe of all this important idleness'.⁹⁵ As Butler's last comment intimates, any pretence of genuine egalitarianism is tainted by the fact that the Spaniards themselves are marginalized in their own country in order to make it appealing to their freedom-loving neighbours from the north. And of course it is those most vocally freedom-loving of all Westerners, the Americans, who in the name of democracy have planted their military bases not only in Greece and Spain but all over the world (*EA* 211).

It was perhaps inevitable that at some stage Hubert Butler should want to visit the U.S.A., since it was the country that more than any other embodied and enforced the post-war order. That his daughter had married a young American doctor and settled there gave him a personal reason to be interested as well. When Butler was preparing to cross the Atlantic for the first time to visit his daughter and her family in 1961, his fellow Kilkennyman Francis Hackett, who had spent many years in New York, explained to him: 'There is more elbow-room, more surprise, more new

⁹⁵ MH (Ms.): "'Spanish Here': An Impression of Tenerife' [3pp., undated (1960s)].

combinations, and more goodwill, if one happens to be curious and susceptible to pleasant and responsive and hospitable people. Americans long to be kind, and they are not stratified as yet. The danger is to be swamped by them. But you can look out for that'.⁹⁶ This was probably all the advice Butler needed. As occasional remarks of his testify, he was not exempt from the reflexive snobbery many educated Europeans feel towards Americans, but his interest in individuals and his perennial open-mindedness meant that this tendency faded quickly in light of firsthand experience. Certainly it did not take him long to realize that despite its producing so much mass culture for consumption both at home and abroad, the U.S.A. still had layers of inner complexity and differentiation that waited beneath the surface to be discovered. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Deep South, where in the early 1960s the battle over civil rights for black people was just coming fully into its own. With characteristic idealism and out of a desire to see American life as directly as possible, Butler decided to follow in the trail of the recent Freedom Riders, those black and white activists who forced the bus services to integrate, by travelling cross-country on a Greyhound tourist ticket (*GW* 232-3).

In writing home about what he was seeing during this trip, Butler proved himself to be an astute observer of American culture and mores. While in the South he was particularly interested in identifying the subtler forms of racial prejudice and in understanding the psychology of its more genteel practitioners. Perhaps because he had grown up hearing analogous arguments being advanced by his Protestant elders about Irish independence, he cut deftly through the rationalizations of respectable Southern Episcopalians who claimed civil rights was a bad idea: 'They don't see why they should not be allowed to go on being paternal. They all have dear old black cooks that they look after very tenderly'. By contrast, he was impressed by the concrete ways in which American Catholics showed themselves so supportive of the movement and readily said so.⁹⁷ He managed to meet with both Wyatt Tee Walker, one of Martin Luther King's

⁹⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/713 (BP): Francis Hackett to HMB, 12 Sept. 1961.

⁹⁷ MH (Letterbook, 'U.S.A.'): HMB to Peggy Butler, 12 Jan. 1962.

chief lieutenants, as well as the writer Eudora Welty, whom he approached through an introduction from Elizabeth Bowen.⁹⁸ In sum, he could only surmise that in the long term there would probably be ‘no dramatic explosion of animosity or reconciliation’ between blacks and whites, a prediction which, despite both the legislative progress and the urban riots, has proved largely correct. No stranger to unresolved historic grievances passed on from one generation to the next, Butler could only conclude with some compassion that ‘both sides are unhappy and confused’ (*GW* 236).

Moving westward on his journey, Butler passed through Texas and into the Southwest. When he stopped over in Santa Fe, New Mexico, he wrote to his wife of the affluent, artistically-inclined residents he met there: ‘Santa Fe is a sort of high power Dubrovnik and all the educated people act as centrally heated, permanently waved, super-sophisticated Red Indians and live in fantastically elegant and expensive mud houses’.⁹⁹ Once on the West Coast, he visited both Los Angeles and San Francisco and quickly decided he preferred the latter. As a place it seemed to him to have developed a more coherent sense of itself, while Los Angeles, he complained, ‘can contrive no entertainment without a pseudo-sophisticated leer’.¹⁰⁰ Having reached continent’s end, Butler then turned around and travelled back to his daughter’s home in New York, a city he was to get to know well during subsequent visits. When discontent on U.S. college campuses reached its height in 1968, for example, he watched attentively as students at Columbia University staged ‘teach-ins’ in conjunction with their protests against the Vietnam War. ‘Is it really so presumptuous of the students to organize their own classes?’ he asked in a series of articles he wrote for the *Irish Times* about the upheaval in American life. ‘Young intellectuals are kept artificially childish and then asked to throw all their weight, their lives and their brains into a conflict whose rights and wrongs have been decided for them elsewhere. The mass media, press, radio, television, overwhelming in their impact, can turn the dull-witted into conformists, while at

⁹⁸ MH (Letterbook, ‘U.S.A.’): HMB to Peggy Butler, 16 and 20 Jan. 1962.

⁹⁹ MH (Letterbook, ‘U.S.A.’): HMB to Peggy Butler, 30 Jan. 1962.

¹⁰⁰ MH (Letterbook, ‘U.S.A.’): HMB to Peggy Butler, 7 Feb. 1962.

the same time, for the inquiring, they expose the dirty little secrets of authority as never before' (LN 244). It scarcely needs pointing out how much these comments are of a piece with Butler's overall interpretation of how technology had transformed western society; perhaps what does bear remarking upon is that a man of his age should prove so ready to defend the agitations of youth. In the same fashion, he applauded the students' protest against the University's plans to build a new gymnasium on parkland which poor residents in the neighbourhood used for recreation. It struck him as a good case of ways in which 'universal problems could be reduced to manageable dimensions and solved by direct action' (LN 246). There could be no better summation of what Butler's international experiences had taught him over the past four decades.

Although he still had over twenty years to live and continued to make occasional trips to North America and the Continent, as the 1970s dawned Hubert Butler settled into the more staid habits of old age. Not that he was any less attuned to world events or ceased to be concerned with an Irishman's role in them. He remained a passionate advocate of a principled neutrality for Ireland and was especially vocal in opposing nuclear proliferation. The arms race was surely the ultimate demonstration of how technology threatened to eclipse the face of all humanity. He recognized that small nations could exert only a modest influence on international relations but did not feel this exempted their citizens from the moral obligation to speak out.¹⁰¹ Ireland had already been undergoing significant changes since the early sixties in the way it related to the outside world, and for the most part Butler greeted approvingly this shift from the insularity of the de Valera years. The most profound gesture the country made towards greater international engagement was its decision to enter the European Economic Community, its membership officially taking effect on New Year's Day 1973. Writing in the Church of Ireland journal *New Divinity* shortly beforehand, the farmer and active layman F.L. Jacob recognized that joining the E.E.C. would mean losing some of the texture and intimacy of Irish governance, but he believed it promised more than just economic benefits by way of compensation. Aside from encouraging

¹⁰¹ See especially his 1986 essay 'Ireland in the Nuclear Age' [LN 57-64].

greater cross-border co-operation between North and South, he insisted that 'above all, we are moving with the tide of history'.¹⁰²

While naturally he welcomed the prospect of bringing Ireland into the European mainstream and fervently desired improved relations between the six and twenty-six counties, Butler balked at Ireland's trading in her hard-earned autonomy so as to move 'with the tide of history'. Both as an ideal and as a policy, he was deeply suspicious of the E.E.C. and its centralizing impulse. Had the Irish not yet learned that there were benefits as well as disadvantages to being a small and comparatively remote people which was in the world but not of it? Why this rush to move from one extreme to the other? While hardly an economist, he nonetheless clung to the belief that the ultimate issue was not money so much as values. If only the political will were there, Ireland might yet evolve a policy more open to Europe while still protective of local industry and agriculture, the economic basis for what made it culturally distinctive. Instead, as he wrote in an unpublished piece entitled 'The Appleman and the Poet', all the market squares in Irish county towns were being turned into car-parks. Local farmers and market gardeners like himself no longer had anywhere to sell their produce, and directives from Brussels would soon be proscribing what had once been agreed with a handshake.¹⁰³ This had certainly never been what he had imagined an Irish internationalism to be. Indeed, were it not careful, soon Ireland would become part of the great sameness that was gradually overtaking the United States and the industrialized nations of Europe. Having recently visited the Hessian city of Cassel, for example, he reflected on its reconstruction after being levelled by British bombs during the Second World War: 'The new Cassel, though prosperous, is like any other big modern city.... Apart from its German shop-signs, it might be in Kansas or Lancashire. When it attracts another bomb, bigger and better, there will, apart from men and women, be only a vast and

¹⁰² F.L. Jacob, 'Some implications for rural Ireland of membership in the European Economic Community', *New Divinity* 3:2 (Winter 1972), 149.

¹⁰³ MH (Ms.): 'The Appleman and the Poet', 4 [11pp., undated (1960s)].

smothered spiritual potential to regret' (*EA* 208). Though only a lone voice, he was determined to do as much as he could to prevent the same ever being said of Ireland.

Four: Irish Community and Protestant Belonging, 1930-49

Be not startled, *Reverend Sirs*, to find yourselves addressed by one of a different Communion. We are indeed (to our Shame be it spoken) more inclined to hate for those Articles, wherein we differ, than to love one another for those wherein we agree. But if we cannot extinguish, let us at least suspend our Animosities, and forgetting our religious Feuds, consider ourselves in the amiable Light of Countrymen and Neighbours. Let us for once turn our Eyes on those Things, in which we have one common Interest. Why should Disputes about Faith interrupt the Duties of civil Life? or the different Roads we take to Heaven prevent our taking the same Steps on Earth? [D]o we not inhabit the same Spot of Ground, breath[e] the same Air, and live under the same Government? [W]hy then should we not conspire in one and the same Design, to promote the common Good of our Country?

– George Berkeley, *A Word to the Wise: or, an exhortation to the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland*.¹

I. The challenge of Protestant social integration

When the old Protestant nationalist Robert Lynd died in 1949, Eamon de Valera sent his widow a telegram of condolence in which, due to an error by the telegraph clerk, he praised Lynd for the role he had played in making ‘Ireland a Notion’.² Despite its accidental origins, this phrase serves as an apt reminder of the part many Protestant intellectuals of Lynd’s generation had taken not only in advancing the cause of Irish political independence but also in articulating new terms for its cultural being. That the Protestant contribution to this latter process was increasingly unwelcome in the Free State after 1930 can be surmised from the unprecedented degree to which Irishness and Catholicism were exclusively associated in the public discourse. Yet what complicates this picture of sectarian opposition is the fact that the Protestants most likely to make a cultural contribution – writers, artists, academics, clergy, journalists – often experienced a growing sense of alienation both as members of the religious minority and as members of the larger Irish intelligentsia. Thus a recognition of the convergence and overlap of Protestant minority concerns with intellectual minority concerns is essential when considering the position each group occupied in Irish society during the decades following.

¹ George Berkeley, *A Word to the Wise: or, an exhortation to the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland* (Dublin, 1749), 3.

² Merton College Oxford, Ms. 632 (Beerbohm Papers): Sylvia Lynd to Max Beerbohm, 24 Nov. 1949.

Lynd himself failed to confront the underlying cause of these shared concerns when, in his contribution to the *Saorstát Eireann Official Handbook* of 1932, he remarked: 'The political idealist and the literary idealist...can seldom tolerate each other for long. The political idealist holds that the man of letters should, in a measure, yoke his genius to the political needs of his country. The literary idealist demands the right to express himself without any regard to the political and national situation of the moment. Hence, it is only to be expected that in time there would come a rift between the new politics and the new literature'.³ By attributing this rift in the Irish context to a universal phenomenon whereby artists and politicians almost inevitably differ, though, Lynd sidesteps the reason the rift became so pronounced in Ireland so soon after Independence. In this as in many other things, it was left to Seán O'Faoláin to say aloud in the 1940s what others had avoided saying before him, that the shared plight of Protestants and intellectuals was symptomatic of a pathology at the heart of national self-definition. The alienation of these two communities, he wrote, was indicative of 'our failure to cope with the problem of forming a unified society of the many elements which, as in every country in the world, diversely compose it'. A result of this unhappy state of affairs was that the two 'most cultivated groups' in Irish society, the Anglo-Irish and the writers, 'are virtually treated as outlaws'.⁴ Whatever the admirably consistent assertion of legal protection for minorities by the state, both its official and unofficial cultural commissars displayed a steely resolve in excluding the possibility of social or intellectual dissent from their ideal of national belonging. Indeed, just as more cosmopolitan perspectives were often discounted as part of the ongoing effort to rid Ireland of English influence, so many forms of dissident engagement were to be rejected as the price of purging the culture of those decadent sensibilities attributed to the old Ascendancy.

A link between outspokenness and religion functioned at the core of Irish Protestant self-understanding as well. Despite abundant evidence of the Anglo-Irish capacity for philistinism

³ Robert Lynd, 'Anglo-Irish Literature', in B. Hobson (ed.), *Saorstát Eireann/ Irish Free State: Official Handbook* (Dublin, 1932), 284.

⁴ Seán O'Faoláin, 'An Irish Council', *The Bell* 11:1 (Oct. 1945), 561-2.

and social conformity, engrained in the Protestantism of people like Hubert Butler was the conviction that intellectual independence was more than an occasional by-product of caste privilege. Rather, it derived directly from a religious tradition in which personal responsibility and individual integrity were of fundamental importance. So while he recognized in his own day how ‘often the Protestant heretic in Ireland has a small private income which cushions him against the inevitable ostracism of his neighbours’, he also felt sure that ‘there [is] a philosophical reason for this, our Protestant aptitude for dissent’, given that so often ‘our vices and virtues are those of the goat rather than the sheep’.⁵ Economic and political advantages may have permitted Protestants in the past to act on their consciences and exercise their judgment in unorthodox ways that the absence of privilege would have made more difficult, but the advantages were not therefore the source itself for the impulse towards self-assertion. For Butler, Irish Protestants’ assumption of spiritual and intellectual freedom came naturally as both a birthright and a duty bequeathed to them by their Elizabethan forbears. So he insisted that ‘we are members of a great European community that took its rise at the Reformation. We are not the dwindling rearguard of English misgovernment’ (*CD* 123). Here again one might argue that invoking the Reformation as the basis of the Protestant dissenting tradition was not a uniquely Irish gesture. Yet Butler’s insistence upon its ongoing and immediate relevance to contemporary Southern Protestant identity underscores the peculiar intensity and historical resonance which religious assumptions could still have in the shaping of the Irish mind, Protestant as well as Catholic.

Perhaps it is not surprising that Butler should feel the need to assert such a sectarian-based intellectual position when faced with the majority’s apparently monolithic and unyielding solidarity, and in his self-consciousness on this point he was certainly not alone. J.A.F. Gregg, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin from 1920-39 and Archbishop of Armagh from 1939-59, remarked towards the end of his life that for him Roman Catholicism was still ‘the religion of the

⁵ MH (Ms.): ‘Libraries’, 3 [7pp., undated (1970s/80s)].

natural man', whereas he had always believed it was 'very difficult to be a good Protestant'.⁶

Gregg's distinction implicitly endorses the assumption that by the standards of their faith, Catholics did not need to think in order to attain righteousness, whereas a person could only hope to be a really 'good Protestant' if continually engaged in the hard work of intellectual and spiritual exploration. Hubert Butler reiterated this specifically Protestant valuation of free thought when he reflected that 'I am a child of the Reformation and the man who questions inherited belief and starts on some independent search for God will always have my sympathy however lonely and ridiculous he may often appear. If he transmits the questioning spirit to his offspring and his friends, his absurdities are likely to be corrected'.⁷ In just a few lines, Butler affirms a tenet of faith basic to his brand of Protestant thinking, that the truly healthy community regulates itself not through social ostracism or by the suppression of diversity, but through an unending process of refinement and evolution. The right to dissent must therefore be afforded all members of the community without any corresponding loss of belonging should they choose to exercise it.

Given that both sides of the sectarian divide continued after 1930 to find the ideological opposition between Catholic authority and Protestant private judgment meaningful in framing the terms of Irish culture, it is natural that Catholic intellectuals alienated by the dominant ethos should look to the Protestant community as a potential ally in the struggle for freedom of expression. That some Protestants should in turn derive reassurance from the intellectuals' demands for a more liberal and inclusive approach to the definition of Irishness is also evident. What requires closer scrutiny are the particular ways in which this alliance was forged and prosecuted by pivotal figures such as Hubert Butler and Seán O'Faoláin. Since not all Southern Protestants shared Butler's emphasis on and enthusiasm for the dissenting strain in their tradition, it is also important to keep in mind that his role as a public controversialist placed him at odds

⁶ George Seaver, *John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg, Archbishop* (London, 1963), 310.

⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/323/2, (BP): 'Sandwich Boards and Table-mats' [undated (1960s)].

with his co-religionists as often as it did with Catholic opponents. These disagreements provide another means of examining the relationship between sectarian identity and intellectual participation, but this time more from an internal than an external perspective. Even among Southern Protestant intellectuals there was, of course, no absolute consensus when envisioning the nature of Irish belonging, so at least a brief account of some of the visions offered by others helps place Butler's own in context, as does attention to the practical ways in which Protestant institutions of an intellectual bent handled questions of adaptation, assimilation and resistance to the larger society. Among his contemporaries, though, it was still Hubert Butler himself who, as an individual, most consistently and emphatically promoted the common ground between the best of the Protestant inheritance and the aspirations of the emergent Catholic intelligentsia. And even when there were signs in the 1960s of new complexities facing Ireland, evidenced by a growing liberality in the South and an exacerbated sectarianism in the North, Butler's nuanced conception of mutuality and difference retained its relevance for all Irish people.

Throughout this period, a major rhetorical challenge for the Protestant community was to resist the assignation of 'non-Catholic' in defining its social status in the new Ireland. For the term was more than just a semantic affront; it signified an attempt to reconstitute Protestants as 'non-matter', a demographic blank space in Irish life akin to the empty fields where destroyed Big Houses had once stood and which nature would in time reclaim.⁸ The dilemma was how to make a separate peace with the catholicity of majority culture without being swallowed up by it, without allowing its logic to become normative in one's own thinking. Here education served an important purpose. Victor Griffin, who eventually became Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, recalls that in attending the local Church of Ireland school in Carnew, Co. Wicklow during the thirties, 'we were warned always to speak of *Roman* Catholics, never just Catholics, and to resist any attempt to call us non-Catholics....We were not non-Catholics, but protesting, Protestant

⁸ I am indebted to the historian Ian d'Alton for this insight. In conversation, Dublin, 11 April 2001.

Catholics. No contradiction was involved in being a Protestant *and* a Catholic'.⁹ Apart from the theological position advanced by this statement, what is striking about it is the new level of self-awareness it intimates among those in the Protestant community who, out of desire or necessity or both, wished to partake in mainstream society. To do so without effectively relinquishing one's heritage was to require constant vigilance and evaluation.

Just how much they were doing this in the 1930s has been a subject of some contention.¹⁰ Nonetheless, one cannot finally quarrel with F.S.L. Lyons's assessment that however significant the interventions of Protestant representatives may have been on their own merits, it would be unwise to exaggerate the actual impact they had on decision-making.¹¹ There were to be less direct yet by no means negligible ways in which the Protestant perspective was to register itself, and here the increasingly engaged tone of the *Irish Times* under R.M. Smyllie is emblematic. Even before he took over the editorship from the unbending Unionist John E. Healy, Smyllie recognized the need for dissident voices to combat the mounting philistinism and insularity of Irish life. Writing as 'Nichevo', Smyllie routinely criticized current trends and personalities in the columns of his 'Irishman's Diary'.¹² The paper's more general outspokenness under the new editor did not go unnoticed by those disposed to detect in its pages evidence of condescension from an unrepentant elite. When an article appeared in the *Times* critical of certain aspects of Irish rural life, for example, an irate reader demanded of Smyllie: 'Have you or those planters for whose applause you live no sense of truth or honour[?]: Ireland is the most beautiful country in the world, but an Ireland that was laid waste by the human sewer rats who swarmed in to loot and

⁹ Victor Griffin, *Mark of Protest* (Dublin, 1993), 27-8.

¹⁰ Pauric Dempsey, for example, has recently sought to challenge the commonly held notion that the Protestant community opted for 'benign silence' as a collective strategy in negotiating their place in the young state, positing instead that leaders of Protestant opinion such as the *Irish Times*, Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland were 'nothing less than querulous' in their pronouncements. Pauric Dempsey, 'Trinity College Dublin and the New Political Order', in M. Cronin and J.M. Regan (eds.), *Ireland: The Politics of Independence, 1922-49* (London, 2000), 217-31.

¹¹ F.S.L. Lyons, 'The Minority Problem in the 26 Counties', in F. MacManus (ed.), *The Years of the Great Test* (Dublin, 1978), 101.

¹² R.B. McDowell, *Crisis and Decline*, 176.

rob under the protection of the blood-stained Union Jack'.¹³ Nor can it be said that this sort of kneejerk reaction to Protestant social critique was entirely restricted to fringe elements. Writing in the respected Jesuit journal *Studies* in 1943, Joseph P. Hackett later claimed that

the native Irishman gets along very well with the planters in the ordinary course of events. So long as they settle down to the life of the countryside, working the same sort of land and getting together at the same fairs and shows, he is prepared to let bygones be bygones. But when one of them begins to preach to him and tell him how to behave, the centuries dissolve in an instant and he begins to see red. He begins to think of Drogheda and Oliver Cromwell and James Ussher and Dublin University and all the other items of the first mission from Geneva to Ireland.¹⁴

Obviously if in speaking their minds publicly Protestants were going to run the risk of unleashing such torrents of Catholic resentment, then only the most determined among them would continue to insist on doing so and thereby also become a source of anxiety to the rest of their community. Through a process of self-censorship fuelled by anticipation, then, progressively fewer Protestant intellectuals proclaimed their right, to borrow a phrase from Edna Longley, 'to define the national being and defend Ireland's soul'.¹⁵

For those Protestants with less elevated ambitions, there were still plenty of ways in which life in the decade-old state continued to challenge their sense of place and belonging. The revolution in Ireland had been sufficiently modest that it was possible for some ex-Unionists to carry on as though nothing had really changed, cocooning themselves in Anglo-Irish social milieus and doing their best to ignore the rest.¹⁶ Once these sheltered people ventured out of the familiar environs of club or college, though, they quickly encountered an environment they found

¹³ TCD, Ms. 9800.4 (French Papers): Conor McNessa to the Editor of the *Irish Times* [R.M. Smyllie], 12 Sept. 1935 [copy in possession of R.B.D. French].

¹⁴ Joseph P. Hackett, 'Shaw and Yeats', *Studies* 32 (Sept. 1943), 370. It is relevant to recall that in the same journal Seán O'Faoláin would later observe that the desire for liberty had induced in many Irishmen 'a nervy, sensitive, touchy, defensive-aggressive, on-guard mentality'. Seán O'Faoláin, 'Fifty Years of Irish Writing', *Studies* 51 (Spring 1962), 96.

¹⁵ Edna Longley, *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1994), 139.

¹⁶ R.B. McDowell, *Land and Learning: Two Irish Clubs* (Dublin, 1993), 37. An extreme case of this anachronistic lifestyle was that of the genealogist Thomas Sadleir, who in his capacity as the Deputy Ulster King-of-Arms managed to carry on his Crown-appointed duties at Dublin Castle until the Office of Arms was at last turned over to the Irish government in 1943. Sadleir's son Randal has written of his father that 'his life centred on the cloistered world of the castle, Trinity College, St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Kildare Street Club'. Randal Sadleir, *Tanzania*, 6.

baffling and even distasteful. In February 1935, the *Church of Ireland Gazette* lamented the incivility of Irish society and the lack of respect afforded those who were older or in positions of responsibility.¹⁷ This decline in manners was confirmed for the Trinity historian Edmund Curtis the same year when he attempted to call on some government officials. He recounted afterwards to Arland Ussher how he had waited for them at their offices, but ‘they were not returned from lunch though it was 3 o’clock[,] and the lounging cigarette smoking assistants...all showed me such scant courtesy and everything smelt so of popular education and Popery in the Pro-Cathedral across the road that I retired beaten’.¹⁸ The blend of social snobbery and religious bigotry at work in Curtis’s comments is countered here only by his tacit recognition that whatever contempt he may have for these people it is matched by theirs for him, and they have power over him. But even Protestants who did not lead cloistered lives and were active in the world of affairs sometimes appeared uncertain about how to negotiate the changed realities of getting along in the Free State. In August the *Gazette* addressed what it characterized as another commonly-held concern within the minority community, that of whether Protestant reliance upon networks of friendship and acquaintance in conducting business constituted discrimination against Catholics.¹⁹ Clearly the hard and frequently messy work of achieving mutual social intelligibility was done as much on the mundane level of these daily concerns as it was on the higher plane of intellectual debate.

According to the Rev. Fred Rea, one obvious way the minority could facilitate this process was by relinquishing some of its own highhandedness. He therefore warned his co-religionists in 1937 that they must ‘lose the ascendancy spirit and find a new humility. Without humility there will be no future for Protestant Ireland’.²⁰ One of Rea’s colleagues in the Irish

¹⁷ *CIG* 1 Feb. 1935, 73.

¹⁸ TCD, Ms. 9032.691 (Ussher Papers): Edmund Curtis to Arland Ussher, 24 Oct. 1935. See also T.W. Moody, ‘Edmund Curtis’, *Hermathena* 63 (May 1944), 69-78.

¹⁹ *CIG* 23 Aug. 1935, 540.

²⁰ Fred Rea, ‘Protestantism in the New Ireland’, in Irish Christian Fellowship (ed.), *Looking at Ireland* (London, 1937), 51-2.

Christian Fellowship movement, Arnold Marsh, attempted to encourage a more egalitarian spirit in all his Protestant students while serving as headmaster of the Quaker school at Newtown, Co. Waterford from 1926-39. In his memoirs, Marsh recalls that he was blessed at the school with a 'good young staff', one for whom the assumption was 'simply that Newtown was an Irish school, that its pupils were Irish boys and girls and that when they grew up they would be Irish men and women'. Marsh adds, however, that 'quite a lot of the people of the type that their parents belonged to did not assume that about themselves'.²¹ If the older generation of Anglo-Irish could not summon up a genuine faith in the new Ireland, then it would be left to their children to come of age without finding this possibility so alien. Though he undoubtedly would have supported Marsh's work with Protestant youth, Hubert Butler remained focused on the social obligations of his own generation of intellectuals, Protestant and Catholic. Reflecting on the sense of possibility that independence had brought with it, he later expressed a sense of urgency about capitalizing on this rare moment:

[A] revolution that is of any value[,] that isn't just a riot or a *coup d'état*[,] never occurs except when there is some sort of understanding between the privileged and the underprivileged – some instinct of generosity on the one side, [with] some challenge of self-respect on the other. For a little [while] a dream of a society, where equal opportunity comes to all, hovers before a few minds. It is a very fragile, evanescent dream, and it loses its substance very quickly for even those who have seen it.²²

Importantly, a revolution that in Butler's estimation 'is of any value' will be contingent on a mutuality that derives from the imagination of 'a few minds' on either side of the barrier of privilege. In other words, thinking people are necessary if this vision of genuine conciliation is to be glimpsed before dissolving under the weight of either populist impatience or elitist reaction. Thus intellectuals' presumed capacity for subtlety and compassion in the social arena, whatever

²¹ TCD, Ms. 8341/140-1 (Marsh Papers): untitled/archived as 'Memoirs' [undated (1960s?)]. According to Kurt Bowen, other Protestant schools were also promoting a discernibly more 'national tone' during this period. Specifically, he notes that 'the teachers I interviewed who had entered the profession in the 1930s and 1940s claimed that most of their generation was committed to weaning pupils from their attachment to Britain'. Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, 158.

²² TCD, Ms. 10304/91 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'When there is a social revolution...' [undated (1940s?)].

their background, gives them in Butler's view a pivotal part in any humane negotiation between past and present.

Those Catholic intellectuals whose background placed them on the other side of traditional social barriers from Hubert Butler, yet who would become some of his chief allies in future struggles, were meanwhile coming into their own during the 1930s. Though he had established his republican *bona fides* by fighting with the anti-Treatyites in the Civil War, Seán O'Faoláin made a decisive break with Catholic nationalist orthodoxies when he published a sharp critique of his mentor Daniel Corkery in the spring of 1936.²³ Likewise Francis Hackett (1883-1962), the Kilkenny writer whose autobiographical novel, *The Green Lion*, was banned by the censors the same year, produced a manifesto of sorts on behalf of liberal values and the rights of intellectuals. 'There exists in this country a community of men and women of free minds', he wrote. 'Some of them are Catholic by religion, some Protestant, but they have a conception of intellectual freedom in common'. While acknowledging the historical reasons that the Irish had come to conceive of political liberty along sectarian lines, Hackett nonetheless insists that 'the State is an instrument fashioned by and for a heterogeneous society. The modern State has worked out democratic association on the very basis of intellectual freedom, and it is this multiplicity-in-unity which is the supreme hope for the development of the individual'.²⁴ Alongside writers like O'Faoláin and Hackett, another intellectual of Catholic stock to assert himself during this time was Owen Sheehy Skeffington, only child of the martyred pacifist Francis Sheehy Skeffington and the feminist Hanna Sheehy Skeffington. Raised an avowed secularist by his mother, Sheehy Skeffington studied at Trinity before returning there to take up a lectureship in French. He became active in the Irish Labour Party in the mid-thirties but was abruptly expelled in 1937 as a result of internal rivalries and fears that he was too radical.²⁵ His

²³ Seán O'Faoláin, 'Daniel Corkery', *Dublin Magazine* 12 (Apr.-June 1936), 49-61.

²⁴ Francis Hackett, 'A Muzzle Made in Ireland', *Dublin Magazine* 11 (Oct.-Dec. 1936), 8, 10.

²⁵ Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, *Skeff: The Life of Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 1909-1970* (Dublin, 1991), 72, 111.

unhappy experience with the party was indicative of the larger failure of leftwing politics in Ireland to develop sufficient coherence either to supply an alternative vision of society or even a viable critique of existing political assumptions.²⁶ As a result, it was left largely to the literary intellectuals, with whom Sheehy Skeffington made common cause after his disillusionment with party politics, to draw attention to the abiding inequalities in Irish life, inequalities in which they found both Church and State complicit.²⁷

Aside from the government, the organization best placed to advocate and initiate change to communal structures was obviously the Irish Catholic Church, and this some of its clergy tried to do in the context of the wider Catholic social movement. In its modern form this movement took its impetus from the 1931 publication of Pius XI's encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, which advocated the establishment of vocational groups or corporations among members of industries and professions as an alternative to the class conflict and increasing state intervention evident in many European countries.²⁸ As elsewhere, though, the vocational movement in Ireland was quickly seized upon by those whose commitment to democracy was often tenuous, a fact which ultimately undermined its influence on mainstream politicians.²⁹ One successful initiative that did grow out of the Catholic social movement was *Muintir na Tire* [People of the Land], started by Father John Hayes in Co. Tipperary in 1931. The group began as an agricultural producers' co-operative but by pursuing an ambitious corporatist plan of socio-economic uplift overextended itself and soon disintegrated.³⁰ Still, in theory at least, corporatism appeared well suited to exploit the Irish preoccupation with regenerating the countryside. With its emphasis on traditional social

²⁶ For a discussion of the failure of the republican left in particular to assert a leading role in the shaping of the political debate in the 1930s, see Richard English, *Radicals and the Republic: Socialist Republicanism in the Irish Free State, 1925-1937* (Oxford, 1994).

²⁷ Liam O'Dowd, 'Neglecting the Material Dimension', 11-12.

²⁸ For a helpful discussion of the concepts of corporatism and vocationalism and their implementation, see Don O'Leary, *Vocationalism and Social Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000) xiff.

²⁹ See, for example, Maurice Manning, *The Blueshirts* (Dublin, 1970); and Kieran Mullarkey, 'Ireland, the pope, and vocationalism: the impact of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*', in J. Augusteijn (ed.), *Ireland in the 1930s* (Dublin, 1999), 103-4. See also J.J. Lee, 'Aspects of Corporatist Thought in Ireland: The Commission on Vocational Organisation, 1939-43', in A. Cosgrave and D. McCartney (eds.), *Studies in Irish History presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), 324-46.

³⁰ Don O'Leary, *Vocationalism*, 42; J.H. Whyte, *Church and State*, 68-9.

relations, it held an obvious appeal for a people who idealized the rural over the urban, lending them with a clear means of linking nationalist nostalgia for the past with Catholic moral concerns about the future.³¹ Given the way *Muintir na Tíre* got started, however, it is natural to ask why the Catholic social movement in Ireland did not also capitalize on the legacy of agricultural co-operation left behind by Horace Plunkett and AE. The main reason would appear to be sectarian: having made an exclusively Catholic basis their first priority, the movement's thinkers do not seem to have noticed the frequency with which their ideas corresponded to those of the co-operators.³²

An exception was the Rev. Jeremiah Newman, who attempted (rather belatedly) in 1958 to address the question of overlap between the two movements. Writing in *Christus Rex*, he readily acknowledges the ways Irish co-operation anticipated the local and rural emphases of the Catholic social movement, but he also devotes considerable energy to explaining why the co-operative movement's example must remain suspect from a Catholic point of view. It comes down to the lack of Christian orthodoxy among the movement's chief spokesmen. So while he concedes that Horace Plunkett in his activism 'did not fail to appeal to things of the spirit', Newman follows immediately with the caveat that 'this appeal, though estimable in itself, was to national sentiment rather than to specifically Christian considerations'. Similarly, however noble he considers AE's dream of a 'co-operative commonwealth', he cannot finally endorse it, since its lack of explicitly Christian underpinnings leaves it vulnerable to socialist infiltration. Thus despite his obvious enthusiasm for the possibilities afforded by a recognition of the movements' shared objectives, Newman offers nothing more specific by way of conclusion than the view that 'Co-operation and Vocational Organisation can develop together; one may go further and declare that they should. Carefully guarded from alien influences and unacceptable lines of development,

³¹ Liam O'Dowd, 'Town and Country in Irish Ideology', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 13 (Dec. 1987), 48.

³² Liam O'Dowd, 'Intellectuals in 20th Century Ireland', 18.

they are twin pillars of a truly Christian social structure'.³³ The problem is that Newman can only conceive of a co-ordination of these philosophies which would involve co-operation's ultimate submission to the mandates of Catholic social teaching, something which by definition would invalidate its principled stance of religious and political non-alignment.

II. Precedents and possibilities: Butler's vision of community

While the language of vocationalism held great sway over Irish social discourse during much of the thirties and forties, nonetheless there remained minority thinkers who carried on Plunkett and AE's work of promoting ideas of societal and economic organization that were not dependent on exclusively Catholic premises. One such person was the TCD professor Joseph Johnston (1890-1972), who as an expert on agricultural economics was to prove a potent critic of Fianna Fáil's policies regarding the promotion of the countryside.³⁴ Another was Arnold Marsh, an economist as well as educator, who was especially eager that Protestants should make a contribution on questions of national development along broadly Christian lines.³⁵ In considering the rivalry between capitalist and communist systems in 1937, Marsh argued that 'it is especially necessary for Protestants to express themselves on these questions', since however 'verbose, sentimental and unpractical as they may seem', the Vatican's encyclicals 'do provide Roman Catholics with a beautiful, if hazy, ideal'. In contrast, he observes that 'because no such expositions have been issued for, or on behalf of, Protestants[,] there is a danger that Protestants may be accused of having no ideals or of not caring about social betterment, or even of being supporters of present conditions'.³⁶ In an effort to address this lack, Marsh had already outlined his own views on the regeneration of Ireland in ways that emphatically repudiated the ideological

³³ Jeremiah Newman, 'Vocational organisation & the Co-operative Movement', *Christus Rex* 12:3 (July 1958), 179ff.

³⁴ J.J. Lee, *Ireland*, 149, 580. Johnston would also later serve in the Senead Éireann and as President of the Irish Association from 1946-54.

³⁵ Arland Ussher would later regret, given Marsh's commitment to explicitly Christian principles and his firm anti-Communism, that his writings on economics 'have aroused but slight interest in Ireland'. Arland Ussher, *The Face & Mind of Ireland* (1950; Old Greenwich, CT, 1979), 114.

³⁶ Arnold Marsh, 'The Social Order', Irish Christian Fellowship (ed.), *Looking at Ireland* (London, 1937), 105-6.

rigidity of both the Catholic Church and the Fianna Fáil government. Writing under the Irish pseudonym 'An Gobán Saor', in 1934 he published *Economics for Ourselves*, while under his own name Marsh published *Ireland's New Foundations* in 1942. In the latter he assured his readers that 'we have difficult times ahead of us. Let us then have an end of the theories that have been used to befuddle us and curb our activities for the twenty years that are past. The only way to save the economic situation is to settle down to steady, hard, productive work, with proper arrangements made to enable us to do so'.³⁷

Marsh's appeal to the Protestant capacity for service, underscored by an insistence on hard work and practical application, is clearly reminiscent of the co-operators. Indeed, AE's influence is obvious throughout much of the economist's writing, hardly surprising given his longstanding admiration for Russell.³⁸ Similarly indebted to the co-operators and to *The National Being* in particular was the Protestant Dubliner Louie Bennett, an outspoken pacifist, feminist and labour advocate.³⁹ And though he was not to become vocal on these matters until the 1940s, Hubert Butler continued throughout this period to ruminate upon the nature of communal organization, a line of inquiry he traced back directly to his youthful encounters with the Revivalists. So in old age he would still boast proudly that 'it was from AE that I learnt to be a Utopian' (CD 219). This claim is significant, not only for its unabashed confession of idealism but also for its insistence that the idealism itself springs from a personally specific time and place. In a similar manner, he might have boasted that it was from Standish O'Grady that he learnt to be a controversialist or from Horace Plunkett that he learnt to be an activist. There was thus nothing theoretical about Butler's utopian aspirations; whatever refinements he might bring to them

³⁷ An Gobán Saor [Arnold Marsh], *Economics for Ourselves* (Dundalk, 1934); and Arnold Marsh, *Ireland's New Foundations* (Dundalk, 1942), 7. See also Arnold Marsh, '1935: The Beginning of a New Age', in Mount Street Club (ed.), *Work To Do: A Survey of the Unemployment Problem* (Dublin, 1945) 116-20.

³⁸ For example, passages from Marsh's unpublished memoirs echo strongly the tone and sentiment of AE's writings. TCD, Ms. 8340/296 (Marsh Papers): untitled/archived as 'Memoirs' [undated (1960s?)].

³⁹ Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Louie Bennett* (Cork, 2001), 121.

through scholarship or cosmopolitan experience, they remained firmly rooted in the immediacy of his Irish environment.

That said, his notebooks from the 1930s and early 1940s indicate he devoted considerable energy to the study of societal organization in its broader historical and cultural contexts. He was preoccupied with the most basic of questions: what constitutes the true essence of community? This seemingly abstract query was not abstract at all for someone whose own social group no longer knew what it was or where it fitted into the larger, national community called Ireland. In trying to shed light on this issue, Butler's reading ranged widely. The notebooks contain a sustained engagement with classical sources, particularly Aristotle; meditations on the implications of Freudianism and Marxism for human relationships; an evaluation of the relative merits of 'organic' versus 'designed' communities; and reflections on the writings of Bertrand Russell, T.S. Eliot, Martin Buber, and other modern commentators.⁴⁰

Like many European intellectuals of his generation, Butler was also attracted to the conceptual language developed by Christian existentialists like Nikolai Berdyaev and Gabriel Marcel.⁴¹ In particular he shows a fondness for Berdyaev's notion of 'communion', citing it as the basis for his own loose formulation of community as 'that intimate relation of human beings where the sense of a common participation prevails over individual passions'. This intentionally open-ended definition is in certain contrast to the often impersonal and determinist logic of Marxism and other modern social theories. Similarly, Butler dismisses the assertion that progress towards ultimate social harmony is predicated upon an evolution of the human psyche, because such an argument 'is an extension of the Darwinian theory of a mechanically ordered universe,

⁴⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/439/9 (BP): 'The idea of social harmony as inspiration and as instrument', [undated (early 1940s)]; and TCD, Ms. 10304/454-6, 460-4, 500 (BP): various notebooks [undated (1930s/1940s)]. Apposite here is Eric Lord and Marjorie Reeves, 'Themes of the 1930s', in M. Reeves (ed.), *Christian Thinking and Social Order: Conviction Politics from the 1930s to the Present Day* (London, 1999), 3-18.

⁴¹ Although Butler's familiarity with Berdyaev's writings almost certainly preceded their acquaintance, it is worth noting here that his friend George Seaver, Dean of St. Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny, published a short study of the philosopher. For Seaver's explication of Berdyaev's ideas on human communion, see *Nicolas Berdyaev: An introduction to his thought* (London, 1950), 72ff.

whose smooth running can be ensured and improved upon by enlightened human supervision'. Rather, he believes that 'the only fulfilment that is possible for man is happiness (or to use the Aristotelian phrase, 'proper functioning') and this is not advanced by the increasing complexity of his body or his environment; it is no more attainable now than it was centuries ago'. Whatever ways in which people may have progressed technologically, politically or otherwise, these developments do not reflect a cumulative change in humanity itself. He therefore concludes that 'for each man and each generation the problem is freshly stated and must be solved at a different level of culture or civilisation. The only element of constancy is man's own incommunicable vision of his proper functioning as a social being'.⁴² To prescribe and then enforce one version of this 'proper functioning' is to ignore the contingent nature of sociability. It is also the basis for terrible oppression, as Butler's time in the U.S.S.R. made abundantly clear to him. Only through an appreciation of those conditions under which organic and voluntary forms of human association develop can one begin to answer the question of what a true community consists.

Butler's ideas locate him in what Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia* broadly defines as the 'liberal-humanitarian' mode of utopian thinking. In this conception, the perfect community is not an ideologically predetermined state of affairs but a generalized set of criteria used to guide and regulate daily effort. The importance of placing Butler under this aegis is to emphasize the essential moderation of his position: socially and philosophically, he both springs from and affirms an 'intellectualistic outlook [which] had its basis in a middle stratum, in the bourgeoisie and in the intellectual class'. Mannheim further argues that historically this outlook predisposed such people to conceive of societal change in terms that reflected the in-betweenness of their own

⁴² TCD, Ms. 10304/439/9-10 (BP): 'The idea of social harmony as inspiration and as instrument' [undated (early 1940s?)]. The extracts quoted here are but a sample of the extensive writings on community that Butler produced in the early 1940s. There survives an incomplete manuscript for a projected book on the subject, which Butler later annotated [in the 1960s?]: 'This is part of a book I started writing about human community about 1941. It interests me still but I shall not be able to return to it till I have published my book on saints and tribes [*Ten Thousand Saints*]'. MH (Mss.): untitled collection on community [undated (c. 1941)]. The outline for this project is located in Butler's papers at TCD: Ms. 10304/466 (BP): Notebook, 'Notes for a philosophy of the organic community 1940'.

social position, leading them to pursue 'a dynamic middle course between the vitality, ecstasy, and vindictiveness of oppressed strata, and the immediate concreteness of a feudal ruling class whose aspirations were in complete congruence with the then existing reality'.⁴³ Butler would make explicit his belief in the necessarily *ad hoc* and compromising nature of 'liberal-humanitarian' progress when he later reflected that 'the liberal is always engaged on [an] expert dovetailing of freedom and discipline. He is always paring and splicing, taking in a bit here, letting out a bit there; he has no plan of campaign beyond day-to-day solicitude and the conviction that by foresight and ingenious contrivance men can be made happy and free without hurting each other' (*EA* 173). Faith in an ideal future is therefore not to be diminished by an acceptance of the sometimes unpredictable means by which it must be pursued. The only certainty is that the utopian moment, if and when it finally arrives, will be the most satisfying of communions precisely because it has been sought out in a spirit of flexibility and mutual consideration.

The personalized nature of Butler's idealism may therefore be taken as its own justification, but it also helps to explain why, despite his awareness of the wide historical and cultural range of utopian thought, he takes especial delight in recalling its Irish manifestations. One obvious exception to this tendency is the regular homage he pays to the example of the city-states of ancient Greece, though even here he is quick to acknowledge that it is AE's view of them on which he is basing his own estimation of their worth. Given that he was better educated in the classics than Russell himself, this cannot simply be a case of taking his mentor's word for it. Rather, it is plain that in *The National Being* AE managed to elicit from Butler what none of his years of classical study had accomplished: an imaginative awareness of how the example of the Greeks might directly inform contemporary Irish life. So he credited AE with pointing out that 'it was in the small states of Greece, each scarcely bigger than an Irish county, that all our arts and sciences were first developed' (*CD* 219). What is plainly exciting to Butler is not so

⁴³ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (1936; London, 1960), 197-9.

much that these important developments should have taken place in the Greek city-states *per se*, but that they should have proceeded from any such small and localized environment. He would return to this conceit repeatedly in his writings, bringing it to its culmination in his 1961 essay 'Return to Hellas'. In contrast to the banality and anonymity of his recent experiences as a tourist in Greece, he contemplates the vitality and familiarity which must have galvanized the ancient culture that once thrived there. The comparison leads him to reflect that, unlike so many modern societies, the city-states had 'managed to be self-centred without being parochial', while at the same time he posits that 'to the Greeks there was nothing paradoxical in the association of great men with small communities'. This latter remark is prompted by Butler's acute awareness of the contemporary preference for drawing human talent and leadership away from the provinces and concentrating them in metropolitan centres. So towards the end of the essay he suggests that even as one should 'acknowledge [the] squalor and slavery and spasms of barbarism' among the ancient Greeks, it is still important to recognize that they possessed 'some precious gift of reconciling disparate things which we have lost'. Ancient Greece may not have been Utopia itself, but by the example of its integrated and accessible social organization, it provides essential lessons for people living in the technological age (*EA* 226-7, 231-3).

Of course the intimacy of setting which the Greeks enjoyed as of right is something which modern people must actively cultivate. In their determination to identify themselves with Ireland when most eyes were on London, Butler regards the Revivalists as having demonstrated the continuing validity of the premise that great things can grow out of minor places. Noting how 'they deliberately left the big world for the small one', he wrote in 1954 that 'they were more afraid of being culturally submerged in a big empire than of being stranded in sterile isolation in a small island. Time has justified them. Work of European significance was done under the stimulus of what might be considered parochial enthusiasms' (*EA* 156-7). By the same token, elsewhere he admires Standish O'Grady and Otway Cuffe for their willingness to take seriously the seemingly insignificant squabbles of Kilkenny, maintaining that they were 'probably wise in

thinking that in a political problem, as in an equation, the solution will come most easily when the numbers on both sides are reduced to their smallest. They believed in the small community, even when it disappointed them' (*GW* 8). This last comment captures precisely the manner in which Butler came to conceive of his own localist idealism; a combination of conventional wisdom and stubborn faith, his evolving ethos was one which gained in utopian fervour the closer he got to home.

The work of the Revivalists was not the only Irish precedent from which Butler would draw inspiration when contemplating the possibilities of social innovation and development. In the 1947 essay 'New Geneva at Waterford', for example, he relates the story of the planned settlement of Genevese watchmakers and craftsmen that nearly came to fruition outside Waterford City in the early 1780s. Disillusioned after losing their bid to supplant the aristocratic council ruling Geneva, these middle-class democrats cast about for alternative locales where they might enjoy more freedom. Perhaps recalling his own frustrations in trying to get Jewish refugees into Ireland before the Second World War, Butler comments that 'in those days, in so many ways wiser than ours, refugees were welcomed, and invitations to the Genevese rebels came from many of the princes of Europe'. A ceremony was held to commence construction of this 'New Geneva', but within six weeks the whole plan was abandoned as the immigrants got cold feet, George III began to distrust them, and even the local Waterford burgesses started to suspect these foreign progressives would imperil their system of privileges. While he acknowledges that the colony's initial promotion and its ultimate termination both resulted from the impure motives of the British and Irish Governments, Butler nonetheless argues that 'it is hard not to regret its failure'. Remarking that 'the new city was to lie on the very edge of Wexford County, where sixteen years later, in 1798, Irish rebels were to fight a last desperate battle', Butler speculates that 'those sober and thrifty disciples of Rousseau and champions of liberty would surely have exercised a moderating influence on the fierce passion aroused by the struggle. In all their dealings they spoke and wrote with friendliness and understanding of the Irish people

among whom they were to settle'. Given the already fraught history of plantation in Ireland, one wonders if Butler is not ignoring some practical difficulties that would have faced the settlers. Still, however hypothetical this scenario may be, what obviously matters is his certainty that these bourgeois, democratic (and Protestant) émigrés would have, by their very presence, lent this situation the sort of balance he considers essential to the healthy evolution of all communal relationships. A potential Utopia lost through miscarriage, the 'New Geneva' retains a retrospective promise as much because of what went wrong without it as because of what might have been better were it born (*EA* 26, 29-31).

Less ambitious but certainly more concrete antecedents to which Butler gives attention are those industrial improvements made by Protestant Kilkennymen of means and goodwill. In 'Beside the Nore', he tells of the Annamult Woollen Factory, which he claims was by 1814 'one of the most progressive factories in the British Isles' and whose owners, George Shaw and Timothy Nowlan, 'rivalled Robert Owen...in their concern for their 400 work people'. Likewise he recalls the innovative William Colles, who operated the Marble Works at Maddoxtown, as well as Richard and Elizabeth Griffith, the builders of Maidenhall and intellectuals who combined running the local mill with deep learning and a cosmopolitan perspective (*EA* 89-90). In praising these exemplars, though, Butler makes clear he is revisiting their work not just for the sake of it, but because he believes it yet has some bearing on the current situation. Thus when referring to the Owen-inspired co-operative community that temporarily functioned at Ralahine, Co. Clare in the 1830s, he asserts without qualification that 'Ralahine remains an example of what still can be done'.⁴⁴ Indeed, his prose is never more fervent than when trying to impress upon his compatriots the value of drawing on the Irish past in shaping their society's future. In an unpublished essay entitled 'The Sandwich-board Man and the Table-mat', he sounds this note with redoubled energy, exclaiming that 'we have to discover the nature of the community, in

⁴⁴ MH (Ms.): 'An Introduction', 8 [9pp., undated (1980s)].

which we can fulfill ourselves without inhibiting the fulfillment of others. How big should it be? How composed? How organised? These questions are of desperate urgency'.⁴⁵

Part of Butler's sense of urgency stemmed from his conviction that in their preoccupation with liberating themselves from England, the Irish had neglected the matter of exactly what kind of society they wanted once free. It appeared to him that nationalist rhetoric had been decidedly vague on such details. So he was to assert in 'The Two Languages' that 'the Ireland for which men died, even when as Cathleen ni Houlihan she took a human shape for them, was aloof and indifferent, demanding but not preaching. She was a projection of their yearnings and frustrations, not of their designs for a social order'. Given his disdain for dogmatic theorizing, though, he obviously did not advocate the adoption of an inflexible plan – his own or anyone else's – now that the Irish state was a reality. It was rather out of an ongoing conversation about values and needs, about what had been good in the Irish past or in other places, that he expected an appropriate vocabulary of belonging and community to develop. When his friend Geoffrey Taylor criticized 'The Two Languages' for its failure to be more specific and systematic in its arguments about the future basis of Irish society, Butler was unrepentant: 'I have a picture of the sort of society I would like, so have you; if either of us could describe it we should be almighty geniuses. As it is we can only poke about hopefully among analogies and parallels and be rather pleased when the same one takes our fancy' (*GW* 45-6).

Implicit in this defence of allusiveness and improvisation is a more general argument on behalf of freedom of expression in the exercise of Irish self-definition. Butler's approximations are thus not merely the result of intellectual vagueness but are in fact a purposeful attempt to loosen the grip of political and sectarian language when trying to get at the underlying realities of human association. So while he may have been a convinced nationalist, Butler did not assume that the achievement of the Free State had resolved once and for all the question of what made for true Irishness. Later in his response to Taylor's critique he argues that 'Ireland, as a state, is the

⁴⁵ MH (Ms.): 'The Sandwich-board Man and the Table-mat', 16 [25pp., undated (1960s)].

same sort of intellectual concoction, emanating probably in part, like Yugoslavia, from Anglo-Saxon brains. There are such things as real human societies, in *posse* if not in *esse*, but they are masked by these political figments, not revealed' (*GW* 46-7). His point is not to denigrate the legitimacy of the Irish nation but to acknowledge its limitations in defining or encompassing some more fundamental instinct for community which no national entity should presume to represent. Here it is useful to recall the original context in which Benedict Anderson formulated his oft-quoted and frequently misused description of the nation as an 'imagined community'. Anderson coined the phrase to describe the ways in which the rise of particular material phenomena (the newspaper, for example) engendered among large swathes of people a sense of belonging to a virtual national community the true totality of which they could never hope to experience in their daily lives.⁴⁶ In his concern with something more personal and immediate than this, Butler is effectively repudiating the quasi-mystical notion at the heart of Catholic nationalism which supposes that all true Irish people have always intuited this sense of abstract belonging without the help of external developments. In this way one sees that his status as a member of the minority informs not only the content but also the very structure of his thinking.

If neither religious nor national consciousness provides the bedrock for what Butler calls 'real human societies', then what does? Simply put, it is non-sectarian Christian neighbourliness. Neither the churches nor any state can supply what people generate among themselves at the most local level through daily contact and mutual concern. As he explained later:

We have a natural love of the place in which we were born and the people among whom we grew up, and equally we acknowledge the truths about brotherly love which have been most clearly expressed in the words of Jesus. These things are self-evident[;] they cannot be argued or used as arguments. The vast and complicated machinery of nationality and religion rose up because what was self-evident could not be seen. The

⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; London, 1991), 24ff.

huge claims made for a church or a country are a measure of individual helplessness. They are used to buttress our lack of faith.⁴⁷

In a classically Protestant appeal to fundamentals, Butler bypasses institutional affiliations and returns directly to the Gospel scriptures. And here he finds Christ challenging the hegemony of the Jewish establishment and the Roman *imperium* over people's lives by calling them instead to focus directly on each other where they are. So he observed at one point that "broad horizons" and the concern for "the welfare of mankind" seem blessedly absent from the teaching of Jesus, who seldom strayed beyond the frontier of a tiny community' (LN 244). It was the abandonment of this small-scale vision that he saw leading to the bureaucratization and depersonalization of human relations throughout modern life, which in turn he would blame for facilitating, among other things, the appalling atrocities of the Second World War.

Before being confronted by those horrors, though, he was in the 1930s still primarily concerned with Christian neighbourliness as the foundation for inclusive Irish communities, communities that would transcend the old sectarian rivalries of the past. He held firmly to the faith that Irish people could and must 'reach to a depth of Christianity that lies deeper than our churches', a utopian aspiration in itself and one he knew would not come about overnight.⁴⁸ Nor did he suppose that neighbourly love always meant total agreement; for him it was a commitment to a certain attitude rather than a promise of a specific result. So he wrote to a friend in later life regarding his code of local responsibility: 'I interpret this in the Christian sense of "loving your neighbour as yourself" and not, as it is usually interpreted, as "getting on well with the neighbours". That is just social adaptability and has little to do with Christianity. Christ got on awfully badly with his neighbours'.⁴⁹ Sometimes, as some of his subsequent actions were to make plain, Butler believed neighbourly love even required him to take oppositional stands that upset the rest of his community. Yet commitment to the neighbourhood as it was, not as it had

⁴⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/391/10 (BP): 'Ireland, Protestantism, propaganda about Stepinac, etc.'/ archived as 'on taking sides in the Yugoslav problem' [undated].

⁴⁸ MH (Notebook): 'Beginning' [undated (c.1980s)]

⁴⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/795 (BP): HMB to John de Courcy Ireland, 12 Feb. 1973.

been or as one thought it should be, was where both the work and the pleasure of it were to be found. Thus when reviewing fictional representations of Irish provincial life in 1943, he wondered: 'Who will see an Irish village not as something to be escaped from or yearned after but as an active centre of human life, a focus of exciting influences, of cross-currents of love and hate, snobbery and fear[?]'⁵⁰ In this plea for literary realism, Butler not only testifies to the adequacy of the small community to accommodate the full range of human experience, he also tacitly criticizes his compatriots for their lack of imaginative engagement with their own lives. For a country preoccupied with its cultural purity, it was indeed ironic that external and faraway influences should still exercise so much influence over Irish self-conception. In the essay 'The Auction' Butler would reflect that 'living in social harmony is a most difficult art; the most absolute concentration is required, and perfect equilibrium. Our island is dangerously tilted towards England and towards Rome, good places in themselves but best seen on the level. Everybody is rolling off it and those that remain, struggling hard for a foothold, drag each other down' (*GW* 19). Rather than keep dragging each other down, he was sure it was time for the Irish to stay put and find their feet together.

The sceptic might well interpret Butler's interest in constructing Irish belonging in terms of local relationships as a Protestant attempt to sidestep or ignore a heritage of alienation from the mainstream of national feeling.⁵¹ But such an appraisal would be superficial. For though he was certainly aware of the historical record of Irish Protestant isolation and elitism, Butler nonetheless believed his tradition possessed certain values essential to any full experience of Christian neighbourliness. This is not to say that he thought individual Protestants were somehow intrinsically better people than individual Catholics; throughout his writings he lambastes the

⁵⁰ HMB, untitled review of Patrick Purcell, *Hanrahan's Daughter*, in *The Bell* 5:4 (Jan. 1943), 332.

⁵¹ One anticipates this interpretation proceeding, for example, from Declan Kiberd's characterization of the Revivalists' claim to belonging on the basis of geography rather than history as a 'classic strategy of the Irish Protestant imagination, estranged from the community yet anxious to identify itself with the new patriotic sentiment'. Declan Kiberd, 'Yeats, Childhood, and Exile', in P. Hyland and N. Sammells (ed.), *Irish Writing: Exile and Subversion* (London, 1991), 134.

adherents of all the Irish churches for signally failing to love their neighbours in their preoccupation with sectarian loyalty.⁵² Yet the authoritarian ethos and hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church seemed to him to militate more strongly against the realization of local, non-sectarian solidarity than did the more conscience-driven mandates of Protestantism. By the same token he concluded that there had been ‘some connection between Anglo-Irish Protestantism and the Cooperative idea’, a connection that grew not just out of Protestant virtue but also ‘the vast size of the Catholic Church and [the fact] its problems cannot be solved nationally, far less locally’.⁵³ So while Catholics had obviously participated in great numbers in the co-operative movement, it was left to unaligned Protestants like Plunkett and AE to lead it and insist upon the centrality of its localist orientation. In emphasizing the necessity of autonomy and individualism in the cultivation of organic neighbourliness, Butler espoused a localism that was implicitly Protestant in spirit but which he insisted must be non-sectarian in form and effect. It is thus certain he would have endorsed the view of one *Church of Ireland Gazette* correspondent, who wrote in 1950 that ‘those who sigh or smile over our fewness have forgotten this inner independent strength [of ours]....And in a world swayed by mass movements and mass production, the time may soon come when the whole people of Ireland will need this Protestantism, this steadfastness, of the undefeated few’.⁵⁴

The degree to which Butler understood his own Protestantism in purely secular terms appears to have varied over the years, but even at its most affirmative his was a heterodox conception of Christian belief. When at one point he asked himself whether God existed at all, he could only answer cautiously that ‘yes, I believe there is something close to us all for which that is the best name’.⁵⁵ Clearly, though, he was primarily drawn to Protestant Christianity for its

⁵² I have written elsewhere of Butler’s critical attitude to institutional religion: see Robert Tobin, ‘Hubert Butler and the Churches’, in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 88-93.

⁵³ MH (Alpha): HMB to Gerald Dawe, 1 July 1988.

⁵⁴ *CIG* 30 Nov. 1950, 7.

⁵⁵ MH (Notebook): ‘Beginning’ [undated (1980s)].

ethical power and not its supernatural dimensions. At one point he noted that ‘like a jelly that has stiffened inside its jelly-mould and slid out intact, I found myself accepting the Protestant ethos and bothering less about its dogma and mythology’ (CD 228). Moreover, in the Irish context he believed spirituality had too often been an excuse for not striving harder for social improvement in the present moment: ‘It as though there is only a limited amount of good-will to be distributed between this world and the next and Heaven would be cheated if too much love or enthusiasm was expended on mere earthly bliss’. It was partly for this reason, he suspected, that ‘Plunkett’s secular Utopia was not given a chance’, a failure of hope which he attributed as much to his fellow Protestants as to Catholics. ‘Our neighbours and relations would have laughed at AE’s *National Being*...had they read it. They prided themselves on being “realists” and did not recognize that you have to set your sights high if you are to hit a lowly but honourable objective’.⁵⁶ Whether because they suspected hubris or feared disappointment, Butler once again saw evidence of institutional Christians failing to confront the central challenge of the Gospel. On the other hand, he was a self-described ‘freethinker’ who did not conform to orthodox belief but who was constantly drawn to Christ’s teaching as the baseline for his own moral reasoning. Like his fellow cradle-Anglican George Orwell, he held that ‘we have got to be the children of God, even though the God of the Book of Common Prayer no longer exists’.⁵⁷

It has been suggested that Butler’s unconventional ideas regarding politics and religion place him too far outside the consensus of Southern Protestantism to cast any real light on its identity.⁵⁸ There were certainly to be moments, especially in the 1950s, when some of his co-religionists criticized his public utterances on what the Anglo-Irish Protestant tradition meant to him. Yet as Butler himself knew well, it was not really in the nature of the tradition to be censorious, and in this respect an acceptance of his eccentricity was itself a reflection of

⁵⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/290/1-2 (BP): untitled/ archived as ‘Fragments’ [undated].

⁵⁷ George Orwell, *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, 4 vols., eds. S. Orwell and I. Angus (London, 1968), ii. 18.

⁵⁸ David Stevens, ‘Religious Ireland (II): Protestants in the Republic’, in E. Longley (ed.), *Culture in Ireland: Division or Diversity?* (Belfast, 1991), 143.

Protestants' ability to tolerate divergence within their ranks. Thus he could announce in his 1957 essay 'Home-Coming' that although he had been baptized and reared as a member of the Church of Ireland, and furthermore, 'I do not wish to call myself anything else till I am expelled for heresy', at the same time he could admit that 'it is not my real religion' (*GW* 29). Perhaps not surprisingly, his 'real religion' was an echo and elaboration of the 'civil religion' AE envisions in *The National Being*, a recurring source of inspiration Butler freely acknowledged when later he referred to it as his 'alternative bible'.⁵⁹ In 'Home-Coming' he affirms that 'to me belief in a co-operative community is a substitute for religion', one which, 'because of Plunkett and AE, had its local shrine, though not much spiritual effulgence radiated from it. It was the Bennettsbridge Creamery'. He then recalls how the co-operators hoped each local creamery would serve 'as the nucleus to a harmonious social organism, concerned not only with buying and selling but also with communal living'. As he looked out his window at Maidenhall, Butler fondly imagined the 'home-coming' by which a co-operative commonwealth might yet come to fruition in his own Kilkenny neighbourhood.

Writing forty years after *The National Being* first appeared, however, he was all too aware how far this dream was from realization, even further now than when AE and Plunkett first spoke of it. And so he concedes that 'I do not claim my Heaven, an earthly one, is yet very probable or practical. It is not so plausible or imminent that I would be justified in decrying the supernatural Heaven which is preached at our Protestant church at Ennisnag or the Catholic chapel at Bennettsbridge' (*GW* 29). This concession is noteworthy not least because it illustrates once again the essential moderation of Butler's outlook, even when discussing his most profound ambitions. For all their superstition and sectarian pretence, then, he did not advocate the dismantlement of the institutional churches or anticipate their elimination from Irish life. He valued too much the historical continuity they embodied and the inherited potential they still possessed to counteract the mechanizing and often alienating trends of modern life. So he

⁵⁹ MH (Ms.), '1920-23', 7 [13pp., undated (late 1970s/early 1980s?)].

explained to his friend Owen Sheehy Skeffington at one point that 'I believe in the churches because I believe we have to modify tradition and not to destroy it....I believe in parishes and neighbourhoods and groupings that are not either professional, social or economic. Also most of the people I know who have broken away from traditional loyalties haven't found anything better to replace them'.⁶⁰

The question was how the churches might evolve so as to assume their proper leadership in a non-sectarian Christian community without in the process losing the specificity and distinctiveness that made them meaningful to their adherents. The key was not to fight against these creedal and cultural differences so much as to transcend them. Butler thus posited that 'only if our churches are re-fashioned at the local level around next-door neighbourly love can they cease to be divisive....The parish of the future must consist of everyone who lives in it, and the task of the minister will be to lead us to care for each other, not because of our beliefs but in spite of them'.⁶¹ Of course this was a pastoral role he expected both Protestant and Catholic clergy to play. Their organizational affiliations notwithstanding, 'their task would be to extract us from the impersonal and institutionalised society in which we are entangled. They must release us from its grip tendril by tendril, so that as its hold on us weakens, we may be able to feel again an opposing magnetism, the pull to those we know and are capable of helping'.⁶² In a local setting where Christian love really predominated, the clergy would not need to abandon their institutions so much as hope for their increasing irrelevance. Under such circumstances, Butler imagined, 'doctrinal differences would become like candles in the sunshine'.⁶³

That Butler's own vision of communal belonging was predicated upon a combination of Christian tradition and utopian social thought meant he was to be deeply interested in others' innovative approaches to religious collectivism. When in later life he became familiar with

⁶⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1372 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 24 Sept. 1969.

⁶¹ HMB, 'Escape from the Anthill', 2.

⁶² TCD, Ms. 10304/323/8 (BP): 'Sandwich Boards and Table-mats' [undated (1960s)].

⁶³ HMB, 'A Protestant Predicament', *Hibernia* 25 July 1975, 8.

American culture, he naturally began to study the wide variety of radical Christian communities which had at various times sought to achieve their own version of perfection in the New World. In his essay 'A Visit to Oneida', for example, he tells the story of the mid-nineteenth century utopian community started in upstate New York by the spiritual leader John Humphrey Noyes. While not blind to his foibles, Butler nonetheless numbers Noyes among that company of radical thinkers who led the Shakers, the Mennonites and the Moravians, all of whom he admires for their exploratory cast of mind. As impressive as he finds the Oneida community's successful agricultural and industrial ventures, what Butler considers most compelling are its unorthodox social practices. He is fascinated by the earnestness and apparent lack of prurience with which the community followed a regimen of non-monogamous love and a policy of stirpiculture in the production of children. When relating how the community became riven by personal tensions from within and moral opprobrium from without, Butler does not conceal his regret that this unconventional but generous social experiment should have failed (*CD* 67, 70, 73-77).⁶⁴

He was similarly intrigued by the theocratic aspirations of the Mormons, and when he visited Salt Lake City in the early 1960s was much struck by its 'blended innocence and worldly wisdom' (*GW* 232). With characteristic piquancy he wrote to his wife at the time that 'if only [the Mormons] believed anything sensible they'd be an ideal community'.⁶⁵ He takes a somewhat more sympathetic view of Christian Science in his late essay 'Aunt Harriet', in which he pays tribute to the eponymous relation who subscribed to this unusual faith amidst her other idealisms. Of Aunt Harriet's refusal to seek medical attention at the end of her life he remarks: 'Goodness often blossoms like roses on very rickety trelliswork, and beauty can grow out of nonsense. There are no grounds for supposing that one can live life without pain and sadness, but is it wrong to believe somehow, somewhere this is possible?' (*CD* 232). It is an eloquent summation of

⁶⁴ For a full account of the Oneida community in its prime, see Robert Allerton Parker, *A Yankee Saint: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community* (1935; Hamden, CT, 1973), 160ff.

⁶⁵ MH (Letterbook, U.S.A.): HMB to Peggy Butler, 13 Feb. 1962.

Butler's attitude towards all those who have had the courage to adopt alternative approaches to religious practice and communal relations in their hunger for a better world.

Even within the narrow confines of Irish sectarian history Butler found a precedent for his dream of a non-dogmatic Christian communion. As he recounts in his piece 'An Irish Ecumenical Movement', in 1824 James Doyle, the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, and Frederick Robinson, later the Earl of Ripon, initiated a campaign to promote ecumenical relations between the Catholic and Established Churches with an eye towards their eventual unification. Butler surmises that this project took its impetus from the disappointment the ecumenists felt at the failure of Wolfe Tone's call for a 'common name of Irishman' to avert bloodshed and their corresponding anxiety as to the social implications of an imminent Catholic emancipation. Faced with seemingly intractable political divisions, he speculates that 'now they were looking for some bond of union more comprehensive and more specifically Christian' than their traditional religious affiliations permitted. The movement scarcely made an impact on Irish affairs, but Butler is still struck by its daring and prophetic espousal of a transcendent ethos that would yoke non-sectarian Christian love to national allegiance. In considering the lesson to be gleaned from this episode, he insists 'the first problem is not a unification of doctrine (more improbable now than in 1824), but to discover in what form of Christian, para-Christian or post-Christian community we can best do our duty to our neighbours and offer protection to the innocent, the just, the wise' (*EA* 60-2). Of course this sort of open-ended thinking was antithetical to the rigid mandates of Catholic nationalist sentiment, so perhaps it is inevitable that Butler was to find himself at such loggerheads with the Irish establishment in the decades to follow. For when it came to defining the basis for neighbourly belonging, he was as uncompromising in his demand for radical inclusiveness as were his compatriots in their prescriptions for exclusion. So he never tired of reiterating the fundamentals of his civil religious creed, as when he argued: 'How could one call oneself a Christian Irishman, linking together two badly shattered and often conflicting ideas[?] To call oneself Irish means to give my first loyalty to the country in which I was born

and wish to go on living. To call myself a Christian means to love one's neighbour as oneself. That is basic Irish loyalty, basic Christianity. There is no difficulty in reconciling them. They are utterly complementary'.⁶⁶

III. *The Bell*, the KAS and 'A Plea from the Country'

While Hubert Butler was working out the logic of a form of belonging that could be non-sectarian but still loosely Christian, localized but still assuredly national, there were developments in Irish society at large during the late 1930s and 1940s that continued to worry his co-religionists. For a start, however clear it has become in hindsight that Eamon de Valera did not allow the rhetoric of Catholic exclusivism significantly to influence his framing of the new Constitution, the fact was not so obvious at the time.⁶⁷ The implications of Article 44 were indeed deeply ambiguous, both as to what 'the special position' accorded the Roman Catholic Church might subsequently mean in practice, as well as what the secondary recognition accorded the minority religious bodies would guarantee them by way of equal protection.⁶⁸ With numerous continental Catholic countries lining up on the side of fascism in the march to war, Southern Protestant concern on this front cannot be dismissed as mere alarmism. Even after the war began and Ireland had declared itself neutral in the fight, there were those who wondered just how firmly democratic the country would continue to be if times got any worse. The heavy-handed use of the emergency censorship had already suggested a worrying insensitivity in government circles to the concept of civil liberties.⁶⁹ More than that, though, there was a feeling among

⁶⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/444/6 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'Christian neighbourliness' [undated].

⁶⁷ See Sean Faughnan, 'The Jesuits and the drafting of the Irish constitution of 1937', *IHS* 26 (May 1988), 79-102.

⁶⁸ Given these uncertainties, Brian Fallon's recent assessment that Article 44 'was little more than *de jure* definition of what already existed *de facto*' is, from the minority point of view, a woefully inadequate summation of the situation. Brian Fallon, *An Age of Innocence*, 19.

⁶⁹ T.L. Murray, 'Another View', *Horizon* 5:25 (Jan. 1942), 26.

intellectuals of all stripes that the Irish population was not just acquiescent in the repressive impulses of its priests and politicians but actively endorsed them.⁷⁰

Indeed, it was just such lay complicity in silencing dissent that had brought about the end of *Ireland To-day* in 1938 in the effort to stop its critical pronouncements against Franco.⁷¹ And with the exception of the urbane but largely apolitical *Dublin Magazine*, that journal's untimely demise once again left Ireland without any regular forum devoted to the exchange of liberal opinions. The Irish Academy of Letters continued to function, but as Seán O'Faoláin later conceded, the sense of occasion and sparkle that Yeats and Oliver St. John Gogarty had brought to its early gatherings was quickly lost without them and proved impossible to emulate.⁷² Surviving members of the Revival generation, people such as Joseph M. Hone, Stephen Gwynn, Lennox Robinson and F.R. Higgins, continued to contribute to public life, but this they did as isolated individuals rather than with any pretence of being associated with a movement. It was this loss of a critical focus for liberal thinkers that led Sean O'Casey to lament bitterly 'how the litterateurs of Dublin fell away or were lost, when Yeats and Lady Gregory died. A new kind of circle is forming now, all bound, or nearly all, together with scapulars and rosary beads'.⁷³ Thus when O'Faoláin founded *The Bell* in 1940, he created a magazine whose importance to modern Irish culture remains even now hard to overestimate.⁷⁴ Not least among its many achievements was that it provided a non-sectarian meeting-place for Irish intellectuals at a moment when such a context was badly needed for all concerned. Cut off from the outside world by war and alienated from within by their society's hostility to liberal thought, writers of both Catholic and Protestant

⁷⁰ John V. Kelleher, 'Irish Literature To-day', *The Bell* 10:4 (July 1945), 347. See also Peter Connolly, *No Bland Facility: Selected Writings on Literature, Religion and Censorship*, ed. J.H. Murphy (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1991), 198.

⁷¹ Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Maria Cross Roads: A Study of "Donat O'Donnell"', in R. English and J.M. Skelly (eds.), *Ideas Matter: Essays in Honour of Conor Cruise O'Brien* (Dublin, 1998), 362.

⁷² Seán O'Faoláin, *Vive Moi!*, ed. J. O'Faolain (London, 1993), 276-7.

⁷³ Harvard, b Ms 1787.298.34 (Reynolds Papers): Sean O'Casey to Horace Reynolds, 18 Feb. 1947.

⁷⁴ Tom Clyde, *Irish Literary Magazines: An Outline History and Descriptive Bibliography* (Dublin, 2003), 192.

background gathered around *The Bell* to partake of an intellectual solidarity they could find nowhere else.

According to Anthony Cronin, Brendan Behan once boasted facetiously of belonging to ‘that large and respectable body of the community’ that had published an article in *The Bell*.⁷⁵ Behan’s personal cynicism aside, his remark testifies to the fact that the magazine worked hard to secure a variety of contributors in its effort to become, as its sub-title claimed, ‘a survey of Irish life’. The pluralistic agenda of *The Bell* runs through Seán O’Faoláin’s editorials like a mantra. He expressed this commitment unequivocally in the inaugural issue with the promise that ‘we ban only lunatics and sour-bellies. We are absolutely inclusiveWhoever you are, then, O reader, Gentile or Jew, Protestant or Catholic, priest or layman, Big House or Small House – *The Bell* is yours’.⁷⁶ Not long afterwards he reiterated the point, asserting that with the exception of the purely literary *Dublin Magazine*, ‘this is the only native periodical open to *everybody*’.⁷⁷ ‘Everybody’ even meant Ulster Protestants, and this at a time when to consider them at all was novel, let alone to entertain seriously and even with a degree of sympathy their fears about the South. *The Bell*’s consistent engagement with the Northern perspective alone might be taken as evidence of the depth of its pluralist conviction.⁷⁸ In seeking to be a platform open to all voices, then, O’Faoláin hoped *The Bell* would engender a sense of commonality not only among the Dublin *literati* but among the thoughtful and sensitive across the land. This perceived constituency he defined elsewhere as simply that group ‘composed of every man and woman who keeps his brains burnished and is neither so snobbish, nor so cautious, as to hide his light under a bushel’.⁷⁹ In discussing the social role played by cultural magazines in Irish life, Richard Kearney has argued the genre itself possesses a rich potential as a unifying agent, because in

⁷⁵ Anthony Cronin, *Dead as Doornails* (1976; Oxford, 1987), 6.

⁷⁶ Seán O’Faoláin, ‘This is Your Magazine’, *The Bell* 1:1 (Oct. 1940), 9.

⁷⁷ Seán O’Faoláin, ‘A Challenge’, *The Bell* 1:5 (Feb. 1941), 5-6.

⁷⁸ Maurice Goldring, *Pleasant the Scholar’s Life: Irish Intellectuals and the Construction of the Nation State* (London, 1993), 157-9.

⁷⁹ Seán O’Faoláin, ‘The Mart of Ideas’, *The Bell* 4:3 (June 1942), 155-6.

generating dialogue among disparate people, it functions ‘as [a] mediating link between the idioms of individuality and collectivism’.⁸⁰ The perception that he was part of a community of writers and thinkers that met in the pages of *The Bell* was vital for a rural intellectual like Hubert Butler, whose determination to remain in the provinces often left him feeling lonely. Nor was he the only one. The veteran republican Ernie O’Malley was another rural-dweller who sought mental nourishment from the magazine while inhabiting the intellectually bare precincts of the Mayo countryside.⁸¹ The restrictions on travel and services imposed by the Emergency compounded the isolation of such people, but to Butler there was at least one way in which these deprivations were to be a blessing in disguise. Largely unable either to visit or publish abroad, Irish writers were forced to focus their energies more locally, a situation from which *The Bell* benefited. Butler later reflected that ‘Sean for some years had a captive audience and captive contributors. We had leisure to sit down and look at ourselves and that is what he helped us to do’.⁸²

The sense of intimacy fostered by these circumstances was something for which Butler thought Protestant intellectuals in particular should be grateful. In retrospect it seemed to him that ‘we remnants of the Anglo-Irish “intelligentsia” would have been nobody’s children, had Sean O’Faolain’s *The Bell* not taken us under its wing’ (*EA* 148). Protestant thinkers of his generation who had not left Ireland permanently by 1940 were often those who in Butler’s estimation possessed a more introverted intelligence, those who, in ‘looking inwards and backwards[,] liked to explore the history, the moods, the motives, the public and private pressures that had given an awkward [,] unyielding shape to the ordinary humanity which they shared with their countrymen’. Thus inclined, they found in their liberal Catholic contemporaries individuals similarly cognizant of the complexities inherent in Irish experience and drawn to the challenge of

⁸⁰ Richard Kearney, ‘Between Politics and Literature: The Irish Cultural Journal’, *The Crane Bag* 7:2 (1983), 161.

⁸¹ Richard English, *Ernie O’Malley: IRA Intellectual* (Oxford, 1998), 31.

⁸² TCD, Ms. 10304/213/2 (BP): untitled/ archived as ‘on Irish journals, the Ideal, etc’ [1974 and after].

reconciling them. Yet unpacking these complexities could sometimes arouse atavistic passions or provoke personal animosities, and it was O'Faoláin's genius to ensure these difficulties should serve the process of mutual recognition rather than become obstructions to it. 'Sean made *The Bell* a pleasant club-room where old antagonisms could meet without loss of pride or integrity', Butler recalled. 'Some thirty generations of English or Anglo-Irish ascendancy had left its imprint on us all and it needed a couple of generations at least for the wounds to heal and the arrogance to subside. And I think Sean saw that'.⁸³ If, as John Wilson Foster has claimed, the Ascendancy intelligentsia of former generations had relied upon the 'social concentration and defensive clubbability' of their caste in achieving a sense of cohesion, then surely it can be argued that their descendants benefited from another type of 'clubbability' made possible by *The Bell*.⁸⁴ The big difference, of course, was that club membership was now based on a commitment to intellectual freedom rather than on criteria of sect and class.

None of which is to say that the work of Protestants associated with *The Bell* was somehow exempt from the critical eye it cast over everyone else's ideas. When in 1945, for example, Monk Gibbon argued in the magazine in defence of the literary censorship, he received no quarter from his fellow Protestants: Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Casey, T.C. Kingsmill Moore and Hubert Butler all advanced forceful arguments opposing, if not attacking, him.⁸⁵ Similarly, O'Faoláin himself was to be fairly ruthless when reviewing Arland Ussher's *A Postscript to Existentialism* in the March 1947 number of *The Bell*. Likening Ussher to a fraudulent and self-important intellectual from a Chekhov play, O'Faoláin gibed that 'he loves his arch witticisms, his verbal play-pen, his Syballine metaphors, not unmixed. The only trouble about Ussherovitch

⁸³ TCD, Ms. 10304/212/6 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'on Seán O'Faoláin, *The Bell*, and Ulster' [undated (1974)].

⁸⁴ John Wilson Foster, 'Strains in Irish Intellectual Life', in Liam O'Dowd (ed.), *On Intellectuals and Intellectual Life in Ireland: International, Comparative and Historical Contexts* (Belfast, 1996), 72.

⁸⁵ Monk Gibbon, 'In Defence of Censorship', *The Bell* 9:4 (Jan. 1945), 313-22. Various respondents, 'Censorship: Comments by Readers', *The Bell* 9:5 (Feb. 1945), 408ff. HMB, Letter to the Editor. *The Bell* 9:6 (Mar. 1945), 531.

was, he was so difficult to follow'.⁸⁶ Butler thought the review was in bad taste, and in an interesting correspondence following the review's appearance he attempted to broker a peace between the two men, which ultimately led to O'Faoláin writing Ussher a letter of apology.⁸⁷ In fairness to O'Faoláin, it must be said that even Butler himself found Ussher's attempts at *belles lettres* opaque to the point of obfuscatory, later confiding to Terence de Vere White that 'I have a good deal of fellow feeling for him, but...I do not think these tortured abstractions in which he is at present involving himself give a just view of his talents. Maybe I just don't understand what he is driving at!'⁸⁸ Before lapsing back into his usual 'tortured abstractions', though, Ussher did manage to produce a highly readable and often incisive meditation on Irishness, *The Face and Mind of Ireland*, which appeared in 1949.⁸⁹ The book was to win him praise from a wide range of Irish readers, many of whom felt that it had managed to articulate at least something of their own opinions and sentiments. As Joseph Hone testified when congratulating him on its widespread success: 'It is really rather remarkable that a book on Ireland should be written that pleases both Father Devane [A.R. Devane, an outspoken and conservative Jesuit] and a bitter anti-Papist like Hubert Butler. Did the like ever happen before[?]'⁹⁰ While it is perhaps unfortunate that Ussher afterwards reverted to his more self-consciously philosophical musings, *The Face and Mind of Ireland* nonetheless stands as one of the central texts of mid-century Irish cultural commentary and exemplifies the unique contribution a minority thinker might make to the ongoing effort at mutual social intelligibility.

Pivotal as the Second World War was to the process by which Protestant intellectuals became more engaged in Irish cultural politics, it was also a watershed in the life of the Southern Protestant community as a whole. Naturally enough, younger Protestants were especially

⁸⁶ Seán O'Faoláin, 'Evenings on a Farm at Sandymount', review of Arland Ussher, *A Postscript to Existentialism*, in *The Bell* 13:6 (Mar. 1947), 67.

⁸⁷ MH (Alpha): Seán O'Faoláin to HMB, undated [c. Mar. 1947]. TCD, Ms. 9037.2932 (Ussher Papers): Seán O'Faoláin to Arland Ussher, 16 Apr. 1947.

⁸⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1541 (BP): HMB to Terence de Vere White, 1 Aug. 1958.

⁸⁹ Arland Ussher, *The Face and Mind of Ireland* (1949; Old Greenwich, CT, 1979), 9.

⁹⁰ TCD, Ms. 9034.1688 (Ussher Papers): Joseph Hone to Arland Ussher, 21 Sept. 1949.

conscious of the ways the war altered their self-conception. Looking back on those days, the journalist Jack White believed that ‘in some strange way the war years saw a melting down of traditional prejudices in Irish Protestants’, while Brian Inglis asserted that ‘by the time the war ended I was more Irish – in the sense of thinking of myself as Irish – than when it began’.⁹¹ Yet if increased solidarity with other Southerners was for Protestants a positive result of their shared neutrality, a corresponding drawback was the alienation it caused between them and their Northern co-religionists. Very much at war, the latter were often bitter over what they considered the soft option taken by their fellows in Éire, to whom one Ulsterwoman would refer derisively in 1943 as ‘just Southerners’ who ‘hadn’t the decency to evacuate’.⁹² As is now well known, there were in fact large numbers of Southern Irishmen, Protestant and Catholic alike, who enlisted in the British forces.⁹³ For a minority spokesman like R.M. Smyllie, then, the problem was certainly not that too many young Protestants were staying put but that so many continued to leave, never to return. Far from discouraging this trend, he worried the war only exacerbated it with its promise of adventure and opportunity.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, many older Protestants at home found sharing the Emergency experience with their Catholic compatriots gave them a sense of belonging that had hitherto eluded them. Writing in the *New Statesman* in 1941, Elizabeth Bowen maintained that an obvious benefit their neutrality conferred upon Irish people of all backgrounds was ‘a growth of the sense of responsibility, an abandonment of the idea of privilege. Parish councils work for co-operation, for emergency action, for mutual aid. Factions have come together, and national unity is more than a phrase’.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Jack White, *Minority Report*, 109. Brian Inglis, *West Briton* (London, 1962), 67-8.

⁹² Harry Craig, ‘A Protestant Visits Belfast’, *The Bell* 7:3 (Dec. 1943), 242.

⁹³ Discussion of the growing differences between Northern and Southern Protestants during the interwar period and of Northern resentment towards Southern neutrality is found in Dennis Kennedy, *The Widening Gulf: Northern attitudes to the independent Irish state 1919-49* (Belfast, 1988). See also Richard Doherty, *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War* (Dublin, 1999), 27-54.

⁹⁴ ‘The Bellman’ [Larry Morrow], ‘Meet R.M. Smyllie’, *The Bell* 3:3 (Dec. 1941), 186.

⁹⁵ Elizabeth Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, 34-5. In a similar vein, Bowen had posited in her 1940 essay ‘The Big House’ that the Anglo-Irish gentry might become more integrated into their local communities through generous and socially creative uses of their inherited country homes. Elizabeth Bowen, ‘The Big House’, *The Bell* 1:1 (Oct. 1940), 71-7.

Still, one must not exaggerate the extent of this *rapprochement* between Protestants and Catholics. Even though relations between them in provincial Ireland were now mostly cordial, residual social divisions meant there were still few occasions for sustained interaction. As a result, says Theo Hoppen, the two communities could remain fundamentally separate, yet ‘all concerned could lay claim to a species of painless goodwill’.⁹⁶ In practice, it was left to occasional exceptional Protestants to break down this tacit segregation by partaking in the civic life of the majority. Thus in a 1945 article entitled ‘Gigmanity Uprooted’, an anonymous writer, who describes himself as a small-town businessman, tells of the epiphanic moment when he realized the importance of making Ireland not only his physical but also his spiritual home: ‘I resolved to serve the new state, not with the windiness of rhetoric but rather by taking part in the multifarious and almost insect-like activities of my native town’. Unfortunately, the writer reports, even as he plunged happily into various public endeavours, most of his Protestant acquaintances ‘continued to sulk in their tents’.⁹⁷ This is a recurring theme in Irish life throughout the forties and fifties: quite apart from their unwillingness to engage in more visible activities such as elective politics, members of the minority were often reluctant to get involved with even those ‘insect-like activities’ on which every community depends for its continuing health. As late as 1958, a speaker at a Church of Ireland-sponsored ‘folk weekend’ in Co. Wexford still felt it necessary to impress upon the Protestant gathering that it could serve Ireland ‘by working together in small groups in which everyone counts and can play a part’, adding that ‘working together like this is in itself one the best ways of expressing our patriotism’.⁹⁸ It is something of a commentary in itself that Southern Protestants should still be grappling with this basic tenet of neighbourliness a full generation after Independence.

One challenge provincial life as a venue for local activity presented to Protestants and Catholics alike was that it could be so lonely and uninspiring. When reflecting in later life upon

⁹⁶ Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland*, 241.

⁹⁷ C.I.R., ‘Gigmanity Uprooted’, *The Bell* 11:2 (Nov. 1945), 693-4.

⁹⁸ Noelle Davies, ‘Patriotism: An Emotional Need? [II]’, *Focus* May 1958, 25.

the choice he and his wife had made to remain in Co. Kilkenny, Butler confessed to a friend that ‘Peggy and I would be unhappy living anywhere else....But how boring it often is!’⁹⁹ It was primarily on these grounds that Arland Ussher finally sold his family home in Co. Waterford in March 1944 and moved to Dublin. Writing to congratulate Ussher on his decision, Arthur Power joked grimly that ‘soon there won’t be a civilized person in the Irish countryside unless they are all refused *in perpetuo* passports to France’.¹⁰⁰ As a matter of principle, though, Butler disapproved of capable people like Ussher and Power abandoning their rural neighbourhoods, believing that it was the duty of the cultured and educated to stay put if possible and try to make life better for all concerned.¹⁰¹ That so many gave up and went to the cities only compounded the problem of anthill civilization and left their country parishes even more bereft than before. Looking back on the cultural achievements of provincial intellectuals in the past, he posited that ‘we are more unsettled than we were one hundred years ago and it needs time and patience to hatch out a new enterprise or a new idea. You cannot do it running about as we do. When an enthusiast leaves a town, it’s a tragedy like a hen walking out on a setting of eggs’.¹⁰² In insisting on the importance of sticking to one’s roots, Butler was what Patrick Kavanagh defined elsewhere as ‘parochial’ in the best sense, a person who is ‘never in any doubt about the social and artistic validity of his parish’. The problem, as Kavanagh admitted, was that in modern times ‘it requires a great deal of courage to be parochial’.¹⁰³ And though he never seriously considered following in Ussher’s footsteps and giving up Maidenhall, Butler himself frequently struggled with his choice. When corresponding with the novelist William Gerhardie in the 1960s, he confessed to finding life as an intellectual in the countryside perennially difficult: ‘One is swimming against the current the whole time. Even the Irish now think there must be something

⁹⁹ MH (Alpha), HMB to Alexander Lieven, 31 Oct. 1973.

¹⁰⁰ TCD, Ms. 9038.3152 (Ussher Papers): Arthur Power to Arland Ussher, 8 Mar. 1944.

¹⁰¹ For more on Power’s own Anglo-Irish Catholic gentry background, see Arthur Power, *From the Old Waterford House* (1949; Waterford, 2003).

¹⁰² HMB, ‘Life and Leisure in Kilkenny’, *Irish Monthly* 78 (Apr. 1950), 159. This piece in its original form was a radio talk of the same title: see Appendix 1c.

¹⁰³ Patrick Kavanagh, ‘Parochialism’, *Kavanagh’s Weekly* 1:7 (24 May 1952), 2.

wrong with you if you choose to live at home and are not either a semi-horse or a retired major or a half-wit'.¹⁰⁴ Still, it was a price he was willing to pay for the sake of his localist ethos.

The 1940s thus saw Hubert Butler busy with a whole series of initiatives designed to improve the cultural life of his community. Indeed, Seán O'Faoláin might well have been thinking of his friend when he reflected in 1942 that 'it is a salutary consideration that those who may do most...to create a fine possible future Ireland will be the quiet, anonymous people who work steadily in all sorts of societies from the Architects Institute to the Zoological Gardens'.¹⁰⁵ In 1943 Butler was among a group that started a Kilkenny branch of the Irish Film Society, a scheme in which Owen Sheehy Skeffington had taken a leading role in Dublin. More significantly, the following year Butler also spearheaded the re-founding of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, which had flourished in the nineteenth century but which for various reasons had become defunct. Musing on the potential of the rejuvenated KAS, Butler revealed his hope that 'it might do what the old society did successfully through the bitter years of the Repeal Controversy; it might provide a common ground in which those who are divided by so many other things might meet and discuss what is of interest to all'.¹⁰⁶ In the opening editorial of the *Old Kilkenny Review*, the KAS journal, he reported proudly that by the end of 1947 the Society's membership had reached 172.¹⁰⁷ It was on the basis of such an apparently modest enterprise he believed a genuine form of mutuality was quietly being fostered, recalling later that 'in a couple of years the new Society became a real bridge between Protestant and Catholic, Anglo-Irishman and Celt. The friendliness which it created was perhaps our main achievement' (EA 279). Yet there were already signs of a future source of tension. According to Butler, he only managed to edit the first issue of the *Old Kilkenny Review* before Father Clohessy, one of the local Catholic priests active in the society, insisted on taking it over himself. Clohessy made this

¹⁰⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/629 (BP): HMB to William Gerhardt[e], 20 Sept. 1966.

¹⁰⁵ Seán O'Faoláin, 'To What Possible Future?', *The Bell* 4:1 (Apr. 1942), 9.

¹⁰⁶ HMB, 'Archaeology and National Culture', *Iris Óda: A Kilkenny Review* 1:3 (1946), 14.

¹⁰⁷ HMB, 'Editorial Comment', *Old Kilkenny Review* 1 (1946-7), 8.

demand on the grounds that Butler had been too slow in preparing the journal for publication, but ‘the real reason was because as early as 1947, I had been talking and writing about the massacre of the Orthodox in Croatia’.¹⁰⁸

Another forum where Butler saw room for growth was that of the county library system. Having devoted himself in the early 1920s to bringing literature of quality to the provinces through the Carnegie network, he was dismayed that most county libraries now specialized in circulating English penny-thrillers and other ephemera. Whatever charges of paternalism one might level against it in retrospect, the Carnegie scheme had at least demonstrated some awareness of the educational mission that libraries could and ought to have. So when reflecting in 1949 in *Irish Writing* on his own reasons for becoming a librarian, Butler explained that ‘I did not have the fashionable horror of “uplift” and though I knew that a great many Irishmen considered Sir Horace Plunkett a Big Bore with his manifold schemes for raising the cultural level of the countryside, I revered him’, not least because he was devoted to bringing ‘self-education within reach of those who were too poor or too far away to reach it in the normal way’ (*GW* 51). In wishing to rekindle the spirit and substance of such efforts, however, Butler recognized that a certain amount of benevolent interference would once again be needed. How to introduce the necessary outside help in a way that would encourage and not undermine local initiative was something he took seriously. ‘Though the control of a Country Library should ultimately be regional and democratic, we must draw back a bit before we can leap’, he argued. ‘Till there are regional committees capable of selecting books intelligently, the choice should be made...by a central Dublin committee, which should appoint the librarians’. Not surprisingly, he was also emphatic that qualified people must not be excluded from such appointments on the basis of their background, as had been the case with Laetitia Dunbar Harrison in 1931.¹⁰⁹ He

¹⁰⁸ MH: handwritten note on cover of HMB’s personal copy of *Old Kilkenney Review* 1 (1946-7).

¹⁰⁹ In January 1931, the Mayo County Council had attempted to block the appointment of Dunbar Harrison as County Librarian on the grounds that her Protestantism made her an unsuitable dispenser of reading material to Catholics. See *Irish Times* 6-7, 12-13 Jan. 1931, etc.

therefore concluded that ‘when appointments are made, those who love Ireland and who also love the English language and have no inhibitions about it ought not to stand back or be overlooked because they are Anglo-Irish’ (*GW* 62-3). Like the K.A.S., the county library must be a setting in which no rural person solicitous of ideas and learning should ever feel unwelcome.¹¹⁰

Analogous to Butler’s proposal for reconstituting the county libraries system was his ambition to establish networks of county museums and social clubs on the same pattern. In the case of the museums, there was again a local precedent on which he based his idea.¹¹¹ The nineteenth-century founding of the Kilkenny Museum had, like that of the original Kilkenny Archaeological Society, proceeded wholly from the efforts of local citizens. According to Butler, the Museum had in its prime been the most famous provincial collection in Ireland, and more importantly, it had ‘owed everything to private initiative. To-day much more public assistance is available than a century ago, and there seems little doubt that if we set about it in the right way a museum, as fine as that which we lost, may be recovered’.¹¹² Yet the most comprehensive scheme Butler formulated was one which would not just resurrect moribund associations but create a whole new framework for the development and support of all local cultural activities. In ‘A Plea from the Country’, which appeared in *The Bell* in June 1946, he imagined a means by which to combine architectural preservation with civic utility, proposing that the abandoned Kilkenny Castle dominating the city should be converted into a focal point for a whole host of organizations and institutions. Observing the Castle ‘was the centre and pivot of a social system which has only finally dissolved in the last generation’, Butler envisions it resuming its centrality in a contemporary context. Besides being the site for the new county museum, he says, such a

¹¹⁰ Another veteran of the Carnegie Libraries network, Frank O’Connor, later advanced his own plan for building up cultural awareness in provincial Ireland by proposing ‘an organisation which for the purposes of the discussion you may call “The Friends of Irish Literature” with branches in every big town, which will organise exhibitions and lectures, publish reading lists of Irish literature and will underwrite the republication of the hundreds of valuable Irish books that are all but forgotten’. Frank O’Connor, ‘You can buy Irish whiskey but not Irish books’, *Sunday Independent* 25 Mar. 1962, 10.

¹¹¹ The idea for a federation of non-sectarian, non-political provincial clubs Butler got from his experience of such organizations during his travels in Yugoslavia in the 1930s. MH (Ms.): untitled/ re scheme to organise small provincial clubs [3pp, undated (1940s)].

¹¹² HMB, ‘Editorial Comment’, *Old Kilkenny Review* 1, 8.

large building could also house an art gallery, the county library, and any other societies requiring space.¹¹³

It was the end of the Second World War that gave Butler a particular sense of urgency about his plans. With the absence of imported commercial entertainments and widespread restrictions on travel, the war years had thrown Irish people back on their own ingenuity and creativity in the cultivation of social pastimes. Once the effects of Ireland's period of enforced isolation faded, though, he feared it would be difficult to retain enthusiasm for local cultural initiatives, so powerful was the lure of mass-produced entertainments from London and Hollywood. Thus in 'A Plea from the Country' he warns his readers that 'we have certain opportunities to-day which will pass, if not quickly seized', and suggests that despite the recent popularity of home-grown theatre troupes, artists' guilds and the like, 'there is a danger that these small societies will perish if they do not get vigorous support'. As with the development of better libraries, he was conscious that this would probably require some assertion of leadership by the educated and the privileged in each locale, many of whom would also likely be Anglo-Irish. In a postcolonial society struggling to find its feet economically and socially, one where 'there is no longer wealth and leisure and the experience in using them', capable Protestants had a duty to contribute such experience as they possessed in ways that would be beneficial to the whole community. To do so appropriately required a balance between sensibility and pragmatism, such as Butler himself strove to achieve in his proposal for the re-employment of Kilkenny Castle.

Having examined both the thought and practice that constituted Hubert Butler's localist activism, it is worth asking what might be the wider political implications of his vision. After Butler died in 1991, W.J. McCormack characterized his politics as 'a thoughtful form of old-fashioned philanthropy'.¹¹⁴ While it is no doubt true that an element of *noblesse oblige* is inherent in some of his ideas, McCormack's description does not adequately account for the

¹¹³ HMB, 'A Plea from the Country'. *The Bell* 12:3 (June 1946), 192-3, 201.

¹¹⁴ W.J. McCormack, 'Far-Seeing Gifts: Hubert Butler, 1900-1991', *Éire/Ireland* 26 (Spring 1991), 99.

progressive trajectory of these ideas, for the quietly persistent ways in which Butler hoped not just to mitigate but eventually eradicate the historical inequalities between Protestants and Catholics. Certainly his faith in neighbourliness as the only authentic basis for social relations was predicated upon something both more sophisticated and more pragmatic than a bourgeois sense of guilt over past injustices. Indeed, Butler reveals an acute awareness of the ways in which such guilt can distort the political intelligence in the essay 'Graham Greene and Stephen Spender: The Sense of Evil and the Sense of Guilt', which first appeared in *The Bell* in November and December 1951. He is particularly incisive in his analysis of those whom Stephen Spender called the 'Divided Generation', the sensitive and well-heeled young Englishmen of the twenties and thirties who repudiated the liberal democratic values of their fathers in favour of more revolutionary social and political commitments. Although he concedes these intellectuals may have had legitimate grievances against their society, Butler is ruthless in exposing the complacency and self-indulgence that finally lay at the heart of their rebellion. In dismissing the less exciting but more exacting attempts of humanitarian democracy to extend the circle of privilege to more and more people, the Divided Generation nonetheless failed to engage seriously with the alternatives it espoused. 'They were really passive anarchists', says Butler, 'hoping, in a mystical way, that the liberties they wished for would grow up in the fissures of a shattered society, like ferns in a crumbling wall'. When this wishful thinking proved no match for the disasters of the late thirties and forties, many of these same people retreated into public and private disillusionment. Yet Butler is unsympathetic. Considering the essential vanity of the Divided Generation, he concludes that 'otherworldliness is popular with many writers today simply because a collective avowal of original sin is less bruising and intellectually exacting to the individual than a sober consideration of avoidable follies' (*EA* 174, 177).

In contrast to his critique of Greene and Spender, Butler retains a steady admiration for the Bloomsbury group, whose loyal opposition to society he finds both a more efficacious and ultimately more honest political stance for the modern intellectual to take. However unorthodox

their personal behaviour, the Bloomsbury writers tacitly accepted their dependence on the stability and continuity of their society, and in Butler's estimation this recognition lends their outlook a necessary self-knowledge and maturity. So he remarks that 'we are all of us tethered to our past, or, if you like, to our social background, but it is only the more adventurous who find this out by straining till the tether is taut. The others believe themselves free'. Having really questioned the fundamentals of their culture, the Bloomsbury writers came to appreciate how their elite position conferred upon them liberties and responsibilities, a balancing act whose opportunities Butler thinks the Divided Generation never comprehended, despite all its claims to radicalism. As a privileged intellectual in independent Ireland, Butler accepted his situation as one which came with its own set of liberties and responsibilities, and while he was well aware of the range of political postures open to him, he chose to work locally in the hope of realizing a humane balance between them. He therefore ends the essay on Greene and Spender with an assertion of his own moderate brand of political realism, maintaining that 'freedom, the freedom of the inner world, might seem to have its best guarantee, not in legislation extorted from the government, but in pledges of mutual support and tolerance exchanged between individuals in the shadow of the state'. Far from defeatism, these lines implicitly acknowledge liberal democracy's essential rightness, even as they contend that political structures can only be a platform for human communion, not its ultimate fulfilment (*EA* 177-9, 180-1).¹¹⁵

IV. The evolution of Protestant institutions

As a result of all his local activities, Seán O'Faoláin told Hubert Butler at one point that 'you are an outstanding example of what one man can do for a whole region'.¹¹⁶ As well-deserved as O'Faoláin's compliment surely was, it also points to a possible criticism that might be levelled against Butler's vision of communal belonging. Arguably the model of community he

¹¹⁵ In a response to 'A Sense of Evil and a Sense of Guilt', Seán O'Faoláin suggests that Butler's judgment of the Divided Generation is too harsh and springs from of his own intellectual ambivalence towards the state. Seán O'Faoláin, 'The Divided Generation', *The Bell* 17:11 (Feb. 1952), 5-11.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Seán O'Faoláin to HMB, undated [c. July 1953]. Alpha, MH.

dreamed of and worked for depended rather too much on his singular, albeit elegant, sensibilities to be readily transferable elsewhere. Indeed, as an individual example of how other Protestants might participate in the life of their own neighbourhoods, he often struck his co-religionists as both eccentric and demanding. Still, this uniqueness did not necessarily render Butler irrelevant, for many of his arguments and proposals for local participation found their context in the larger evaluative process the minority was undergoing about its role in Irish society. By looking at the evolving position of traditional Protestant institutions such as the *Irish Times*, Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland, it is possible to appreciate better the ways Butler's distinctive outlook alternately affirmed and challenged the prevailing sentiments of Southern Protestants as a whole.

The success with which the *Irish Times* managed to transform itself under R.M. Smyllie from a Unionist mouthpiece into the newspaper preferred by educated and upwardly mobile Irishmen of all backgrounds was not an achievement obvious to everyone at the time. Signe Toksvig confided to her diary after meeting Smyllie in February 1937 that although he had been entertaining company, she wondered 'why should we be making so much of a newspaperman of average vintage?'¹¹⁷ Regardless of whether he was an outstanding journalist in his own right, though, Smyllie proved adept at attracting and cultivating talented young Protestants whose politics were often more liberal than his own. Chief among these was Alec Newman, a TCD-educated Belfastman and committed nationalist who was to serve as Smyllie's assistant, and later, deputy editor. Over time Newman would be joined by Patrick Campbell, Brian Inglis, Lionel Fleming, Jack White, Tony Gray, Alan Bestic and Alan Montgomery, among others.¹¹⁸ Such people were to play a vital part in Smyllie's gradual refashioning of the paper into one that could respond effectively to its altered environment. Unlike either of its politically-aligned competitors, the *Irish Press* and the *Irish Independent*, the paper was well positioned to present itself as an

¹¹⁷ Signe Toksvig, *Irish Diaries 1926-1937* (Dublin, 1994), 356.

¹¹⁸ See Tony Gray, *Mr Smyllie, Sir!* (Dublin, 1991).

objective and non-partisan commentator on events. In this way Smyllie and his lieutenants managed to turn a vice into a virtue, recasting a legacy of social elitism as an attitude of intellectual independence. Of course, the paper still retained much of its Protestant identity and continued to rely upon its Protestant readership even as it embarked upon these editorial changes. In fact the changes had a double purpose: they not only served to draw in educated and professional Catholics, but they also gave traditional subscribers a lead in orientating themselves politically and socially within the new Ireland. So Vivian Mercier remarked of the paper in 1945 that 'in the country rectories of Ireland and the consulting rooms of Merrion Square it has brought about a silent revolution'.¹¹⁹ Lionel Fleming later corroborated this view when he recounted the ways he and Alec Newman had worked to give the paper a specifically 'Protestant Nationalist' slant, one which Smyllie was happy enough to promote.¹²⁰ It is hardly surprising, then, that Hubert Butler, as both a liberal and nationally-minded Protestant, should prove to be 'a man after Smyllie's heart'.¹²¹

Another traditionally Protestant institution undergoing important changes during this period was Trinity College Dublin, though here again the transformation was not always readily apparent to the rest of Irish society. Writing in the April 1945 issue of *The Bell*, Jack White tried to correct many of the popular misconceptions about the College, not least that it remained the last outpost of those seeking 'to re-establish the British Raj in Dublin Castle'. Rather, White documents how Trinity was fast becoming a place catering to a whole range of students, the majority still from the Protestant professional classes but only a minority unionist in sentiment.¹²² Admittedly, the institution's attitude towards the Irish state had often been a suspicious one since independence; however, this was to change when future provost A.J. McConnell facilitated a

¹¹⁹ Vivian Mercier, 'The Fourth Estate: "The Times" (Irish)'. *The Bell* 9:4 (Jan. 1945), 293-6.

¹²⁰ Lionel Fleming, *Head or Harp* (London, 1965), 167.

¹²¹ Interview with Maurice Craig, Dublin, 16 Aug. 2001.

¹²² W.J. White, 'Inside Trinity College', *The Bell* 10:1 (Apr. 1945), 64-65.

much needed grant from the government in 1947.¹²³ A source of estrangement which proved more stubborn was the Irish hierarchy's ban on Catholics attending the College without a special dispensation. Although some form of prohibition on Catholic enrolment at TCD had existed since 1875, only with the appointment of J.C. McQuaid as Archbishop of Dublin in 1940 was the ban actively enforced. Fellows R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb remember that as a result McQuaid quickly became 'a sort of bogey-man' around the place, such that 'his motives, activities, prejudices, shortcomings and virtues were endlessly discussed'.¹²⁴ Predictably, one of the ban's most eloquent critics through the years was to be Butler's good friend Owen Sheehy Skeffington, a passionate promoter of Trinity's role in Irish life. When standing for one of the University's two Senate seats in 1951, he spoke of his pride in belonging to the community, 'not because I share the views of all my colleagues and fellow-graduates, but because it is one of the few places in Ireland to-day where, no matter what one's views, one is guaranteed the right to hold them, to express them, and to receive a fair hearing'.¹²⁵ As Sheehy Skeffington's remarks suggest, Trinity had ceased simply to be a haven for the Protestant elite and was rapidly becoming a gathering-spot for independent thinkers of all kinds. So while the College retained many of its distinctly Protestant associations for many years to come, increasingly its guiding ethos was to be secular and pluralist.

Representing Trinity alongside Owen Sheehy Skeffington in the Oireachtas was W.B. Stanford, who was appointed Regius Professor of Greek in 1940 and elected to the Senate in 1948. An active layman in the Church of Ireland, Stanford had become deeply concerned about the ongoing deterioration of Protestant communal life and believed the Church must be more

¹²³ J.V. Luce, *Trinity College Dublin: The First 400 Years* (Dublin, 1992), 146.

¹²⁴ R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin, 1592-1952: An academic history* (Cambridge, 1982), 470-1. The situation was to become even more extreme when the Catholic hierarchy reiterated with unprecedented strictness the terms of the ban at the Plenary Synod of Maynooth of 1956, at the same time ceding to McQuaid sole power to issue exceptional dispensations. Andrew Burke, 'Trinity College and the religious problem in Irish education', in J. Kelly and U. Mac Gearailt (eds.), *Dublin and Dubliners: essays in the history and literature of Dublin City* (Dublin, 1990), 116-17.

¹²⁵ Owen Sheehy Skeffington, *Election Address of Dr. Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Candidate for the Constituency of Dublin University* (Dublin, 1951).

active in speaking out on behalf of its rank-and-file members. He articulated these sentiments in his 1944 pamphlet *A Recognised Church: the Church of Ireland in Éire*. In it he does not conceal his dissatisfaction with the tendency among the older generation to abstain from the public arena: ‘The policy of *lying low* and *saying nothing*, which many of our elders have advocated for our Church, is neither honourable nor good for ourselves or our country’. While critical of the minority’s failure to take a larger part in contemporary Irish affairs, Stanford is quick to pay tribute to the legacy built up by generations of decent and unassuming Protestants who have always comprised the bulk of the Church’s body. So whatever the Church of Ireland’s links with the powerful and illustrious in the past, he is equally concerned with the debt owed to ‘the hundreds of thousands of quiet, faithful, charitable citizens who lived and died in the Church: rectors, teachers, parents, traders, farmers, plain people’. To reinforce the connection between these predecessors and his present readers, Stanford further insists that ‘our Church’s existence to-day is based on those plain, enduring people, and her future will depend on them and their children no less’.¹²⁶ This affirmation of the solidarity of the ‘plain people’ as the cornerstone of continuing Protestant identity stands in certain contrast to Hubert Butler’s emphasis on individuals witnessing to the tradition through their confident interaction with their Catholic neighbours. Of course, Butler knew from personal experience how isolated life as a rural Protestant could be, but his country house, his intellect and his idealism all combined to make him exceptionally self-assured. It is left to Stanford, the practicing churchman, to bear witness to the gnawing sense among many Protestants of their ‘social fewness and loneliness’, a feeling he believes the majority reinforces in a variety of subtle ways. With his more conventional and institutionally-derived conception of Protestant belonging, Stanford counsels his co-religionists that the best way to deflect the pressures of living in a Catholic society is to ‘make it clear that

¹²⁶ W.B. Stanford, *A Recognised Church: The Church of Ireland in Éire* (Dublin, 1944) 11, 25. Others shared Stanford’s preoccupation with these ‘plain people’: see Unsigned, ‘A Policy for the Church of Ireland’, *CIM* Aug. 1939, 129. For a demographic analysis of Southern Protestantism from this period, see also R.P. McDermott and D.A. Webb, *Irish Protestantism To-day and Tomorrow: A Demographic Study* (Dublin, 1945).

your faith is not a soft, decayed thing to be easily squashed, but a sinewy, living thing that can resist and press back'. But even while doing so, he adds, 'make it clear you are sincerely eager to help Ireland in public efforts'.¹²⁷

Another churchman to take up directly the relationship between Protestantism and public participation was the Rev. Harry McAdoo, later the Bishop of Ossory and eventually the Archbishop of Dublin. In 1945 McAdoo published a pamphlet entitled *No New Church*, in which he sought to counteract the prevailing assumption among Protestants that political engagement was either futile, unwanted, or somehow a betrayal of their heritage. And when speaking of politics, he hastens to add that '[not] taking part in politics is an expression that covers a wide field. It may mean that one does not seek election to the Dáil, and, of course, not everyone can be a legislator in that sense, but it may also mean that [one] takes no active interest in the socio-political setting in which he lives and earns his bread and butter'. In a case such as this, McAdoo concludes, it can only be said that 'for a man to take no interest in the way his country is run is the same as taking no interest in himself'.¹²⁸ In fact there were Protestants actively engaging in electoral politics in the forties and fifties at both the municipal and national levels, but they remained very few in number. Men such as Maurice Dockrell, Lionel Booth, Erskine Childers, Michael Yeats, and Fred Cowan all distinguished themselves in what Cowan was to call 'the unremitting, unremunerated political spadework' of the democratic process. Yet however valuable the contribution these individuals might make, they were nonetheless regarded within the minority community as exceptional, if not a little eccentric, and not because of their particular views but because they were involved in politics at all. So when reflecting on his long career as a Labour Party activist, Cowan would complain that his co-religionists had routinely treated him as

¹²⁷ W.B. Stanford, *A Recognised Church*, 17, 26. Portions of *A Recognised Church* were reprinted in the June 1944 issue of *The Bell*, accompanied by responses from various Southern Protestants, among them E.C. Hodges, Lennox Robinson, Lil Nic Dhonnchadha and Arnold Marsh. See W.B. Stanford et al., 'Protestantism Since the Treaty', *The Bell* 8:3 (June 1944), 218ff. See also Seán O'Faoláin, 'Toryism in Trinity', *The Bell* 8:3 (June 1944), 185-97.

¹²⁸ H.R. McAdoo, *No New Church* (Dublin, 1945), 31.

though 'I was either a simpleton or a spiv!'¹²⁹ The arguments and encouragements of their church leaders notwithstanding, then, many Anglo-Irish Protestants after 1945 still had some way to go towards a psychological acceptance of their place in Irish society.

All of which raises the question of when the concept of 'Anglo-Irishness' actually began to die off and to be replaced by an un-hyphenated sense of 'Irishness' among Protestants. Obviously Anglo-Irishness is too nebulous a concept for its demise to be pinpointed exactly, but by the mid-1940s a combination of war, immigration, and the simple passage of time had done much to erode the rhetorical appeal of this traditional identity. This process was given a push by John Costello's unexpected proclamation of an Irish Republic in 1948. After it was announced, Hubert Butler reflected that Ireland's new political status did not augur any substantive changes to its governance, observing that the declaration was nothing more than 'a juggling with words'. Nonetheless, he thought the innovation conferred a less obvious benefit: 'I welcome the Irish Republic; it was an obsession that we had to be freed from. The British crown had long ceased to be a grave vexation, but it was like a fly on the nose, which prevented us concentrating on what was important to us'.¹³⁰ If the declaration of the Republic signalled the death-knell of Anglo-Ireland's political pretensions, then surely their funeral rites came with the Church of Ireland's consequent revision of its State Prayers. The possibility of revising the Prayers had been broached occasionally since the promulgation of the 1937 Constitution and the ambiguous changes it effected upon the formal relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom. Here, it seemed, was a literal test of Anglo-Irish Protestant allegiance: should Southern Church of Ireland congregations continue to pray publicly for the King, or should they begin to pray instead for the new Irish President? The Rev. H. Vere Flint summed up the sense of ambiguity and uncertainty many Protestants felt when he observed in May 1941 that 'the Union is at an end.

¹²⁹ Fred Cowan, 'Odd Man In', *Focus* Feb. 1958, 20.

¹³⁰ MH (Ms.): untitled/ re the proclamation of the Irish Republic [6pp., 1949].

The Republic has not come into being'.¹³¹ Yet when a motion at the General Synod the same month advocating not revision but simply the introduction of alternative prayer forms was voted down, the Rev. John Tobias fumed in the *Church of Ireland Gazette*: 'What dead hand of obscurantism is over the Synod that it refused even to consider the addition of certain prayers[?]' In his own frustration, Tobias added that 'where reality is lacking, it is better not to pray at all'.¹³²

In the context of this welter of emotions the issue was forced again in 1948, but this time opposition to revision was restricted to a limited number of diehards. Among them was Hugh A.C. Maude, a member of the General Synod, who launched a campaign during the winter of 1948-49 to try to block any changes the following spring. Significantly, however, Maude gathered most of his support from the old guard, people such as the Trinity don A.A. Luce, who mourned what he called this 'orgy of liturgical regicide'.¹³³ Likewise, W.A. King-Harmon told Maude that 'I'd leave [Ireland] tomorrow if I weren't far too old to move, and if Great Britain had not sold herself to those filthy Socialists'.¹³⁴ All these protestations were to no real avail. At the General Synod in May 1949, Archbishop Gregg spoke on behalf of all the bishops when he endorsed a proposal by which the Irish Book of Common Prayer would incorporate two sets of State Prayers to reflect the constitutional differences now explicit between Northern Ireland and the Republic. Northerners would thus continue to pray for the Sovereign, while Southerners would pray for the President. Chiefly he was concerned that the political change and the Church's answer to it should not be permitted 'to mar the essential oneness of the Church of Ireland...."Hands across the Border" must be the unfailing principle of our common Church life'. An aged Southern Unionist himself, there is a certain poignancy to Gregg's conclusion that 'many dwellers in the Republic will regret the loss of the familiar words, but what other way out

¹³¹ *CIG* 9 May 1941, 189.

¹³² *CIG* 6 June 1941, 236-7.

¹³³ RCB, Ms. 262/1/45 (Maude Papers): A.A. Luce to Hugh Maude, 3 May 1949.

¹³⁴ RCB, Ms. 262/1/66 (Maude Papers): W.A. King-Harmon to Hugh Maude, 12 May 1949.

is there?'¹³⁵ But even Gregg does not seem to have grasped that this supposed regret was not as widespread as it would have been just a decade earlier. When he wrote to Harry McAdoo in Cork in December 1949 to solicit his opinions about the attitude of young Protestants towards the issue and to discover whether any of them were 'fervently republican', he learned from McAdoo that indeed some of them were.¹³⁶ Lonely and sparse as they sometimes were in the Republic, Irish Protestants were finally entering a new phase in their communal life.

¹³⁵ *CIG* 13 May 1949, 6. Not surprisingly, the *Irish Times* came out strongly in favour of the revisions: see *Irish Times* 14 May 1949, 7.

¹³⁶ George Seaver, *John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg*, 231.

Five: Public Controversy and Intellectual Dissent, 1949-72

Protestantism is to me a great historic movement of Reformation, Aspiration, and Self-Assertion against spiritual tyrannies rather than an organization of false gentility which so often takes its name in vain in Ireland...I do not want to banish religion from politics, but I do want to abolish the thing miscalled religion in this controversy from the world altogether. I want to bring religion back into politics. There is nothing that revolts me in the present state of things more than the unnatural religious calm in Ireland. I do not want a peaceful Ireland in that sense. I want a turbulent Ireland. All free and healthy nations are full of the turbulence of controversy, political, religious, social: all sorts of controversy. Without it you can have no progress, no life.

– Bernard Shaw, from a speech delivered in London, December 1912.¹

I. *The Liberal Ethic* and ‘approved’ Protestantism

Writing to Hubert Butler in 1955, the retired brigadier Eric Dorman O’Gowan complained that the Republic of Ireland was turning into little more than a ‘theocratic bogocracy’.² Butler had become friendly with Dorman O’Gowan in the late forties as a result of their mutual interest in genealogy and archaeology, and the two men corresponded regularly on these subjects, as well as about their shared commitment to a united Ireland.³ As his comment makes clear, though, Dorman O’Gowan also shared Butler’s worry and irritation with the way the Roman Catholic hierarchy continued to encroach upon the workings of the southern Irish state. When, after sixteen years of continuous rule by Fianna Fáil, an inter-party government had been elected in 1948, Dorman O’Gowan had been among those Catholics who believed the change marked a departure from the stale pieties and ideological rigidities of Eamon de Valera.⁴ Yet whatever else his shortcomings as a leader, de Valera had proved adept at keeping the Church hierarchy in check when it sought to interfere too directly in politics. In this sense, he had been successful in his efforts to make the Irish state more confessional without allowing it to become

¹ Bernard Shaw, *The Matter with Ireland*, ed. D.H. Greene and D.H. Laurence (London, 1962), 72.

² MH (Alpha): HMB from Eric Dorman O’Gowan, 15 July 1955.

³ This correspondence, which Butler and Dorman O’Gowan maintained from 1948 until the latter’s death in 1969, is archived as TCD, Mss. 10304/636-7 (BP).

⁴ Dorman O’Gowan (1895-1969) had changed his name from Dorman Smith in 1949 as part of his claim to headship of the O’Gowan clan. Lavinia Greacen, *Chink: A Biography* (London, 1989), 295ff.

more clerical.⁵ The Costello government, on the other hand, showed little or no finesse in negotiating such a distinction. Indeed, the hierarchy exerted a more explicit influence upon government behaviour from 1948-1951 than at any time since Independence, not least because the government itself seems to have expected it. So beyond the essential catholicity that already saturated Irish life, J.H. Whyte has spoken of how institutional Catholicism during the early 1950s attained a degree of 'integralism' that was unprecedented in twentieth-century Ireland.⁶

By the same token, these years also marked a low-point in the fortunes and morale of the Protestant population. With the implicit security of the British connection definitively ended and a post-war malaise overtaking the country generally, Southern Protestants were further discouraged by the increasing aggressiveness of the Catholic Church on social issues. And while it is again important not to exaggerate the significance of any one incident, be it the Meath Hospital affair or the non-attendance of Douglas Hyde's funeral by Catholic dignitaries, neither should it be forgotten what a disproportionate effect even small slights could have upon so vulnerable a community. Thus the attitudes and actions of the Catholic leadership may be interpreted at least partly in terms of its indifference to their likely impact upon a state-recognized minority. Or, as one contemporary commentator put it, 'there is no doubt that the hierarchy does indulge in a number of pinpricks which the Protestants receive as sword-thrusts'.⁷ Chief among these was the controversy that grew up around Dr. Noël Browne's Mother-and-Child Scheme in 1951. The details of this *cause célèbre* have been frequently discussed, as has the question of who ought to bear ultimate responsibility for it: the hierarchy, the government, or Browne himself.⁸ What tends to be of secondary interest is how Protestants reacted, since the scandal is not usually regarded as directly or uniquely affecting their situation. In looking back upon it,

⁵ Emmet Larkin, 'Church, State, and Nation in Modern Ireland', *American Historical Review* 80 (Dec. 1975), 1275.

⁶ J.H. Whyte, *Church and State*, 158.

⁷ Rawle Knox, 'Protestants in Eire', *The Spectator* 23 Sept. 1949, 380.

⁸ See, for example, Eamonn McKee, 'Church-state relations and the development of Irish health policy: the mother-and-child scheme, 1944-53', *IHS* 25 (Nov. 1986), 159-94. More recently, see Marcus Tanner, *Ireland's Holy Wars* 346-8.

however, Hubert Butler recalled how Protestants ‘were shocked and alienated beyond measure’ by the government’s apparent capitulation to the Church on this occasion, asserting that ‘all the jobs and schools in the world could not compensate them for the loss of dignity, freedom and integrity which such an abdication seemed to imply’.⁹ The significance of the incident for them lay not so much in the socialization of medical care as in the fact that the hierarchy had become flagrantly involved in policy decisions at all. Little could they have known what Browne only revealed later, that when Seán MacBride had levelled a series of allegations against the doctor to force his resignation, one of them had been that ‘I was not sufficiently hostile to the Protestant minority in the republic’.¹⁰ In a blatant manner to which their predecessors had never resorted, the inter-party government proved willing both to accommodate the hierarchy’s wishes and to pander to the sectarian impulses of the society as a whole.

And while the hierarchy itself rarely if ever endorsed such bigotry overtly, neither did it always find its expression unwelcome. Certainly John Charles McQuaid, the most influential figure in the Irish Catholic Church during this period, tended to regard the Protestant minority as part of a vague alliance of undesirables threatening his flock.¹¹ When in 1952 he made his Quinquennial Report to the Vatican on the state of the Dublin archdiocese, McQuaid identified ‘liberalism’ as Catholics’ chief adversary and one whose power was regulated by a coterie of Trinity College Freemasons with strong affiliations to London and Belfast.¹² Perhaps more important than his own paranoid fantasies, though, was McQuaid and the other bishops’ failure to stop an extremist group like Maria Duce from pursuing its avowedly anti-Protestant agenda. This

⁹ HMB, “‘We are the People of Burke...’”, *Twentieth Century* 156 (Nov. 1954), 429.

¹⁰ MacBride further charged that by allowing himself to be photographed shaking hands with the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, Browne had damaged not only Clann na Poblachta but the whole inter-party government. Noël Browne, *Against the Tide* (Dublin, 1986), 179ff.

¹¹ Martin Maguire, “‘Our people’: the Church of Ireland and the culture of community in Dublin since Disestablishment”, in R. Gillespie and W.G. Neely, *The Laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: All Sorts and Conditions* (Dublin, 2002), 299.

¹² John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin, 1999), 294. J.V. Luce of TCD agrees that the image of Trinity as some sort of ‘oath-bound secret society’ was prevalent among Catholic extremists but maintains that however vocal such people sometimes were, they remained few in number. Interview with J.V. Luce, Dublin, 21 July 2003.

tacit acceptance of the group led Butler to reflect at one point that ‘we all know that decent people abhor its aims, but if these aims were in direct conflict with ecclesiastical policy would they not long ago have been officially and publicly condemned by the highest ecclesiastical authority in the land?’¹³ By this logic, an organization like Maria Duce did not seem to him so much an aberration from Catholic thinking as an acute symptom of the Church’s authoritarian tendencies. His experience of twentieth century Europe had confirmed for Butler what he took to be a fundamental Protestant insight, that ‘authoritarianism in spiritual matters is an evil far greater than the disorders to which the abuse of private judgment has often led’. Given the strictness with which they supervised other aspects of Irish society, he reasoned, it was disingenuous to suggest the bishops could not subdue Maria Duce if they chose. That they did not do so must mean they perceived it, as Archbishop Stepinac had initially perceived the Ustashe in Croatia, as useful in reinforcing the Church’s power. The danger in this approach, as the Croatian tragedy had made all too plain, was that ‘a society whose solidarity is based on subservience will itself be servile. It will make a God of Universality or Obedience and for their sake it will make terms with every earthly power, even the basest’ (CD 130). It was to combat such a fate overtaking Ireland that Butler became increasingly vocal in his criticism of the Catholic establishment in the 1950s.

If the Church leadership was indeed becoming more dictatorial and unyielding during this period, then opposition to it by Irish liberals was also becoming more coherent. One important confrontation between the two camps took place in early 1950 when the *Irish Times* reported a speech delivered by the Very Rev. Professor Felim O’Briain at University College Galway, where he held the Chair in Philosophy. According to the report, in his address Father O’Briain condemned as immoral what he called the ‘liberal ethic’ and attacked so-called ‘enlightened liberals’ as enemies of Christian teaching and as agents of free love, birth control and abortion. He further argued that the anti-clericalism of such people proved they were in league with

¹³ ‘B’ [HMB], Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times* 22 Apr. 1954, 10.

socialists and at best espoused only a loose theism which ultimately repudiated all morality. At its 'most innocent and futile' O'Briain saw this anti-clericalism manifested in the 'occasional letter in the *Irish Times* about "the priest-ridden Irish"', but he assured his listeners that at its most ruthless the same impulse had led to 34 Eastern European prelates being either imprisoned or forced into exile. First to take up the cudgels against O'Briain was Owen Sheehy Skeffington, who wrote a letter to the *Irish Times* in early February ridiculing the suggestion that all liberally-inclined people were 'abortionists, loose-living sexual maniacs, and pleasure-seeking monsters of depravity'.¹⁴ Involving himself in such disputes was something for which Sheehy Skeffington was to become renowned in Ireland throughout the forties and fifties. After his disillusioning experience of party politics in the 1930s, he had resolved, in the words of his wife, 'to strike out on his own as an independent socialist and defender of liberal values'. Writing to the newspapers became one of his most effective means for fulfilling this mission. Between January 1943 and July 1954, at which time he joined the Irish Senate and thereby gained a regular platform for his views, Sheehy Skeffington penned some 175 letters to the press.¹⁵ On this occasion in 1950, as on many more after it, his willingness to initiate public debate prompted his fellow liberal intellectuals to join the fray. By the time it came to an end in mid-March, Hubert Butler, Arnold Marsh, Brian Inglis and Peadar O'Donnell had all contributed to what was subsequently known as 'The Liberal Ethic' correspondence.¹⁶

It did not take Father O'Briain long to reply to Sheehy Skeffington's critique, though he did not address the criticisms themselves so much as question the other man's motives for voicing them in the first place. It was pathetic, he writes in his first letter, to see his opponent 'putting up a weak defence of a nebulous, creedless, indefinable liberalism' when so many people elsewhere

¹⁴ *The Liberal Ethic*, ed. Irish Times (Dublin, 1950), 7-8, 13-14.

¹⁵ Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, *Skeff*, 126-7. Another means by which Sheehy Skeffington was to champion freedom of speech was through his participation in the Irish Association of Civil Liberties, founded by his close friend Christopher ['Christo'] Gore-Grimes in 1947. Vice-presidents of the Association included Seán O'Faoláin, Theo Moody and Lord Killanin, with Brian Inglis later serving as Honorary Secretary. Brian Inglis, *Downstart* (London, 1990), 188.

¹⁶ *The Liberal Ethic*, 21, 32, 41-2. Butler's letter appeared under his occasional pseudonym of 'Emilius'.

were silenced by Communist tyranny. But then he adds that Sheehy Skeffington will still be able to indulge this callow behaviour 'so long as Ireland remains faithful to her Catholic code, with its balanced liberties, and its clear-cut definitions of the guardian duties, guarded zealously by her priests'. In other words, by questioning O'Briain's blanket condemnation of liberalism, Sheehy Skeffington is merely taking for granted those who, because neither so decadent nor so privileged as himself, quietly hold the line of faith and thereby ensure the continued existence of a free Ireland. Thus O'Briain says of Sheehy Skeffington that 'any day he likes he may take his soap-box through the gate of Trinity College, and...plant it at the corner of the Bank of Ireland, and he will have a burly Catholic gárda to defend him while he exercises his socialist apostolate in denouncing the censorship, the clerics, the Government, or any other vice against the liberal-socialist ten commandments'.¹⁷ The attempt to reinforce a stereotype of TCD as a haven for parasitic intellectuals is so obvious that it scarcely merits comment. Yet what lends it a resonance beyond mere anti-intellectualism is how O'Briain conflates political, social and religious categories so as to discredit the actual practice of dissent, even as he boasts of its legitimacy in Irish law.

Employing concepts such as secularism, liberalism and Communism interchangeably and without distinction was not unique to Ireland during the Cold War, but the fact that anti-Communism became nearly synonymous with Catholic legitimacy placed the minority community in an especially awkward position. It became even more difficult under the circumstances to challenge majority assumptions without questions of political orientation being insinuated, as 'The Liberal Ethic' correspondence well illustrates. Moreover, anxiety about the erosion of the 'Christian West' was sufficiently strong among Protestants themselves that many were willing to subordinate sectarian grievances in the ideological contest against atheistic socialism. When speaking to a Protestant audience in May 1952, for example, W.B. Stanford warned that the Church of Ireland 'should be on her guard against being led into alliances with

¹⁷ *The Liberal Ethic*, 19.

secularist tendencies in face of the strength of Roman Catholicism – for example, to denounce *all* pronouncements by Bishops simply to score off the Roman Bishops'.¹⁸ Stanford does not allow here that his co-religionists might advocate secularization for more positive reasons, such as the promotion of pluralism in Irish society, and implies that by aligning themselves to 'secularist tendencies' against the Catholic hierarchy, Protestants risk endangering the integrity of their own Christianity. In this sense, 'secularist tendencies' begins to sound like little more than a euphemism for the Red menace. Other Protestants were more overt in advancing this sort of argument by suggesting that Catholic piety was a bulwark against Moscow for which the minority should in fact be grateful. Interviewed in the 1960s, politician Maurice Dockrell would later reason: 'Let's not fool ourselves – if the majority of the Irish weren't Catholics they wouldn't be good little Protestants, they'd be rip-roaring anti-clerical Communists'.¹⁹

Predictably, this sort of quietist logic deeply irritated Hubert Butler. He regarded it as but another sign of his community's moral and intellectual deterioration, typical of 'the easy, commonplace, conciliatory, why-make-a-fuss, after-all-the-Russians-are-worse, anyway-it's-old-hat-now, feather-bed philosophy which is suffocating Southern Protestantism'.²⁰ Rather than try to defeat Communist tyranny long-distance by submitting to more subtle forms of domination at home, he was certain minority Irishmen made their best contribution to democracy by speaking out and affirming the legitimacy of dissenting viewpoints. Yet even without the mitigating factor of the Cold War, Irish society plainly needed individuals undaunted by the established order if it was going to mature. The great majority of Irish Catholics still found it difficult in the early 1950s to ignore, let alone challenge, the communal norms enforced by their religious hierarchy and its lay supporters. In positing at one point that 'the best check on clerical presumption is a liberal, well-established and demi-independent upper class', Eric Dorman O'Gowan was quickly

¹⁸ *CIG* 20 June 1952, 9.

¹⁹ Michael Viney, *The Five Per Cent: A Survey of Protestants in the Republic* (Dublin, 1965), 14.

²⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1065 (BP): HMB to Tommy Murtagh, 30 June 1976.

forced to acknowledge that under the current circumstances this was ‘just what we have not got here’.²¹

Though more optimistic about the future than his friend, Butler too struggled with the dilemma of just how much the intellectual confidence required to play the dissident’s part remained contingent on an independence deriving from class and creed. The open-mindedness and tolerance characterizing the best of the Anglo-Irish tradition were in his estimation directly indebted to Protestant notions of individualism. At the same time he recognized that nourishing such virtues had depended upon the wealth and leisure afforded by Ascendancy privilege. Thus with the religious and socio-economic sources of his intellectual freedom so closely interwoven and those of Catholic subservience likewise intertwined, Butler puzzled over how far one might relinquish one’s material advantages before also risking one’s freedom.²² Or, as he was to put it when later discussing E.M. Forster’s novel *Howards End*, the question facing all well-heeled, progressive people must eventually become: ‘How much of your independence can you jeopardize in order that others may share it?’ (LN 210-11). Given the still pervasive influence of the Catholic Church over Irish life, Butler concluded that renouncing the vestiges of his inherited position – his house, his ability to travel and study and speak his mind – did not constitute a socially constructive gesture. So while he consistently sought to extend the fruits of this position through various local initiatives, he kept for himself the personal autonomy that had made their growth possible in the first place.

Undoubtedly at the heart of this approach there lies, in the words of Roy Foster, ‘the assertion of a privileged separateness’.²³ But there is also the tacit acceptance of a kind of social contract, an assumption of Protestant civic responsibility easily traced back to Butler’s heroes Standish O’Grady and Horace Plunkett. Like them, he has an abiding sense that caste difference

²¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/636/135 (BP): Eric Dorman O’Gowan to HMB, 11 Jan. 1955.

²² TCD, Ms. 10304/172/9 (BP): untitled/ archived as ‘fragments, on Ireland’ [undated].

²³ Roy Foster, ‘For the meeting of hearts’, review of HMB, *Escape From the Anthill*, in *TLS* 6 Sept. 1985, 980.

has conferred on him and his co-religionists special burdens as well as advantages. As the 1950s progressed, therefore, Butler was to become as critical of his community's failure at self-assertion as he was of the Catholic establishment's chauvinism. Certainly he would have appreciated George Gilmore's suggestion in 1951 that Southern Protestants should spend less time complaining about religious bigotry and more time 'fighting to make effective the position of equality guaranteed to them by the non-sectarian tradition of Irish Republicanism'. That so few did, Gilmore reasoned, was evidence that preserving their lifestyle was more important to them than working to build up the society as a whole.²⁴ Conversely, Butler had a particular sympathy for the woman he met in Zagreb after the war who, having once been a member of the intellectual elite, now lived in poverty and helplessness under the Tito regime. It was a fate she refused to accept as her just deserts, explaining that 'among my friends the most resigned to the disappearance of the leisured, educated classes were the lackadaisical ones who were quite satisfied to be on top before'. In contrast, however, 'my husband and I were never satisfied and tried to justify our leisure by the use we made of it. I am not resigned to effacing myself now or thinking of myself as a piece of past history' (*GW* 192). Like this woman, Butler had worked hard at not being complacent, so when the occasion demanded it he was ready to express his unpopular opinions. And in the process he helped to push back the rhetorical boundaries of Irishness itself.

Of course among more reactionary Catholics, any Protestant contribution to the public discourse was likely to be discounted, yet occasionally even liberal Catholics were dismissive as well. In the 1951 essay '*Envoy* and Mr. Kavanagh', for example, Butler points out how the diversity of opinion espoused by that magazine (of which he himself was a supporter) was all too often undermined by the bigoted remarks of its chief columnist, Patrick Kavanagh. In the poet's constant swipes at Anglo-Ireland and the Literary Revival, Butler detects not so much an effort at generational differentiation as a rejection of his community's cultural relevance. A serious

²⁴ George Gilmore, 'The Republic and the Protestants', *The Bell* 16:5 (Feb. 1951), 11-12.

critique of Protestantism along these lines would merit a serious response, maintains Butler, but 'as the real menace nowadays is not theological rigorism but sloppy thinking, we cannot afford to be too indulgent' (*EA* 158). Far from prompting a meaningful discussion, Kavanagh's petty attacks in *Envoy* and elsewhere had served only to intimidate and to retard the progress of intellectual candour.²⁵ Butler reiterated this point the following year when Kavanagh savaged Arland Ussher's book *Three Great Irishmen* on the grounds that as a Protestant, Ussher was by definition 'anything but a safe guide to whatever may be called "Irish"'.²⁶ Encouraging Ussher to fight back against this attack on his identity, Butler assured him that 'it is people like you who try to be friendly and sympathetic on a level but recall the old ascendancy, who will get all the knocks'.²⁷ Being himself a product of the Ascendancy but seeking to partake fully in contemporary society, Butler was fast learning that the middle ground could indeed be a dangerous place from which to speak out. The one consolation, as his friend Maurice Craig joked at the time, was that 'so long as you get potted at from both sides you may be sure you are still sane'.²⁸

Getting 'potted at' by Protestants as well as Catholics was something to which Hubert Butler would become all too accustomed in the fifties. Whereas his Catholic critics increasingly questioned his right to speak as an Irishman, his co-religionists began to challenge his authority to express himself as a Protestant. When in the January 1951 issue of *The Bell* he remarked in a tribute to Bernard Shaw that 'Protestant values have been defended, but by exceptional and isolated men, like W.B. Yeats', he was quickly taken to task in the correspondence column of the

²⁵ Butler felt Kavanagh had been particularly egregious in his essay on the poet F.R. Higgins, 'The Gallivanting Poet', *Irish Writing* 3 (Nov. 1947), 62-70.

²⁶ Arland Ussher, *Three Great Irishmen: Shaw, Yeats, Joyce* (London, 1952). Likewise, and in keeping with some of his earlier comments about Protestant writers in *Irish Writing* and *Envoy*, Kavanagh begins the review by announcing that 'as far as the local characteristics are concerned, neither Shaw nor Yeats was Irish in any sense'. Patrick Kavanagh, review of Arland Ussher, *Three Great Irishmen*, *The Spectator* 15 Aug. 1952, 226.

²⁷ TCD, Ms. 9031.329 (Ussher Papers): HMB to Arland Ussher, 25 Aug. 1952.

²⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/313a, (BP): Maurice Craig to HMB, 4 Sept. 1951.

Church of Ireland Gazette.²⁹ Registering his disapproval of Butler's article, the Rev. John McKew claimed that 'he is using the term "Protestant" in a sense very different from that in which it is used by the Church of Ireland....Mr. Butler's "Protestantism" derives, not from the Church of Ireland, but from a Mr. George Shaw – a gentleman who...spent much of his life and ability in protesting against the Christian religion generally'. McKew then announced: 'I sincerely hope that some of the *approved* spokesmen of the Church of Ireland...will quickly disassociate us from such weird "Protestantism" as is expounded in the *January Bell*'.³⁰ Butler was unimpressed by McKew's arguments. The next week he retorted that 'many "approved" members of the Church of Ireland joined in acclaiming Bernard Shaw as a great Irishman and one of themselves....Were the "approved" members illiterate? Or were they more tolerant than Mr. McKew about what constitutes a "Protestant"? I believe the latter'.³¹ In defending Shaw's Protestant belonging, here Butler is obviously defending his own. More generally, though, he is also demanding recognition of a secular or cultural form of Southern Protestant identity not dependent upon creedal conformity to be deemed valid by the rest of the Church of Ireland community. For as his comment about Yeats attests, it had always been the capacity for constructive protest that defined for him the true Protestant, not the sort of social and religious introspection clogging the pages of the *Church of Ireland Gazette*.

II. The Papal Nuncio Incident revisited and 'The Minority Voice'

In describing the impression Hubert Butler's outspokenness had made on other Southern Protestants during this period, Victor Griffin sums up the prevailing sentiment as 'God, he'll get us into trouble'.³² When the Papal Nuncio Incident took place at the end of October 1952, it must have seemed that their suspicions had indeed been justified. Since they were as unlikely as their Catholic neighbours to have a detailed knowledge of Croatian war-crimes, it was enough for most

²⁹ HMB, 'Shaw', *The Bell* 16:4 (Jan. 1951), 29-36.

³⁰ *CIG* 9 Feb. 1951, 10.

³¹ *CIG* 16 Feb. 1951, 8.

³² Interview with Victor Griffin, Dublin, 26 Aug. 2001.

Protestants that the so-called 'insult' was being construed as a sectarian affront. In his resulting ostracization Butler was therefore not someone to be associated with, and only a handful of his co-religionists supported him. That the episode might signify something more lasting and profound about the status of free expression in Ireland was a possibility that most of the minority community either could not or would not countenance. Reflecting years later upon the events that took place in Kilkenny after the Incident, Butler told Myles Dillon that other Protestants had treated him like 'someone who has through clumsiness put his foot in a wasp's nest'.³³

The situation was far more serious than that, at least in the eyes of Kilkenny's civic leadership. Determined to make an example of Butler, a special meeting of the County Council was called for 17 November to discuss the full implications of his actions.³⁴ Consequently a 'Vote of Protest' was unanimously passed by the Council censuring Butler, since his remarks at the Dublin meeting were reckoned 'not only an insult to the Papal Nuncio (Most Rev. Dr. O'Hara) but to His Holiness Pius XII'. The councillors also resolved that the Kilkenny Archaeological Society should select someone else to represent it on the National Monuments Committee, an advisory body to the Council.³⁵ The *Kilkenny People* reported that in bringing these proceedings to an end, the Chairman added that 'it might be said that here in Kilkenny where they were predominately Catholic, they were excessively tolerant. Various Protestant bishops who had lived amongst them and Protestant clergymen and members of the Protestant community and other denominations would say they were not in any way bigoted'.³⁶ The comment demonstrates that the sense of grievance against Butler sprang from more than what he had said about Cardinal Stepinac in Dublin; it also derived from the feeling he had upset a delicate balance in Kilkenny whereby Catholics generously affirmed the principle of toleration so long as Protestants ensured its actual practice remained unnecessary. By voicing his dissent

³³ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/523 (BP): HMB to Myles Dillon, 17 May 1962.

³⁴ *The Post* [Kilkenny] 12 Nov. 1952, 3; *Kilkenny People* 15 Nov. 1952, 5.

³⁵ Kilkenny County Council Records, Kilkenny County Library: 'Minutes of 17th November 1952 Special Meeting of the Kilkenny County Council', Minute-book for period 29 Jan. 1951-20 June 1955, 108.

³⁶ *Kilkenny People* 22 Nov. 1952, 3. See also *Kilkenny Journal* 22 Nov. 1952, 3.

publicly on such a sensitive topic, Butler had put an end to this charade, leaving Catholics sounding curiously defensive even as they spoke of how offended they were.

Other civic bodies echoed the County Council's sentiments. The Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee passed its own resolution of public condemnation, as did the Catholic Young Men's Society of Kilmanagh and the Kilmanagh Co-operative Dairy Association.³⁷ Importantly, however, the membership of Butler's beloved Bennettsbridge Creamery refused to follow suit. According to James O'Brien, who managed the Creamery from 1943-76, as far as Croatia was concerned most people in the village 'assumed Hubert Butler knew what he was talking about' and attributed his castigation elsewhere to a small number of clergy and lay zealots.³⁸ This assessment corroborates what Butler's acquaintance Sheila Leahy claimed at the time, that 'this outcry is not the spontaneous expression of Kilkenny opinion', and that 'many old Kilkenny people are boiling at the way you are being treated'.³⁹ Neither was the unpleasantness expressed in ways that Butler found it easy to confront; so he later described to Bertie Smyllie how at 'the open and public level here I have found everyone extraordinarily friendly and unvindictive. All the nastiness comes through underhand manoeuvres of county councils and the like'. He added that even those who disapproved personally of what was happening nonetheless kept quiet for fear of having 'the squeeze put on them in private ways'.⁴⁰ Meanwhile Butler himself tried to remain philosophical about it all, though clearly the experience was traumatic for him and his family. He confided to Owen Sheehy Skeffington on 23 November that 'it's all right for us on the whole, as I have got a tiny income and am independent in mind and occupation[,] but if I was in any way dependent for my livelihood or reputation on the good sense of the

³⁷ Paul Blanshard, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, 192.

³⁸ Interview with James O'Brien, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny, 28 July 2003.

³⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/858 (BP): Sheila Leahy to HMB, 22 Nov. 1952.

⁴⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/577/14 (BP): HMB to R.M. Smyllie, 11 Dec. 1952. Butler subsequently wrote to Sheehy Skeffington that 'I think all this pious indignation is a fake from start to finish...but there have 2 or 3 small things which show how it might be a wonderful excuse for exploiting the sinner'. One example he related was how, 'at the height of the Papal war', a farmer who had long rented his riverside fields suddenly demanded a reduction in rent on the flimsiest of pretences. Hazelbrook Cottage: HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 22 Dec. 1952.

community[,] life would already have become quite impossible for us here'.⁴¹ Never had his 'privileged separateness' been quite so necessary as it was now, nor his faith in the heritage that made it possible ever seemed more justified.

However much Butler's personal independence might soften the impact of all this opprobrium, it could not shield him entirely from its effects. By far the most distressing result of the whole ordeal was his forced resignation from the Kilkenny Archaeological Society. No sooner had the Incident hit the papers than the Society's Vice-President, W.J. Phelan, wrote to Butler severing all further relations with him.⁴² This was followed by weeks of tension within the KAS, which became fiercely divided over whether he should continue to serve as its Honorary Secretary. In anticipation of the Committee meeting called to discuss his fate, Butler sent a statement to the whole membership, defending his behaviour and explaining why his resignation from the Society would be counter-productive. Proud that the organization had 'survived so long without a trace of bitterness or dissension', he considered it unlikely his departure would safeguard the Society's integrity 'as an interdenominational one to which people of every shade of opinion could belong' (EA 339). After all, the whole *raison d'être* of the KAS had been to create a meeting-place where social and political differences were not so much resolved as transcended in the common pursuit of learning. If Butler yielded to his detractors now, then a fundamental principle would be compromised. Yet in the end he did yield, for although a formal motion to expel him was defeated, it became plain that if he did not leave then, the Society would never recover.⁴³ The irony of the situation was hard to bear, not just for Butler but also for those who knew how much of his neighbourly goodwill he had invested in the KAS. Hence when writing in *The Bell* a few months later, Seán O'Faoláin lashed out at the pettiness of his compatriots: 'Do those well-meaning, good-hearted, decent chaps down in Kilkenny – your potential friends and mine; men we might drink a glass with, or kneel beside at Mass – really

⁴¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1336 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 23 Nov. 1952.

⁴² TCD, Ms. 10304/611/1 (BP): W.J. Phelan to HMB, 2 Nov. 1952.

⁴³ *Kilkenny Journal* 13 Dec. 1952, 5; *Irish Times* 16 Dec. 1952, 5; and 20 Dec. 1952, 8.

think that by ejecting Mr. Butler from the Secretaryship of an Archaeological Society they have struck a tremendous blow for Christ?’⁴⁴

It was not only his estrangement from the KAS that profoundly disillusioned Butler. Similarly distressing was his sense of having been misunderstood and undervalued by his fellow Protestants. Of course, in the wake of the Incident messages of support arrived from all over, but these were mostly from friends who, even as they praised him for his integrity, could scarcely conceal their bafflement at Butler’s becoming embroiled in the controversy to begin with. While more blunt than most, Richard Hayward was therefore not atypical when he asked: ‘[W]hy the hell did you shoot out your neck????’ Anticipating his friend’s answer to this query, Hayward then added, ‘Freedom of speech, my eye, as you know damn well. The RCs only believe in that when it is *their* brand of speech’.⁴⁵ But for Butler the issue of freedom of speech was too important a matter for Protestants to become cynical about or try to ignore. When the *Church of Ireland Gazette* provided only a perfunctory report of the Incident, he felt obliged to offer a fuller picture of events via the correspondence column.⁴⁶ To the subsequent editor of the *Gazette*, Andrew Willis, he would later confess that ‘I was *stunned*, when [the paper] did nothing at all, but even implied that I had been “tactless”. After that I wrote off the Church of Ireland as hopelessly moribund’.⁴⁷ Likewise, he was astonished that, with Bertie Smyllie in the hospital, Deputy Editor Alec Newman had afforded the Kilkenny dimension only minimal coverage in the *Irish Times*. Apparently when Butler pressed Newman on the issue, he had responded that it was ‘all a storm in a teacup and they should not expend valuable space on it’.⁴⁸ Finally there was

⁴⁴ Seán O’Faoláin, ‘On a Recent Incident at the International Affairs Association’, *The Bell* 18:9 (Feb. 1953), 323.

⁴⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/752 (BP): Richard Hayward to HMB, 17 Nov. 1952.

⁴⁶ *CIG* 5 Dec. 1952, 11. HMB, Letter to the Editor, *CIG* 12 Dec. 1952, 20.

⁴⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1575 (BP): HMB to Andrew Willis, undated [c. Nov. 1970]. Similarly, in publishing Butler’s letter of resignation to the KAS under the title ‘An Unnecessary Resignation’, the *Gazette* managed only the anaemic remark that ‘we print below what should be of public interest as there are many societies in Ireland whose views forbid discussion on religion and politics’. *CIG* 19 Dec 1952, 11.

⁴⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1336 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 23 Nov. 1952. This prohibition even extended to letters written to the newspaper on Butler’s behalf by both Tyrone Guthrie and Geoffrey Taylor. TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1341 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 16 Dec. 1952.

Brian Inglis's article in *The Spectator*, which characterized Butler's comments at the Dublin meeting as 'injudicious' and which dismissed the furore as illustrative of 'a not-very-credible but not-very-serious local custom, whereby we cash cheques, whenever possible, at Banks of Respectability'. Incensed by what he considered Inglis's patronizing and self-serving tone, Butler fired back: '[I]s he not himself cashing a very fat cheque at the Bank of Respectability when he says that my remarks about Mgr. Stepinac, which he did not hear, were "injudicious"?' It was bad enough that through some mixture of contempt and cowardice his co-religionists failed to take their part in the public discourse, but to have one of them then belittle the significance of his own involvement struck Butler as altogether shameful.⁴⁹

In contrast, his Catholic friends did not fail to appreciate the value of his stand or the personal cost he paid for taking it. Whether local supporters like James Delehanty, Florence Hackett and Walter Smithwick, or Dublin allies such as Myles Dillon, Eoin O'Mahony and Seán O'Faoláin, Butler's stoutest and most vocal defenders throughout came from the majority community.⁵⁰ This was no coincidence. Rather, it reflected the seriousness with which these liberal Catholics took the forces of reaction, that they accepted the necessity of confrontation and of supporting those who became involved in it.⁵¹ That a man like Butler should thus become something of a symbol or catalyst to others doubly irritated those who regarded him as a mere trouble-maker. The *Irish Catholic* weekly complained that in the wake of the Incident both Butler and Owen Sheehy Skeffington were 'enjoying a slight aura of alleged martyrdom and the sympathy of certain sentimental Catholics'.⁵² By the same token, the Secretary of the Department

⁴⁹ Brian Inglis, 'An Engaging Assailant'. *The Spectator* 13 Feb. 1953, 178. HMB, Letter to the Editor, *The Spectator* 27 Feb. 1953, 250. This brief exchange was but a rehearsal for a more protracted clash between the two men a decade later, when Inglis again criticized Butler in his 1962 book *West Briton*. See below.

⁵⁰ Hazelbrook Cottage, Dublin: HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 18 Nov. and 22 Dec. 1952. See also *EA* 97.

⁵¹ As a leading spokesman for liberal values in Ireland, Owen Sheehy Skeffington was able to attract special attention when an invitation previously extended to him to address the Dublin Technical Students' Literary and Debating Society was later withdrawn because of his part in the Incident. See *Irish Times* 28 Nov. 1952, 7; *Sunday Independent* 30 Nov. 1952: 7; *Irish Times* 1 Dec. 1952, 7. See also Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, *Skeff* 159-61.

⁵² *Irish Catholic* 26 Feb. 1953, 1.

of External Affairs, Sean Nunan, regretted that the public repudiation of Butler in Kilkenny had only lent him 'a prominence which he does not deserve and makes him look like a martyr in the cause of freedom of speech in this country'.⁵³ Certainly the Incident and its aftermath served as a convenient illustration for foreign journalists arguing Ireland remained an essentially repressive society.⁵⁴ Yet as gratifying as the support and attention he had received was to Butler, he had not set out to be a source of division or become known as victim. He instead simply wished to demonstrate to majority and minority alike that an individual Protestant might dissent from Catholic popular opinion without also abandoning a claim to full Irish belonging. How and when the point was to be made he obviously could not have predicted, but almost immediately after the Incident took place, this is how he came to understand it. So he later concluded:

It is possible to accept the difficult conditions of existence and one may even come to prefer them to that artificial world of privilege in which we were born. When we fight for what we believe we depend on ourselves alone, and when we win, nobody can cheat us of our victory by telling us that we were too generously handicapped. So, though I am not a masochist and do not like giving or receiving 'insults', I was more exhilarated than abased by this heavy local bombardment. I was pleased that it had happened to me in the neighbourhood where my family had lived for many generations and where I had lived for [most of] my life.⁵⁵

Privilege had first facilitated and then yielded to dissent, while dissent itself proved to be the gesture binding fast conscience to community.

After the onslaught triggered by the Nuncio Incident had finally died down, Butler continued to question the failure of Southern Protestants to assert their proper role in contemporary Irish society. Over the course of the next several years he wrote consistently on the subject, with a number of pertinent essays appearing in the London-based review *The Twentieth Century*. In October 1953, for example, the magazine published 'Stock-taking in the Irish Provinces', in which he speaks proudly of the historic part played by Protestants in constructing

⁵³ Dermot Keogh, *Ireland and the Vatican: The Politics and Diplomacy of Church-State Relations, 1922-1960* (Cork, 1995), qtd. 329.

⁵⁴ See, for example: Unsigned, 'Is There Freedom of Discussion in the Republic?', *British Weekly* 25 Dec. 1952, 11; Rushworth Fogg, 'Irish Protestant Stirs a Tempest', *Christian Century* 11 Mar. 1953, 298-300; and *New Statesman* 25 Apr. 1953, 481.

⁵⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/241/14 (BP): 'The Pattern of Persecution' [undated (1950s)].

the Irish nation. 'It is our trump card', he argues, 'but we usually play it shamefacedly and without conviction. Alternately we betray the Protestant nationalists, who were all, to a man, minority-minded people, by being too ingratiating and sycophantic'. He then posits that 'if occasionally our liberties have been slighted, it is more often due to our failure to stand up for them than to any intolerance of the majority'.⁵⁶ The next year the same journal also printed "'We are the People of Burke...'", in which Butler again ascribes his community's morbid condition not so much to Catholic chauvinism as to the passivity of the minority itself. 'More serious than the dwindling numbers of Anglo-Irish Protestants', he suggests, 'is the decline of enterprise, audacity, intellect in their ranks. There are very few now capable of presenting their case with knowledge and vehemence'.⁵⁷ Yet this incapacity was not merely the product of timidity or indifference; it also proceeded from a genuine uncertainty as to what the Protestant 'case' now consisted of. Butler realized that since Independence most of his co-religionists had conceived of their distinctiveness largely in terms of 'sentimental, class-bound issues' like the State Prayers, so that they appeared increasingly lost as these outdated identity markers faded away (LN 233). Thus in seeking to provoke conversation about the Protestant viewpoint where there seemed to be dangerously little, he asked bluntly at one stage:

Is there such a thing as Protestant thought to-day in Ireland, a body of ideas in the light of which Irishmen can shape their behaviour to their neighbours[?] I am not thinking of synods and prayer-books, clerical stipends and the morality of turkey raffles. I am thinking of intelligent contemporary speculation about the evolution of our community which comprises a quarter of the population of Ireland. How can we best show our love for our countrymen without betraying our principles? Where can we make concessions, where should we stand firm? It seems to me that there is no such speculation going on anywhere, but the most abject and rudderless floundering and muddle.⁵⁸

Be it an overtly religious or a more secular form of Protestant identity to which they were drawn, Butler was sure that all members of his community must confront such basic questions for the sake of their individual and collective integrity. His persistence in raising them underscores both

⁵⁶ HMB, 'Stock-taking in the Irish Provinces', *Twentieth Century* (Oct. 1953), 289.

⁵⁷ HMB, "'We are the People of Burke...'", 427.

⁵⁸ HMB, 'Protestantism and Unionism: Are They the Same Thing?', *The Plough* 1:1 (Sept. 1957), 5.

the resilience of his own idealism and the perennial intellectual challenge he represented to his own people.⁵⁹

Undoubtedly Butler's views on the Southern Protestant condition received their most prominent airing in May 1955, when he produced a series entitled 'No Petty People?' for the *Irish Times*. In fact there is much in these articles that he had already expressed in *The Bell* and *The Twentieth Century*, but as he explains in the opening article, he was spurred to write something argumentative after the recent correspondence in the *Times* on the subject of toleration.⁶⁰ This exchange he felt had revealed once again the 'staggering ineptitude' with which Protestants defended their position.⁶¹ For Butler, toleration was not something for which the minority ought to be constantly thanking the majority; rather, it was something it had a right to expect as its due. Or, as he had put it in his own contribution to the debate on 17 March, 'what civilised democracy wants to be congratulated on its "toleration"?'⁶² In the 'No Petty People?' series he therefore assumes a deliberately combative attitude, not least in his attempt to expose the hypocrisy and cant of fellow Southern Protestants who eagerly testify to their good treatment yet must seek censored books, contraception and divorce from across the Irish Sea. Espousal of this contradictory position is symptomatic of the minority community's larger failure either to comprehend the republican ideals of its eighteenth-century forbears or to commit itself to the present-day work of achieving a unified Irish republic.⁶³ Given Butler's contention that these ideals derive from the Protestant commitment to private judgment, he regards it as only logical that any future reunification settlement must honour the right of Protestant dissent under a secular constitution.⁶⁴ And while he recognizes that Ulster Protestant intransigence renders such a

⁵⁹ Edna Longley and Gerald Dawe have noted the centrality of such questions of differentiation to both spiritual and social manifestations of Irish Protestantism. See their introduction to *Across a Roaring Hill: The Protestant imagination in modern Ireland*, eds. E. Longley and G. Dawe (Belfast, 1985) iii.

⁶⁰ Correspondence on this subject ran in the *Irish Times* throughout March and April 1955.

⁶¹ HMB, 'No Petty People? 1: Rosscullen and the Reformation', *Irish Times* 13 May 1955, 5.

⁶² HMB, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times*, 17 Mar. 1955, 5.

⁶³ HMB, 'No Petty People? 2: King or Republic?', *Irish Times* 14 May 1955: 5.

⁶⁴ HMB, 'No Petty People? 3: The Right of Private Judgment', *Irish Times* 16 May 1955, 5.

settlement unlikely in the near future, he suggests that Southern Catholic enthusiasm for an all-Ireland Dáil might not actually be so great as commonly supposed.⁶⁵ Only if Protestants north and south join together in re-asserting their distinctive but historic national loyalty would Ireland finally attain the religious and political equilibrium which continued to elude the six and twenty-six counties alike.⁶⁶

The series provoked sufficient correspondence that Butler was given the opportunity to respond with two further articles in June. In these he seeks to offer further evidence of Protestant passivity by discussing the failure of his co-religionists to mount a co-ordinated resistance to the *Ne Temere* decree. Since its promulgation in 1908, he explains, the decree had proved disastrous to rural Southerners, whose lack of concentrated population had made mixed marriages inevitable yet nearly always detrimental to the cause of Protestant survival. Rather than confront the painful but obvious fact of institutionally-sanctioned Catholic aggression, though, Protestants preferred to console themselves with a variety of rationalizations that Butler terms ‘the woolly ball of homespun sophistry with which we bind our wounds’.⁶⁷ In his final article he reiterates the need for Protestants to rediscover ‘the liberties claimed at the Reformation’, which he insists ‘have nothing whatever to do with race or royalism, though they appear very closely allied to the concepts of modern democracy’.⁶⁸ This is Butler at his most unabashedly whiggish, so it is perhaps unsurprising that at least one reader should write in to accuse him of promoting bigotry and divisiveness: ‘Is not Mr. Butler appealing to Southern Irish Protestants on the ground of anti-Romanism, rather than the ground of a common Faith, common Hope, and common Charity?’⁶⁹ But for Butler the point was not whether Protestants were anti-Catholic; by definition he believed they must be, just as he assumed every Catholic would, to a greater or lesser extent, be anti-Protestant. He had made this point a year earlier in the *Irish Times* when defending Paul

⁶⁵ HMB, ‘No Petty People? 4: The Ulster-Sussex Axis’, *Irish Times* 17 May 1955, 5.

⁶⁶ HMB, ‘No Petty People? 5: Dingle Irredenta’, *Irish Times* 18 May 1955, 7.

⁶⁷ HMB, ‘No Petty People? 6: Fighting the Springtime’, *Irish Times* 7 June 1955, 5.

⁶⁸ HMB, ‘No Petty People? 7: Resistance in God’s Name’, *Irish Times* 8 June 1955, 5.

⁶⁹ John Mullarney, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times* 11 June 1955, 9.

Blanshard's controversial book *The Irish and Catholic Power*, reasoning that 'we can criticise each other not for the strength of our convictions, but for the courtesy and truthfulness with which we express them'.⁷⁰ Increasingly appeals to 'a common Faith' seemed to him under the circumstances deeply disingenuous, calculated to stifle dissent and to ensure that sectarian difference remained a zero-sum game in which there could be only one victor – the Roman hierarchy. Thus by espousing an emphatically Protestant perspective, Butler hoped to foster an atmosphere of greater openness and mutuality and to promote a public discourse in which religious allegiance might at last serve as a topic for debate rather than as the sole determinant of its form. One of the most gratifying results of the 'No Petty People?' series was therefore the avowals of support it prompted from liberal Catholics like Terence de Vere White, who after reading the final instalment admitted to Butler that 'I did not face until today the fact that a protestant can be nice and at the same time opposed to the idea of catholicism to the extent of disinheriting heirs, etc....But you have made me see how a manly liking for independence could make overt action possible'.⁷¹

Overt action is just what Butler decided it was time to take, so the same month he rather unexpectedly put himself forward as a candidate for the Kilkenny County Council. Addressing a small gathering of supporters, he explained that he had reached this decision because he felt it was important for someone 'to voice the minority opinion'. Subsequently published in both the *Kilkenny People* and the *Church of Ireland Gazette* under the title 'The Minority Voice', Butler's speech makes clear that he believes this minority opinion is not necessarily confined to the Protestant community, though naturally Protestants constitute a significant part of it.⁷² And to this end his chief goal in speaking out is not to articulate a platform of specifically Protestant interests so much as to testify once again to the importance of participation, and in standing for

⁷⁰ 'B' [HMB], Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times* 1 May 1954, 9.

⁷¹ MH (Kilkenny Debates File): Terence de Vere White to HMB, undated [July 1955].

⁷² 'The Minority Voice' appeared in *CIG* 26 Aug. 1955, 1ff. and then in *Kilkenny People* 10 Sept. 1955, 9 [LN 26-31].

elected office to lead by example. 'Even if our dissentient minority had no chance of returning its candidate', he holds, 'I believe it should put him forward just the same. By so doing, we are, at least, making our protest....Such a gesture might annoy some people, but it would, I believe, please far more. It would show that we are keenly interested in what happens in Ireland, for I think a great many Irishmen consider that we stand aloof because we don't very much mind'. Speaking of the influence Southern Protestants still enjoyed in Irish life, he further maintains that 'in local affairs as well as national, many of these people look to us for a lead and when that lead is given without condescension or anti-Irish feeling, it will be followed' (LN 26-8). In the event, Butler received only 131 votes, but even this modest number proved he had garnered support from minority-minded Catholics as well as from his fellow Protestants. The fact he had dared stand at all in the wake of the Nuncio Incident was enough to cause the Fianna Fail councillor Thomas Walsh to comment publicly after the results were announced on 30 June that 'I sincerely regret that in this county of Kilkenny and particularly in the Thomastown area we have a person who went forward as a candidate who had the audacity to insult the Papal Nuncio'. Moreover, Walsh expressed disappointment that Butler should have garnered even as many as 131 votes.⁷³ Only when threatened with a libel suit did Walsh later agree to apologize in the local newspapers for his inflammatory remarks.⁷⁴ Far from adding to his sense of alienation from the local community, however, the election of 1955 paradoxically facilitated Butler's reintegration into the mainstream of Kilkenny affairs. Writing to his cousin Bob French in August, Butler explained that Walsh's gratuitous attempts to humiliate him had instead created an opening for the townspeople to express their sympathy and thereby signal that the row over the Nuncio was finished.⁷⁵ In this respect, the election campaign confirmed for Butler the principle he had espoused in his initial speech, that Irish people ultimately would honour those who kept the courage of their convictions.

⁷³ *Kilkenny People* 2 July 1955, 1; *Kilkenny Journal* 9 July 1955, 8.

⁷⁴ *Kilkenny People* 23 July 1955, 1; *Kilkenny Journal* 23 July 1955, 1.

⁷⁵ TCD, Ms. 9800.16 (French Papers): HMB to R.B.D. French, 21 Aug. 1955.

Meanwhile, though, Butler's foray into elective politics had also generated criticism from an entirely different quarter. When 'The Minority Voice' appeared anonymously in the *Church of Ireland Gazette* at the end of August, J.L.B Deane, a noted Church of Ireland layman from Cork, wrote to condemn what he considered the sectarian agenda of the speech. Noting that six other Protestants had similarly stood in county council elections across the Republic, Deane then noted of Butler that 'there is one important point of difference between his candidature and that of other Protestant candidates in Leinster, Munster, and Connacht: he stood as a Protestant, while they went forward, whether as party men or as Independents, with a desire to represent, not merely a minority, but the entire constituency, and I am very glad that their stand was vindicated and that the Kilkenny gentleman was defeated, because sectarianism has nothing whatever to do with politics, least of all local politics'.⁷⁶ The next week Butler responded, reiterating that while his own minority perspective stemmed from his Protestantism, he did not believe Protestants were the only citizens with minority opinions, nor did he think voicing his own Protestant motivations meant he would be incapable of representing the interests of everyone in his constituency. In political terms he had simply been an Independent candidate, he argued, and a reluctant one at that: 'I sent in my nomination papers on the last day. I had waited to see if any other minority man would stand, in which case I would not have stood, but none came forward'. He concludes by confessing that he remains uncertain 'whether Mr. Deane disapproves of my principles or whether he is vexed at my using the word "Protestant"'. It seemed not unreasonable at a public meeting to ventilate the rights and duties of the Protestant minority and I need not apologise for it'.⁷⁷ The exchange carried on for another few weeks, with neither man showing any sign of conceding anything to the other.⁷⁸ It is another illustration of how Butler's conception of Irish Protestantism as a potentially secular but nationalist identity was moving him further and further away from the mindset of his more religious but often less patriotic co-religionists. For all that

⁷⁶ *CIG* 9 Sept. 1955, 6.

⁷⁷ *CIG* 16 Sept. 1955, 5.

⁷⁸ See *CIG* 30 Sept. 1955, 10; 7 Oct. 1955, 12.

this disjunction appears to have saddened and at times even angered him, there is no indication that Butler ever doubted the essential rightness of his own position. So in 1957 he could ask rhetorically:

Is it Johnnie who is out of step or is it the regiment? In making my outrageous claim that it is the regiment that is wrong, I do not feel that I am at war with the Protestant tradition. We are heretics by profession and in the great days of the past we did not hesitate to outrage comfortable conformities or to defy received opinion. If today we cling to the safer orthodoxies, I think we do so not from conviction but for security.... Yet in the long run those, who from discretion conceal the motives of their conduct, give more offence and produce more misunderstandings than those who crudely blurt them out. Also if we do not occasionally expose our convictions to hostile critics, we forget what they are.⁷⁹

III. The Northern dimension and intellectual absenteeism

Of course one of the main contexts in which Butler had grown accustomed to exposing his convictions to others' sometimes hostile but generally constructive scrutiny was *The Bell*. It was inevitable, however, that the Irish literary scene should evolve over time, and despite the apparently successful transfer of the magazine's editorship from Seán O'Faoláin to Peadar O'Donnell in the spring of 1946, there was to be an unmistakable decline in both the editorial and production quality of *The Bell* after O'Donnell took over.⁸⁰ Due to a lack of funds it ceased to appear altogether from May 1948 until November 1950, though once publication resumed O'Donnell persuaded Butler himself to take responsibility from Kilkenny for the book pages.⁸¹ While this arrangement seems to have worked initially, it was not long until Butler became frustrated with the slipshod management of the whole business.⁸² And while he remained committed to *The Bell* until its demise in 1954, he had recognized well beforehand that alternative

⁷⁹ HMB, 'Protestantism and Unionism: Are They the Same Thing?', 5.

⁸⁰ Heather Bryant Jordan, "'A Particular Flair, A Hound's Nose, A Keen Scent': Seán O'Faoláin's Editorship of *The Bell*", *Éire/Ireland* 29 (Winter 1994), 158-9. See also Richard English, *Ernie O'Malley*, 136; and Frank Shovlin, *Irish Literary Periodicals*, 127-30.

⁸¹ TCD, Mss. 10304/643/6-11 (BP): HMB and Peadar O'Donnell, Feb.-Mar. 1951.

⁸² Butler later preferred to blame not O'Donnell for the journal's problems but Associate Editor Anthony Cronin. TCD, Ms. 9031.345 (Ussher Papers): HMB to Arland Ussher, 27 Dec. 1975. A specific incident that turned Butler against Cronin was when he split one of Butler's essays into two parts and then printed them out of order, all without any consultation. TCD, Ms. 10304/1055/24 (BP): untitled/ notes regarding publication of 'A King's Story' and 'British Royalty and Ireland' [undated (1950s)]. The two pieces were published under these titles in *The Bell* 17:12 (Mar. 1952), 85-90 and 18:3 (June 1952), 176-83. The full essay appears in its intended form under the title 'Reflections on Royalty', CD 133-42.

milieus for progressive cultural debate would be needed. Thus when the magazine had first appeared on its deathbed in 1948, he discussed with Eric Dorman O’Gowan his ambition to create a journal which would not only fulfil *The Bell*’s current role in the south but also serve as a forum for greater cross-border dialogue. He had become acutely conscious of the deterioration in North-South relations and believed that only through modest but determined efforts at mutuality could the two sides begin to mend the rift between them. For his part, Dorman O’Gowan discouraged the launching of another liberal magazine, arguing that *The Bell*’s difficulties had demonstrated all too well the lack of support for such initiatives.⁸³

Butler was prepared to shelve the idea for the time being; however, he did not cease to concern himself with ways to improve relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic. In keeping with his moderate outlook he became a supporter of the Irish Association, a non-sectarian, non-political organization founded in 1938 by Ulstermen Major-General Hugh Montgomery and Viscount James Charlemont to promote cross-border friendship and goodwill.⁸⁴ He had known about the Association since his return to Kilkenny but did not become actively involved in its work until the early fifties, by which time regular Association events were being organized in Dublin by Louie Bennett and Brian Inglis. Invited to address one such gathering in June 1950, Butler characteristically spoke of the importance of cultivating individual relationships as the best means of breaking down the abstract sectarian and political barriers dividing Northerner from Southerner, Orangeman from Gael.⁸⁵ It was in hope of fostering just such personal connections that in the spring of 1952 he and the KAS hosted a week-long visit to Kilkenny by the Belfast Naturalists’ Field Club, the principal archaeological society of Northern Ireland. The occasion was sufficiently novel to attract the attention of the *Irish Times*, which

⁸³ TCD, Mss. 10304/636/1-4 (BP): Eric Dorman O’Gowan and HMB, May-July 1948.

⁸⁴ Among other early supporters of the Association were Donal O’Sullivan, Frank MacDermot, J.J. Horgan, Edith Somerville, R.B. McDowell, J.C. Beckett and Joseph Johnston, the last of whom replaced Lord Charlemont as President in 1946. See *Passion and Prejudice: Nationalist-Unionist Conflict in Ulster in the 1930s and the Founding of the Irish Association*, eds. Paul Bew et al. (Belfast, 1993) xii, 115.

⁸⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/167a/1 (BP): ‘The Irish Association’ [speech delivered in Dublin, 5 June 1950].

quipped that Kilkenny was 'to have an invasion from the North at the Easter weekend'.⁸⁶ After the Northerners' trip proved a success, Butler permitted himself to speculate on its deeper implications: 'I think everybody who attended the outings ...[was] aware that something very important was happening, more important than any archaeological or geological experience which we might be sharing. It was a real reunion of north and south and perhaps we were more interested in each other than in the abbeys and crosses and caves which made the excuse for this friendly pleasant holiday'.⁸⁷ The ongoing seriousness of the divisions between Northern Ireland and the Republic must not be underestimated or belittled, but neither should they be permitted to prevent cultural contact between ordinary people. So Butler reported proudly in the *Kilkenny Journal* that 'nobody talked about partition or politics nor did anyone studiously ignore them. There was no need. For it is quite obvious that politicians have not yet succeeded in erecting any barriers that friendship and scholarship cannot easily cross over'.⁸⁸

This faith in the intrinsic value of personal communication as an antidote to political and social estrangement continued to inform Butler's thinking about cross-border relations throughout the fifties. After resigning from the KAS over the Nuncio Incident, though, he needed some other local platform for elaborating on the sort of constructive interaction that had taken place with the Belfast Naturalists' Club. To this end a group of his Catholic friends rallied round and in early 1954 helped Butler start the Kilkenny Debate, since as he later explained to Constantine Fitzgibbon, 'I felt an annual orgy of free speech would be healthy'.⁸⁹ Naturally enough the first debate was to be over partition, and by March the Kilkenny Debating Society had managed to secure a promise of participation from 'real live Unionists', specifically Colonel W.W.B.

⁸⁶ *Irish Times* 10 Apr. 1952, 5. Revealingly, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs seized upon the conceit of a 'friendly invasion' from the North when reporting the visit in its newsletter. Unsigned, 'NORTH AND SOUTH'. *Bulletin of Department of Foreign Affairs* 28 Apr. 1952, n/p.

⁸⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/188b/1 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'Visit of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club/ "I think everybody who attended these outings"' [1952]. In 'The Sub-Prefect Should Have Held His Tongue' Butler claims the Northerners' visit was the KAS initiative of which he was most proud (EA 279).

⁸⁸ *Kilkenny Journal* 19 Apr. 1952, 7.

⁸⁹ MH (Kilkenny Debates File): HMB to Constantine Fitzgibbon, 17 Jan. 1971.

Topping, Chief Whip of the Ulster Unionist Party at Stormont, and William Douglas, Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Council.⁹⁰ Representing the nationalist standpoint would be activist and politician Seán MacBride, supported by the ubiquitous Eoin O'Mahony. When the Ulstermen introduced the proviso that they would only come if allowed to argue a motion in the affirmative, O'Mahony was philosophical: 'provided we realise that their cause is sacred to our opponents, and that they are not allowed to forget that our point of view is equally sacred to us,...it doesn't much matter what the Motion is'.⁹¹ Thus the debate took place as scheduled on 23 April 1954, with Butler's good friend Myles Dillon in the Chair.⁹² As had been agreed, Topping and Douglas proposed the motion 'That Ulster's best interests lie with the United Kingdom', and MacBride and O'Mahony stood to oppose it. Others invited to speak at the debate were Arnold Marsh, Joseph Johnston, Richard Hayward, and Mary O'Malley, the latter being a Nationalist member of the Belfast Corporation.⁹³ In a piece he prepared for the *Manchester Guardian*, Butler related afterwards how a surfeit of police and plain-clothes detectives had been deployed to guard against any possible disturbances, a precaution he had regarded as unnecessary. Indeed, contrary to the dire predictions of the Belfast press, he was pleased to report that 'uninterrupted and unbooed, [the Northerners] were able to make a number of caustic remarks about the Irish Republic and its ideals. The perfect courtesy of the Kilkenny audience was the best possible answer to the Orange talk about gunmen'. In sharp contrast to all the nay-saying of bigots and pessimists on both sides of the issue, the debate had proved 'how quite a small group of determined people can raise the

⁹⁰ MH (Kilkenny Debates File): Eoin O'Mahony to Sheila Leahy and Mary Kenealy, 23 Mar. 1954.

⁹¹ MH (Kilkenny Debates File): Eoin O'Mahony to Sheila Leahy, Mary Kenealy and HMB, 11 Apr. 1954.

⁹² Butler had originally hoped to have W.B. Stanford serve as Chairman, since not only was he a good public speaker but also a Southern Protestant 'known to have national sympathies'. In the algebra of Irish identity politics, this appeared to be as balanced an equation as one could hope for in a moderator. MH (Kilkenny Debates File): HMB to Richard Hayward, 23 Mar. 1954. Unfortunately, Stanford refused, explaining privately that he feared participation in such controversial proceedings might jeopardize his re-election as one of TCD's representatives in the Seánad. MH (Kilkenny Debates File): W.B. Stanford to HMB, 26 Mar. 1954.

⁹³ *Kilkenny People* 1 May 1954, 9.

border dispute to the plane of constructive political thinking'.⁹⁴ Three decades after partition, this was still very much an achievement to be remarked upon and celebrated.

Although there were to be some rumblings in Kilkenny about the legitimacy of the whole exercise, these mostly surfaced after the debate's success had attracted national plaudits, and in tone they smack not a little of sour grapes.⁹⁵ In August, Butler jokingly explained to his old Yugoslavian acquaintance Milan Čurcin that 'many of the local people got furious with themselves for not having broken somebody's head and very indignant with everyone who had lured them into this betrayal of ancient tradition'.⁹⁶ Yet it was obvious to him that a major point had been scored for the principle of free speech, however irritated or uncomfortable the debate had left some people. After all, a certain amount of controversy was precisely what every society needed. As he remarked to Eric Dorman O'Gowan the following year, 'in Ireland it is a sort of a victory to force candid expression of opinion out of anyone, even if the opinion itself isn't what one wants'.⁹⁷ Butler and his friends went on to host a debate annually until 1960, and then again in 1966 and 1971, with the topics ranging from Irish language policy to the Rhodesian declaration of independence. Participants over the years included, among others, Cecil Woodham Smith, Seán O'Faoláin, Myles na gCopaleen, Terence de Vere White, Noël Browne, Basil Liddell Hart, Garrett Fitzgerald, Vivian de Valera, Brian Inglis, John O'Meara, Alec Newman, Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Declan Costello, R.B. McDowell and Lionel Fleming.⁹⁸ Broadcast across the country on Radio Éireann and covered by all the major newspapers, Butler could fairly claim in 1956 that the annual event was 'beginning to become a national Institution'.⁹⁹ Its eventual

⁹⁴ *Manchester Guardian* 3 May 1954, 4.

⁹⁵ An excellent and more detailed account of the first debate is found in Proinsias Ó Drisceoil, 'The Kilkenny Debates', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 108-18.

⁹⁶ MH (Alpha): HMB to Milan Čurcin, 21 Aug. 1954.

⁹⁷ MH (Alpha): HMB to Eric Dorman O'Gowan, 20 Aug. 1955.

⁹⁸ For a chronological listing of all the topics and participants of the annual Kilkenny Debates, see Appendix 2.

⁹⁹ MH (Kilkenny Debates File): HMB to Megan Lloyd George, 17 Apr. 1956.

discontinuation may thus be taken not so much as a setback for the exercise of free speech as an indication that Irish public life had effectively assimilated its lessons.

Meanwhile, Butler had not abandoned his thinking about a cross-border cultural journal that might someday succeed *The Bell*. Although the magazine had been resurrected in 1950, he and its other supporters considered its existence perilous enough to carry on discussions about what to do following its demise.¹⁰⁰ Not long after the last number of *The Bell* finally appeared in December 1954, Butler circulated a manifesto for a possible new journal with an explicitly all-Ireland agenda, which he proposed to call *The Bridge*. Yet this venture was to be more than just a talking shop for those already committed to *rapprochement*, as a close reading of 'Crossing the Border' makes plain. In his manifesto Butler approaches the issue of the border both as a social dilemma in its own right and as a kind of metaphor for the nourished enmities and seemingly intractable alienations characterizing contemporary western society as a whole. By speaking of the Irish problem in these broader terms, he is not making a novel case for political reintegration but trying to emphasize the subsidiary role such an eventuality must have in the genuine realignment of communities. 'Political union when it is enforced has never of itself brought happiness', he reasons, and consequently, 'ours is not, in the political sense, an anti-partition paper'. Whatever opinions its contributors might voice on the subject of the border, editorially *The Bridge* must remain effectively neutral, making good on its name by providing a trustworthy conduit for a two-way traffic in ideas. 'We believe that free and friendly intercourse is an essential preliminary to happy union', Butler continues. 'Without that a united Ireland might prove a disappointing place when we reached it, a mere atomic cushion whose unity results from the decay of regional loyalties and the displacement of small rivalries by large ones'. This is a carefully calibrated sentence, one which by envisaging a unified island tacitly recognizes the reality of nationalist aspiration, while at the same time affirms regionalism in a way that nods to the logic of unionism. Butler thus manages to acknowledge the legitimacy of each side's

¹⁰⁰ Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, *Skeff*, 152.

viewpoint even as he reiterates the significance of organic relationships and the necessity of consensus.

Enlarging upon his conceit that Irish partition is indicative of the futile estrangements all too often afflicting modern life, Butler declares that ‘borders do not keep out vulgarity and stupidity’, something he considers impossible to deny given the ‘almost unbelievable spiritual stagnation’ currently found both north and south of the border. Lamenting how ‘a dumb, stupid antagonism breaks into an occasional muffled snarl or jeer’, he then insists that ‘where there is disagreement, there should, at least, be the stimulus of conflict. It is from challenge and response that civilizations have arisen in the past. Why are our differences so unfruitful?’ Not surprisingly, he ascribes this deficiency to the fact that people have simply stopped listening to each other and have instead retreated into sloganeering, so that ‘what should be said is blurted. There are clarion calls and crusades and political landslides and united fronts, but the art of free controversy was never so neglected’. This mounting failure at communication is not uniquely Irish, however. Rather, it represents one of the central pathologies of the totalitarian age, an indulgence of the impulse to shout down the better angels of mutuality and conciliation. So in a memorable passage Butler contends:

Timid or stupid people often enjoy times of crisis. They can suspend, for the country or the cause, those careful discriminations which tire the brain and do no good to the career. ‘Now’, they cry, ‘is not time for academic straw-splitting and parlour-theorizing. Close the ranks! He that is not with me is against me!’ And so there is always a drift towards crisis, a gentle, persistent pressure towards some simple alignment of Good and Evil, Friend and Enemy. Even the Churches are drifting slothfully towards a crude Manichaeism of Darkness and Light and away from Christ, who said so inscrutably that we should love our enemies.

Passionate in their reasonableness, these lines convey as well as any he wrote the intensity of Butler’s faith in the efficacy of debate and dissent as bulwarks against human corruption. For ultimately such corruption – which is a kind of moral stupidity of which even the intelligent are capable – results in his view from individuals refusing to acknowledge the varied and complex reality of their environment. In its own modest way, then, *The Bridge* is to be a means by which

Irish people of all sorts can begin to engage with the possibility of difference, thereby erasing some of their own mental borders, if not those drawn on maps. As moderate and equitable as the argument of 'Crossing the Border' may appear now, though, Butler was unable at the time to secure the basic funds required to get the magazine started, itself an ironic confirmation of the problems he had diagnosed (*GW* 64-6).

Yet for all his belief in the inherent virtue of free speech and opposing viewpoints, Butler could be unsympathetic towards those who criticized without also participating, or who elaborated upon Irish shortcomings from a distance. When in 1953 the English journalist Honor Tracy published *Mind You, I've Said Nothing!*, a sardonic account of her recent experiences living in the Republic, he did not deny Tracy's right to an opinion so much as question her readiness to objectify ordinary people and pass summary judgment on their foibles.¹⁰¹ 'Is she not like a doctor', he asks, 'who knocks at our door when we are ill, checks up on our heart-beats and pulse-beats, takes samples of our blood and urine, and then without a word or a pill makes off to win a gold medal for a thesis on our disease?' (*EA* 127).¹⁰² Even when assessing his friend Paul Blanshard's controversial 1954 book *The Irish and Catholic Power*, Butler confessed that 'I can find little fault with what he has written, but as an American he can write with a dispassionate detachment that is impossible to me. For I am an Irishman and implicated in any criticism that is made of us from the outside'.¹⁰³ He does not suggest that either writer has been explicitly wrong or unjust in the critique of Ireland provided, but in both books he misses a corresponding empathy to balance out and humanize the harshness of their appraisals. And here again one sees that Butler's notion of intellectual dissent necessarily functions in tandem with his vision of

¹⁰¹ In his review-essay 'A House of God', Butler pays particular attention to Tracy's role in the Doneraile libel case. For Tracy's own version of this episode, see *Mind you, I've said nothing!* (London, 1953), 95ff. It is worth recalling that Butler had already taken Tracy to task a few years earlier for what he considered her similarly facile representation of Tito's Yugoslavia in *The Listener*. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁰² Edna Longley has thoughtfully juxtaposed the opposing reactions of Butler and Louis MacNeice to Tracy's book. See Edna Longley, *The Living Stream*, 142-3.

¹⁰³ TCD, Ms. 10304/241/8 (BP): 'The Pattern of Persecution' [undated (1950s)].

communal belonging, that his belief in the legitimacy of critique presupposes a personal loyalty born of local relationships.

Having made a conscious decision to settle in Ireland and to work at such relationships, he was therefore especially severe with other Protestant intellectuals when they left the country yet continued to expound upon its problems or prescribe for it remedies. In the 1955 piece 'Reflections of an Unjustified Stay-at-Home' he remarks of such people that 'it is useless for our "clerks" to tell us what ought to happen, if they are not here to act as midwives to their predictions', and while he knows firsthand just how dispiriting Ireland can be for independent thinkers, he still insists that 'from the standpoint of the Irish nation there is more dynamism in a frustrated genius than an absent one'.¹⁰⁴ It is not hard to detect in these sentiments an echo of Butler's eighteenth-century heroes, champions of Protestant patriotism and engagement such as Lord Charlemont and the Edgeworths. A lot had changed in the interim, however, as Butler's old acquaintance Kildare Dobbs was inclined to point out. Dobbs, grandson of the archbishop and TCD provost J.H. Bernard, could certainly claim a worthy Anglo-Irish pedigree yet had little else with which to back it up. So, after serving in the war and doing a stint in the African Colonial Service, he emigrated to Canada, where he became a successful journalist.¹⁰⁵ Writing in 1957, he expressed his admiration for Butler's courageous stands at home but reminded him that 'y[ou]r hereditary acres gave you a weapon that not all of us have'.¹⁰⁶ Butler understood well enough that not everyone enjoyed his material advantages; moreover, he accepted that some of his contemporaries might go abroad simply to lead more fulfilling personal lives. What he refused to countenance was that this state of affairs should ever be regarded as normal, or that in the process of going people did not forfeit something fundamental in their relation to Ireland. 'Though it seems to me a man's duty to work in and for the community which he acknowledges to be his own', he wrote the same year, 'we also have a duty to develop our faculties to their fullest extent.'

¹⁰⁴ HMB, 'Reflections of an Unjustified Stay-at-Home', *Twentieth Century* 158 (Oct. 1955) 315, 320.

¹⁰⁵ Kildare Dobbs, *Running to Paradise* (Toronto, 1962) 66-116.

¹⁰⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/530 (BP): Kildare Dobbs to HMB, 1 Apr. 1957.

Often these two duties cannot be reconciled and we have to choose between spiritual and intellectual frustration. So long as we do not accept our mutilated destiny with levity or resignation, we cannot be condemned as dodgers' (*GW* 24-5).

This last line helps explain why Butler was to react so negatively to the journalist Brian Inglis's memoir *West Briton* when it was published in 1962. On the surface at least, the two men should have been natural allies: both were liberal Anglo-Irish Protestant intellectuals who sought to combine a commitment to nationalist politics with a tolerant and progressive social agenda. But when in the wake of the Papal Nuncio Incident Inglis had suggested that Butler's behaviour had been 'injudicious', the latter felt betrayed.¹⁰⁷ Any resentment still simmering on this count was again brought to a boil a decade later when Inglis returned to the episode in his memoir, concluding that 'deplorable though the reaction was, Butler had brought it on himself by injudiciously obtruding his King Charles' Head on an unsuitable occasion'.¹⁰⁸ Undoubtedly Inglis's fondness for citing the Incident as an example of gratuitous provocation was galling to Butler, but as he was at pains to convey in reviewing *West Briton*, his objections to the book extended well beyond any personal animus he might harbour against its author. Thus at the beginning of the review he remarks memorably that Inglis 'is amusing, impartial, compassionate and his book is as cheering to the remnant that still hangs on in its native land as a nice cup of Ovaltine to the victim of disseminated sclerosis'. What seems attractive about the man is precisely what makes his memoir so depressing, the way he urbanely recounts his gradual disillusionment with Ireland as if it were all very sad but also somehow inevitable. Butler does not blame Inglis for having been frustrated – he readily concedes that 'life is full of strain and misunderstanding for the hybrid' – but he cannot abide the journalist's retrospective and self-justifying deprecations of Protestant activism now that he has packed up and moved to England.

¹⁰⁷ See above.

¹⁰⁸ Brian Inglis, *West Briton* (London, 1962) 202-3.

For in doing so Inglis has become the epitome of what he routinely and disparagingly refers to as an ‘intellectual absentee’ (*GW* 138-40, 146).

In particular Butler is incensed by Inglis’s presumption that Protestants have little or nothing to contribute to the vexed issue of Church-State relations in Ireland. Having decided that ‘Irish Catholicism must be left to come to terms with itself’, Inglis surmises that ‘for an outsider to try to intervene would merely create the kind of irritation felt by liberals in England or America when they find themselves being supported in a cause by the Communist Party’. There was also the unhappy history of their ancestors having proselytized and persecuted Irish Catholics, which meant ‘there was no use trying to pretend that we were capable of giving disinterested advice’.¹⁰⁹ Yet to Butler such reasoning typifies how Southern Protestantism has lost its way. Suggesting that ‘outsiders’ should keep silent about religion in public life is to him nothing more than ‘moral cowardice dressing herself up in a diplomat’s bemedalled frock-coat’. Likewise, he rejects the premise that the Penal Laws and other past transgressions must automatically neutralize the moral claims Protestants might make against bigoted Catholics in the present. ‘This argument which appears to lead to unity and brotherly love really leads to London’, he warns, adding of the former persecutions that ‘if Tone and Emmet and all the others did not by dying close that chapter, what profit is there in Mr Inglis’s cosy penitence?’ (*GW* 142-3). Here one begins to see how for Butler Inglis’s repeated criticism of his role in the Nuncio Incident signifies more than just an individual attack. Instead, it represents an essential difference of conception between them about the identity and responsibilities of the Protestant intellectual in contemporary Ireland. If of the two Butler often comes off as the more pugnacious and even arrogant, it cannot be said that he ever succumbed to the condescension that lurks beneath the other’s more conciliatory exterior. In the end, Inglis simply does not appear to respect his compatriots enough to fight with them. Citing at the end of *West Briton* the various reasons why he has chosen to go work in England, he speaks of economic factors but then concedes that ‘there

¹⁰⁹ Brian Inglis, *West Briton*, 208.

was also the fear, working in Ireland, of becoming too absorbed in insular controversies'.¹¹⁰

Whereas for Hubert Butler, that was the whole point.

IV. *Ne Temere*, the Fethard-on-Sea Boycott and signs of liberalization

One source of perennial worry and bitterness for the Southern Protestant community during this period was the enforcement of the *Ne Temere* decree by the Irish Catholic hierarchy. The decree, which had been issued by Pope Pius X at Easter 1908, deemed any marriage rite performed by a Protestant minister invalid and mandated that if a mixed couple wished to be married by a Roman priest, they must sign a written promise that their children would be baptized, educated and confirmed as Catholics. Not surprisingly, this had caused a furore among Irish Protestants, who regarded *Ne Temere* as an outrageously cynical and invasive attempt to prompt their assimilation into the island's majority. Stories like the McCann case of 1910 served only to confirm their fears.¹¹¹ For some churchmen, though, the very aggressiveness of the decree served as a wake-up call for those inclined to underestimate the ongoing relevance of their Reformation heritage. In what was later taken to be a classic statement of Protestant defiance, J.A.F. Gregg assured an audience in 1911 that

the Roman Catholic Church has stirred in us a just sense of grievance, and we shall not be slow to justify our name and protest. But the wrong that has been done us will be a blessing to us. It will close up our ranks, it will enable us to see that Rome to-day is the same that Rome ever was, that no terms are possible with Rome, but that resistance in God's name, and in the name of conscience and liberty – resistance is the duty of us all.¹¹²

A steady flow of pamphlets by Church of Ireland clergymen appeared throughout the thirties and forties to reinforce this message. Young Protestants were warned in no uncertain terms of the dangers *Ne Temere* posed both to their personal well-being and that of the community as a whole. In 1936 T.C. Hammond informed anyone marrying under the decree that 'in relation to your faith

¹¹⁰ Brian Inglis, *West Briton*, 215.

¹¹¹ Alexander McCann was a Belfast Catholic who, ostensibly at the behest of his parish priest, abandoned his Protestant wife and made off with their children. The episode quickly became a *cause célèbre* among Protestants north and south. Desmond Bowen, *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism*, 362, 372.

¹¹² J.A.F. Gregg, *The 'Ne Temere' Decree: A Lecture* [delivered before the members of the Church of Ireland Young Men's Association on 17 March 1911] (1911; rev. edn., Dublin, 1943), 24.

you are a betrayer of an age-long heritage and must for ever feel ashamed', while W.L.M. Giff later agreed that acquiescing in it 'would be treason against your Church and the shipwreck of your own conscience'.¹¹³ Especially in Southern Ireland, the gradual but potentially devastating impact *Ne Temere* could have on the minority's long-term survival was never far from Protestant leaders' minds. Addressing the General Synod in 1946, Archbishop Gregg reiterated the need for resistance not only on theological grounds but also for practical purposes: 'We need all our young people to replenish our ranks as we older people pass away. The Church which cannot count on a strong younger generation is doomed to early extinction'.¹¹⁴

Facing up to this challenge was certainly not made any easier by the Tilson case of 1950. Ernest Tilson, a Protestant who had married a Catholic woman under the terms of the *Ne Temere* decree in 1941, decided nine years later that their three children should be raised and educated as Protestants after all. When his estranged wife appealed to the High Court for custody, its President, Mr. Justice George Gavan Duffy, ruled that the ante-nuptial agreement signed by Tilson was binding in Irish civil law.¹¹⁵ The case provoked consternation among the minority, who saw the ruling as a gross violation of its constitutional protections and the beginning of an alliance 'between the priest and the policeman for the maintenance of exclusive rights of members of one denomination'.¹¹⁶ With the deck stacked against them in this way, many Protestants in the fifties remained reluctant, their fondness for their Catholic neighbours notwithstanding, to allow their children to socialize outside the faith.¹¹⁷ Yet to Hubert Butler, this

¹¹³ T.C. Hammond, *Marriage - My Choice: What Shall It Be?* (Dublin, 1936). RCB, Ms.553 (Giff Papers): *A Short History of Our Church* [67pp., undated].

¹¹⁴ CIG 10 May 1946, 9. In fact, mixed marriage as a factor in Southern Protestant population decline did not become a real, as opposed to a perceived, problem until after the Second World War. The percentage of Protestants marrying Catholics went from almost nothing in 1946 to somewhere between 16-22% in 1961 and increased steadily thereafter. Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State* 40-1. See also Brendan M. Walsh, 'Trends in the Religious Composition of the Population in the Republic of Ireland, 1946-1971', *Economic and Social Review* 6:4 (July 1975), 549-54.

¹¹⁵ J.H. Whyte, *Church and State*, 170-1.

¹¹⁶ CIG 11 Aug. 1950, 1-2. The Tilson case received extensive coverage in the *Irish Times*: see 1 Aug. 1950, 3; 2 Aug. 1950, 5; 3 Aug. 1950, 3; 4 Aug. 1950, 3; 7 Aug. 1950, 6. Correspondence from prominent members of the Protestant community criticizing the ruling also appeared in the paper throughout August.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, Homan Potterton, *Rathcormick: A Childhood Recalled* (Dublin, 2001), 176-7.

tactic of self-segregation was not only defeatist but unrealistic. Writing to Owen Sheehy Skeffington in 1952, he reported that of the six Protestant families living in his village, three already had children married to Catholics in compliance with the decree. The fact that all these matches appeared to be good ones did nothing to make the situation less distasteful to him; on the contrary, it only intensified his anger at the majority Church for interfering in the couples' domestic arrangements.¹¹⁸ At the same time, he thought it unfair to ask young Protestants to forgo personal happiness and stand individually against Catholic pressure if their elders proved unwilling to confront the problem at an institutional level. Collectively, Protestants must learn to be both more pragmatic and more principled: 'we can't *stop* mixed marriages in a mixed community', he argued, 'but we can prevent them being made on unequal terms'.¹¹⁹ He felt sure the Catholic hierarchy would become more amenable to compromise if Protestants across the island, backed by their still considerable economic and social resources, demonstrated a willingness to combat this intrusion upon private judgment. Without this show of resolve, the Southern minority could only expect *Ne Temere* to go on claiming more and more of its members.¹²⁰

All of which is why Butler regarded the Fethard-on-Sea Boycott of 1957 as a missed opportunity for Protestants. Not that many shared this view at the time; indeed, for most minority commentators, what was happening in this small Wexford town was simply further evidence, if such a thing were needed, of Protestants' inherent vulnerability to Catholic domination. To say that the boycott was caused by a family dispute is to adopt from the outset the assumptions of those who launched it. Having married under the terms of the *Ne Temere* decree, Sean Cloney and his Protestant wife Sheila went on to have two daughters, both of whom were accordingly expected to receive a Catholic education. When the older girl reached school age, however, Mrs.

¹¹⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1341 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 16 Dec. 1952.

¹¹⁹ TCD, Ms. 10304/442/3-4 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'Letter to C. Roberts, chairman of a large Church of Ireland meeting in Kilkenny' [27 June 1958].

¹²⁰ HMB, "We are the People of Burke...", 432.

Cloney balked at this prospect, and the local Catholic curate began to exert pressure on the family to comply. At the end of April Mrs. Cloney then absconded with the children, an act publicly denounced by the Catholic clergy on 12 May. The next day Catholics in the town began a full-scale boycott of all Protestant shops and businesses in reprisal for Mrs. Cloney's behaviour, in which they suspected her co-religionists had colluded.¹²¹ The national press only learned of the boycott a few weeks later when the *Irish Times* asked the Protestant newsagent in Fethard why she had cancelled her newspaper order, and she was forced to admit she no longer had any customers.¹²² In the meantime, the Rev. Edward F. Grant, who had served as the Protestant vicar of Fethard from 1946-56 and now served in another parish nearby, was asked by some of his former congregants to intervene in the situation. His successor in Fethard, a young clergyman called Adrian Fisher, had only just taken over as incumbent and knew little of the community he was serving.¹²³ When Grant called on the parish priest and his curate, Father Allen and Father Stafford, in order to discuss the boycott, he was shocked by their unfriendliness. In particular he was stung by the 'unexpectedly waspish and stubborn' attitude of Stafford, with whom he had always been friendly when serving in Fethard. The priests claimed the boycott had been a spontaneous expression of lay outrage and denied they had originated the idea, a position to be corroborated by their bishop, Dr. Staunton. Yet by the end of the interview, recalls Grant, he had formed the distinct impression that the boycott 'had strong priestly approval'.¹²⁴

It transpired that Grant was to be one of the few people willing to ask awkward questions about the affair. When reporter Cathal O'Shannon was assigned by the *Irish Times* to cover the controversy, he was surprised by editor Alec Newman's apparent lack of enthusiasm for the story.

¹²¹ *Irish Times* 27 May 1957, 1.

¹²² Interview with Canon and Mrs. Edward Grant, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, Apr. 2002.

¹²³ Fisher's correspondence from this period testifies to the direct efforts that Hubert Butler, Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Eoin O'Mahony, Seán O'Faoláin and others made to assist Fethard's Protestant community and bring the boycott to an end. See University College Dublin, Mss. P164/2-7, 10-13 (Fisher Papers): various correspondents to Adrian Fisher, 1957-8.

¹²⁴ Edward F. Grant, *The Fethard Boycott: Recollections and Reflections* (2002), 10-12. [Courtesy of the Rev. Canon E.F. Grant.]

A Catholic himself, O'Shannon had been appalled to hear Father Stafford explicitly endorse the continuation of the boycott in his sermons, and he began each week to make careful transcriptions of the priest's remarks. To the journalist's disgust, though, Newman then refused to publish them.¹²⁵ Writing to Hubert Butler, Owen Sheehy Skeffington likewise expressed his disappointment at Newman's reaction to the Fethard dispute: 'The *Irish Times* has got a bit frightened', he observed. 'I had to intervene personally to get my last letter in, and they have a great number they won't print....Mad, I think! And cowardly'.¹²⁶ In his capacity as a senator Sheehy Skeffington had already tried to broach the issue by other means, using the Adjournment Debate of 5 June to ask what provision the Department of Education would make for the Protestant children of Fethard-on-Sea, given their school had been forced to close since the resignation of their Catholic teacher. In response the government spokesman demurred, claiming the Department had neither the right nor the ability to intervene in a local dispute.¹²⁷ When the Taoiseach was subsequently pressed by Noël Browne to comment on the boycott in the Dáil, he admitted that up till then he had put off making a public statement 'because I have clung to the hope that good sense and decent neighbourly feeling would, of themselves, bring this business to an end'. Once asked to speak to the matter directly, however, he was unequivocal in his disapproval and called for the boycott to stop.¹²⁸ Still, even his friend and supporter, the Trinity don A.A. Luce, felt de Valera should have taken an earlier and more positive stand on the issue.¹²⁹ To the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, the Irish establishment's reluctance to confront the Fethard problem merely showed how little real support the minority could expect from Catholics at such moments when lending it might mean confrontation with their own clergy. In its leader for 14 June the *Gazette* claimed with some bitterness that 'we can well believe that decent and intelligent Roman Catholics feel nothing but shame for what is being done in the name of their

¹²⁵ TCD, Ms. 10548/13/286 (Kay Papers): Michael Campbell to Beatrice Campbell, undated [1957].

¹²⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1358 (BP): Owen Sheehy Skeffington to HMB, 1 July 1957.

¹²⁷ *Seánad Éireann Debates*, vol. 48, cols. 105-12 [5 June 1957].

¹²⁸ *Dáil Eireann Debates* vol. 163, cols. 730-1 [4 July 1957].

¹²⁹ TCD, Ms. 8401.318 (Marsh Papers): A.A. Luce to Arnold Marsh, 8 July 1957.

Church. Unfortunately their decency and intelligence are not reinforced by the courage which would embolden them to speak out in condemnation of the whole sorry and sordid business'.¹³⁰

The Catholic Bishop of Galway, Dr. Michael Browne, did nothing to assuage Protestant feelings when in a speech on 30 June he characterized the boycott as 'a peaceful and moderate protest'. Given that he was speaking in the presence of Cardinal d'Alton, Archbishop McQuaid, and five other bishops, Browne's comments were generally interpreted as a statement from the hierarchy as a whole. Rather than waste any more breath complaining about Roman perfidy, though, Andrew Willis of the *Church of Ireland Gazette* at this stage assumed a different tack. 'Is it not time for the minority spokesmen to break their silence?', he asked pointedly, adding that 'we respectfully submit to our own Archbishops and Bishops that this has ceased to be a local affair. It is tempting to say, in places where relations are of the friendliest, "it can't happen here". In the absence of any repudiation of Dr. Browne we must conclude that it can happen anywhere'.¹³¹ Certainly this was the conclusion reached by Hubert Butler, who had been particularly distressed by what he considered the poor leadership of John Phair, Protestant Bishop of Ossory and the diocesan responsible for the Fethard parish.¹³² Soon after news of the crisis became known, Butler and other activists had begun buying their supplies from the boycotted businesses in Fethard and encouraged Irish Protestants everywhere to do the same.¹³³ Bishop Phair, however, deemed such gestures of solidarity to be 'senseless retaliation' and instead counselled appeasement and restraint.¹³⁴ Butler was scandalized. 'How in the world can the bishop make out that it is "senseless retaliation" to support the boycotted shop-keepers of Fethard?' he demanded to know. 'Was the Good Samaritan "retaliating" on the priest and the

¹³⁰ *CIG* 14 June 1957, 1.

¹³¹ *CIG* 5 July 1957, 1.

¹³² Edward Grant recounts that when he first alerted Bishop Phair to what was happening in Fethard-on-Sea, he was dismissed with the remark 'you cannot boycott a community'. It was not until six weeks after the boycott had started that Phair finally visited the town. Edward F. Grant, *The Fethard Boycott* 18.

¹³³ 'Resistance' [HMB], Letter to the Editor. *Irish Times* 5 June 1957, 7.

¹³⁴ The Bishop reiterated this position in the *CIG* throughout the duration of the Boycott.

Levite, when he gave aid to the injured traveller?’¹³⁵ Far from standing up for minority rights, then, it seemed to him that Phair was effectively promoting the Catholics’ own perception that it was they, not the Protestants, who were the injured party.¹³⁶ If this is what was meant by diplomacy, Butler wanted no part in it.

It was because Protestant leaders had failed to confront Catholic presumption over Fethard or to galvanize the minority community into coordinated acts of resistance that Butler felt an important opportunity had been missed. He remained convinced that an overt display of Protestant determination to face down such intimidation would have forced Irish Catholics to reckon with the divisive impact of their Church’s policies. Consequently, he was unimpressed when Phair’s widow later defended her husband’s handling of the situation by recalling the £1754.10.6 the Bishop had raised on behalf of those in need.¹³⁷ Although he did not deny the usefulness of such financial support, it seemed to Butler ultimately beside the point. Rather than fundraising behind the scenes, he reasoned, ‘there should have been the *maximum* of publicity. For this purpose there should have been a STREAM of cars going to Fethard to SPEND that £1754.10.6 with evidence of personal commitment. Just writing a cheque as though it was the welfare of a few shopkeepers and milkmen at stake and not our children’s future was too jolly easy’.¹³⁸ *Ne Temere* in Ireland might not be abolished as a result of such efforts, but this did not absolve Protestants from their obligation to witness against it. And here Butler’s sensitivity to how totalitarian tendencies elsewhere had fed on the complacency and diffidence of ordinary human beings gave his interpretation of the episode an urgency few others shared. In the piece ‘Boycott Village’ he alluded to the sort of dangers he thought his co-religionists still invited with

¹³⁵ ‘Resistance’ [HMB], Letter to the Editor. *Irish Times* 11 June 1957, 5. This was not the first time Butler felt Bishop Phair had conspicuously failed to stand up for his own in a time of need. See Chapter Six of this thesis.

¹³⁶ Apposite here is the view expressed by Bishop Staunton of Ferns to Archbishop McQuaid once the boycott had come to an end, that ‘Protestant propaganda, in my opinion successful, was in fact an attack on the Catholic Church, under the guise of an attack on the people of Fethard-on-Sea’. John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid*, qtd. 325.

¹³⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/1056/65 (BP): Beryl Phair to HMB, 5 Mar. 1973.

¹³⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/1056/65 (BP): HMB to Beryl Phair, 7 Mar. 1973.

their genteel evasions, noting how ‘as in the early days of the Brown Shirts of Germany, respectable people put their faith in the healing properties of time. We like to think that, left to themselves, our difficulties will “blow over”, “peter out”, “die down”....And, in fact, if we only have patience, the victim of injustice will probably emigrate and cease to embarrass us with his tedious lamentations’ (*EA* 139). As it happened, the Cloney family was eventually reconciled and left to resolve its differences privately, while the boycott itself concluded in November as mysteriously as it had begun the previous May.¹³⁹ In a public statement, Bishop Phair paid special tribute to the forbearance shown by the Protestants of Fethard during their ordeal, boasting how they had shown ‘no bitterness, only Christian love and charity. Thus have they tried to promote the only spirit that will turn Ireland into a Christian nation.’¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, there were those who had begun to worry about Ireland’s future as a nation of any kind. Citing the Republic’s stagnant economy and high rates of emigration, American commentator John V. Kelleher contended in April 1957 that although de Valera and his followers had enjoyed ‘much success in making the country appear the small, remote and damp but sinless nirvana of their elderly dreams, Ireland is presently in serious trouble’.¹⁴¹ Yet never was there a better example of the night appearing darkest just before dawn. In 1958-9 two major changes took place which were to have far-reaching effects upon Irish society in the years to come. The first was the election of Pope John XXIII in October 1958, which heralded a program of liberalizing reforms in the Catholic Church under the auspices of the Second Vatican Council. The impact of these reforms upon a body as profoundly conservative as the Irish Catholic Church remains difficult to overstate.¹⁴² The second major development was the replacement of Eamon de Valera by Seán Lemass as Taoiseach in June 1959. Lemass’s leadership was to become the

¹³⁹ Shelia Cloney returned to Fethard at Easter 1958. Edward F. Grant, *The Fethard Boycott*, 19. Another useful account of the Boycott is provided by Marcus Tanner in *Ireland’s Holy Wars*, 339-41.

¹⁴⁰ *CIG* 15 Nov. 1957, 8.

¹⁴¹ John V. Kelleher, ‘Ireland...And Where Does She Stand?’, *Foreign Affairs* 35 (Apr. 1957), 485.

¹⁴² Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland: Nation and State* (Dublin, 1994), 261-3; J.J. Lee, *Ireland*, 655.

catalyst for a whole series of initiatives to bolster the Irish economy and rejuvenate national life.¹⁴³

In those smaller arenas where Southern Protestants still exercised significant influence, there were likewise changes in personnel that signalled the start of a new phase. At the *Irish Times*, Douglas Gageby would eventually succeed Alec Newman as editor, an appointment which Owen Sheehy Skeffington and Hubert Butler grew to appreciate, since in the former's words, 'Gageby has far more *guts* than poor Alec'.¹⁴⁴ Over the course of the next two decades Gageby transformed the *Times* into a paper of international standing.¹⁴⁵ In the same way Albert McConnell's provostship at Trinity College Dublin from 1952-67 was to prove among the most dynamic and progressive in the institution's modern history.¹⁴⁶ Under the guidance of these two strong figures, both the *Irish Times* and TCD finally settled into that 'new-look nationalism' characterizing them ever since.¹⁴⁷ And after forty years as the Church of Ireland's pre-eminent churchman and guide, Archbishop J.A.F. Gregg at last retired in 1959. His mantle was to be taken up in the 1960s first by James McCann and then by the much-loved George Otto Simms.¹⁴⁸

Another sign that a fresh generation of Protestant thinkers and activists had come into its own was the launch of the magazine *Focus* in January 1958. Started by the young Methodist layman and Irish enthusiast Risteárd Ó Glaisne, the journal was conceived as an opportunity for Protestants to reflect upon their evolving condition, whether they regarded themselves as holdovers from the Ascendancy or, as in Ó Glaisne's own case, as 'a child of the new state'.¹⁴⁹ It was out of his self-conscious identification as such that in early 1959 Ó Glaisne declared in an editorial:

¹⁴³ John Horgan, *Seán Lemass: The Enigmatic Patriot* (Dublin, 1997) 348-57. See also Tom Garvin, 'Change and the Political System', in *Unequal Achievement: The Irish Experience 1957-1982*, ed. F. Litton (Dublin, 1982), 21-40.

¹⁴⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1369 (BP): Owen Sheehy Skeffington to HMB, 2 Jan. 1965.

¹⁴⁵ Gene Kerrigan, 'The Life and Irish Times of Douglas Gageby', *Magill* 3:3 (Dec. 1979), 18-21.

¹⁴⁶ J.V. Luce, *Trinity College Dublin*, 151.

¹⁴⁷ R.F. Foster, *The Irish Story*, 50.

¹⁴⁸ George Seaver, *John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg* 321-322.

¹⁴⁹ Risteárd Ó Glaisne, 'We Introduce Ourselves', *Focus* January 1958, 3-7. Interview with Risteárd Ó Glaisne, Dublin, 22 July 2003.

Ireland, let it be remembered, is seeing in the younger Protestants in the south the first generation of Protestants who, as a mass, are growing up feeling Irish without qualification. Many of them are proud of their Protestantism. These young people, proud to be Irish and proud to be Protestant, may always without apology hope for an ascendancy of certain spiritual emphases strongly maintained by Protestants – an ascendancy granted wholly by the will of the people. And that, as I see it, is the only sort of ascendancy which Protestants have any right to hope for.¹⁵⁰

Though to Ó Glaisne's regret Butler did not become a contributor to *Focus*, in 1963 the two men did appear together on the recently created Telefís Éireann to discuss Protestant life in the Republic on Brian Farrell's current affairs program 'Broadsheet'.¹⁵¹ In the meantime, Butler published a number of major essays in *The Kilkenny Magazine: An All-Ireland Literary Review*, which his close friend James Delehanty had started in 1960 and which, as Delehanty announced in the first editorial, he hoped would prove a worthy successor to *The Bell*.¹⁵² Yet as is obvious from the homage paid in the magazine's title to Standish O'Grady's earlier Kilkenny-based *All Ireland Review*, this was also to be a journal combining the widest vision possible with an avowedly local framework. Or, as Butler explained to an English friend at the time, the magazine was being offered as 'a very deliberate attempt to "decentralise" literature and the arts'.¹⁵³ Nonetheless during its ten year existence it managed to attract not just older writers such as Butler himself, Ewart Milne and Kate O'Brien, but also many excellent younger ones from across the island, among them John McGahern, Brendan Kennelly, Seamus Heaney and John Banville.¹⁵⁴

V. The common name of Irishman: ecumenism, the Troubles and social reform

At a gathering held in September 1963 to mark the bicentenary of Theobald Wolfe Tone's birth, Hubert Butler delivered an address entitled 'Wolfe Tone and the Common Name of Irishman'. On first inspection, there is much about this piece which seems familiar, with Butler

¹⁵⁰ Risteárd Ó Glaisne, 'Comment: Protestant Ascendancy', *Focus* Feb. 1959, 31. See also Risteárd Ó Glaisne, *The Irish Language: A Protestant speaks to his co-religionists* (Longford, 1965) and *To Irish Protestants* (Dublin, 1991).

¹⁵¹ Interview with Risteárd Ó Glaisne, Dublin, 22 July 2003. Risteárd Ó Glaisne, 'In Focus', *Focus* July 1963, 154.

¹⁵² James Delehanty, 'To Our Readers', *Kilkenny Magazine* 1 (Summer 1960), 3-4.

¹⁵³ TCD, Ms. 10304/647/84 (BP): HMB to Niouta Kallin, 10 Nov. 1962.

¹⁵⁴ See Frank Shovlin, *The Irish Literary Periodical*, 187-9.

once again expounding upon the importance of diversity and neighbourliness in the construction of any humane society. Noteworthy on this particular occasion, though, is his ascribing these ideals to the Protestant patriot tradition of the eighteenth century, which he then employs as a historical foil against the restrictive and distorted loyalties of contemporary Irishmen. So he begins by recalling Tone's famous ambition 'to unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter'. As becomes obvious in the pages to follow, these lines have an almost incantatory power for Butler, not least because he appreciates that however conciliatory their sound, they still possessed radical implications for people both north and south of the border. In affirming Tone's status as the father of Irish Republicanism and even of Irish nationalism, he likens him to 'a great inventor who blows up himself and his friends with the thing he invents' yet in the process has 'discovered something which nobody had observed before'. Taken in its fullness, Tone's idealism remained combustible material in 1963 because it exposed the current Republic for little more than a Catholic statelet happily shorn of troublesome dissenters. Indeed, not just for Tone but for all the patriots of his age, Ireland always meant the whole of Ireland, so that 'the common name of Irishman would have been meaningless to them if applied to the twenty-six counties only'. Irishness as a racial category was equally alien to them, thereby making redundant any concept of an Irish diaspora: '*Effective* Irishmen lived in Ireland', Butler notes, adding that 'the sentimental ties which now bind the foreign emigrant to his motherland were then very weak....[R]acialism, which in Europe has often since usurped the place of nationalism, hardly existed'. While long critical of other Protestants for their own types of national disloyalty, here he invokes Tone to suggest that Catholics had been fundamentally anti-national in a different way. Judged by the standards of this most uncompromising of Irish patriots, the sectarian Gaelic dispensation prevailing in Southern Ireland from 1922 onwards had done as much to inhibit true nationhood as to foster it (LN 32-4).

What is missing, besides the geographical area of the six counties, is the 'vigorous creative polemical' society Wolfe Tone believed Ireland must by nature become if fully inclusive and physically whole. No amount of technologically-enhanced contact with the immigrant communities abroad can compensate for the breakdown in dialogue between north and south. On this point Butler returns to the argument he advanced in 'Crossing the Border', that whatever the political expediency of partition, it has also guaranteed the disruption of 'that equilibrium of opposing forces which is necessary to a country's happiness'. This time, though, he is more directly critical, telling his fellow Southerners that 'without the Protestant north we have become lopsided. We lack that vigorous and rebellious northern element, which in the eighteenth century was responsible both for our nationalism and our republicanism'. Not that the North is any less impoverished by this estrangement; Butler is equally convinced that 'without the south the north has become smug and has succumbed to what ought to be the most discredited of all contemporary delusions, the lure of broad horizons'. Like Gaelic racialism, the Northerners' preoccupation with 'broad horizons', his term for the vicarious sense of scope and relevance they derive from union with Britain, is but another stumbling-block to the genuine if more localized unity of Tone's dreams. To illustrate what he means, Butler recalls the otherwise intelligent and informed Belfastman he came across who did not know who Parnell was. Such ignorance in an educated Irishman would be unforgivable were it not so tragic and obviously symptomatic of a much larger problem. He surmises that the man 'had such broad horizons, the range of his interests was so wide, that his own place in history had become obscure and unimportant to him. He was befogged and benighted like someone trying to find his way home by a map of the world' (LN 38-43).

Though he is emphatic that this preoccupation with 'broad horizons' is central to the North's rejection of the South, Butler concedes that religion likewise persists as a major source of division between the two. Here again he turns to Tone as one of the few leaders in Irish history who, precisely because he understood just how profound sectarian divisions were on the island,

sought not to ignore or manipulate the divisions so much as transcend them. For a fleeting moment Tone and his generation succeeded 'in thawing the rigid frozen barriers of race and creed that divided the Irish', even as they accepted that the differences themselves would not disappear. Mutual tolerance and shared respect were the watchwords of the Ireland they strove for, as evidenced by the proclamation made by the Volunteers who gathered at Dungannon in 1782. Butler quotes approvingly their statement that 'we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as ourselves', a view which led them to endorse the relaxation of the Penal Laws. He explains that the only reason liberal Protestants like Charlemont and Flood later withdrew their support for Catholic Emancipation was because they feared their respect for others' private judgment would not be reciprocated in a land where the Catholic Church held sway over the political majority. This was a fear that in subsequent decades the Roman hierarchy made little effort to dispel, leading Butler to suggest that Catholic authoritarianism must bear as much historical responsibility for partition as Protestant recalcitrance. Rather than point fingers, though, each side in the current situation would do well to recognize in the other qualities from which it could benefit. In a moment of true *via media* reckoning, he concludes that

we must find some way of living together and I think Tone's way, the way of generous inconsistency, is still the best. After all we all of us respect the two opposing principles of authority and private judgment. Everyone in the world regulates his conduct by both, deferring sometimes to traditional authority, sometimes to his own rebellious sense of fitness....[I]t is reasonable to think that social harmony in a united Ireland would be based on an equilibrium of these two opposing forces.

As patriots and as human beings, therefore, Irish people must be willing to follow Wolfe Tone along his 'way of generous inconsistency' if ever they hope to attain a truly just and integrated society. The implications for their respective political identities should they do so would indeed be radical; however, Butler insists the particulars remain secondary to the principles. In an Ireland where people were genuinely committed to the daily work of reconciliation, he says, 'one day we should find that almost without our knowing it the border had gone' (LN 44-50).

Yet the panacea-like power he attributed to neighbourliness also made Butler deeply sceptical of the budding ecumenical movement of the 1960s. The grand gestures and warm promises made by church leaders seemed to him largely meaningless in themselves and even insulting to those for whom religious enmity had been a matter of life and death in their communities. Given his special knowledge of the sectarian conflicts in both Ireland and the Balkans, Butler was adamant that ‘what is likely to unite us is not the spectacle of a pope embracing a patriarch or a heretical archbishop, or the return of St. Andrew’s skull to Petras or some holy keepsake from Byzantium to Rome. We have to venture out from the well-kept museum of symbols on to the junk-heap of cast-off clothes, broken crockery and maggoty corpses which is history’ (*LN* 158). One scarcely need dig very deep to see how easily Christian churches of all sorts had become instruments of political corruption and ethnic chauvinism, and conversely, how ineffectual calls for ‘spiritual unity’ had proved amidst moments of oppression and slaughter. ‘So long as this continues’, Butler reasoned, ‘how much meaning can we attach to the friendly meetings of the high ecclesiastics[?]’¹⁵⁵ In the Irish context, then, his espousal of Tone’s ‘generous inconsistency’ as the basis for a common and balanced nationality should not be interpreted as a plea for religious sameness or for a blanket suppression of grievances. On the contrary, only those who carried in their genes the local dimensions of Ireland’s four-hundred year-old sectarian quarrel were equipped to fashion any lasting solution to it. So Butler declared of Protestants and Catholics on the island that ‘we should be necessary and complementary to each other like two halves of a broken plate, each concavity matching a convexity, each NO a YES[;] but the two halves will never become one if we try to sandpaper away all the awkward projections, which are necessary to its wholeness’.¹⁵⁶ By definition he felt the ecumenists were incapable of fostering those intimate harmonies he deemed essential to any genuine and lasting communion.

¹⁵⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/142/2 (BP): ‘The Greek Primate Says “No!”’ [undated (c.1960s)].

¹⁵⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/140/1 (BP): ‘Ecumania’ [undated (c.1975)].

There were those who thought Butler's suspicion of ecumenism was peculiar and excessive. His friend Charles Gray-Stack was one, confessing to him in 1961 that 'frankly your tone about ecumenical gatherings str[ikes] me as rather hysterical'.¹⁵⁷ Butler realized that his strong feelings on the subject must appear doubly odd given his lack of orthodox belief, but he maintained that 'if I have to call myself an unbeliever,...I would sooner be the obstructive, acrimonious, anti-ecumenical kind than the urbane and detached kind who is universally respected to-day'.¹⁵⁸ This admission is important, because it makes explicit his tacit assumption that Protestantism consists as much of psychological revulsion as it does creedal refutation. And here it becomes difficult to assess with any precision where Butler's reasoned opposition to Roman Catholicism as a social and intellectual force comes to an end and where a more visceral antipathy for it begins. To himself he was prepared to concede that both operated within Irish Protestant thought:

Our affections and our aversions are emotional, not intellectual. We mostly have an atavistic horror of confessionals[;] the idea of whispering sexy sins to some dim figure behind a lattice and discussing the minutiae of "sin" and "grace" fills me with nausea. This horror reeks of ignorant snobbery; I think of stuffy bedrooms, where the poor lie dying under a picture of the Sacred Heart....The things from which we recoil link Ireland with Europe and with past generations. But our repugnance too has a history behind it, centuries of repudiation to which we cannot be disloyal, without total disintegration and submergence. Indeed through history most of our vigour has come from repudiation.¹⁵⁹

Even as he admits that there are irrational and potentially bigoted aspects to the Protestant distaste for Catholic culture, he does not consider the larger inheritance thereby compromised. Rather, such sentiments are only the natural residue of generations of self-assertion against the relentless forces of authoritarianism. To deny or underrate the intrinsic fighting spirit of Protestantism struck him as a far worse betrayal of the cause. Thus he blurted to Myles Dillon at one point in 1962: '[D]amn it all[,] without professional anti-Catholics none of the heresies and schisms, to

¹⁵⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1416 (BP): Charles Gray-Stack to HMB, 2 July 1961.

¹⁵⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/424/1 (BP): 'Kilkenny Essays' [1967].

¹⁵⁹ MH (Notebook): untitled [blue with red binding; 1973].

which we non-Catholics are so devoted, would have endured a year'.¹⁶⁰ The problem with contemporary Southern Protestants was not just that they were afraid to be openly anti-Catholic; they had also become ashamed of a heritage which required them to be so. 'Many Church of Ireland people...are now anxious to repudiate all kinship with the more vulgar, esoteric or intolerant of the Reformation's children', Butler had observed in 1953. Yet he insisted that 'we cannot do this without falsifying our pedigrees and invalidating the title-deeds of Irish Protestantism'.¹⁶¹ Religious or not, Protestants whose sense of decorum took precedence over their capacity for protest were in his estimation no longer worthy of the name.

Such reasoning was to influence the way Butler responded to the conflict overtaking Northern Ireland in the late sixties. When, for example, the playwright Conor Farrington asked him to sign an open letter to Ulster Protestants testifying to the good treatment minorities received in the Republic, he refused. Not because he necessarily disagreed with the letter's contents, but because he felt the gesture itself was emblematic of Southern Protestants' self-effacement and would send a message contrary to the one Farrington intended.¹⁶² Recalling this minor episode later, he remained adamant that he had been right to decline: 'Imagine Yeats or AE or Plunkett or Douglas Hyde or any of our illustrious dead signing that letter!' he exclaimed. 'They thought of themselves not as a well-treated minority, but as Irishmen'.¹⁶³ By the same token, he also criticized his co-religionists for their haughty dismissal of Ian Paisley, whom he readily agreed was reprehensible in many respects but who was at least standing up for Protestant independence in a way they had signally failed to do. Consequently, in the 1969 piece 'Protestant Timidity' he argued that for Southern Protestants to castigate Paisley was 'like whipping one's

¹⁶⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/523 (BP): HMB to Myles Dillon, 17 May 1962.

¹⁶¹ HMB, 'Stock-taking in the Irish Provinces', *Twentieth Century* 154 (Oct. 1953), 291-2.

¹⁶² TCD, Ms. 10304/597/573 (BP): HMB to Conor Farrington, 23 Sept. 1969.

¹⁶³ HMB, 'A Protestant Predicament', *Hibernia* 25 July 1975, 8. Butler's response was indeed identical to that of W.B. Yeats, who in 1912 refused to sign a public statement penned by a group of Protestant Home Rulers reassuring their recalcitrant Ulster co-religionists of the essential tolerance of Catholics. See R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, I: The Apprentice Mage 1865-1914* (Oxford, 1997), 459.

own leg to counteract the pain' of their community's declining vitality.¹⁶⁴ This conceit drew an irritated response from David Webb of TCD, who questioned Butler's assumption that Protestants across the island were obliged to find common cause by virtue of their shared Reformation heritage. The Troubles in Ulster need not overshadow social progress in the Republic, which is what he thought Butler was advocating by linking the minority's status to that of the Orangemen: 'The fact is that southern Protestants are in real danger of being used as stalking-horses by free-thinkers, embittered Catholics, and those who see life only terms of protests', he wrote. 'Because some things in our society are bad, the idea that *any* might be good is anathema to them; and the one thing they cannot endure is to see people agreeing to differ peaceably'.¹⁶⁵ The problem was that people in the North were obviously not agreeing 'to differ peaceably', and given the extent to which his thirty-two county nationalism was bound up in his secularised conception of Irish Protestantism, it is unsurprising that Butler should insist upon regarding the Northerners' dilemma as inextricably linked to his own. In this sense, his anti-partitionism was not just political and cultural but broadly religious as well.¹⁶⁶

As for the Troubles themselves, Butler was convinced that religious rivalry still constituted the heart of the problem, economic and sociological explanations notwithstanding.¹⁶⁷ This is not to suggest, as some critics have since, that he was therefore naive about or indifferent

¹⁶⁴ HMB, 'Protestant Timidity', *Hibernia* 7 Nov. 1969, 7.

¹⁶⁵ D.A. Webb, 'A Singular Protestant', *Hibernia* 21 Nov. 1969, 7. It is revealing that unlike Butler, Webb described himself as a 'twenty-six county nationalist'.

¹⁶⁶ Arguably Butler's concern with Northern Protestants, at least those of the Church of Ireland variety, also had the force of demographics behind it. By 1970, 50% of all Church of Ireland members lived within 30 miles of Belfast and 73% in Northern Ireland. This was a major shift since the time of Disestablishment, when 54% of the Church's membership lived in the South and 46% in the North. R.P. McDermott, 'The Church of Ireland since Disestablishment', 213-14.

¹⁶⁷ Brian Walker has assessed the ongoing debate as to whether religion is in fact a primary determinant of the divisions in Northern Ireland. He notes that among Ulster Protestants it is often still perceived to be. Brian Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, myth and politics in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996) 34-7, 41-3. More recently, Roy Foster has commented upon the enduring nature of Northern antipathies despite economic equalization and social reform. Roy Foster, 'Something to Hate: Intimate Enmities in Irish History', *Irish Review* 30 (2003), 3.

to other important factors in the make-up of Northern Irish society.¹⁶⁸ On the contrary, according to Maurice Craig it was his determination to place himself imaginatively 'in the shoes of the unpropertied Ulster Protestant' that enabled Butler to move past his instinctive distaste for working-class Orangeism and to appreciate the depth of feeling that lay behind it.¹⁶⁹ Having done so, he could not then agree with Taoiseach Jack Lynch's appraisal that religion was merely a convenient rallying-cry for demagogues like Paisley seeking to advance their personal agendas. Rather, he became convinced that 'Paisley is only the tip of the iceberg. The iceberg won't melt for many years; there is something there to be reckoned with and before then it might easily destroy us'.¹⁷⁰ What had to be reckoned with of course was the near total symbiosis of religion and politics, so that it was futile to attempt to engage with one without also engaging with the other. And while he certainly did not excuse either their ignorance or their extremism, Butler could not bring himself to reject entirely the logic by which Ulster Protestants associated sectarian identity with political predisposition. 'I have been an Irish Nationalist since I was 14 and still believe in unity and dislike Orangeism and the Union Jack', he told an English acquaintance in the early 1970s. 'But in a Catholic dominated country it is fairly useless to talk of democracy and fair play for both sides....If unity was forced on Ireland without some at present improbable total secularisation of government, the northern Protestants will suffer the same slow process of attrition as we [in the South] have suffered'.¹⁷¹ The necessity of 'total secularisation' as the only basis on which Irish Protestantism might survive in the long-term became one of Butler's recurring messages during this period.¹⁷² But as with W.E.H Lecky before him, his commitment to secularization was not fuelled solely by a desire to neutralize the political

¹⁶⁸ See Damian Smyth, 'Illegitimate Aspirations'. *Fortnight* 297 (July-Aug. 1991) 31-2. See also Geoffrey Wheatcroft, 'Messages from a gentle protestant', review of HMB, *In the Land of Nod*, in *TLS* 28 June 1996, 14-15.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Maurice Craig, Dublin, 16 Aug. 2001. Butler himself alluded to this predisposition against Northerners when he remarked in 1971 that 'the Anglo-Irish of the south... have always disliked and belittled the Ulster Protestants'. TCD, Ms.10304/161/7 (BP): 'Mr. Powell and Mr. Paisley' [27 Aug. 1971].

¹⁷⁰ MH (Ms.), untitled/ re Ian Paisley [3pp., undated (c. early 1970s)].

¹⁷¹ MH (Alpha): HMB to Harold Bing, 24 Oct. 1973.

¹⁷² TCD, Ms. 10304/641/306 (BP): HMB to Douglas Gageby, 23 Mar. 1971.

influence of the Catholic Church; he was equally committed to curbing expressions of Protestant chauvinism, a view likely to antagonize those Ulstermen with whom he had personally tried to sympathize in other ways.¹⁷³ To the end of his life, Butler championed a rigid separation of Church and State, frequently invoking the Enlightenment wisdom of the American Constitution as the great precedent upon which Ireland might yet model a unified nation, one in which all religions could proceed both unhindered and unaided by the civil authorities.¹⁷⁴

While Northern Ireland descended into chaos, the social and intellectual life of the Republic had begun to relax and expand. Increased prosperity and the arrival of television contributed to the sense that the South had become a more modern place. In 1967, the Minister for Justice, Brian Lenihan, introduced and ushered into law the Censorship of Publications Act (1967), the culmination of a decade-long process of liberalizing censorship procedures.¹⁷⁵ The same year the Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, proposed a merger between TCD and UCD, a controversial idea that did not proceed but which one commentator nonetheless celebrated as symbolic of 'the new liberal outlook of the Irish Establishment'.¹⁷⁶ During this period there had also been significant revisions to Catholic instruction on mixed marriage, and in 1970 the Vatican issued the encyclical *Motu Proprio*, which allowed for much greater flexibility than had been permitted under *Ne Temere*. The Church of Ireland's House of Bishops issued a statement in August greeting the encyclical as both 'more pastoral and less juridical' than its predecessor but also voicing the hope *Motu Proprio* was an interim document, 'since only a radical rethinking of the subject carried out by both Churches together holds any hope of a

¹⁷³ Lecky argues in his *Democracy and Liberty* that 'there is a broad and intelligible distinction between the right of freely expressing religious or political opinions in churches or meetings to which no one is obliged to come...and the right of expressing them in the public streets, which all men are forced to use, and which are the common property of all'. From this he proceeds to condemn the proselytising practices of certain evangelical Protestants in Southern Ireland as intrusive and disrespectful. W.E.H. Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, 2 vols. (1896; London, 1899), i. 529-30.

¹⁷⁴ MH (Ms.): 'Reagan and the Wall of Separation: A View from Ireland', 6-7 [7pp., c.1981].

¹⁷⁵ Michael Adams, *Censorship*, 120-8, 199.

¹⁷⁶ Michael Sheehy, *Is Ireland Dying?: Culture and the Church in Modern Ireland* (London, 1970), 41. It is important to note, however, that this was not how it was perceived by most within the gates of TCD at the time.

solution'.¹⁷⁷ 1970 likewise saw the lifting of the ban on Catholic students attending Trinity College Dublin without a special dispensation from the Archbishop of Dublin. To some degree the reversal was just a formality, since by this point 1400 of TCD's 4000 students were Catholic. It is significant, however, that the announcement was made by Cardinal Conway rather than by Archbishop McQuaid himself, who had been the primary enforcer of the anti-Trinity policy for three decades.¹⁷⁸ Another person for whom the ban's existence had been of the greatest importance was Owen Sheehy Skeffington, who had long looked forward to seeing it rescinded. There is thus an undeniable poignancy in the fact that Conway's announcement on 25 June came just two and a half weeks after Sheehy Skeffington's untimely death.¹⁷⁹

Hubert Butler felt acutely the loss of his friend and longtime ally in the cause of intellectual freedom.¹⁸⁰ As late as the autumn of 1969 he had written to Sheehy Skeffington that 'I...hope you that you will give me some encouragement and help [me] produce some symposium of dissent', not least because 'we are all getting old and it would be satisfying and good for our successors if we could get as much as we can and as fearlessly as we can of our real points of view down into print'.¹⁸¹ This sense that their generation was nearing the end of its public life was shared by W.B. Stanford, who after two decades in office elected to step down from the Irish Senate the same year.¹⁸² As Butler's remarks to Sheehy Skeffington make clear, though, this passing of the baton did not represent the end to all activity; rather, now he saw it as his responsibility, in the words of Risteárd Ó Glaisne, 'to leave a literary marker' of how they and other dissident thinkers had participated in and contributed to Irish cultural life.¹⁸³ This was especially important to him as a Southern Protestant, since as he remarked to his co-religionist

¹⁷⁷ Church of Ireland House of Bishops, 'Mixed Marriages', *CIM* Aug. 1970, 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid*, 410-12.

¹⁷⁹ Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, *Skeff*, 230.

¹⁸⁰ See the correspondence between HMB and Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, 1970-2: TCD, Mss. 10304/597/1296-1307 (BP).

¹⁸¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1372 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 24 Sept. 1969.

¹⁸² W.B. Stanford, *Memoirs*, 154.

¹⁸³ Interview with Risteárd Ó Glaisne, Dublin, 22 July 2003. I have written elsewhere on Protestant memoir as communal testimony and self-assertion: see Robert Tobin, "'Tracing again the tiny snail track": Southern Protestant Memoir since 1950'. *Yearbook of English Studies* (2005), forthcoming.

Alfred Allen in 1970, 'I am beginning to believe that we are more likely to see what used to be considered the Protestant virtues in the growing number of liberal Catholics than among our own people'.¹⁸⁴ If he felt at all ambivalent about this trend it was not because Butler resented the increased assertiveness of independent Catholics, but because even under the more salubrious circumstances of the sixties and seventies he felt Protestants still preferred to lie low and say nothing. One exception for whom he developed an abiding respect was Victor Griffin, who became Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1969. When in his new post Griffin established himself as a vocal proponent of the Protestant perspective and the cause of pluralism in Ireland, Butler was quick to back him up in his stands.¹⁸⁵ The two men would meet occasionally in Dublin to discuss social questions, particularly ways in which the North might someday be reconciled. And though Butler maintained his scepticism towards the ecumenical movement, he shared Griffin's belief that Christian values must always take precedence over institutional loyalties.¹⁸⁶ So whatever his repudiation of the Catholic Church and its teachings, one also imagines he would have approved of Griffin's invitation to the Jesuit Father Michael Hurley to preach at St. Patrick's in March 1972, the first Roman Catholic priest to do so since the Reformation.¹⁸⁷ After all, a willingness to hear other points of view, however unpalatable, had been one of the essential tenets of his whole career and philosophy.

1972 proved to be a watershed for Ireland. In the North, it began with the Bloody Sunday incident in Derry, and in the South, with the retirement of John Charles McQuaid as Archbishop of Dublin. These events were in some respects emblematic of the direction in which each society was headed.¹⁸⁸ Westminster's sustained involvement in Northern Ireland was ensured by the suspension of the Stormont parliament later in the year, while in the Republic a

¹⁸⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/30 (BP): HMB to Alfred Allen, 5 Mar. 1970.

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, HMB, Letter to the Editor. *Irish Times* 14 Dec. 1971, 13. See also Victor Griffin, *Enough Religion to make us hate: Reflections on religion and politics* (Dublin, 2002), 48.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Victor Griffin, Dublin, 26 Aug. 2001.

¹⁸⁷ Brian Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune*, 84.

¹⁸⁸ John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid*, 428; Marcus Tanner, *Ireland's Holy Wars*, 384.

successful referendum was held to amend Article 44 of the Irish Constitution, thereby deleting the sub-section granting the Catholic Church its 'special position'. Although this gesture did little to assuage Unionist suspicions of the Church's influence, it did represent a victory for pluralists in the twenty-six counties themselves.¹⁸⁹ In the same way, the battle during 1971-73 that led to legalizing the importation of contraceptives may not have revolutionized sexual health in the Republic, but it did signal a milestone in the state's recognition of ethical viewpoints diverging from traditional Catholicism.¹⁹⁰ And here it is worth emphasizing the debt that progressive reformers from the sixties onwards owe to those who in the forties and fifties dared to speak up for liberal values, even when their recognition by the majority was at its most remote. Hubert Butler's contribution to this legacy has not been lost on subsequent commentators, who have placed him alongside Seán O'Faoláin and Owen Sheehy Skeffington as one of the pre-eminent Irish dissidents of the period.¹⁹¹ By the early seventies Butler himself had come to reflect upon what he had brought to the cause of intellectual growth in his native land. Half a century after Gerald Heard had counselled him to give up on Ireland and pursue his life elsewhere, he decided to write his old friend and tell Heard about all the ways he had ignored his advice. In speculating on what had driven him over the years in his various activities and engagements, Butler concluded: 'I think it was mainly to stay on and make things faintly less boring for the next lot. And maybe in this modest aim I have succeeded'.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ J.H. Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland*, 389. As early as September 1969 the Lynch Government had floated the idea of removing the clause of the Irish Constitution which granted the Roman Catholic Church its 'special position', leading Cardinal Conway to make his famous remark that he 'personally would not shed a tear if the relevant sub-sections of Article 44 were to disappear'. *Irish Times* 23 Sept. 1969, 1

¹⁹⁰ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, 73.

¹⁹¹ At the memorial service held for Seán O'Faoláin in 1991, Conor Cruise O'Brien spoke of those 'deeply committed to liberal values and possessing the courage to court unpopularity by publicly defending them at all points where they were challenged or denied. Among those who did that, three names are foremost: Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Hubert Butler and Seán O'Faoláin: an agnostic, a Protestant, and a Catholic. There is a fitness about that'. Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Memorial Address', *Cork Review* (1991), 96. More recently see Julia O'Faolain, 'A snug and needy place', *TLS* 24 Mar. 2000, 16.

¹⁹² MH (Alpha): HMB to Gerald Heard, 7 July 1971. The letter was returned undelivered to its sender.

Six: History, Heritage and Scholarship, 1930-72

Do not persuade yourself that any institution, however great may be its antiquity, however transcendent may have been its uses in the remote past, can permanently justify its existence, unless it can be shown to exercise a really beneficial influence over our own society and our own age. It is equally true that no institution which is exercising such a beneficial influence should be condemned, because it can be shown from history that under other conditions and in other times its influence was rather for evil than for good.

– W.E.H. Lecky, *The Political Value of History*.¹

I. Social transition and the virtues of continuity

In 1960 Hubert Butler published an essay in the short-lived Dublin magazine *nonplus* called ‘Mr Pfeffer of Sarajevo’.² This unassuming but respectful title captures well the tenor of the piece, which pays tribute to an individual who, though almost forgotten now, in Butler’s estimation behaved honourably and courageously at a key moment in modern history. As the anti-Nazi activist Carl von Ossietzky would do later, Pfeffer practiced a non-aligned humanitarianism in the face of powerful institutional forces, assuming the necessary role of ‘a civilian defending the rights of civilians’ (CD.184). In fact, Pfeffer was not just another civilian; he was the examining magistrate at the trial of Gavrilo Princip and the other Serb nationalists who conspired in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo in June 1914. Both as an imperial servant under intense pressure from his masters and as a Croatian Catholic, Pfeffer might well have allowed his court to become a rubberstamp to political expediency. Yet out of commitment to the law and respect for the principled young radicals he was called upon to judge, Pfeffer instead proceeded with absolute rigour, fixing guilt ‘clearly and categorically upon individuals who were ready to shoulder it’. In so doing, observes Butler in his essay, ‘he had tried to dispel the clouds of dark suspicion and vague accusation from which wars arise. He had localized and isolated a crime at a time when the Austro-Hungarian Government, with the

¹ W.E.H. Lecky, *The Political Value of History* (London, 1892), 13-14.

² HMB, ‘Mr Pfeffer of Sarajevo’, *nonplus* 4 (Winter 1960), 33-44. [EA 249-60]

German Empire behind it, was trying to put a whole nation in the dock'.³ Regardless of his efforts Pfeffer was of course unable to stem the tide which precipitated the First World War, and only in the 1930s did he finally provide his version of what had taken place that fateful summer. This remains a crucial record, says Butler, since it was due to Pfeffer's own integrity in the first place that 'the conspirators remain more than mere names carved in marble or woven into patriotic ballads'.⁴ By the same token he argues that while both the Archduke and Princip were at different times commemorated at the bridge where the assassination took place, 'the real tragedy of Sarajevo was never commemorated'. The real tragedy was that 'all through the empire and through Europe there were men of liberal outlook who foresaw the fatal collision and tried in vain to prevent it. Their failure meant the disgrace and finally the extinction of liberalism. If another commemorative monument were ever to be erected on the bridge at Sarajevo', he concludes, 'it ought to be to Mr Leo Pfeffer' (*EA* 250-1, 258).

Despite his inability to alter the course of events, then, what makes a liberal like Pfeffer worth remembering is his attempt to mediate sensitively between the corrupt order he served and the insurgent forces striving to displace it. To Butler, such moderating figures are the unsung heroes of history. In various times and places, these people recognized the necessity for social change and sought to facilitate its peaceful and humane accomplishment. Thus whatever his instinctive sympathy for the modern nation-states born of old imperial regimes, Butler remained deeply unsympathetic to the impulse among them to deny their debt to all preceding their creation. This hubristic desire among post-revolutionary dispensations to believe they had emerged, Athena-like, without precedent or gestation, was not only self-destructive; it was also a cruel distortion of history. For by it the legacy of those privileged but conscientious individuals

³ Pfeffer's handling of the situation was obviously incompatible with the minority policy upon which the Austro-Hungarian state believed its ongoing domination of the Balkans depended. James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (2nd edn; London, 1992), 11.

⁴ Pfeffer's account was first published in installments by Butler's friend Milan Čurcin in the Zagreb-based liberal monthly *Nova Evropa* in 1934 (*EA* 250). It was eventually also published in book form: see L[eo] Pfeffer, *Istraga u Sarajevskom Atentatu* (Zagreb, 1938).

who in former days had worked for the betterment of their fellows was repudiated.⁵ Writing in 1951, Butler therefore recalled that before dogmatists like V.I. Lenin came along there had been ebullient visionaries like Alexander Pushkin, who in spite of his elite position nonetheless yearned 'to overthrow the tyranny of the Tsar and bring freedom to the Russian people' (*LN* 172). Admittedly, the piecemeal and incremental reformism of earlier generations proved inadequate when confronted by the extreme conditions characterizing twentieth-century Europe.⁶ Yet even as he recognizes as much in his essay on Pfeffer, Butler was adamant that this inadequacy does not nullify, anymore than does the subsequent amnesia of revolutionaries, the real and unique contribution made by establishment progressives. So when later contemplating the revolution that had transformed Russia, he could not help but regret that 'the dumb masses, who initiated nothing, not even their own emancipation, were able to thrust aside the liberally-minded intelligentsia'. Without this group it seemed to him that all the promises of deliverance had simply resulted in one gross tyranny replacing another. This was because unlike the liberal dissidents they supplanted, the Communist apparatchiks were constrained by 'the leaden apathy and suspicion of those who do not know how to handle freedom because they have never enjoyed it'.⁷ Acquisition of power had not conferred upon them a discerning and flexible sensibility, and as the essay 'Peter's Window' testifies, the Russian counterparts of Leo Pfeffer were unable to play their reconciling part.

More than the practical question of how best to manage political transitions, though, what concerned Butler was the cultural dilemma of how the accumulated confidence and sophistication of a passing order should devolve upon the one succeeding it. As both a scion of the Protestant Ascendancy and an Irish nationalist, plainly he had a personal investment in the way this vexed issue was approached. At stake was not only the content of his own intellectual heritage and the

⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/91 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'When there is a social revolution...' [undated (1940s?)].

⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-91* (New York, 1994), 135-41.

⁷ HMB, 'Russia's Decline and Fall', review of Edward Crankshaw, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace: The Drift to Revolution*, in *Irish Times* 21 Aug. 1976, 8.

preservation of its institutional and material manifestations but also the manner in which that heritage was to be represented in the historical narrative of the nation. And while he believed it should be possible to differentiate what was worthy about the past from what was not, he also appreciated the psychological barriers a newly liberated people must overcome before doing so:

Those who have not had privileges see their oppressor [as] all of a piece different from themselves and impossible to analyse [as a] common man. They succeed in destroying and supplanting their oppressor but they cannot assimilate him. They don't really believe what I think is true, that fastidious, intelligent, critical people can be bred out of the oppressed and impoverished in a couple of generations. As a result they disparage the gifts they don't believe they can ever attain....And so there seems to be a pleasure in offering insults to Italian gardens and classical porticoes and ornamental summerhouses, a hatred of noble beech trees and smooth lawns.⁸

Of course, since Irish Independence, there had been official attempts to supersede this detested legacy by reviving the 'authentic' language and customs of the people, and unlike many of his co-religionists, Butler was not in theory opposed to such efforts. Yet what troubled him more than the idea of such initiatives was the disingenuousness and complacency that characterized them in practice. For even as all things Anglo-Irish were routinely condemned, he nonetheless detected in Éire a reflexive anglocentrism to which the Ascendancy itself would never have fallen prey. In an unpublished piece from the late forties called 'Ignorance and Moujik Government', he writes how 'everything has its day and it is time for a new Ireland, Irish and democratic. I agree[,] but where is it?....The elaborate government-sponsored schemes to create a distinctive Irish culture have completely failed. We are more wedded to Anglo-Saxon civilisation than we have ever been'. Meanwhile, he continues, the Anglo-Irish have been replaced by a new species he terms 'Celto-Saxons', Irishmen who have no critical attitude to English culture at all:

They are as unfastidious and as supine as drain-pipes. Their function seems to be carry to us the overflow and the scum of Anglo-Saxon civilisation and to deposit it profitably in Ireland. They vote for an Irish Republic and the revival of the Irish language and rejoice over the downfall of the ascendancy class, but when they build cinemas and dance halls, they call them 'The Mayfair', 'The Savoy', 'The Regent'. The films they prefer are

⁸ MH (Ms.): untitled/ re St. Patrick's Day and Irish belonging, 6-7 [8pp., c.1948]. Butler's phrasing here is strikingly reminiscent of the 'Ancestral Houses' section of Yeats's 'Meditations in Time of Civil War'. W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems* (London, 1979), 225-6.

about rich American socialites and their favourite fiction, if you are to judge from the catalogue of our county library, concerns the problems of English heiresses.⁹

Whatever their manifold shortcomings, Butler elsewhere concludes, the Anglo-Irish were always sufficiently self-assured in their relations with England to see through its pretensions and resist its vulgarities (*GW* 58). Only when it had developed a similar assurance would the Irish majority be able to make the same distinctions and realize its true nature with equanimity.

Predictably, Butler believed that he and other nationally-minded Protestants still had a crucial contribution to make in this process of maturation. Not only did they possess a natural capacity for distinguishing the wheat from the chaff in the Anglo-Irish inheritance, but by their very presence they embodied the possibility of historical continuity. This conviction did not mean, however, that Butler wished to whitewash the past or exaggerate the achievements of his tribe. 'I don't overestimate the virtues of the Anglo-Irish', he insisted in 'Ignorance and Moujik Government'. 'Often they were far stupider and more malicious than their gardeners, but in their fine libraries and schools, which have mostly perished or decayed with them, they owned the machinery for mending themselves and for reconciling opposites'.¹⁰ Once Irish history started being written in a way almost wholly blind to such discriminations, Butler felt obliged to reassert the complexities of the Anglo-Irish tradition. In recalling at one stage the benevolence of a particular Ascendancy figure, he therefore argued that 'a lucid mind should still be able to recognize what was good in the old system and disentangle it from the bullying and toadyism in which it was embedded' (*GW* 119). Arnold Marsh made a similar plea on behalf of nuance and moderation in 1944 when he encouraged his compatriots to accept that 'even a drastic acceptance of the new ways need not involve a total expurgation of the old. Our task is not either to rebuff the changes or to think that they are everything, but to fit them into the places that suit them, and to go on living'.¹¹ Monk Gibbon likewise testified to the necessity of assimilating the past for the

⁹ MH (Ms.): 'Ignorance and Moujik [Muzhik] Government', 5-6 [9pp., undated (late 1940s)].

¹⁰ 'Ignorance and Moujik [Muzhik] Government', 2.

¹¹ TCD, Ms. 8325/iv-v (Marsh Papers): *A Dynamic Democracy* [unpublished, Jan. 1944].

sake of the present, warning in another context that ‘without a sense of continuity, without an awareness that humanity buys its experience down the centuries, the minds of men quickly become *déracinés*’.¹² Even Elizabeth Bowen, who more than once voiced her suspicion of the modern propensity for nostalgia, nonetheless perceived the intrinsic advantages to preserving social institutions.¹³

As Butler was well aware, though, the promotion and acceptance of continuity as a principle did not preclude certain practical difficulties in its application. Writing in 1948 about his visit to Yugoslavia after the Second World War, he recounted the experience of trying to visit the civic museum in the town of Fiume: ‘It is “closed for repairs”, but a knock at the door brings out a baffled, exasperated scholar with a three-days’ beard. All around him in dumps on the floor lies the wreckage of history, once thought glorious, now dishonourable. What is to be done with all these photographs, busts, pictures, manuscripts, Austrian, Hungarian, Italian?’ Such a scene demonstrates in symbolic but tangible form the challenges that new societies face in consolidating their past and underlines the sensitivity required to do so effectively. It also confirms Butler in his belief that ‘the modern Yugoslav, like the modern Irishman, must, now that he is free, acknowledge the rich cultural deposit left by the invader. Only by such generosity of spirit can the long years of human tragedy and loss be made good in the future’ (*GW* 204-5).¹⁴ Yet even in Kilkenny, where he knew such generosity was in steady supply among his Catholic neighbours, Butler recognized this negotiation was ongoing and could excite passions that seemed disproportionate to the issues at hand. When in the 1950s, for example, a zealous if belated campaign was launched to remove a bust of W.E. Gladstone from the Tholsel [City Hall],

¹² Monk Gibbon, *Austria* (London, 1953), 17.

¹³ Elizabeth Bowen, ‘The Cult of Nostalgia’, *The Listener* 9 Aug. 1951, 225. Bowen is at pains to make this point in her somewhat overblown tribute to Dublin’s Shelbourne Hotel: see Elizabeth Bowen, *The Shelbourne* (1951; London, 2001), 155.

¹⁴ One Yugoslav who actively sought to facilitate the transitional process was the poet Vladimir Nazor, who during the Second World War took to the hills with Tito’s Partisans. In reading Nazor’s diary from this time, Butler admits he often finds ‘embarrassing’ the old bourgeois poet’s stilted efforts at relating to the young revolutionaries, but he admires Nazor nonetheless for trying ‘sincerely to interpret the virtues of the old world in which he grew up in terms of the new, and...to save a good many venerable but discredited idols from the first fury of the iconoclasts’ (*CD* 23).

he quickly perceived that this urge towards iconoclasm had little to do with the present-day realities of people's lives. Rather, the bust was simply indicative of 'a large class of ancient symbols, political, national, religious[,] which are completely out of touch with our thoughts and yet can still destroy our happiness'. If continuity was about knowing how to preserve what was valuable from bygone days, it was also about appreciating the power of historical grievance and finding suitable ways to dispense with the inappropriate and the extraneous. Juggling these priorities was not easy, leading Butler to reiterate that 'the exorcism of these anachronisms needs knowledge and faith as well as skill'.¹⁵

A certain generosity of spirit might be required of all modern Irishmen for the sake of the future, but it still fell to Anglo-Irish Protestants to come to terms with the sins committed by their fathers in the past. Before 1922, many in the minority had of course anticipated that Home Rule would mean 'Rome Rule', that with Independence they would suffer a reversal of those oppressions their ancestors had once visited upon Catholics.¹⁶ That the modern Irish state instead protected the Protestant community is a fact that should not be ignored or downplayed, but neither can it be used to tell the whole story. There existed a variety of informal and unsanctioned ways in which the minority was penalized for the past, which may help explain why Protestants became so adept at keeping their heads down and avoiding confrontation.¹⁷ Conversely, it is obvious that this collective strategy of withdrawal was primarily about self-preservation and not fuelled by any conscious urge towards repentance. When not actively bitter about their changed condition, Protestants appear to have resigned themselves to it and been grateful its effects were not any more severe. The prominent churchman Dudley Fletcher captured this feeling well when he reflected in 1933 that, given what they had earlier feared, the minority had few grounds for serious complaint: '[A]fter all, cricket is cricket. We had a very

¹⁵ MH (Ms.): untitled/ re controversy in Kilkenny over Gladstone's bust, 4-5 [6pp., undated (1950s)].

¹⁶ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, 17.

¹⁷ Simon Hewat, 'The Protestant Minority in Ireland', *CIM* June 1967, 11-13.

long innings, and no fair-minded man will object to the other side's having its innings too'.¹⁸

With a different emphasis but essentially the same message, Dean George Seaver later conceded that Catholics often dwelt on the historical transgressions of the Ascendancy to the exclusion of its merits, but Protestants must still be thankful that 'the sins of the fathers have not been visited upon the children. Our fellow-countrymen of the Roman Communion have shown themselves to be charitable and forgiving when they might have been vindictive'.¹⁹ For the Rev. Fred Rea, though, such sentiments did not go far enough in confronting the real issue. Writing in *Focus* in 1959, he was at once more confident and more severe on the subject than his fellow clergy, arguing that Protestants must 'face facts and recognise with humility that today we are reaping where our forefathers have sowed....Can we honestly say that we have accepted the historical justice of our dilemma? Have we yet sloughed off the old ascendancy spirit[?]'²⁰ More than merely repeating expressions of resignation or gratitude, then, the minority must begin to engage actively with questions of historical responsibility. Only by doing so would it be able to enter fully into the discourse of the new nation.

For Hubert Butler, such an effort was likewise indivisible from making effective arguments on behalf of continuity. For just as the Catholic majority must overcome its blanket hostility to the Anglo-Irish legacy, so Protestants must fully appreciate what was bad about that legacy before they could make a compelling case for what was good. Where to draw the line between the two was not always clear; Butler observed in 1954 that 'England is now ashamed of the racial arrogance and rapacity, the penal laws and the tithes, of her colonists in Ireland; and we, their heirs, are often uncertain what to apologize for, what to defend'.²¹ Nor was this the only difficulty facing those who might wish to confront the sins of the fathers in the interests of reconciliation. The static and self-referential nature of Catholic folk memory also

¹⁸ *CIG* 24 Mar. 1933, 172.

¹⁹ *CIG* 14 Dec. 1951, 12.

²⁰ Fred B. Rea, 'Protestantism in the Day of Small Things', *Focus* June 1959, 15.

²¹ HMB, "'We are the People of Burke...'", 429.

stood as a major obstacle to any systematic evaluation of the Irish past. For as Geoffrey Taylor observed in 1952, 'what is in most of Western Christendom the main historical period, we have, instead of history...only an enormous contemporaneousness – an ageless era from Henry the Second to the Heroic Defence of the Post Office, during which Time is without structure'.²² The majority's determination to keep a firm grip on the narrative of communal suffering and redemption might work in favour of memorializing the past but obviously discouraged attempts to lend it specificity or context.²³ This propensity for 'timeless' history likewise meant that Protestants who might somehow wish to repent for historic wrongs found that these had no fixed endpoint in the popular consciousness and thus could never be adequately atoned for.²⁴

Unsurprisingly, the sense of being trapped in an unremitting cycle of historical recrimination – a particularly Protestant form of the Joycean nightmare – served to exacerbate defensiveness in the minority rather than promote increased candour.²⁵ So while the *Church of Ireland Gazette* could announce in 1953 that 'we do not pretend that our Anglo-Irish forefathers were perfect', it was quick to complain that 'far too much pseudo-history' was being written about them, and only 'for polemical purposes with a cynical disregard for historical perspective'.²⁶ Be their motives cynical or sincere, though, Butler was less interested in castigating his fellow Irishmen than in persuading them to abandon their circular and ultimately futile relationship with history. 'It as though we were on a scenic railway in a fun-fair', he later wrote of it. 'We pass through towering cardboard mountains and over raging torrents and come to rest in the same well-trodden field from which we got on board' (EA 7). Whatever the immediate necessity of assigning blame to the Anglo-

²² Geoffrey Taylor, *The Emerald Isle* (London, 1952), 13.

²³ Ian McBride, 'Introduction: memory and national identity in modern Ireland', in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. I. McBride (Cambridge, 2001), 41.

²⁴ Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind*, 7.

²⁵ Even those fully committed to teaching Irish history to Protestant children voiced frustration at the wholly negative representation of the Anglo-Irish tradition in school textbooks. See Eileen F. Webster, 'History in Our Schools', *The Bell* 7:3 (Dec. 1943), 192-200. See also Alan Meaghey, *The Irish Protestant Churches in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2000), 111.

²⁶ CIG 19 June 1953, 1.

Irish, he felt it was this closed loop in their own psychology that the majority must someday overcome.

Yet if the Catholic mind tended towards a cyclical conception of the past, then the Protestant mind had always demonstrated an equally strong desire to view it as linear and progressive. Certainly this preference is discernible in one of the central ecclesiological claims of the Church of Ireland, that it represented the true descendent of the ancient Celtic Church. ‘The Church of Ireland is the most Irish thing there is in Ireland’, affirmed Archbishop Gregg in 1932, while the Rev. F.H. Kinch explained that ‘the present Roman Mission dates from A.D. 1614. It is an Italian-run Mission, both un-Irish and un-Apostolic in its character’.²⁷ Such a vigorous assertion of the Church’s rootedness (and Catholicism’s lack thereof) clearly derived from an ongoing need to justify its anomalous position in Ireland, and particularly after Disestablishment Protestant apologetics sometimes assumed what Risteárd Ó Glaisne has labelled a tone of ‘unedifying truculence’.²⁸ In 1892, for example, Thomas Olden conceded that even though the Church of Ireland had frequently allied itself to a foreign and often corrupt power, it nonetheless had been the victim of both misunderstanding and disloyalty by the Irish masses, who proved ‘unable to discern her true character and her rightful claims to their allegiance’.²⁹ In upholding the coherence of a tradition Protestants claimed for their own, W.S. Kerr later argued that the Celtic Church had retained independence from Rome for over two centuries after its founding.³⁰ Likewise F.R. Bolton reiterated the assertions of purity made by the Caroline divines on the grounds that it had been Rome – not the Church of Ireland – which had obtruded innovations into Irish Christianity, thereby violating the councils of the primitive church.³¹

²⁷ CIG 21 October 1932, 611. F.H. Kinch, *Should I Join the Church of Rome?* (Dublin, 1937), 8. See also J.W. Camier, *The Representative of the Church of St. Patrick (The Church of Ireland or the Church of Rome – Which?)* (Dublin, 1937).

²⁸ Alan Ford et al., ‘Preface’, in A. Ford et al. (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland Since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995) vii. Risteárd Ó Glaisne, *To Irish Protestants* (Dublin, 1991), 55.

²⁹ Thomas Olden, *The Church of Ireland* (London, 1892), 403-4.

³⁰ W.S. Kerr, *The Independence of the Celtic Church in Ireland* (London, 1931), 36-43.

³¹ F.R. Bolton, *The Caroline Tradition of the Church of Ireland* (London, 1958), 55.

Why these matters should be urgent to James Ussher and his seventeenth-century colleagues as they sought to shore up the Reformation in Ireland is plain enough. More remarkable, though, is the degree to which questions of authenticity and continuity remained a preoccupation for the Church of Ireland into the twentieth century.³² In 1945 H.R. McAdoo was moved to write the pamphlet *No New Church*, in which he fiercely rebuts the idea that Protestantism is merely the negation of Catholicism and the Church of Ireland a pretentious novelty. ‘Setting aside the fact that reformation does not mean making some new thing’, he writes, ‘we may look at our Church and ask how or where it is new? Certainly not in its structure, or in the substance of its liturgy, or in its teaching’.³³ Even if one accepts the substance of McAdoo’s argument here, it is impossible to ignore how he tries to downplay the profound historical disjunction that the Reformation signifies. In this instance, at least, the claim to an uninterrupted Protestant lineage is as transparently polemical as the Catholic insistence upon repetition and timelessness. In both cases, the function of the mythic narrative is to exclude the reality and complexity of the other side’s experience in the ongoing effort to legitimate one’s own.³⁴ Maurice Craig summed up this state of affairs well when he wrote in 1948 that ‘Irish history is a series of new beginnings, each claiming historical continuity, and each pretending that its predecessor never really happened’.³⁵

II. Protestant historiography: sectarian apologetics versus cultural conciliation

Keeping Maurice Craig’s remark in mind, it is no wonder Protestant and Catholic apologists alike became fixated with proving that St. Patrick, ostensibly Ireland’s first Christian, was a figure sympathetic to their own theology and churchmanship. If this could be demonstrated, all other claims to originality were automatically invalid. The Church of Ireland’s efforts to establish Patrick as its founder-advocate began with Archbishop Ussher’s *A Discourse*

³² Alan Ford, ‘James Ussher and the creation of an Irish protestant identity’, 196, 209. See also Norman Vance, *Irish Literature*, 40-56.

³³ H.R. McAdoo, *No New Church* (Dublin, 1945), 30.

³⁴ See T.W. Moody, ‘Irish History and Irish Mythology’, 71-86.

³⁵ Maurice Craig, *The Volunteer Earl* (London, 1948), 250.

of the Religion Anciently Professed by the Irish and the British (1622/1631), which supplied the basic premises much future argumentation was built upon. The abiding influence of Ussher's work did not mean, however, that Protestant representations of Patrick became fixed in stone. In the eighteenth century, for example, he evolved increasingly into a 'rational enlightened saint' whose teachings upheld the state, a figure who reflected the minority's need to justify a Protestant Constitution in an Irish context and an age of reason.³⁶ Patrician images were to be even more aggressively and anachronistically Protestant in the nineteenth century, when rival Catholic hagiography reasserted itself.³⁷ One scholar who tried to bypass the sectarian debate was J.B. Bury, whose 1905 *Life of St. Patrick* posited a saint who had been neither Catholic nor Protestant but a 'bearer of the Roman *idea*'. As the latter, Patrick and his mission had been part and parcel of the larger imperial project emanating from Rome, to which the early Church had become inextricably linked.³⁸ Yet even as Bury did not seek to advance a specific religious agenda, his interpretation tacitly commended empire as a civilizing force, a view which had clear implications for the context in which he wrote.³⁹ For Hubert Butler, this sort of ideological manipulation reached new depths on St. Patrick's Day 1948, when the saint was enlisted in platform speeches across Ireland as a mascot in the Catholic fight against Communism. Such a conceit was absurd for many reasons, he afterwards observed, but chiefly because it inadvertently highlighted just how little was actually known about Patrick, that he could be appropriated for almost any purpose. So Butler concluded that while Irish Catholics found it convenient to use their patron saint to advocate liberal capitalism, 'he might equally well be used like St. Alexander Nevski, the patron saint of Russia, to forward the ideas of Lenin and Marx'.⁴⁰

³⁶ Bridget McCormack, *Perceptions of St Patrick in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), 97.

³⁷ Jacqueline R. Hill, 'National festivals, the state and "protestant ascendancy" in Ireland, 1790-1829', *IHS* 24 (May 1984), 50.

³⁸ J.B. Bury, *The Life of St. Patrick and His Place in History* (1905; Mineola, NY, 1998) xi-xii.

³⁹ R.B. McDowell, *Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists* (Dublin, 1997), 21-2.

⁴⁰ MH (Ms.): untitled/ regarding St. Patrick's Day and Irish belonging, 1.

Undoubtedly the last great set-piece in the battle between Protestants and Catholics regarding St. Patrick was in 1932, the year both churches recognized as the fifteen-hundredth anniversary of his arrival in Ireland. The Vatican's decision to hold an international Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in honour of the occasion confirmed Catholics in their Patrician claims and provided them an opportunity to celebrate the triumph of their sectarian-nationalist vision. And whether they did so consciously or not, the Free State's political leaders effectively gave its endorsement to these claims when they openly partook of the festivities.⁴¹ In the face of this mass mobilization Protestants had meanwhile undertaken their own, more modest program of commemoration. Key to this effort was the preparation of a multi-volume history of the Church of Ireland, a venture instigated by Archbishop Gregg and entrusted to W.A. Phillips, Lecky Professor of History at TCD. When first explaining to Phillips what he had in mind, Gregg wrote that 'such a history would have to emanate from men writing from the standpoint of the C. of I., but at the same time it would be of no use to us if it were chargeable with mere partisanship'.⁴² Yet while Phillips busied himself commissioning scholars to work on the *History*, Gregg remained concerned with the strategic part its publication might play in the anticipated war of words with the Catholics. He requested that Phillips strive for an autumn 1932 release date, believing this would 'not be altogether inappropriate, psychologically. The drums beat during that year, after the spring publishing season – accordingly, if after the offensive has taken place we come in with our reply, there is less fear of its being ignored or swamped than if the other side has all the field to itself to demonstrate in'.⁴³

In the event, the *History* was officially launched at the Church of Ireland's Commemoration Conference, held at Mansion House from 11-14 October 1932.⁴⁴ Recalling the

⁴¹ David Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration in the Irish Free State: a chronicle of embarrassment', in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. I. McBride (Cambridge, 2001), 187.

⁴² RCB, Ms. 60/37 (Phillips Papers): J.A.F. Gregg to W.A. Phillips, 1 Oct. 1929.

⁴³ RCB, Ms. 60/46 (Phillips Papers): J.A.F. Gregg to W.A. Phillips, 22 Mar. 1930.

⁴⁴ See *The Church of Ireland A.D. 432-1932 (The Report of the Church of Ireland Conference held in Dublin, 11th-14th October, 1932)*, eds. W. Bell and N.D. Emerson (Dublin, 1932).

mandate he had received when he began, Phillips proudly confirmed in his editorial preface that the finished product made for 'a reasoned defence of the claim of the Church of Ireland to be, both institutionally and in all the essential articles of the Catholic faith, the legitimate successor of the Church founded by St. Patrick and the early Irish saints'.⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, this was not how it was received by the Catholic press, who immediately dismissed it as little more than 'an overgrown party pamphlet'.⁴⁶ What is surely even more significant is how quickly the premise of the *History* came to be regarded as obsolete by Protestant apologists themselves. By 1961, when the anniversary of Patrick's death was observed, the tone of Church of Ireland pronouncements on the saint had shifted dramatically. Gone was the tendency Joseph Hone had recorded in 1932, whereby churchmen had pressed Patrick's non-Romanism to the point that he acquired 'something of the character of an Ulster dissenter'.⁴⁷ Now, Church historians joined sceptics like Hubert Butler in accepting that rhetorical claims about early Irish Christianity were futile and that Patrician scholarship must no longer be used merely to bolster *a priori* assumptions.⁴⁸ So it was that N.D. Emerson, who had taken part in the proceedings thirty years earlier, could then announce to a Protestant gathering in 1963 that as far as Patrick was concerned, 'all is fluid; all is confusion. This is excellent. At long last the laws of evidence and the laws of criticism are being allowed fully play'. Furthermore, Emerson stressed, it was important for Christians of all persuasions to understand that the debate over Patrick was 'not a matter of saving faith or of revealed religion or of Protestant or Catholic truth; it is a bit of 5th century history – interesting but not vitally important to anyone'.⁴⁹ Having for generations been taken as a lynchpin in the

⁴⁵ W.A. Phillips, 'Editorial Preface', in W.A. Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland*, 3 vols. (London, 1933), i. vii.

⁴⁶ Donal MacEgan, 'Alison Phillips and His Parsons: Disasters to the T.C.D. Light Infantry', *Catholic Bulletin* 24 (Oct. 1934), 811.

⁴⁷ J.M. Hone, *Ireland since 1922* (London, 1932), 16.

⁴⁸ T.W. Moody, 'Irish History and Irish Mythology', 72-3.

⁴⁹ N.D. Emerson, 'St. Patrick: A Survey of Some Present-day Opinions', in *The Celtic Church: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Church of Ireland Diocese of Limerick (Limerick, 1963), 17.

whole sectarian debate, suddenly the saint had been relegated to the status of an academic plaything.

This rapid makeover was, at least in part, indicative of the larger changes Irish historiography had been undergoing since the late 1930s. What Alan Ford calls the ‘incestuous fusion of theology, history and prejudice’ in which Protestants and Catholics had traditionally indulged was thereafter subjected to close scrutiny by a new generation of historians determined to assert the integrity of their discipline.⁵⁰ The methodological revolution that T.W. Moody, Robin Dudley Edwards and others effected in the process would permanently alter the historical discourse in Ireland.⁵¹ Yet it is worth asking whether a definably Protestant sensibility still persisted among some of the scholars who were participants in this movement. Donald Akenson detected as much when reviewing R.B. McDowell’s book on the Church of Ireland, which he suggested might itself someday serve as ‘a historical document...indicating both the abilities and the limits of the Anglican mind in our times’.⁵² More broadly, J.W. Foster has claimed that from Lecky right up to the present day there has been a propensity among Protestant historians to take ‘the Olympian view, the magisterial overview’ in their work, emblematic of the ‘panoptic’ stance the Anglo-Irish have assumed towards Ireland all along.⁵³ Seamus Deane has noted another predilection among Protestant writers since Lecky, that of interpreting Irish history as ‘a tragic theatre’ in which a succession of Anglo-Irish heroes have struggled in vain ‘to unite the culture of intellect with the emotion of multitude, or, in political terms, constitutional politics with the forces of revolution’.⁵⁴ One might quarrel with the particulars of these judgments, but what they point to is a distinctly Protestant urge to gather together the disparate and un-reconciled features

⁵⁰ Alan Ford, “‘Standing one’s ground’: religion, polemic and Irish history since the Reformation”, in A. Ford et al. (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland Since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), 12.

⁵¹ See F.S.L. Lyons, ‘T.W.M’, in F.S.L. Lyons and R.A.J. Hawkins (eds.), *Ireland under the Union: Essays in honour of T.W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), 1-35. See also Ciaran Brady, “‘Constructive and Instrumental’: The Dilemma of Ireland’s First ‘New Historians’”, in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin, 1994), 3-31.

⁵² Donald Akenson, untitled review of R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland 1869-1969*, in *New Divinity* 6:2 (Winter 1975), 141.

⁵³ John Wilson Foster, ‘Strains in Irish Intellectual Life’, 78.

⁵⁴ Seamus Deane, ‘Heroic Styles: the tradition of an idea’, 48.

of Irish experience into a narrative form that is at once comprehensive and comprehensible. In this respect, the work of some modern Protestant historians might be said to reflect the mediating impulses characteristic of Anglicanism. That this should likewise lead them to emphasize the conciliatory aspects within the Anglo-Irish tradition itself is only to be expected. For as Ian d'Alton commented when noting how those studying Southern Protestant history are frequently its products, 'whether we like it or not, we stitch ourselves into the very process of explanation'.⁵⁵

Two historians whose identification with the Anglo-Irish Protestant perspective proved central to the evolution of their thought were J.C. Beckett and F.S.L. Lyons. Both were associated with the Moody-Edwards dispensation and eventually entered the front rank of Irish scholarship by producing general histories that even today are standard texts.⁵⁶ Fundamental to their endeavours was the conviction that historical objectivity might be unattainable but must remain the standard at all times; so Lyons could insist that in recalling bygone events, 'our business is not to praise or to blame, but to understand – always, and above everything, to understand'.⁵⁷ In the same way, Beckett aspired to be the quintessential moderate with 'no axes to grind' in his appraisals of Irish history.⁵⁸ Fuelling this confident attitude seems to have been a belief that the virtues of reasonableness and reconciliation they both associated with the Anglo-Irish tradition could somehow be brought to bear upon the divided Ireland of their own day. But as both men confronted the fact that the island was actually becoming more and not less polarized, they were gripped by what might be deemed a uniquely Anglican form of intellectual despair. In Beckett's *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* and Lyons's *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland*, books written at a time of renewed extremism in the North, the old Anglo-Irish talent for

⁵⁵ Ian d'Alton, 'A Perspective upon Historical Process', 89-90.

⁵⁶ See J.C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923* (London, 1966); and F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London, 1971).

⁵⁷ F.S.L. Lyons, 'The Meaning of Independence', in *The Irish Parliamentary Tradition*, ed. B. Farrell (Dublin, 1973), 223.

⁵⁸ Alvin Jackson, 'J.C. Beckett: politics, faith, scholarship', *IHS* 33 (Nov. 2002), 144-5.

compromise is openly celebrated and its current displacement freely mourned.⁵⁹ Seeking refuge in a sometimes idealized version of the Protestant past, these *cris de coeur* do not question the potential of gradualism and melioration so much as the capacity of Irish people to profit by them. About *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland* Lyons thus confessed to Hubert Butler that ‘a valedictory strain...was certainly much in my mind when I wrote it’, adding that ‘to the up-and-coming “new Irish” it is of course either incomprehensible or shocking or both, but that bothers me not at all’.⁶⁰ The disillusioned but defiant tone of this remark bespeaks the quandary in which Lyons and Beckett alike found themselves. As sceptical but essentially progressively-minded Irishmen, they lived in a present which appeared determined to learn nothing from the past, thereby reminding them daily just how little the wisdom of their own tradition had been heeded.

The tendency to idealize aspects of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy was even more pronounced among other Protestant writers. That they had long done so is undeniable; repeatedly one observes in their autobiographies and memoirs the positing of a ‘prelapsarian national life’ which, depending on the account, came to an unhappy end with the Union, Disestablishment, Independence, or some other pivotal moment.⁶¹ The eighteenth century in particular has occupied a golden place in the Protestant historical imagination at least since Lecky, a preference to which Yeats gave his blessing when he christened it the ‘one Irish century that escaped darkness and confusion’.⁶² Though the poet is hardly renowned for his dispassionate readings of Irish history, his judgment here reflects the perception common among Protestants that this was a time when they were not only politically and economically dominant but also culturally at their most vital.⁶³

⁵⁹ J.C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition*, 152-3; and F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy*, 2.

⁶⁰ MH (Alpha): F.S.L. [Leland] Lyons to HMB, 31 May 1980. Roy Foster has recently commented upon the ‘saturnine doubt’ that crept into Lyons’s outlook in the 1970s. See “‘Colliding Cultures’: Leland Lyons and the Reinterpretation of Irish History”, in R.F. Foster, *The Irish Story*, 37-57.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Grubgeld, ‘Anglo-Irish Autobiography and the Genealogical Mandate’, *Éire/Ireland* 32+33 (1997-8), 108. See also Seamus Deane, ‘Autobiography and Memoirs, 1890-1988’, in S. Deane et al., *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry, 1991), iii. 380-3; and R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 582.

⁶² W.B. Yeats, *Wheels and Butterflies* (New York, 1935), 7.

⁶³ D.T. Torchiana, *W.B. Yeats and Georgian Ireland* (1966; Washington, D.C., 1992) xix. See also R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life*, II, 424-6.

So Brian Fitzgerald could admit that the early Ascendancy had consisted of ‘ruthless colonizing capitalists’, while simultaneously contending ‘these were great men, and it is a mark of our littleness if we affect to despise them’.⁶⁴ Such logic was unlikely to impress Catholics, however, who generally regarded the eighteenth century as the most oppressive and humiliating on record.

One scholar who laboured to complicate this picture of Georgian Ireland was the Trinity historian Constantia Maxwell. She opens her 1936 book *Dublin under the Georges* by acknowledging that for a long time the Protestant Ascendancy ‘has been in bad odour in Ireland’ and concedes that poverty and subjection were frequent in the eighteenth century. But she goes on to assert there were ‘healthy political, social and economic forces at work ...which might have combined to produce a united, prosperous and contented nation, had it not been these were thwarted or destroyed by the policy adopted at the Union’.⁶⁵ In her follow-up book, *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges*, Maxwell provides further evidence to support her claim that the ingredients necessary to Ireland’s ultimate success were all present under the pre-Union Ascendancy. Of the Anglo-Irish elite she therefore asserts that even as they were the wealthiest and most powerful people in the country, ‘they were also the most progressive. Despite their faults, which were those of their class and period, there were many good landlords and public-spirited philanthropists among them’.⁶⁶ By assiduously cataloguing the various expressions of enlightenment and virtue among these people, Maxwell, Butler and others sought to restore some credibility to an age that had since fallen into disgrace among their compatriots. In so doing they were also able to reinforce their own fonder image of it as the time before the Protestant tradition lost its way.

Instances of this recovery effort are many and revealing. Writing in 1943, for example, Robert Wyse Jackson recalled the impoverished and eccentric Trinity don Jacky Barrett, whose

⁶⁴ Brian FitzGerald, *The Anglo-Irish: Three Representative Types – Cork, Ormonde, Swift, 1602-1745* (London, 1952), 11-12.

⁶⁵ Constantia Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges, 1714-1830*. 1936 (1936; rev. edn., London, 1956), 16.

⁶⁶ Constantia Maxwell, *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges* (1940; rev. edn., Dundalk, 1949), 7.

‘one-sided genius’ he believed had only flourished because of the unusual tolerance and sophistication of eighteenth-century society.⁶⁷ In 1947 Geoffrey Taylor similarly paid homage to the man-of-letters Henry Brooke, who preferred ‘the life of quiet...amongst the peasantry of Rural Ireland to the polished society of Pope’. Taylor draws special attention to Brooke’s 1762 treatise the *Tryal of the Roman Catholics* [sic], which he avers ‘must be one of the earliest instances of open opposition to these laws on the part of a Protestant Episcopalian’. As a Protestant in the patriotic mould, Taylor clearly considers Brooke something of a paragon.⁶⁸ Elizabeth Bowen makes less exalted claims on behalf of her gentry forbears in *Bowen’s Court*, yet pervading it is a Burkean assumption that through their property and position such people exercised a civilizing influence on the social order.⁶⁹ Assessing the record of her family under the Ascendancy, Bowen thus concludes that ‘having obtained their position through an injustice, they enjoyed that position through privilege. But, while they wasted no breath in deprecating an injustice it would not have been to their interest to set right, they did not abuse their privilege – on the whole. They honoured, if they did not justify, their own class, its traditions, its rule of life’.⁷⁰ In both his 1948 biography of Lord Charlemont and his 1952 masterwork *Dublin 1680-1860*, the architectural historian Maurice Craig strives after a more dispassionate tone, though his esteem for Georgian achievements remains evident throughout. As an Irish patriot, a man of learning and of conscience, Charlemont emerges under Craig’s pen as someone representing his culture’s finest qualities and its abiding contradictions. Particularly as regards the nobleman’s ambivalence on the question of Catholic rights, Craig is effective in showing how a Protestant with a genuine commitment to social progress could nonetheless retain a visceral fear of its consequences.⁷¹ All these illustrations combine to create a collective portrait of eighteenth-century Protestant life

⁶⁷ Robert Wyse Jackson, ‘Jacky Barrett’, *The Bell* 6:6 (Sept. 1943), 508.

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Taylor, ‘Two 18th Century Irish Writers’, *The Bell* 15:1 (Oct. 1947), 6-8, 12.

⁶⁹ Hermione Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, 26-9.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen’s Court* (1942, 1963; Cork, 1998), 456.

⁷¹ Maurice Craig, *Volunteer Earl*, 161-2, 232-3; Maurice Craig, *Dublin 1680-1860* (Dublin, 1952), 224.

which does not deny its problematic basis so much as highlight the humanity and intelligence it still managed to engender.

Through his own writings Hubert Butler consistently championed this liberal strain in the Ascendancy tradition and defended its integrity against naysayers. When in 1944 Harold Nicolson published a condescending account of his own great-great-grandfather, the United Irishman Hamilton Rowan, Butler was swift to challenge its dismissive portrayal of Rowan's attempts at social justice: 'We are asked to smile at his frailty, his self-dramatizations, because he obviously enjoyed himself in "his new role as tribune of the people", but he seems to me to have been sadder and lonelier, not a funnier, figure [as a result]....[H]e was divided from those he wished to serve not merely by rank but by history, race and religion. Why should he be grudged any joy he felt in that service?' Butler further asserts of Rowan that 'of course he was ridiculous, but those rash beings who try to jump the barriers of class and creed seldom land gracefully on their feet' (*LN* 223). In the same way Butler later paid tribute to the chequered career of Henry Flood, whose enthusiasm for the Irish language and Celtic archaeology he considered just as critical to understanding Flood as the man's work in parliament. 'The important thing about Flood was that he was the first of the Irish Protestants to consider himself primarily an Irishman and only secondarily as a member of a ruling caste', Butler writes in 'Henry Flood of Farmley'. To challenge as he did the vested interests of families like the Beresfords and to campaign for a political system more beneficial to the whole nation took vision and courage, not least because 'you were called a traitor by your friends'. In recounting the twists and turns of Flood's parliamentary activities, Butler does not equivocate over what he thinks were bad choices, yet neither does he deem them grounds for condemning the man. And while he concedes that Flood often arrived at opinions out of step with today's sensibilities, he hopes that 'anyone who studied the background against which he worked would understand him better and forgive him' (*LN* 20-5). This appeal for historical perspective and at least some recognition of the dedication, if not the goodness, of individuals like Rowan and Flood is a recurring motif in Butler's writings on the

Protestant past. More than any tangible success, it was their intense desire to heal Ireland's wounds that sets them apart and makes them worth remembering.

Besides the idealism of certain eighteenth-century figures, what obviously appeals to Butler is their exceptional open-mindedness. For people like his beloved Edgeworths, humanitarianism and innovation went hand-in-hand as they sought to apply the light of reason to their divided society (*CD* 86). Others, like the Griffiths, were less driven by social conscience but still impress him with their displays of wit and vitality. In the essay 'Henry and Frances', he recalls discovering an old book of letters between a husband and wife writing under these pseudonyms. The couple turn out to be Richard and Elizabeth Griffith, who had built Butler's Maidenhall in 1745 and then started a flax mill on the Nore in hopes of spearheading a linen industry in Kilkenny. When this project failed, they turned instead to literature to make a living. One thing their published correspondence makes plain, says Butler, is that 'they were wholly unpolitical people. I doubt whether it ever occurred to them that happiness could be brought about by social legislation. Happiness depended on the right ordering of life, on the enjoyment of rational delights, and the consolations afforded by wisdom and learning'. Even if they lacked the reforming zeal of some of their compatriots, the Griffiths still serve for Butler as highly relevant exemplars of what an enlightened, well-rounded person might be and do in a local country setting. Certainly it is tempting to see something of Butler's own Enlightenment affinities in what he reckons about the couple itself, that they 'often indulged in romantic dreams but held them under control, submitting themselves constantly to calm and ruthless examination' (*EA* 15-22). Such self-regulation did not derive so much from an external need to conform, however, as from an inner vision of what constituted a balanced life. This faith in one's private judgment and the readiness to depart from convention that came with it were to Butler among the worthiest traits of Ascendancy society in its prime. So he could boast elsewhere that during the eighteenth century 'the Irish gentry had a privileged position denied their English equivalents. Often they carried self-expression to extraordinary lengths. They believed and said exactly what they liked.

They minded the disapproval of their compatriots so little that few found it worth while disapproving'.⁷²

Someone who epitomized this highly individualistic tendency was Robert Fowler, who served for thirty years as the Protestant Bishop of Ossory before his death in 1843. The son of the Archbishop of Dublin, Fowler advanced rapidly through the ranks of the Church, despite what can only be called a liberal conception of personal morality. In his 1960 essay 'The Bishop', Butler provides a character sketch of the cleric as a young man, based primarily on Fowler's own diary from the years 1792-94. With unconcealed admiration he places him at 'the centre of an urbane and sociable society, confident in its own values'. Among those values stood prominently the conviction that 'honour was what mattered most in human relations. One's private behaviour only concerned others when it injured them in fortune or repute, and [Fowler] had a fine scrupulosity about such injuries'. So he indulged his taste for adultery only in those rarefied precincts where 'between Right and Wrong there stretched a carefully tended enclave of It-All-Depends, from which the ill-bred and uncultivated were debarred'. His status as a man of the cloth did little or nothing to inhibit him in these pursuits, a fact Butler appears to relish when he announces that 'the Protestant Right of Private Judgment was in those days freely practised even by the clergy'. On the basis of this claim he proceeds to liken Fowler's peculiar morals to the various unorthodox theological positions espoused by Protestant clergy before the Union. In the same way he implies that Fowler's sexual laxity was somehow commensurate with his progressive social ideas, observing how 'he was generous in his views towards the Catholic majority and supported their emancipation, though fully aware that the Protestant ascendancy would not survive it'.

These conflation all serve to underscore Butler's final point, that the real decadence of Fowler's generation was not its moral looseness but its loss of nerve in the face of political change. 'If they had not felt so guilty and so scared, they might have managed better', he argues.

⁷² HMB, 'Pacifism in Ireland', *Peace News* 13 May 1949, 3.

By panicking over the Rebellion of 1798 and passing the Act of Union, the elite may have temporarily safeguarded their property, but in the process they presided over the country's deterioration into 'an obsequious province'. To Butler, it was Fowler's pre-Union worldliness that later made him such a popular and effective bishop among Protestants and Catholics alike, in spite of Ireland's reduced circumstances. 'Men will usually respect those who have good humour, good nerves and a knowledge of human nature', he writes at the end of the essay. 'They do not ask too searchingly how these virtues were nourished' (*EA* 31-45). Part of the tragedy of the years to come would be that the humane instincts of a man like Fowler would die with him and be replaced by something more uniform and unyielding. Having allowed themselves to doubt that their fate was inextricably bound up with that of the Irish nation, the Anglo-Irish as a body became defensive. The sense of possibility that the eighteenth century represented thus receded into the unused chambers of the Protestant mind and became a daydream in which only the simple and credulous might indulge without censure. Only much later would it resurface in popular perception as a time of warmth and promise that the Ascendancy itself had betrayed.

The desire of Protestant writers to retrieve and promote evidence of their forbears' happier qualities did not escape the notice of their contemporaries or of subsequent critics. As early as 1934 Daniel Corkery attacked the whole idea of a historic Protestant nation as nothing but a literary fabrication based on 'quoting stray sentences' from certain isolated individuals. To him this was simply a pathetic attempt to manufacture an Anglo-Irish equivalent to the enduring, organic nationalism of the majority.⁷³ Seán O'Faoláin, though opposed to Corkery's exclusive notions of Irishness, nonetheless felt obliged to recall the paradox underlying the Ascendancy's golden age, that 'one of the most cultivated and creative societies in western Europe during the eighteenth century was also politically barbarous'.⁷⁴ Recent scholars have interrogated closely the Leckyite premise of a cohesive and progressive Patriot movement dominant in the 1770s and

⁷³ Daniel Corkery, 'The Nation That Was Not a Nation', *Studies* 23 (Dec. 1934), 612.

⁷⁴ Seán O'Faoláin, *The Irish* (1947; London, 1980), 90.

'80s, a conceit Maxwell, Beckett and other Protestant historians are seen to have perpetuated.⁷⁵ Yet even as a new scepticism has been brought to bear on old assumptions of coherence, the Corkeryesque suggestion that Protestant patriotism lacked any basis or precedent has been persuasively denied.⁷⁶

Current historians have likewise sought to reassess Protestant support for toleration during this period, tending to find it less widespread and wholehearted than as depicted by their predecessors.⁷⁷ A specific case of how subsequent investigation has undercut the fonder sentiments of a Protestant writer comes with the reappraisal of Henry Brooke. In contrast to Geoffrey Taylor's admiring 1947 portrait of Brooke as a principled opponent of the Penal Laws, it has since been shown that he was almost wholly disinterested in the matter, having written anti-Catholic tracts for his own advancement as readily as he would later compose *The Trial of the Cause of the Roman Catholics* for cash payment. The moral motivation Taylor attributed to Brooke's activism appears not to have existed.⁷⁸ Still, if the purpose of writers like Taylor and Butler was not to erase contradiction and complexity from the story but rather to restore it, then their interventions cannot be entirely dismissed, even when their judgments have sometimes proved flawed or incomplete.

Butler in particular was quick to acknowledge that under Grattan's Parliament, Anglo-Irish nationalism had enjoyed only a short-lived popularity and that thereafter its champions were

⁷⁵ Jacqueline Hill, 'Religious toleration and the relaxation of the penal laws: an imperial perspective, 1763-1780', *Archivium Hibernicum* 44 (1989), 98-9. Gerard O'Brien cites R.B. McDowell's 1944 work *Irish Public Opinion, 1750-1800* as the notable exception to this trend. Gerard O'Brien, *Anglo-Irish Politics in the Age of Grattan and Pitt* (Dublin, 1987), 12-13.

⁷⁶ S.J. Connolly, 'Precedent and principle: the patriots and their critics', *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. S.J. Connolly (Dublin, 2000), 130-3. See also Ian McBride, 'The common name of Irishman', 245.

⁷⁷ F.G. James, 'The Church of Ireland and the Patriot Movement in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Éire-Ireland* 17 (Summer 1982), 46-55; and James Kelly, 'Conservative Protestant political thought in late eighteenth-century Ireland', in S.J. Connolly, *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), 192.

⁷⁸ C.D.A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant Kingdom* (London, 1996), 12-14. See also Joseph Th. Leerson, *Mere Irish & Fíor-Ghael: Studies in the idea of Irish nationality, its development and literary expression prior to the nineteenth century* (Amsterdam, 1986), 363-4, 376-77.

‘a tiny, despised and neglected minority’ (CD 3).⁷⁹ Despite this concession, though, he resisted the idea that following the Union, Protestants ceased to contribute anything of value to Ireland. As he is eager to show in essays such as ‘Down the Parade’ and ‘The Country House After the Union’, the Anglo-Irish may have become more local in their Irish involvements after 1800, but this did not mean the Protestant conscience itself became moribund. In the former piece he pays homage to the success of the Kilkenny Players, who during the Napoleonic Wars attracted crowds from across the British Isles to their performances. While he does not pretend this was any substitute for the political activism of twenty-five years earlier, he does praise the civic spirit of the Players and their efforts to help Kilkenny’s poor (LN 4-5).⁸⁰ He expands on this theme in ‘The Country House After the Union’, which took its original form as a Thomas Davis Lecture on Radio Éireann in 1954.⁸¹ In it he calls attention to those scattered inhabitants of country houses who in the nineteenth century persisted in combining the work of social improvement with that of intellectual inquiry. Whereas many other Anglo-Irishmen after the Union ‘began to speak with the lukewarm conviction of temporary lodgers’, these exceptional people retained a sense of commitment to their neighbourhoods. ‘Their views are not of course very representative’, Butler says at the end of the essay, ‘but to balance that you must remember they are very seldom heard’ (EA 52, 56).⁸² Indeed, recognition of such people’s rarity served only to strengthen his dedication to them, since as products of an increasingly distracted elite their continuing engagement with Ireland was all the more remarkable. So in ‘A House of God’, Butler admits that the proliferation of rectories and deaneries built during the Ascendancy with tithes paid by Catholics ‘make it hard for us to assert that we...were never grasping or domineering’, yet at the same time he reasons

⁷⁹ See also Geoffrey Taylor, *The Emerald Isle*, 183; and Jack White, *Minority Report*, 183.

⁸⁰ ‘Down the Parade’, written around 1950, is a variation on an essay Butler had already published in 1946: see ‘The Kilkenny Theatre 1801-1819’, *Dublin Magazine* 21 (Oct.-Dec. 1946), 10-19.

⁸¹ See F.X. Martin, ‘The Thomas Davis Lectures, 1953-1967’, *IHS* 16 (Mar. 1967), 276-302.

⁸² When reviewing the collection in which Butler’s piece was later published, J.H. Whyte singled out his contribution for its novelty: ‘it is refreshing to find a study of the Irish landlords, however brief, which tries to see them from their own point of view and not as they appeared to the peasants’. J.H. Whyte, review of R.B. McDowell (ed.), *Social Life in Ireland 1800-45*, in *IHS* 11 (Sept. 1959), 362-3.

that ‘our defence must be that Berkeley once lived in one of these mansions, Swift in another, and that, though privilege was often based on plunder, it was not always abused. Our scholars had an amplitude of vision which could not be called disreputable because they lived in easy circumstances’ (EA 133). While so many others were out riding to hounds, these stayed in their libraries, carefully studying the history and culture of their native land.

III. Country scholarship, past and present

Besides being heir to this tradition of responsible Anglo-Irish gentry, Hubert Butler also served as its theorist, concerning himself as much with its philosophical underpinnings as its actual accomplishments. Through their highly localized scholarly pursuits, he saw his precursors as engaged in a form of devolved, self-generated intellectual enterprise fuelled by their Protestant individualism.⁸³ The result of all these diffuse activities, as he declares in ‘The Country House After the Union’, is that now ‘there is scarcely any course of study relating to Ireland which one can pursue very far without running into the work of some early nineteenth-century scholar from a Big House, who has managed to prove he was Irish by being indispensable to Ireland’. Thus by their often unexciting but conscientious forays into archaeology and antiquarianism, such people quietly laid the groundwork for modern scholarship (EA 55). More than this, though, they demonstrated how, even after the Union, serious learning could still contribute to and benefit from the rest of provincial life. In his late piece ‘Beside the Nore’, for example, Butler recalls his fellow Kilkennyman William Tighe of Woodstock, who in 1802 produced *A Statistical Survey of the County Kilkenny*. Of this multi-faceted work he asserts that ‘it has never been surpassed and never will be, because the tribe to which [its author] belonged, the rural polymaths, is now extinct’. Besides being a classical scholar, an archaeologist, an economist, a sociologist and a politician, Tighe was also a man of conscience, who was outraged that exotic fruit could be bought in Kilkenny while down the road poor children went to school “‘almost naked”’ (EA 91).

⁸³ Edna Longley, ‘Close-cropped grass comes up sweet’, review of HMB, *The Sub-Prefect Should Have Held His Tongue*, in *TLS* 1 Feb. 1991, 8.

Another figure who for Butler embodied this nineteenth-century integration of life and learning was his own great-uncle Richard. Educated at Oxford, Richard Butler went on to serve for forty-three years as the Vicar of Trim. 'He was the pattern of the country scholar and the faithful pastor', Butler boasted, noting how his ancestor would often dine with the parish priest and discuss contentious issues with his Catholic neighbours. For Butler, the Vicar of Trim had been one of those unusual minds 'who see knowledge as valueless unless it is a gateway to wisdom. To him it was a social not an intellectual disaster that his neighbours knew nothing and cared nothing for the history of their past, Irish, Norman, Anglo-Irish'.⁸⁴ Scholarship for such a man was no mere hobby for the leisured; rather, it was a potent means by which Protestants and Catholics alike might realize the extent of their shared humanity and neighbourly concerns.

Yet it is impossible to appreciate the emphasis someone like Richard Butler placed on local connections without recognizing how political changes had altered the whole antiquarian movement. Joseph Leerson has observed that the upheaval of 1798 did much to discredit the ideological impulses of the Patriot antiquarians and prompted their Protestant successors to stress the disinterested and apolitical nature of their own researches.⁸⁵ While perhaps not the only reason for the growth in provincial learned societies during the nineteenth century, this repudiation of an overtly nationalist dimension to Irish scholarship undoubtedly played its part. In his writings on this period Hubert Butler tends to sidestep the possibility that localism represented a kind of retreat for Protestants, preferring instead to regard such initiatives as positive expressions of a conscious world-view. So when describing how the Kilkenny Archaeological Society first came about in 1849, he insisted its founders 'really believed that the wounds of history might be staunched by accurate knowledge properly applied. Local history was the core of the matter, the centre from which one worked outwards'. More than once he also pointed out that these founders had not been wealthy gentry but a local clergyman, James Graves,

⁸⁴ HMB, 'The Butlers of Priestown', *JBS* 1:5 (1973-4), 383-4. See also *CD* 211.

⁸⁵ Joseph Leerson, *Mere Irish & Fíor-Ghael*, 434-40.

and a county newspaper proprietor, John Prim (*GW* 80-2, *EA* 238-9). This mattered because of the tendency in modern Ireland to dismiss the old societies as mere accoutrements to Ascendancy landlordism. On the contrary, it was only through the persistence of men like Graves and Prim, themselves of comparatively modest means, that the old KAS had developed its excellent library and flourished as an organization.⁸⁶ That such people followed their scholarly muse within a corrupt system did not perforce make them reactionaries who happened to dabble in ideas. In his 1960 piece 'By-Products', Butler built upon this theme by recalling the largely unknown career of William Prendergast, an early twentieth-century Kilkenny activist, historian and topographer. He speculates that though progressively-inclined, Prendergast never became a successful politician because he was 'too retrospective and fair minded'. In one notebook, for example, he carefully tabulated everything he considered both good and bad about the landlord system. Such deliberation, Butler comments dryly, 'is not the way a successful revolutionary is manufactured'. More importantly, it reflected Prendergast's whole way of approaching life, which was to him a never-ending source of fascinating detail. Butler thus ends the essay by concluding that whatever else his concerns and values, Prendergast was above all 'the eternal student loving knowledge for its own sake'.⁸⁷

It was on the basis of all these antecedents that Butler believed a Protestant intellectual should be able to lead a meaningful existence in the Irish countryside. He regretted that the 'natural solitary' type was disappearing from rural areas as sensitive or talented individuals increasingly went to the city in search of company. 'His function is to be a pinch of bread-soda in the dough', he said of this kind of Irishman, 'not to foregather with other ex-solitaries and form a bread-soda pudding' (*EA* 5). Here the ways Butler's notions of scholarly inheritance dovetail with his broader ideas about neighbourliness and communal belonging become obvious. The

⁸⁶ As Butler later told his friend Robert Wyse Jackson, he was particularly irritated when Liam de Paor in the *Irish Times* dismissed his attempt to draw this distinction: 'He made my regret for the passing of the old country archaeological libraries look like a regret for the passing of the ascendancy and their libraries'. TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1594 (BP): HMB to Robert ['Boney'] Wyse Jackson, 4 May 1973.

⁸⁷ HMB, 'By-Products', *Kilkenny Magazine* 1 (Summer 1960), 8-9.

various schemes he supported to improve local culture in Kilkenny were to him intrinsically worthwhile. Yet they were also a kind of tribute to the vision his Protestant forbears had pursued a century earlier. In this respect, his advocacy of provincial archives and museums would seem an effort not just to preserve records and artefacts but the moral principles of nineteenth-century antiquarianism itself.⁸⁸

The premise that the surviving gentry had anything left to contribute to the refinement of Irish life, however, struck some of Butler's fellow Protestants as grossly out of step with contemporary reality. Writing in the *Toronto Star* in 1970, Kildare Dobbs was especially mordant:

Social romantics and crypto-snobs encourage the notion that such people are conservators of civilized values. And Irish gentry sometimes speak of themselves as educated people. The truth is rather different. In fact, few of them can read without moving their lips....In the solitude of decaying smoking-rooms, undernourished minds lethargically drink up every kind of quackery and crankism, the prey of bonesetters and water-dowsers....Their libraries of old books are unread. They have pictures but know nothing about art – they do not even know what they like. Their many clocks are unwound. Harps and pianos have been silent for decades. They do not sing. The treasures that fill their drawing rooms...are pissed on by gundogs and nibbled by mice....Their one talent is for breeding livestock. It is a kind of applied genealogy.⁸⁹

When Butler wrote Dobbs to challenge his generalizations, the latter was swift to relent in the case of Butler himself: 'you [are] in almost every way an exception as an Irish gent', he told him. 'Not a colonel, or a crank, or a bloodstock breeder. As a scholar and man of genius you must be very lonely, I think'. Still, as regards the great majority of Southern Protestants, Dobbs could not go along with what he considered his friend's Yeatsian idealization of them 'as the glorious heirs of Swift and Berkeley and Burke and the rest'. To him they were 'good, gray sober people maybe, but essentially philistines'.⁹⁰ From this perspective, Butler's admitted peculiarity as an

⁸⁸ Butler was not alone in seeing the pursuit of local history as something to which the Republic's Protestants were especially well suited: see Victor Hadden, 'Protestants and Local History', *Focus* Sept. 1958, 7.

⁸⁹ Kildare Dobbs, 'Ireland's new middlemass: like immigrants in their own country', *Saturday Night [Toronto Star]* Feb. 1970, 42.

⁹⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/531 (BP): Kildare Dobbs to HMB, 4 June 1971.

independent man-of-letters was not solely the result of his country residence; it was also a reflection of the Protestant community's cultural redundancy.

To counter Dobbs's argument, Butler might justifiably point to other individualistic scholars who made a contribution to Irish intellectual life by adhering to the sensibilities of a former age. His older contemporaries Joseph Hone and Stephen Gwynn, neither of whom was an academic, nonetheless managed to turn out serious biographical studies of some of Anglo-Ireland's great figures.⁹¹ Under similar circumstances Denis Johnston later published *In Search of Swift* (1959), though in this case the author's fixation with trying to discredit established authorities detracts from his own arguments.⁹² More directly analogous to Butler's efforts at celebrating and emulating the provincial polymath tradition were the varied productions of Geoffrey Taylor. Besides his vocation as a poet and editor, Taylor also devoted considerable energy to writing about gardening and natural history.⁹³ As with Butler, what lent coherence to these seemingly disparate passions was a knowledge of how obscure individuals had historically combined literary ability with a broad curiosity about their environment.⁹⁴ Other Protestants who pursued their unsubsidized interests into print were Monk Gibbon and George Seaver, the former with analyses of film and the performing arts, the latter with books on Christian missionaries and explorers.⁹⁵ And then of course there was Arland Ussher, whose unique approach to

⁹¹ See J.M. Hone and M.M. Rossi, *Bishop Berkeley: His life, writings, and philosophy* (London, 1931) and *Swift, or the Egotist* (London, 1934); and Joseph Hone, *W.B. Yeats, 1865-1939* (London, 1942). See also Stephen Gwynn, *Oliver Goldsmith* (London, 1935) and *Henry Grattan and His Times* (Dublin, 1939).

⁹² Bernard Adams, *Denis Johnston*, 317.

⁹³ See Geoffrey Taylor, *Insect Life in Britain* (London, 1945); *Some British Beetles* (London, 1948); *Some Nineteenth Century Gardeners* (London, 1951); and *The Victorian Flower Garden* (London, 1952).

⁹⁴ See Geoffrey Taylor, 'Some Irish Naturalists as Men of Letters'. *Irish Monthly* 68 (Nov. 1949), 513-18. Terence Brown explores the interlocking nature of Taylor's concerns in 'Geoffrey Taylor: A Portrait', in *Ireland's Literature*, 141-51.

⁹⁵ See Monk Gibbon, *The red shoes ballet: a critical study* (London, 1948); *The tales of Hoffmann: a study of the film* (London, 1951); and *An intruder at the ballet* (London, 1952). See also, among others, George Seaver, *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic* (London, 1937); *Albert Schweitzer, Christian revolutionary* (London, 1944); *Francis Younghusband, explorer and mystic* (London, 1952); and *David Livingstone: his life and letters* (London, 1957).

philosophical *belles-lettres* resulted in works on a whole host of subjects.⁹⁶ To both Enid Starkie and Samuel Beckett, Ussher described himself as a ‘*moraliste*’ in the eighteenth-century mould, even as he recognized such a posture placed him on the wrong side of current Anglophone sensibilities.⁹⁷ Thus by 1964 he explained to John Bell that having enjoyed so little popular success with his books, he had taken instead to keeping a journal, which had already reached half a million words.⁹⁸ Yet in writing his books from what one reviewer called the perspective of a ‘gentleman-scholar’, Ussher was wrong to assume his limited appeal was purely a question of cultural placement. It was, according to Gershon Weiler, just as much a matter of timing: ‘The “gentle reader”, who is not a specialist and yet knows enough about the thinkers discussed to be able to appreciate the special point of view that Mr Ussher adopts, no longer exists’.⁹⁹ Although Ussher’s case may be an extreme one, this recognition of the historical specificity of literary forms pertains to all the Protestant scholars mentioned here. Through their choices of tone and genre, their writing reveals the outlook and social values they absorbed from the Anglo-Irish tradition of polite learning.

All of which necessarily leads to a consideration of why Hubert Butler himself chose to write the way he did. Throughout his career he struggled with the issue of form, with finding the appropriate relationship between what he wanted to say and how best to say it. He persisted with the vehicle of the short story well into the 1940s, as indicated by his correspondence with Seán O’Faoláin during this period. And as he had done in his conversations with Elizabeth Bowen in the late thirties, O’Faoláin encouraged Butler to write novels about the gentry society from which he sprang. ‘It’s a lovely world you belong to, Hubert’, he told him at one point. ‘But hard to

⁹⁶ See, among others, Arland Ussher, *The Magic People* (London, 1950); *Journey through Dread* (London, 1955); *Sages and Schoolmen* (Dublin, 1967); and A. Ussher and Carl von Metzradt, *Enter these enchanted woods: an interpretation of Grimm’s fairy tales* (Dublin, 1957).

⁹⁷ TCD, Mss. 9039.3643 and 9039.54 (Ussher Papers): Arland Ussher to Enid Starkie, 18 Jan. 1958; and Arland Ussher to Samuel Beckett, 12 Nov. 1962.

⁹⁸ TCD, Ms. 9031.92 (Ussher Papers): Arland Ussher to John Bell, 11 Mar. 1964. Portions of Ussher’s journal have subsequently been published under the editorship of Roger Nyle Parisious: see *From a dark lantern: a journal* (Dalkey, 1978) and *The juggler: selections from a journal* (Mountrath, Co. Laois, 1982).

⁹⁹ Gershon Weiler, untitled review of Arland Ussher, *Sages and Schoolmen*, in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 47 (1969), 108.

write of since one must simultaneously be objective about it, and see it with affection and pride. Most people writing about your world are objective as to its comic aspects but not the other; or the other and not objective. It needs a Gogol. Are you dotty enough to be a Gogol? I wish you were!’¹⁰⁰ The challenge of representing his community’s experiences through the genres of fiction, however, did not finally appeal to either Butler’s talents or his tastes. Like his fellow controversialist Owen Sheehy Skeffington, often he was inspired to take up his pen in response to whatever was happening in the present moment.¹⁰¹ But unlike Sheehy Skeffington, who devoted most of his energies to the newspaper correspondence columns, Butler was also refining his talent for a lengthier and more considered type of journalistic intervention for which the term ‘essay’ remains the best name.¹⁰² In trying to elucidate the particular blend of immediacy and discernment Butler brought to his compositions, Neal Ascherson has compared them to the *feuilleton* genre as practiced in Central Europe, a special brand of journalism ‘elegant but piercing, and revealing great learning lightly borne, interested in the “epiphanies” which make currents of social and political change visible through the lens of some small accident or absurdity’.¹⁰³ By this comparison Ascherson rightly appreciates the way form and content complement each other in the essays, the way Butler’s more meditative pieces manage to retain a sense of urgency about them, while in others he convincingly invests the most quotidian subjects with a cultural or historical resonance few people would think to lend them.

Yet at the same time Butler realized that the flipside of his instinct for the timely and the contextual was a certain reluctance to commit to the more protracted business of producing full-length books. He later confided to Elizabeth Bowen that ‘I am I think pathologically anti-book and can be distracted by the merest hint of an Irish controversy into long articles, arguments, letters, fulminations, so that the gathering together of all this dispersed passion and logic into a

¹⁰⁰ MH (Alpha): Seán O’Faoláin to HMB, undated [1947].

¹⁰¹ Eleanor Burgess to Robert Tobin, 26 Apr. 1999.

¹⁰² TCD, Ms. 10304/298/2 (BP): ‘Humanism’ [undated (1971)].

¹⁰³ Neal Ascherson, ‘Foreword’, in HMB, *In the Land of Nod* (Dublin, 1996) x.

few sheets, covered in cardboard, seems terribly frivolous. But of course it isn't'.¹⁰⁴ This temperamental indisposition to undertake larger writing projects did not escape the notice of his friends and admirers. In September 1947, for example, the General Features Officer at Radio Éireann, Francis MacManus, 'threatened' to commission him to do a series of talks on Kilkenny in order 'to compel you to do a book'.¹⁰⁵ His old friend Geoffrey Taylor reproached him even more directly after the 'No Petty People?' series appeared in the *Irish Times* in 1955, arguing that 'those five articles are the best thing written about Ireland in our life time. Doesn't your conscience a little prick you that, with so much knowledge, so clear a vision, and so lucid a pen, you don't do a bit more about it?'¹⁰⁶ In truth, though, Butler's preference for more concise forms of literary idiom was not just a product of his controversialist impulse, nor was it (as Taylor's backhanded compliment seems to imply) merely due to a lack of effort or initiative. Rather, it proceeded directly from his abiding belief in the local and the homespun. Championing the virtues of provincial literary endeavour in 1951, he insisted that 'writing is a form of self-expression, not of self-exhibition', an attitude that reflects the combination of personal indifference and principled repudiation with which he regarded the business of metropolitan publishing (CD 146-7). Rightly or wrongly, Butler appears to have associated book production with the 'urban literary labyrinth' of Dublin and London, something in which he had no wish to get caught up.¹⁰⁷ For the most part, then, he was content to make such contributions as he could to those 'little magazines' and minor publications promoting Irish life and letters. That this meant

¹⁰⁴ MH (Alpha): HMB to Elizabeth Bowen, 15 Apr. 1971. As mentioned in Chapter Four of this thesis, Butler had begun a book on human communities in the early 1940s but never completed it. In the same way, a proposed book on religious groups in the U.S.A. was sketched out in the early 1960s and also abandoned. Butler discusses why he chose not to pursue this second project in the unpublished essay 'The Sandwich-board Man and the Table-mat' [25pp, undated (1960s)], MH.

¹⁰⁵ TCD, Ms. 10304/647/3 (BP): Francis MacManus to HMB, 18 Sept. 1947. At MacManus's behest, Butler had recently delivered a successful series of broadcasts about post-war Europe for Radio Éireann. See Appendix 1c.

¹⁰⁶ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1442 (BP): Geoffrey Taylor to HMB, 18 May 1955.

¹⁰⁷ Christopher Fitz Simon, 'A Country Scholar', C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 72.

his work should reach but a handful of readers does not seem greatly to have bothered him; it was, after all, only the logical result of his own convictions.¹⁰⁸

Central as it was to him, then, Butler's writing was not finally an end in itself so much as an expression of his country scholar ethos, the guiding principle of which remained amateurism. To be a serious amateur, whether literary, scientific or otherwise, was in his estimation a calling that gained in stature as knowledge became more specialized. For he had long considered such specialization part of the atomizing process undermining modern existence; thus anyone who resisted it in the name of a more integrated approach to life became for him something of a hero. And among all the country scholars he admired for their amateur spirit, there was one who stood out as a kind of patron saint. This was the nineteenth-century Frenchman Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes, who besides serving as a customs officer in his native Abbeville also pursued an amateur interest in geology. As a result of his local researches into this field, from 1838 Boucher began to argue that man had existed far longer than previously believed and present evidence for what is now known as the Old Stone Age. Yet as Butler relates in his essay on Boucher, it was not until 1859 that the scholarly establishment finally conceded the veracity of these claims. To the writer this was a classic case of academic specialists resisting a fundamental discovery about their discipline largely because it had been made by an amateur and not one of their own. Butler further reflects that 'it is curious that even today the Father of Prehistory continues to irritate his spiritual children. It seems to them intolerable that fate should have selected this discursive old dilettante, who grew prize pears, wrote poems and plays, [and] organized a swimming pool bath,...to carry through a major revolution in geology and anthropology. Had they not dedicated their entire lives to these pursuits?' What evidently pleases him even more is that the Frenchman knew just how much an amateur he really was and launched his assault upon received opinion with a good-humoured but calculated irreverence. 'Boucher had greatness because he was a crusader for the unity of knowledge in an age when its

¹⁰⁸ Robert Greacen, *Brief Encounters: Literary Dublin and Belfast in the 1940s* (Dublin, 1991), 34.

fragmentation was already far advanced', Butler concludes. 'Fighting his own battles, he was fighting for others too, the individualists, the provincial, the scholar who refuses to specialize' (CD 96-9, 106).

As the nineteenth century wore on, though, it was of course the specialists who prevailed over the amateurs, and this was nowhere more apparent than in the traditionally allied fields of history, archaeology and antiquarianism. Philippa Levine has documented the emergence in Victorian England of professional specialization which led to the sidelining of the old antiquarian societies, so that by the 1880s these once formidable organizations were regarded as all but irrelevant. In the process there also took place what Levine calls 'taxonomic shifts' in the linguistic differentiation of certain scholarly activities. Whereas the terms 'historian', 'archaeologist' and 'antiquarian' had till then been employed more or less interchangeably, the first two were appropriated by the professionals to denote their nascent specialisms. Meanwhile the third was left over to serve as a synonym for amateur, someone whose efforts should be deprecated as incompetent or unserious.¹⁰⁹ To Hubert Butler, this bureaucratization of learning was bad not just for its rejection of unsubsidized scholars but for the detrimental effect it had on intellectual curiosity generally. Assessing in 1951 the social contribution made by professional academics, he contended that 'certainly they will have made a great addition to knowledge, but they'll have neglected a more urgent task. They won't have increased at all the zeal for knowledge. And it is easier, I think[,] to teach people to know than to want to know. And the second is sometimes the more important task of the two'.¹¹⁰ Far from challenging students to think for themselves or develop their individuality, educational institutions in contemporary society seemed to him instead to foster pedantry and to reward conformity. 'I dislike all modern universities and modernized ancient ones', he stated flatly in the 1960s. 'Built like airports, they

¹⁰⁹ Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge, 1986), 38-9. See also Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists*, 199-250.

¹¹⁰ HMB, 'The Old Kilkenny Archaeological Society and Its Successors', *Old Kilkenny Review* 4 (1951), 22.

function like factories for processing lively children into civil servants and narrow “experts” (GW 250).

As he attests in ‘The Children of Drancy’ and elsewhere, Butler perceived the proliferation of expertise in the twentieth century not as an antidote to the dehumanizing trends of the age so much as a sign of their triumph. And even when the ‘experts’ did not end up facilitating *kinder*-transports to concentration camps or performing other unspeakable acts, he was still troubled by their relationship to knowledge itself, their all too frequent assumption that in its pure form it must be incompatible with imagination or instinct (GW 179).¹¹¹ So in his unpublished essay ‘The Appleman and the Poet’, he recounts that when he asked an agricultural instructor how to make his apple orchards pay, the man amazed him by replying that he was an appleman, not a poet. ‘This has helped me to construct a new definition of poetry’, Butler then says. ‘A poet is perhaps the man who can see a little beyond the narrow craft in which he excels, who asks “Why?” as well as “How?” We are mostly nowadays stunned by the crass ignorance of those who do not specialise in the same field as we do. And sometimes, alas, we preen ourselves on it. A poet’s reaction, on the other hand, would be anguish. He would grieve for the uselessness of knowledge, the sterility of skill, the vanity of abundance’.¹¹² By the same logic he was convinced the Free State had harmed its own campaign to revive the Irish language by tying its use to purely practical considerations, such as advancement in government employment. ‘[I]f you teach people to know intimately their native land and history and to study it seriously’, he reasoned, ‘you may turn out good citizens instead of cynics, who use Irish as the gateway to jobs’.¹¹³ Here the ‘experts’ had inspired a new generation not to respect knowledge and love culture so much as to manipulate one and commodify the other.

¹¹¹ A notable exception among Butler’s contemporaries must surely be W.B. Stanford, credited by his colleagues for his creative and adventurous readings of the classical tradition. Niall Rudd, *Pale Green, Light Orange: A Portrait of Bourgeois Ireland, 1930-1950* (Dublin, 1994), 143. See also J.V. Luce, ‘In Retrospect: Professor W.B. Stanford’, *Search* 26:2 (Summer 2003), 107-11.

¹¹² MH (Ms.): ‘The Appleman and the Poet’, 2.

¹¹³ HMB, ‘Archaeology and National Culture’, *Iris Óda* 1:3 (1946), 14.

Yet to Butler, professional intellectuals were responsible for more than merely co-operating with the bureaucratization of society. They were also its active beneficiaries, readily tailoring their scholarly endeavours to suit the shifting priorities of their paymasters. To find such accommodation among academics in totalitarian countries came as no surprise to him. He was far less forgiving, however, when he detected such pliancy among 'their discreet counterparts in the democratic universities', where as a result 'wisdom grows large and sleek and pacific like a doctored cat, incapable of chasing the feeblest of mice'.¹¹⁴ When visiting New York in 1968, Butler came across an excellent example of how tempting it could be for subsidized scholarship to relinquish its autonomy and compromise its integrity. In 'American Impressions' he tells of the conflict he observed at Columbia University over the presence of a government-sponsored organization called the Institute of Defense Analysis, which drew on academic specialists to study the behaviour patterns of both the Vietcong and black urban rioters. That in a relatively liberal political environment such as Columbia the Institute still found people willing to work for it was easy to predict, Butler speculates, if for no other reason than 'it is more interesting to have some hush-hush work of national importance than to be helping adolescents to pass exams' (*GW* 239). Amidst the triviality and boredom of institutional life, vexing moral questions about the applications of one's research might be rationalized away, with thoughts about personal advancement always ready to fill the gap.¹¹⁵ It was on the site of another such collision between ethical and professional considerations that Butler likewise placed the German archaeologists who served under the Nazis. In his 1961 essay 'Return to Hellas', he provides a distinctly Bendian interpretation of the ways, in exchange for state support, these intellectuals allowed their investigations into the ancient culture of Mycenae to be used by Heinrich Himmler to support his Aryan race theories. They persuaded themselves that by humouring Himmler and his absurd

¹¹⁴ MH (Ms.): 'The Sandwich-board Man and the Table-mat', 6.

¹¹⁵ American universities had been facilitating secret government work since the Second World War. See Sigmund Diamond, *Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities with the Intelligence Community* (New York, 1992).

ideas, they were somehow doing their part to civilize an otherwise barbaric regime. In truth, though, all they really managed to do was show that archaeology had become 'one of the whore sciences whose poxy favours can be bought by any government prepared to pay for them' (*EA* 224-5, 244).

Butler's critique of the Western academy and its corrupt relationship with power suggests his own commitment to amateurism constituted more than nostalgia for the past. It also formed the basis for what he urgently hoped would develop into a viable, widespread alternative to subsidized intellectual pursuit. Of course, in his desire to provide a counter-example to the dominant model he was not unique among twentieth-century writers and thinkers.¹¹⁶ Even in his strategic preference for the essay form as the best means by which to reach sophisticated laypeople, he had an obvious counterpart in someone like Lionel Trilling.¹¹⁷ What remains noteworthy, though, is the precision with which Butler anticipated the terms later critics have employed in their analysis of the modern intellectual condition. In dissecting, for example, the way humanities academics have sought to gain currency in the marketplace of social and political relevance, John Guillory has identified their readiness to renounce traditional autonomy in favour of a 'mimetic bureaucratization of the working life, the submission of scholarly labour to the norms of "productivity" and institutional competition'.¹¹⁸ Yet the 'crisis of the humanities' that this tendency provoked and which has been the topic of so much debate since the 1970s was something Butler had been warning against long before. In the same way, there is an unmistakable echo of his views in Edward Said's argument that 'the intellectual today ought to be an amateur, someone who considers that to be a thinking and concerned member of society one is

¹¹⁶ See Stefan Collini, *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture* (Oxford, 1999), 313-15.

¹¹⁷ Cornel West notes that after 1943 Trilling turned from book-writing to the non-academic essay in hopes of cultivating 'a community of educated middle class people like himself who enshrined complexity...and thereby sidestepped the simple-mindedness of Stalinism and the kitsch of popular culture'. Cornel West, 'Lionel Trilling: Godfather of Neo-Conservatism', in J. Rodden (ed.), *Lionel Trilling and the Critics: Opposing Selves* (Lincoln, NB, 1999), 399.

¹¹⁸ John Guillory, 'Literary Critics as Intellectuals: Class Analysis and the Crisis of the Humanities', in W.C. Dimock and M.T. Gilmore (eds.), *Rethinking Class: Literary Studies and Social Formations* (New York, 1994), 136.

entitled to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professionalized activity as it involves one's country, its power, its mode of interacting with its citizens as well as with other societies'.¹¹⁹ This awareness among humanist academics that they must reassert the moral dimension of their role undoubtedly would have pleased Butler. Still, as a country scholar who over the years struggled against institutional arrogance in a variety of spheres, he never lost his suspicion of those who made their living from the search for knowledge. Reflecting on his amateur inquiries into Irish archaeology and how these related to other aspects of his life, he concluded: 'I would be more diffident about the answers if I had not seen the learned and the pious yawning defiantly about other things that I know to be true and important'.¹²⁰

IV. *Ten Thousand Saints* and the moral obligations of learning

For Hubert Butler, then, the essence of real learning proceeded from a combination of the head and the heart. This was the conviction that for half a century nourished his unsubsidized researches into the genesis and development of Ireland's many saint-figures. And though his interest in these matters kept evolving until the end, he set down the essence of his ideas about Irish archaeology in the 1972 book *Ten Thousand Saints: a study in Irish and European Origins*. Quite apart from the specific hypothesis it advances about who or what the saints actually were, the work testifies to Butler's highly personal conception of the relationship between past and present. The purpose of archaeological investigation was not simply to collect ancient fragments for a museum exhibit but 'to foster the feeling that we belong to a community, where roots go back centuries'.¹²¹ While early antiquarians may not have been as sophisticated in their theories or techniques as modern professionals, they 'stressed the continuity of our regional history and reminded us that we and our neighbours were the heirs of the people and problems we investigated. The focus of their enquiries was mostly man himself and not his artefacts and his material débris, his food-vessels, ashpits, collar-bones'. These amateurs grasped a fundamental

¹¹⁹ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York, 1996), 82-3.

¹²⁰ Ms. 10304/170/7 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'on Irish society' [undated (1970s/80s)].

¹²¹ TCD, Ms. 10304/177a/1 (BP): 'Purpose of Archaeology' [undated]. See also *LN* 14.

truth either lost or ignored by their academic successors, that ‘the past was not so dead that it could not strike sparks out of the present’ (*TTS* 7). And as the ongoing debate over St. Patrick shows, the religious and political sensitivities imbued in Irish hagiography remained flammable well into the twentieth century. While Butler was not afraid to challenge some of these shibboleths, he did not ridicule them or dismiss their significance to the larger process of understanding. So he asked at one point: ‘Is soul rather a loaded and inappropriate word to use in connection with a debate about the Irish saints and tribes[?]....A hundred years ago all the believing books about the saints were written by Canons, Archdeacons and even Bishops, and all the unbelieving ones were written by country gentlemen and retired solicitors and architects, and both parties were concerned about the soul’.¹²² In the subsequent effort to rid this debate of its partisan overtones, though, the saints themselves had been imprisoned in the barren precincts of abstraction. Their significance as symbols of the human search for meaning had been all but abandoned.

The ways belief had both inspired and inhibited scholarly exploration of the saints was thus for Butler an important part of the story that needed to be told. Like Oliver MacDonagh, he identified the Rev. Edward Ledwich’s *Antiquities of Ireland* (1790/1804) as a milestone in Irish historiography, because Ledwich’s aggressive anti-Gaelicism and his denial of the saints’ reality provoked a renewed interest in their background and that of the Irish nation.¹²³ ‘This controversy raised provincial archaeology from its torpor’, Butler posits in *Ten Thousand Saints*. ‘Out of the commotion some of the great figures of Victorian archaeology, Petrie, O’Donovan, O’Curry emerged, some of them ascendancy Irish, some native, all of them champions of the Irish saints’. The problem was that those scholars who zealously reacted against Ledwich’s anti-patriotic claims in the process helped erect a kind of barrier between popular sentiment and intelligent discourse (*TTS* 18-19). Butler observes elsewhere that this effort to rehabilitate the Celtic saints,

¹²² MH (Ms.), untitled/ re *TTS* and the academy [1 p., undated].

¹²³ Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind*, 1. See also Joseph Leerson, *Mere Irish & Fíor-Ghael*, 404-6.

‘which had begun in chivalry, had ended in sterility’ (CD 152). By the end of the nineteenth century, piety and patriotism had become an acceptable substitute for scholarship in the minds of many, a state of affairs Butler found no more satisfactory than the steady retreat by academics into ‘objective’ research. About patriotism and scholarship he therefore reasoned that ‘when there is too large a proportion of one or the other, things begin to go wrong. That is to say[,] when people become too sentimental and credulous about the Irish past[,] or on the other hand[,] bury themselves in an accumulation of arid details of fact and sneer at anyone who tries to discover meaning or poetry in the past, then it is plain that we have got onto the wrong lines’.¹²⁴ Yet he also believed that neither side of this arrangement had any real interest in setting it to rights. For by it the church hierarchy and politicians retained their rhetorical grip on the Irish historical imagination, while the specialists were left to pursue their esoteric speculations in peace (TTS 24-6).

Perhaps it was inevitable that Butler’s attempts to square popular conceit with scholarly inquiry should cause irritation among his compatriots. Given his avowedly Protestant perspective on questions of Irish belonging and dissent, his willingness to question conventional ideas about the saints and their origins seemed to some like an attack on the Catholic faith. Therefore in 1954 Owen Quinn in *The Bell* railed against Southern Protestant intellectuals who ‘hide bitter anti-Catholic bigotry behind a facade of liberalism’, adding that one of them ‘dresses it up as an interest in Irish archaeology’. Given the intimacy of Irish literary circles, it was not hard to guess whom Quinn meant by this remark.¹²⁵ Even among those who were not automatically hostile to Butler’s efforts, there was still a reluctance to be identified with them publicly. When in 1959 he offered an article on the saints to Patricia Murphy, the editor of the new magazine *nonplus*, she

¹²⁴ MH (Ms.), untitled/ re the founding and purpose of the KAS, 3-4 [6pp., undated].

¹²⁵ Owen Quinn, ‘On or About Samuel Beckett’. *The Bell* 19:4 (Mar. 1954), 31-2. Butler responded the following month: ‘I would like to know who this pseudo-liberal, pseudo-archaeological bigot may be. Deplorable as he sounds, I think we ought to become acquainted, because the number of Irish Protestants who have written on these oddly assorted enthusiasms is very small. They could be counted, I think, on one hand if not one finger. Perhaps I might be able to reason with him’. HMB, Letter to the Editor, *The Bell* 19:5 (Apr. 1954), 51.

was quick to refuse: 'I'm sorry. I would if I could, but I can't. You see the only way to manage this affair is to steer clear of such political and religious controversies as are bound to arouse local ill-feeling. No loss of integrity here, but I personally have no wish to offend Church or State, especially at this stage'. By this logic, Murphy concluded, 'the family trees of Irish saints would not be the wisest first feature, even you must admit'.¹²⁶

But this sort of caution among other intellectuals only increased Butler's determination to force a reckoning of his views. And whatever else people might think, he was emphatic that his work was neither disrespectful of nor contrary to Irish Christianity. At the beginning of *Ten Thousand Saints* he therefore insists that were he to be successful in making his case about the Irish saints, 'I do not believe I would be damaging the *pietas* with which these venerable figures have been regarded for centuries. There are sanctities which depend not on belief but on a long tradition of reverence ...[A]m I mocking at the love and respect with which they are still regarded? Am I injuring belief? I do not think so' (*TTS* 16). At the same time, he recognized *pietas* was not the same as traditional piety, the latter for which he had little appreciation, since he perceived in it not holiness so much as 'hypocrisy and commonness of mind'.¹²⁷ Still, whatever his own feelings on the subject, Butler was certain that no amount of interrogation could unsettle what was precious about the saints and their legacy in Ireland. 'We are emotionally and intellectually committed to them', he wrote in the late essay 'Influenza in Aran'. 'They beckon us along a private road that leads not only to the Irish past but to the past of Europe. It is through them that we can learn about the youth of the world and the infancy of religion. Whether they really lived or not, they belong to us more than anybody else' (*GW* 136-7). Contrary to common perception, the purpose of his investigations was not to deprive the saints of their significance or show them up as hopelessly irrelevant to modern life. Rather, he hoped to persuade the pious and

¹²⁶ MH (Alpha): Patricia Murphy to HMB, 12 Aug. 1959.

¹²⁷ MH (Ms.): 'The Angel Victor's Mail Bag', 1 [2pp, undated (c.1960s)]. See also *EA* 191.

the scholarly alike that their own thinking underestimated the saints' complexity and overlooked the vital clues they offered to the progress of European civilization.

Butler's theory was potentially upsetting to Irish Catholic piety because he argued the saints were a Christian appropriation and embellishment of a pre-Christian cultural phenomenon. Or, as he puts it bluntly at the start of his book, 'they were not, as we are asked to believe, a dim foreshadowing of a bench of bishops but the dying echoes of an immemorially old world, which the bishops have superseded'. Furthermore, he states, the world from which the saints took their impetus was pre-Roman, pre-Greek and probably even pre-Celtic. In this respect, his theory might also be taken as an attempt to drain the saints of their distinctively Gaelic character. Yet the premise on which his work hinges, that the saints 'were a Christian by-product of the dying art of ancestor-making', carries his inquiry not forward into the age of post-Reformation rivalry and Anglo-Irish conflict, but backwards into a time when such distinctions were completely meaningless. The saints owed their existence to an even greater number of imaginary ancestors which had been formulated by early pagan tribes seeking to chronicle and rationalize their myriad alliances. 'If we were to read the ancient notation correctly', Butler posits, 'we should one day learn of the wanderings and minglings of all the great tribes of Europe and how every parish in Ireland and many in Britain and Europe were settled. We would acknowledge without regret that, while Ireland had only the average number of good men, it had superb practitioners of an ancient art, who survived the ruin of their class elsewhere in Europe' (*TTS* 16-17, 27).

That the multiplicity of saints could not be real therefore seemed to him obvious and not worth disputing. A much more interesting question to ask was exactly how they had been conceived in all their variety and strangeness. In addressing this puzzle it became necessary to move backwards from both the saints and tribal ancestors on which they were based to a consideration of the psychology of the tribes themselves. Butler reasons that 'a natural human process had been pushing the meaningless tribal names towards meaning, and entire life stories were built out of tribal puns'. Noting that these improvised 'pun-biographies' were common in

both the Greek and Hebrew culture, he cites the well-known examples of Perseus and Medea. These figures were adopted by the ancient Greeks from the Persians and Medes, who brought with them behaviour reflective of their names. That is, Perseus slew dragons, since the pun *perthein* means to destroy, and Medea intrigued, since the pun *medea* means to counsel.¹²⁸ In the same way, he says, the many thousands of Irish saints and ancestors derived their names from Irish, Latin, and very occasionally English puns, and these were employed over and over again. The challenge was to work back from the pun-biography to the ancient tribe whose name inspired it. ‘Early races all had imaginary ancestors’, Butler explains, ‘whose names derived from their tribal names (or ‘eponymously’ if you like that word), and he or she was the brother, sister, father, uncle or nephew of the ancestor of the neighbouring tribe’. These invented ancestral genealogies became progressively more complex as the tribes merged and migrated, and it fell to druids, bards and hagiographers to devise linguistic tricks for remembering and making sense of them.¹²⁹ What made Ireland unique was that unlike the Continent or Britain, this process carried on uninterrupted until the arrival of Christianity (*TTS* 32-9, 45-6).

In discussing the ways the tribal ancestors finally became Christian saints, Butler injects a more intuitive and humanistic logic into his explanation. ‘The genealogists had evolved a highly complex technique of neighbourliness, which kept as close as it could to the sources of instinctive love and mutual tolerance’, he says of the tribal sages who maintained the mythical family trees binding their tribes together. As the tribes grew ever larger and more diffuse, though, the intimacy of their ancestors’ various relationships had to be emphasized and nourished to sustain a solidarity that was no longer apparent in the tribes’ immediate experience. ‘It must have been a golden age for the poet and social planner’, Butler reflects. ‘The genealogies had to be kept

¹²⁸ Butler explores the incidence of puncraft in the Bible in his essays ‘In the Land of Nod: Puns and Tribal Ancestors in the Old Testament’ and ‘Woe unto Thee Bethsaida: Puns in the New Testament’ [*LN* 247-54 and 255-62]. Both these pieces were originally written as chapters for what became *Ten Thousand Saints*.

¹²⁹ For a more detailed explanation of Butler’s theory of puncraft, see Richard Crampton, ‘Working on the Saints: Clues to the Irish Genome’, in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003) 120-2.

perpetually up to date, for their message was that all men are brothers or at least that their ancestors had been brothers, sisters, cousins to those of their neighbours'. But eventually this elaborate means of teaching social inter-connectedness became untenable, and another means of inculcating it had to be adopted. 'As the old technique of neighbourliness broke down there will have been a readiness to adapt it to a gospel, whose message is that we should love our neighbours as ourselves', Butler surmises, adding that 'as the tribes merged and disintegrated and sharp distinctions became blurred, a celibate saint could have been useful full-stop to a progression that had become meaningless'. Because of their isolation, the Irish were left to make this transition in a gradual and relatively conciliatory fashion. The Celtic wise men knew 'how to make old enemies sit side by side on the same branch of the family tree', he contends, such that 'pagan and Christian beliefs were dove-tailed into each other with expert ingenuity. The towering fabric of genealogical make-believe, which led to epic poetry in Greece, led in Ireland to the most elaborate and abundant hagiography which any country possesses' (*TTS* 53-6).

More than an attempt to discredit the importance of the saints themselves, Butler's approach really constitutes a challenge to the academic conventions governing the study of early Ireland. For in place of the qualified and piecemeal assertions of philological research, he posits a theoretical template by which the 10,000 saints and 15,000 ancestors can be comprehended as expressions of a recurring pattern. As he reiterates throughout his book, the fact that the saints and ancestors were not real people need not mean their invention was gratuitous or arbitrary. This was why he grew impatient with the professionals' slavish adherence to philological methods, which he thought too often underrated the inventiveness of the human mind. 'Is it possible for a sober-minded philologist to pick his way through this jungle of ancient proper names, in which fantasy so frequently reshaped the word it claimed to interpret? Can one advance very far by the light of "dental affricates" and "case syncretisms"? Can they help us investigate a society, where there was an insatiable appetite for meanings, but fantastic ones were preferred?' With the academics seemingly content to answer only small questions to the

exclusion of pursuing big ones, Butler saw again a justification for the unscientific but creative methods of the country scholar. Making use of academic research but combining it with commonsense born of life in a small community, such a person had as good a chance of understanding the way ancient people thought and acted as did the specialist.¹³⁰ In deciphering ancient names, Butler thus concludes, the latter ‘pounces eagerly on meaningful syllables, the cogs, twigs and kegs. Yet a solicitor in Cookstown or a priest in Tandragee has a better idea of what men are like’ (*TTS* 70-8).

Getting the ‘experts’ to take his ideas seriously was something Butler grappled with continually. As a controversialist, being ignored had always bothered him much more than being challenged, so he was frustrated when the only response he seemed able to elicit from the professionals was one of polite indifference.¹³¹ Submitting a piece on the saints to the *Irish Times* in 1958, he made the point to Jack White that ‘I personally shall be very grateful if you can print it as it may lure some of my friends in the Institute [of Advanced Studies] into contradicting me. They so seldom come out of their Druids’ Cave’.¹³² Over the many years he devoted to this work, he was of course not without allies and supporters, especially Eric Dorman O’Gowan and Eleanor Burgess (*TTS* 11). But once he had finally published *Ten Thousand Saints*, he confessed to Paul Blanshard how difficult the whole enterprise had sometimes been, noting that ‘only because I have the same conviction that I had in the Nuncio days that what I am saying is right and important could I have gone ahead with it, as it is entirely a do-it-yourself job and I am “insulting” most hideously all the nuncios of Celtic scholarship and Irish Christianity’.¹³³ This is an important statement, because it makes explicit the close connection Butler saw between his independent scholarship and his dissent in other quarters.

¹³⁰ TCD, Ms. 10304/145/1(BP): ‘Early Irish Invasions’ [Mar. 1950].

¹³¹ Richard Crampton, ‘Working on the Saints’, 130-1.

¹³² TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1535 (BP): HMB to Jack White, 18 Nov. 1958. The piece referred to was a book review of *Early Christian Ireland* by Maire and Liam de Paor, published as ‘Was Early Ireland Christian?’ *Irish Times* 9 Dec. 1958, 5. [LN 11-14]

¹³³ MH (Alpha): HMB to Paul Blanshard, 18 June 1973.

The review *Ten Thousand Saints* received in the *Irish Times* in early 1973 served only to confirm his suspicion that, like Boucher de Perthes before him, he would find it difficult to secure a fair hearing for his views. Printed under the misleading title ‘Hammering the Holy Men’, Dervla Murphy’s assessment praised the book for its compelling arguments but emphasized the reviewer’s inability to make an authoritative judgment on them. It was as if Butler’s own faith in amateurism had purposely been turned against him. If this were not bad enough, a limerick was then inexplicably appended to the end of the review:

There was an Old Man of Kilkenny,
Who never had more than a penny;
He spent all that money on theories so funny,
That wayward Old Man of Kilkenny.¹³⁴

As a gesture of ridicule, there was no mistaking this bizarre coda, though whether it actually formed part of Murphy’s contribution was unclear. Butler’s friend A.J. Arkell wasted no time in complaining to the paper about what he considered its cavalier and demeaning treatment of both the book and its author.¹³⁵ Even now, Butler’s ideas continue to provoke divergent responses. Tim Robinson recently voiced his scepticism of the saints and ancestors thesis, concluding that ‘a resignedly syncretic agnosticism is the only rational attitude to the truth-value of the Lives of the Saints’.¹³⁶ Meanwhile, however, Richard Crampton has introduced the findings of Irish genomic research in support of the thesis, arguing that DNA testing will eventually confirm the pattern of tribal migration and settlement Butler long ago posited through his archaeo-linguistic techniques.¹³⁷ So even if the religious and national sensitivities he once faced are no longer so acute, the scholarly debate Butler instigated is still unfolding.

¹³⁴ *Irish Times* 13 Jan. 1973, 10.

¹³⁵ A.J. Arkell, Letter to the Editor. *Irish Times* 26 Jan. 1973, 11. The book received more serious reviews elsewhere: see W.M.S. Russell, ‘Saints, Tribes and Ancestors’, review of HMB, *TTS*, in *Biology and Human Affairs* 40:3 (1975), 118-30. See also F.E. Dixon, untitled review of HMB, *TTS*, in *Dublin Historical Record* 26:3 (June 1973), 116.

¹³⁶ Tim Robinson, ‘Butler among the Saints’, in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 174.

¹³⁷ Richard Crampton, ‘Working on the Saints’, 125-30.

As his work on the Irish saints demonstrates, Hubert Butler was looking for some middle ground between the cerebral abstractions of specialists and the unexamined pieties of laypeople. Consequently he felt free to admire the ancient tribes' creativity while at the same time to disapprove its calcification into superstition among their descendents. His own natural reverence for tradition thus remained distinct from that romantic primitivism he detected in many of his educated contemporaries. In 1952, for example, he criticized a BBC broadcast on St. Peter's shrine in which the commentator had characterized as 'moving' the Church's claim to know the precise location of the Apostle's tomb: 'why does a misstatement become "moving" because it is often repeated?' he demanded to know. He surmised the reporter had tried 'to seduce our reason by giving privilege to error because it is ancient'.¹³⁸ Butler's severity on this point grew out of his conviction that it was a failure of social responsibility for the enlightened to patronize the ignorant and credulous (*EA* 270). To do so was not only disrespectful but potentially harmful, since as he wrote elsewhere, the uneducated often fell within 'that great and dangerous class of the human race, which can feel but cannot think, and can keep two completely incompatible ideas in their heads at the same time without the wish to reconcile them'.¹³⁹

An extreme but telling instance in which such incompatibility gave way to tragedy was the 1895 murder of Bridget Cleary, a story Butler revisits in his 1960 essay 'The Eggman and the Fairies'. As a young farmer's wife in Co. Tipperary, Cleary was burnt alive by her husband and others when he became convinced her body had been taken over by a fairy. Although Butler speculates that Michael Cleary initially arrived at this notion due to an unexpressed anxiety about his wife's relationship to the local eggman, this is not where the writer's primary interest lies. What really concerns him is how a group of simple rural people became so hopelessly caught up in a web of fear from which the larger community failed to extricate them: 'They appealed to the priests and the peelers to save them from themselves', he writes, 'but no external power was

¹³⁸ HMB, Letter to the Editor, *The Listener* 2 Oct. 1952, 551.

¹³⁹ MH (Ms.): 'Ignorance and Moujik [Muzhik] Government', 2.

stronger than their obsessions'. In reviewing the muddled testimonies they later gave in court, he does not condemn those directly responsible for this grotesquerie, but neither does he seek to absolve them. Rather, he uses the episode as a reminder of just how fragile human reason and civility can be. Of the Clearys and their neighbours he concludes that they inhabited a 'perilous region of half-belief which the sophisticated find charming because they are more acquainted with its tenderness than its cruelty. It is a no-man's land of the imagination, in which fantasy, running wild, easily turns into falsehood and ruthlessness' (*EA* 63-65, 72-73). There was to him a kind of moral complicity to indulging the irrational when it so plainly possessed the ability to cause suffering and distort reality. Even when they did not lead to such violent ends as that befalling Bridget Cleary, Butler was adamant that the human passions must be kept on a short leash of rigorous thought. Enforcing this discipline was one of the chief duties of those who had been blessed with learning.¹⁴⁰

In this context it is worth returning once more to Butler's preoccupation with the war-crimes of Catholic Croatia. For besides exemplifying his cosmopolitan outlook and his commitment to social dissent, the stand he took during the Papal Nuncio Incident testifies to his stubborn faith in the process of historical evaluation and factual assessment. As self-evident as this principle might seem, though, he would learn to his own amazement just how rare it could actually be in practice, both at home and abroad. So he recalls in 'The Sub-Prefect Should Have Held His Tongue' that when in 1946 he visited the Zagreb Municipal Library to examine wartime newspapers, 'it was obvious that no foreign inquirer had handled them before, and the library clerks regarded me with wonder and suspicion'. This early effort to document the Church's complicity in mass murder marked the beginning of Butler's long campaign to gain recognition of some horrible and complex truths, a campaign in which the Nuncio Incident proved to be an

¹⁴⁰ One suspects Butler would query the conclusion drawn by Angela Bourke in her recent book on the Cleary case, that 'fairy legends have been denigrated as superstition, and trivialized in ethnic stereotypes; like any other art form, however, they carry the potential to express profound truths and intense emotions....The model of society they offer is firm, yet forgiving: flexible enough to accommodate transgression'. Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story* (London, 1999), 206.

unexpected by-product. His real target at the International Affairs Association that fateful evening had been the speaker, Peadar O'Curry of the *Catholic Standard*, with whom he had been engaged in an ongoing debate about Cardinal Stepinac's relationship to the Ustashe regime (*EA* 270-7).¹⁴¹ Besides his moral outrage at what had been done to the Orthodox Serbs, Butler was equally incensed by what he considered 'the frigid contempt for history' displayed by the Catholic authorities in their cynical efforts to suppress the facts of the situation.¹⁴² Thus even after the Nuncio Incident had taken place, he continued to insist on the necessity of 'a far more scholarly examination of sources if the public is to be able to form a just opinion on this important and delicate issue'.¹⁴³ Yet to some Irish people, more or better information was beside the point. In December 1952, for example, a correspondent named R.C. Flanagan wrote the *Irish Times* suggesting that 'when we know one of the avowed objectives of Communism is a Godless world, we cannot afford the luxury of joining Mr. Butler in the urbane pursuit of the objective truth'. Such a flagrant repudiation of knowledge and reason still had the capacity to startle Butler but served only to reinforce his belief in their importance. 'I am shocked at Mr. Flanagan's view of the pursuit of objective truth as "a luxury we cannot afford"', he wrote. 'I regard it as an arduous and necessary task. I do not see how we are ever to learn anything about the growth of intolerance and hypocrisy, Protestant, Catholic, Communist, unless we are prepared to value truth because it is true, and not, as Mr. Flanagan would seem to advise, because it may be inopportune'.¹⁴⁴

While Butler espoused a standard of truth that would transcend all political and religious loyalties, he nonetheless perceived his devotion to it as rooted in his Protestantism. Thus when

¹⁴¹ Butler had first come to O'Curry's attention in 1946 because of his letters to the *Irish Times* regarding Archbishop Stepinac's trial by the Titoists. An editorial in the *Catholic Standard* reported that 'Mr. Butler is, as we are informed by friends of his, a leftist "intellectual" who spent several years on the Continent and also some time in Yugoslavia'. The paper nonetheless dismissed his critical comments about Stepinac as 'not worthy of refutation'. *Catholic Standard* 25 Oct. 1946, 2. See also the long-running personal correspondence between Butler and O'Curry: TCD, Mss. 10304/642/1-46 (BP).

¹⁴² TCD, Ms. 10304/142/4 (BP): 'The Greek Primate Says "No!"' [undated (1960/70s)].

¹⁴³ HMB, Letter to the Editor, *The Tablet* 28 Feb. 1953, 174-5.

¹⁴⁴ R.C. Flanagan, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times* 24 Dec. 1952, 6; HMB, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times* 1 Jan. 1953, 5.

explaining why he felt compelled to advertise the Croatian atrocities to people in Britain and Ireland, he wrote that 'I was brought up an Irish Protestant and I think it is implicit, if not explicit, in our belief that the Truth, which is a phrase we seldom use, is built up of many lesser truths, or perhaps it is always in the process of rebuilding, for as we grow wiser we grow more fastidious. We demand a higher standard of accuracy, a keener courage in applying it' (LN 90).¹⁴⁵

Admittedly, some have since interpreted his Croatian concerns not as part of the battle for truth so much as a barely disguised attempt to score points off his own Catholic compatriots.¹⁴⁶ Yet this interpretation once again presupposes that as a proud and confident Protestant, Butler could only be motivated by sectarian animosity. Back in 1948, Geoffrey Taylor interpreted his friend's behaviour in a decidedly more positive light. Reporting that many people thought of Butler as a 'cats-paw to Stalin', Taylor added: 'I have to explain patiently that you are a curious survival from the days when it was quite usual for the Irish Gentry to take a dispassionate and unprejudiced interest in events and to speak the plain unpropagandist truth as they happened to observe it'.¹⁴⁷ That Butler understood himself as a lonely vestige of this tradition is corroborated by his later reflections on the fall-out from the Papal Nuncio Incident. Though some of the denunciations he received were to be more severe, the worst in his judgment was the unanimous one that came from the Kilkenny Vocational Committee. This was because rather than stay and defend him, Bishop Phair, a member of the Committee, chose instead to slip away before the motion of censure was made. To Butler, this was not only a bitter personal disappointment but also a betrayal of the tradition of free inquiry Phair was meant to represent. 'I knew then that southern Protestantism and southern scholarship were totally dead', he confessed to Maurice Craig. 'I had all the facts, and a very stupid undergraduate could have seen at a glance that I was

¹⁴⁵ It is apposite here that when surveying contemporary Southern Protestants, Kurt Bowen found many who believed that they had a 'respect for the true historical record' their Catholic compatriots tended to lack. Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, 109-10.

¹⁴⁶ Peggy O'Brien, 'An Ireland not heard', review of HMB, *Independent Spirit*, in *Boston Sunday Globe* 24 Nov. 1996, N18.

¹⁴⁷ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1440 (BP): Geoffrey Taylor to HMB, 12 Oct. 1948.

voicing not my opinion but that of the entire Orthodox Church'.¹⁴⁸ Here, as on so many other occasions, what concerned Butler most was the honour of the minority community. For if a heritage of reasonableness and learning was something Southern Protestants still had the ability to claim, then they were obliged to do so, and this as much for Ireland's sake as their own.

V. Destruction and renewal: the politics of preservation and the Butler Society

Hubert Butler's commitment to intellectual integrity and continuity was intensified by his perception that Irishmen did not take these things seriously enough. Indeed, the readiness with which they ignored evidence of Church complicity in Croatian war-crimes seemed to him of a piece with their indifference to the historical record in Ireland itself (*EA* 272). And at no time was this disdain more tragically manifest than on 28 June 1922, when the Four Courts building was blown up by the Republicans. Regarding the impact of this incident he liked to quote R.A.S. Macalister, who observed that 'the hand which fired the Record Office condemned the people of Ireland for all time to grovel in a bovine ignorance of vast tracts of the history of their country'.¹⁴⁹ Nationalist though he was, Butler could never forgive those whose vision of the Irish nation countenanced this sort of philistinism in the name of 'total' liberation. By the same token, he never missed a chance to remind Irishmen of the wanton destruction of Big Houses during the Civil War.¹⁵⁰ In particular he mourned the burning of Woodstock House in Co. Tipperary, which in his boyhood he knew to be a 'home of poetry and learning' (*EA* 92-3). He found it doubly sad that among those torching the house had been Ernie O'Malley, whom he later recognized as a man of great intellect and culture. Yet his sadness turned to anger when he reflected on this irony, leading him to remark caustically that O'Malley had been 'one of those daring and clever boys who helped to give Woodstock to Éire for ever and to destroy what he loved'.¹⁵¹ The destruction of Horace Plunkett's Kilteragh had been an equally perverse action, one that

¹⁴⁸ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/313h (BP): HMB to Maurice Craig, 21 Oct. 1973.

¹⁴⁹ MH (Ms.): 'Destruction in Ireland', 1 [3pp., undated]. See R.A.S. Macalister, *Ancient Ireland: A Study in the Lessons of Archaeology and History* (London, 1935), 271.

¹⁵⁰ HMB, 'History In Stone'. *Hibernia* 13-26 June 1975, 24.

¹⁵¹ MH (Ms.): 'Woodstock', 1-2 [3pp., undated].

demonstrated just how myopic Irish revolutionary politics could sometimes be. Writing in *The Bell* in 1951, Butler regretted the ruins of Kilteragh had not been preserved as a monument, so that ‘whenever there is some unwholesome burst of national complacency, compulsory tours, like those for Weimar citizens to Buchenwald, could be organised. “That is the way”, it could be explained, “we treated one of the most constructive minds of our century”’.¹⁵² In its obsessive repudiation of the Anglo-Irish tradition, the majority had forsworn valuable resources for healing its wounds and telling its story.

Even after the lawlessness of the twenties had come to an end, though, the urge to erase rather than confront the past persisted, and a low-level iconoclasm was not uncommon. In Dublin, aesthetically valuable monuments were pulled down in an effort to rid the city of its Ascendancy associations, much to the chagrin of Thomas Bodkin in his 1949 *Report on the Arts in Ireland*.¹⁵³ Butler likewise detected a purging impulse at work in the provinces; he complained at one stage that ‘the Land Commission seems to make a point of destroying demesne walls round here, [and] old records and rentals and maps seem to be deliberately neglected’.¹⁵⁴ Animus towards the Anglo-Irish legacy assumed a more passive form in 1943, when the Government refused to preserve intact Henry Grattan’s house in Co. Wicklow. As a result, its contents were auctioned off and scattered.¹⁵⁵ Yet to Butler, there was nothing inherent in the democratizing process that made such behaviour necessary. In contrast to the Irish pattern of neglect, he pointed out how, for the sake of posterity, the Soviets had carefully preserved Tolstoy’s Yasnaya Polyana and other places of historical merit (*GW* 89). Political arguments about efficiency and expansion would also ring false when later employed in Dublin to justify the widespread demolition of Georgian architecture. It has since been suggested that the real rationale for destroying these irreplaceable buildings was not economic necessity so much as a hatred of the dispensation under

¹⁵² HMB, untitled review Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman*, in *The Bell* 17:9 (Dec. 1951), 60.

¹⁵³ Thomas Bodkin, *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (Dublin, 1949), 58-9.

¹⁵⁴ TCD, Ms. 10304/597/1447 (BP): HMB to E.R. Townsend, undated [Aug. 1952].

¹⁵⁵ Gerard O’Brien, *Anglo-Irish Politics* 12, 183n.

which they were constructed.¹⁵⁶ If such logic were followed in its purest form, however, most of Dublin's distinguishing features would have to be obliterated. So James Delahanty sardonically addressed his compatriots in 1958: 'Let us show the world that we are entirely independent of Britain by getting rid of the English look, the English language, and English lucre. We shall then be back where we were 700 years ago. And isn't that the burning desire of every patriotic Irishman – or is it?'¹⁵⁷

As evidenced by his longstanding desire to convert Kilkenny Castle into a centre for local cultural activities, the safeguarding of architectural landmarks was central to Hubert Butler's vision of a useable past. And as he emphasizes in 'A Plea from the Country', wherein he first broached this idea, he understood both the practical necessity of combining conservation with functionality. So he concludes at the end of the piece that 'such a plan as I have suggested for the constructive use of an ancient building will be more readily listened to [by the authorities] than schemes of preservation which are based on mere regret for what is no longer serviceable'.¹⁵⁸ One case where this approach yielded quick and happy results was the conversion of Foulksrath Castle, near Kilkenny, into a youth hostel. The idea had its genesis in Butler's friendship with Terry Trench, the co-founder and leading light of An Óige, the Irish youth hostelling movement. Once Trench managed to secure the £1000 required for purchase and refurbishment, Butler persuaded the owner of the Castle to sell it to An Óige, thereby giving the building a new lease on life.¹⁵⁹ Still, all around him Butler saw evidence of a precious architectural heritage being neglected or mismanaged. Two of Kilkenny's best known churches had for twenty years been

¹⁵⁶ Kevin Kearns, 'Dublin's crumbling fair city', *Geographical Magazine* 55:2 (Feb. 1983), 80-1. See also Frank McDonald, *The Destruction of Dublin* (Dublin, 1985); and Stephen A. Royle, 'The Historical Legacy in Modern Ireland', in R.W.G. Carter and A.J. Parker (eds.), *Ireland: Contemporary perspectives on a land and its people* (London, 1989), 113-43.

¹⁵⁷ J.A. Delahanty, "'Histerical" Perspective', *Focus* Feb. 1958, 15.

¹⁵⁸ HMB, 'A Plea from the Country', 202. Even when his larger plan for the Castle did not come to fruition, Butler continued to advocate the creation of a southeast regional archive within its walls. See HMB, 'Kilkenny Castle', *JBS* 1:1 (1968), 56-60; 'Foreword', *JBS* 1:6 (1975-6), 415-19; 'Foreword', *JBS* 1:7 (1977), 505-10; and 'A Future for Kilkenny Castle', *JBS* 2:4 (1985), 432-4.

¹⁵⁹ Terry Trench, *Fifty Years Young: The Story of An Óige* (Dublin, 1981), 31-2. See also HMB, 'Editorial Comment', *Old Kilkenny Review* 1 (1946-7), 8.

used as hand-ball courts, while the finest of its Jacobean town-houses had been turned into a Woolworth's department store. The gracious old Georgian bridges spanning the River Nore were unceremoniously being torn down to make way for modern ones. 'These things are of small consequence in themselves', he admitted, 'but they are symbolic of what is happening all over Ireland'.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps most disturbing was the case of the Evans Library, a collection dating from the eighteenth century whose location on the River Nore had been subject to repeated flooding and whose contents had been left to rot by the authorities. The fate of slow deterioration the Library had suffered led Butler to observe what 'a suitable mausoleum for Anglo-Irish civilization' it now made. But here again he was adamant that something like the Evans collection was more than just a token of former glories; it was also a salvageable resource for the promotion of contemporary learning (*GW* 60).

For Butler, such attempts at local conservation were part of an entire way of life. They constituted a constructive and moderate response to the inevitability of change, whereby one neither wholly repudiated nor wholly romanticized the past. And in this way he believed all Irishmen could approach their society's evolution as the fulfillment of history rather than as its rival.¹⁶¹ Of course there need not be anything exclusively Protestant in this outlook, and many people of Catholic background were to join in the growing movement to preserve the nation's material heritage.¹⁶² The Irish Georgian Society in particular has served since the late fifties as a platform for concerned citizens of all sorts to sponsor protection and restoration activities.¹⁶³ Eager as he was to see more Irish people involved in such initiatives, though, Butler remained unafraid to speak out individually when he thought popular opinion was misdirected. On the

¹⁶⁰ HMB, 'A Plea from the Country', 200. Though he could not halt the despoilment of Kilkenny's built environment, Butler could at least record it for posterity. Under the aegis of the KAS, he commissioned the British archaeologist O.G.S. Crawford in 1946 to perform a photographic survey of the area's unique architectural features, many of which would be altered shortly thereafter. See HMB, 'A Photographic Survey', *Irish Times* 5 Nov. 1946, 4. See also *GW* 92-3.

¹⁶¹ MH (Notebook): 'Beginning' [c.1980s].

¹⁶² Interview with Maurice Craig, Dublin, 16 Aug. 2001.

¹⁶³ Desmond Guinness revived the Irish Georgian Society in 1958. See his editorials in its *Quarterly Bulletin*, especially those of 1:1 (Jan.-Mar. 1958), 3-5; 3:1 (Jan.-Mar. 1960), 1-3; and 7:2-4 (Apr.-Dec. 1964), 39-45. See also Carola Peck, *Mariga and her Friends* (Ballivor, Co. Meath, 1997).

occasion of John F. Kennedy's much-touted visit in 1963, for example, he expressed public opposition to the Government's plan to present its guest with the original Ormonde-Kennedy Treaty. Although he considered himself 'a great admirer of President Kennedy', he held that 'this fourteenth century document should be kept in Ireland, which is still the principal home of the Kennedys and Butlers, however many members of either family may find distinction abroad'.¹⁶⁴ Needless to say, he did not find his sentiments echoed across the land in this instance. Despite such errors, he did not abandon his belief that the State must be encouraged to participate creatively in heritage work. So when in the 1960s there was some uncertainty as to what would happen to Annagh-ma-Kerrig, his wife's childhood home in Co. Monaghan, he persuaded his brother-in-law to donate it to the Nation as a retreat for artists and writers. At least partly as a result of Butler's vision and faith, the house has served in this capacity ever since.¹⁶⁵

Another such gift Butler helped to facilitate was the Marquess of Ormonde's eventual handing over of Kilkenny Castle to the State in August 1967. In the formal ceremony at which he passed its keys to the Kilkenny Castle Restoration Committee, the Marquess spoke of his conviction that 'new life can be put into these old buildings', and certainly the symbolism of his gesture has not been lost on subsequent commentators.¹⁶⁶ The occasion also provided a fitting context for the launching of the Butler Society, the seed of which had been germinating in Hubert Butler's mind for some time. He later testified that the successful creation of the O'Mahony Society by his friend Eoin 'the Pope' O'Mahony had been a key inspiration in this undertaking. 'He had seen in the extended family a blueprint for what life might one day be like', Butler wrote after O'Mahony's death in 1970. 'Perhaps some generations or centuries from now groups of people, linked together maybe as kinsmen, maybe as neighbours, will feel a special responsibility

¹⁶⁴ HMB, Letter to the Editor. *Irish Times* 5 July 1963, 6. See also CD 87-8.

¹⁶⁵ James Forsyth, *Tyrone Guthrie: A Biography* (London, 1976), 347.

¹⁶⁶ Marquess of Ormonde, 'Address at the handing over of Kilkenny Castle to the Kilkenny Castle Restoration Committee – August 12th, 1967', *JBS* 1:1 (1968), 14-15. See also Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London, 1987), 303; and Terence Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland, A Study of Irish Landed Families* (Dublin, 2001), 278.

for each other, based on a closer knowledge and affection than is possible in our faceless and centralized society' (EA 193-4). By gathering together those who claimed some affiliation to the wider Butler lineage, an opportunity for fellowship was created, one which had the capacity to transcend various other social distinctions. And of course in the process, the Society provided a forum in which family history and relationships could be shared and explored. Thus when assessing the Society's initial efforts in 1968, Butler reflected that 'it soon became clear that the Butlers were no better than any other family, but their records had been well-kept, and it was possible to find kinsmen in France and Germany, in America and Australasia'. Moreover, he thought that the enthusiastic response the Society had received in these places bespoke a need of people everywhere to reassert their organic selves: 'All round us men are rebelling against the civilization of the anthill and wish to be individuals, not units, humans not machines, and are juggling in different ways with the old human constants which are under threat, neighbourhoods, kinships, beliefs, skills, traditions' (EA 204). Just as ancient buildings could be put to present-day uses, he saw no reason why these 'old human constants' might not likewise play a part in the rejuvenation of modern communities.

That the Society should be forward-looking and inclusive was important to Butler. In explaining the organization's *raison d'être* he thus identified continuity as a central tenet but not, he emphasized, continuity of 'a hierarchical, conservative kind'.¹⁶⁷ Certainly he would have rejected Hermione Lee's suggestion that the Butler Society and its *Journal* were dedicated to 'a kind of wistful repining' for the days of Anglo-Irish domination and exclusivity.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, if one actually reads the *Journal of the Butler Society* in any detail, it becomes apparent that Butler wished to challenge such narrow conceptions of family identity. In the inaugural issue, for example, he writes of the historical likelihood that the Butler clan spread as far as Russia and confirms that blood relations have been traced to Yugoslavia and Poland. Given his sensitivity to

¹⁶⁷ MH (Alpha): HMB to James Forsyth, 18 July 1976.

¹⁶⁸ Hermione Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen* (rev. edn., London, 1999), 19-20.

the Cold War division between East and West, this claim to familial links across the Iron Curtain cannot be discounted.¹⁶⁹ Nor should one overlook his mildly provocative speculation that the black Butlers he met while visiting Georgia might be his kinsmen as much as the white ones who had invited him.¹⁷⁰ Speaking more generally about his encounters with newfound relations across the United States, he reiterated that ‘there is nothing special about our dispersed and divided family except a certain cohesion which has sometimes cut across social and political prejudices, and could do so again’.¹⁷¹ It was the very usualness of the Butler clan when taken as a whole that recommended it as a model for what other families might achieve through association. Much more important than grand antecedents (though admittedly some Butlers had these as well) was a shared curiosity about the minutiae comprising the bulk of the family record. ‘Time’, he reasoned, ‘can make the duller of us interesting. Time lends enchantment to law-suits, to carpenters’ bills,...to squabbles about wills, property and marriage settlements....Yet it is on such meagre records that we mostly build our identities and we must cherish them[,] for men, like plants, draw strength from their roots, no matter what the soil in which they grow’.¹⁷²

Of course a fascination with genealogy went hand-in-hand with these inquiries. And here again Butler derived inspiration from the example of Eoin O’Mahony, who was famous across Ireland for his bard-like ability to recount the lineage of just about anyone he came across. ‘How many family trees the Pope could climb!’ exclaims John Ryan in his memoirs. ‘I tagged behind him on quite a few of these arboreal ascensions. One could almost hear the family branches breaking before his relentless clambering’.¹⁷³ What impressed Butler about O’Mahony’s genealogical knowledge was not only its sheer breadth but its almost entirely oral expression. For to witness one of his friend’s ‘papal disquisitions’ was in his estimation to experience the

¹⁶⁹ HMB, ‘Beyond the Iron Curtain’, *JBS* 1:1 (1968), 68-70.

¹⁷⁰ HMB, ‘Butler’s Island in Georgia’, *JBS* 1:5 (1973-4), 358.

¹⁷¹ HMB, ‘A Visit to America’, *JBS* 1:5 (1973-4), 318.

¹⁷² HMB, ‘The Butlers of Priestown’, 377.

¹⁷³ John Ryan, *Remembering How We Stood* (1975; Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1987), 82-8.

spontaneous combination of love and learning in a manner no literary document could convey.¹⁷⁴ Not everyone has shared O'Mahony and Butler's belief in the socially redemptive possibilities of the genealogical impulse. In contrast to the idea of genealogy as a unifying agent, it has been suggested that the invocation of pedigree more often serves as a means of claiming privilege and justifying elitism.¹⁷⁵ Within the specifically Irish sphere, W.J. McCormack has argued that a key cultural difference between Protestants and Catholics in the twentieth century has been the former's self-conscious and direct 'possession of a history', which the upheaval of colonization denied to the latter.¹⁷⁶ Yet it is worth noting that during a period when so much else in Ireland's heritage was either being neglected or mishandled, the authorities retained an interest in the preservation of the ancient Office of Arms at Dublin Castle. Though the Office's transfer from British to Irish control was tardy – it did not formally take place until March 1943 – Edward MacLysaght and others worked hard thereafter to ensure that the re-christened Genealogical Office maintained high heraldic standards while adapting to a republican ethos.¹⁷⁷ Thomas Sadleir, who as Deputy Ulster King-of-Arms ran the office prior to the handover, always denied the idea that genealogy was inherently elitist, 'a mere aristocratic conceit cloaked in snobbery'. Instead, he often argued that his work 'would be more appreciated in Japan where the Shinto religion's ancestor worship is the norm, than in 20th Century Europe where Genealogy was once the preserve of the Upper Class'.¹⁷⁸

It would be disingenuous, however, to suggest that no snobbery existed among the Anglo-Irish regarding the real or imagined brilliance of their ancestry. The nostalgia and caste-pride of parents and grandparents is certainly a recurring motif in the memoirs of many Southern

¹⁷⁴ MH (Alpha): HMB to Nora O'Sullivan, 17 Oct. 1971.

¹⁷⁵ Julia Watson, 'Ordering the Family: Genealogy as Autobiographical Pedigree', in S. Smith and J. Watson (eds.), *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography* (Minneapolis, MN, 1996), 299-300.

¹⁷⁶ W.J. McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett*, 264. McCormack's distinction loses some of its force in the face of current evidence that the enthusiasm for heraldry and lineage-tracing which flourished during the eighteenth century was not a uniquely Ascendancy phenomenon, but extended to certain Catholics and Ulster Dissenters as well. Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, 45.

¹⁷⁷ Susan Hood, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance: The Survival of the Office of Arms* (Dublin, 2002).

¹⁷⁸ Randal Sadleir, untitled speech, delivered at Dublin Castle in commemoration of the former Office of Arms (2001), 7-8. [Courtesy of Randal Sadleir, London].

Protestants.¹⁷⁹ Hubert Butler acknowledged that these qualities had also characterized his family, though he was prepared to forgive such tendencies since they had prompted him to approach his forbears 'as objects of hereditary speculation'.¹⁸⁰ This is an important caveat, and one which ultimately distinguishes him from those Protestants for whom lineage served to inhibit self-understanding rather than enhance it. With the expansive logic of his familial and genealogical writings, he offers a hopeful and all too rare alternative to his community's deadening relationship with history.¹⁸¹ Thus like Yeats before him, Butler engages in a form of 'genealogical and territorial insistence' on behalf of the whole Anglo-Irish tradition, though as Edna Longley rightly notes, his accumulation of local precedents and affiliations owes more to the practical inclinations of AE and Horace Plunkett than to the romantic aspirations of Coole.¹⁸² Yet to invoke any of the Revivalists in this context is to be struck again by the remarkable cohesion of Butler's intellectual concerns. Just as he hypothesizes in *Ten Thousand Saints* that ancient tribes required imaginary ancestors to bridge the social gaps between them, so in his essays he posits a more generous conception of genealogical inheritance as part of the effort to reconcile the people of modern Ireland. And nowhere does his personal investment in this process shine through more brightly than in the almost filial attitude he exhibits towards the legacy of progressive nationalists like AE and Plunkett. And though they and most of his other moral exemplars were Protestants, his promotion of them was never directed solely at his co-religionists. For to him, these Protestant ancestors were already on their way to becoming secular saints, saints whom all his countrymen would someday revere in the pluralist Ireland of the future.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, L.A.G. Strong, *Green Memory* (London, 1961), 9; and Lionel Fleming, *Head or Harp* (London, 1965), 17. More recently, see Richard Murphy, *The Kick* (London, 2002), 26.

¹⁸⁰ MH (Ms.): '1920-23', 10 [13pp, undated (c. 1970s/80s)].

¹⁸¹ Elizabeth Grubgeld, 'Anglo-Irish Autobiography and the Genealogical Mandate', 104, 110-11.

¹⁸² Edna Longley, *The Living Stream*, 139-40. For a sceptical reading of the Revival's genealogical dabblings, see Declan Kiberd, 'The Perils of Nostalgia: A Critique of the Revival', in P. Connolly (ed.), *Literature and the Changing Ireland* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1982), 1-24.

It was therefore as a seedbed for renewal rather than as a defiant last stand that Butler chose to regard his post-Independence inheritance. That Southern Protestant culture had been buffeted by change and riven by self-doubt during the twentieth century was obvious; the question was what good might be salvaged from the experience. Likewise, the corresponding diminishment of orthodox belief within the Church of Ireland did not strike him as a reason for despair so much as an invitation to reform. On all these fronts, then, what his community most required was the courage to embrace change:

Belief that is dead should like the phoenix consign itself to the flames, having laid the egg from which a radiant and glowing new phoenix will be hatched....The poor old phoenix, moulting and blind and bedraggled, gazes mesmerised into the fire[,] but unable to summon up the courage to take the last leap. Yet I think it still has the power to lay a very fine egg. Because of that I am proud to be a member of the Church of Ireland.¹⁸³

This image of the phoenix perfectly encapsulates Butler's commitment to historical continuity and his faith in organic social evolution. And however much he thought all the churches needed to amend themselves in this way, he never doubted that in the process they remained pivotal to the transformation of society as a whole. Besides which, he explained to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 'most of the people I know who have broken away from traditional loyalties haven't found anything better to replace them'.¹⁸⁴ Their ongoing conflicts and corruptions notwithstanding, the study of Irish history had shown him that Protestants and Catholics had occasionally managed to share heritage, learning and love for the good of their country. It was Hubert Butler's profound conviction that through a combined appreciation of these precedents, modern Irishmen might yet do the same:

The study of the past brings together people of sharply different views and tastes and we learn side by side that there is nothing permanent about the deep cleavages in society, which obsess us so to-day. There have always been cleavages but they have healed and new ones have broken out elsewhere. A continuous reshaping is always going on. When we see how past bitternesses have died down and been forgotten, the present ones seem less formidable. We know a solution can be found.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ TCD, Ms. 10304/399/1 (BP): untitled/ archived as 'Fragment beginning "Here in Ireland we are engaged in a never ending..."' [undated].

¹⁸⁴ TCD, Ms.10304/597/1372 (BP): HMB to Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 24 Sept. 1969.

¹⁸⁵ HMB, 'The Old Kilkenny Archaeological Society', 27.

Conclusion

Speaking at the Hubert Butler Centenary Celebration held at Kilkenny Castle in October 2000, Antony Farrell of the Lilliput Press recalled that when he first came across Butler's uncollected writings in the early 1980s, he felt an excitement akin to 'a Schliemann uncovering Troy'.¹ Certainly it is remarkable that such an extraordinary *oeuvre* – parts of which were by then over fifty years old – had still not reached a wider audience, either in Ireland or abroad. This apparent blindness to Butler's achievement, for which Farrell sought to compensate by putting out four collections of essays between 1985 and 1996, obviously had a number of causes, not least the writer's own reluctance to pursue a more conventional literary career. Yet the acclamation these collections received when they finally appeared bespoke more than just a tardy recognition of Butler as a brilliant prose stylist. It also reflected a broader change underway in Irish society by which a person with his convictions was no longer regarded so much as a crank or trouble-maker but rather as a man of integrity and vision. Since the 1970s a new generation of mostly secular Catholic intellectuals had been setting the tone of the public discourse, and to them Butler stood out as one of the chief forerunners in their current drive to advance the cause of pluralism in Ireland.² As the list of well-wishers and admirers grew during the last few years of his life, Butler was even described by one commentator as 'a living national treasure'.³ In sum, it was a happy ending to what had often been a lonely and uncertain journey.

For all that is satisfying about such an outcome, though, it seems unlikely Butler himself would have been content to let matters rest there had he lived still longer. Winning a debate was never as important to him as the inherent virtue of participating in it. And here one suspects he would be less interested in savouring his personal vindication than in pressing on with the larger

¹ Antony Farrell, 'Editing the Master', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 78.

² See, for example, Fintan O'Toole, 'Loyal Dissenter', *Irish Times* 23 June 1990, W2-3.

³ Robert Tracy, 'The Last Essays of Hubert Butler', review of HMB, *The Children of Drancy*, in *Irish Literary Supplement* Spring 1991, 18.

question of what pluralism in Ireland might actually look like in practice. Certainly he worried that despite the gradual weakening of nationalist orthodoxy, his compatriots had yet to develop a coherent alternative sense of communal inclusiveness to replace it. As Terence de Vere White put it at one stage, there seemed a real danger that ‘a nation born of enthusiasm and reared in dissension is being unified by indifference’.⁴ In particular Butler would complain in 1977 that the old village creameries, those abiding monuments to George Russell’s vision of a ‘co-operative commonwealth’, were all being consolidated into centralized regional businesses. No doubt this trend was an efficient one, but he could not help but wonder what it said about the state of social idealism in Ireland. ‘What would Plunkett or the other pioneers,...say of all this, Robert Owen, John Vandaleur, William Thompson?’ He then added simply: ‘I do not know. And what saddens me is that no one cares either’.⁵

As always, one realm in which Butler continued to look for answers was organized religion. It is one of the standing paradoxes of his life that regardless of his own lack of religious faith and his acute sensitivity to the churches’ manifold failings, he retained to the end an unshakeable belief in their social significance. Yet at the same time part of the Irish pluralistic future he envisioned required the eventual subsuming of these traditional sects into a new, non-denominational, ‘vaguely agnostic’ Christianity, a variation on the civil religion propounded by AE.⁶ Here paradox would seem to give way to outright contradiction; on the one hand, Butler was fiercely anti-ecumenical and wary of any attempts to downplay traditional divisions, while on the other, he craved the day when such divisions would cease to matter. There are other such contradictions in Butler’s thought, and moments of outright disingenuousness, too. Indeed, there

⁴ Terence de Vere White, *The Anglo-Irish* (London, 1972), 40.

⁵ HMB, untitled review of Patrick Bolger, *The Irish Co-operative Movement: Its History and Development*, in *Irish University Review* 7:2 (Autumn 1977), 284. At least one contemporary intellectual has revisited the co-operative commonwealth as a model for a modern pluralistic Ireland: see Richard Kearney, ‘The Right To Be a Minority’, *The Crane Bag* 5:1 (1981), 88-93.

⁶ MH (Notebook): untitled [royal blue with rust red binding; 1982]. See also HMB, ‘The Butlers of Priesttown’, 386. It is relevant here to recall that in 1969 Dean Victor Griffin, another staunch Southern Protestant, suggested the possibility that St. Patrick’s be turned into an ecumenical national cathedral to be shared by all the principal denominations. RCB, Ms. 487/1/14 (Hurley Papers): Victor Griffin to Michael Hurley, 26 Aug. 1969.

exists in his writings and example enough that is either elitist or quixotic that some find it reasonable to question his ultimate relevance to the realities of Irish life. Yet what such an attitude fails to recognize is how these inconsistencies reflect an organic and integrated process, one in which an especially gifted minority Irishman tried to work out a tenable identity for himself during a period of major cultural and political change. And in this regard it is important to emphasize again the essential moderation of Hubert Butler's thought, the constant 'dovetailing of freedom and discipline' he strove to apply whilst defining both his public responsibilities and private aspirations. That in so doing he felt obliged to confront not only the presumptions of the Catholic majority but also the inhibitions of his fellow Protestants is a testimony to his fundamental integrity as an intellectual and as a citizen. His passionate detachment was the gift of a native son.

Appendix 1: Hubert Butler's Published Writings and Radio Broadcasts

1a. Translations and essay collections

[in chronological order]

Leonid Leonov, *The Thief*, trans. HMB (London, 1931).

Anton Chehov, *The Cherry Orchard*, trans. HMB (London, 1934).

Ten Thousand Saints: A Study in Irish and European Origins (Kilkenny, 1972).

Wolfe Tone and the Common Name of Irishman [Lilliput Pamphlet 5] (Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1985).

Escape from the Anthill (Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1985). [EA]

The Children of Drancy (Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1988). [CD]

Grandmother and Wolfe Tone (Dublin, 1990). [GW]

The Sub-prefect should have held his tongue, and other essays, ed. R.F. Foster (London, 1990).

L'envahisseur est venu en pantoufles, trans. P. Blanchard (Paris, 1994).

In the Land of Nod (Dublin, 1996). [LN]

Independent Spirit: Essays, ed. E. Sifton (New York, 1996).

1b. Periodical publications and book contributions

Notes:

Pieces which have appeared in whole or in part in one of the four original Lilliput collections are followed by the particular collection's abbreviation in bold [see Abbreviations page].

Sometimes Butler did not approve of the title under which his work was published, eg. 'The Blood-Feud' was the name given to 'The Last *Izmirenje*'. Since the re-titlings or restorations of original titles can be found in the notes on sources in the four Lilliput collections, I have chosen not to clutter this listing with further annotations about versions, etc.

1941:

'The Barriers', *The Bell* 2:4 (July 1941), 40-5. [GW]

1942:

untitled review of Enid Starkie, *A Lady's Child*, in *The Bell* 3:5 (Feb. 1942), 402-3.

1943:

untitled review of Patrick Purcell, *Hanrahan's Daughter*, in *The Bell* 5:4 (Jan. 1943), 331-2.

1944:

untitled review of Harold Nicolson, *The Desire to Please*, in *The Bell* 8:4 (July 1944), 351-5. [LN]

1945:

untitled reviews of Patrick Purcell, *A Keeper of Swans*; Sean Dorman, *Valley of Graneen*; Philip Rooney, *Singing River*, in *The Bell* 9:5 (Feb. 1945), 447-9.

'Censorship' [response to Monk Gibbon], *The Bell* 9:6 (Mar. 1945), 530.

1946:

'Soviet Literature', *Irish Times* 25 May 1946, 4.

'A Plea from the Country', *The Bell* 12:3 (June 1946), 192-202.

untitled review of Kate O'Brien, *That Lady*, in *The Bell* 12:5 (Aug. 1946), 444-5.

'Archaeology and National Culture', *Iris Óda, A Kilkenny Review* (Samrad 1946), 13-14.

- 'The Kilkenny Theatre 1801-1819', *Dublin Magazine* 21 (Oct.-Dec. 1946), 10-19.
 'A Photographic Survey', *Irish Times* 5 Nov. 1946, 4.
 'Trial of Archbishop Stepinac', *Irish Times* 3 Dec. 1946, 3.
 'Russians Remember', reviews of V.V. Mikhailovsky (ed.), *Literature and Life: Selections from the Writings of Maxim Gorki*; N.D. Telezhov, *A Writer Remembers*; Valentin Kataev, *The Wife*, in *Irish Times* 14 Dec. 1946, 6.
 'The Teaching Brigade', in Robert Greacen (ed.), *Irish Harvest* (Dublin, 1946), 15-25. [EA]

1947:

- 'Editorial Comment', *Old Kilkenny Review* 1 (1946-7), 8-10.
 'A Kilkenny Survey' [reprint from *Irish Times*], *Old Kilkenny Review* 1 (1946-7), 31-3.
 'How We Taught English in Leningrad' [abridged reprint from *Irish Harvest*], *World Digest* 95 (Feb. 1947), 52-4. [EA]
 'The Anglo-Irish and Ireland' [reprint from *Irish Press*], *National Digest* 1:2 (Feb. 1947), 1ff.
 'The Blood-Feud', *Irish Press* 28 Feb. 1947, 7. [EA]
 'Standish O'Grady in Kilkenny (No.1)', *Irish Press* 15 Apr. 1947, 4. [EA]
 'Standish O'Grady in Kilkenny (No.2)', *Irish Press* 16 Apr. 1947, 4. [EA]
 'New Geneva in Waterford', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 77:2 (Dec. 1947), 150-5. [EA]

1948:

- 'Istria and Maria Pasquinelli', *Dublin Magazine* 23 (Jan.-Mar. 1948), 27-32. [LN]
 'Chronicles of Narovchat' [trans. from Russian of Constantin Fedin], *The Bell* 15:6 (Mar. 1948), 36-53.
 'The City' [trans. from Greek of C.P. Cavafy], *Irish Times* 10 Apr. 1948, 4. [GW]
 'Deserted Sun Palace', *Irish Press* 20 July 1948, 4. [GW]
 'Otway Cuffe', *Dublin Magazine* 23 (Oct.-Dec. 1948), 1-15. [GW]
 'Wales and Its Folklore', *Irish Press* 14 Oct. 1948, 14.
 'Report on Yugoslavia 1, War Resistance To-day', *Peace News* 8 Oct. 1948, 5. [LN]
 'Report on Yugoslavia 2, The Church Reaps Her Harvest' *Peace News* 15 Oct. 1948, 3. [LN]
 'Report on Yugoslavia 3, When Catholics and Communists Unite', *Peace News* 22 Oct. 1948, 3. [LN]
 'Report on Yugoslavia 4, The Choice Before the Church', *Peace News* 29 Oct. 1948, 3. [LN]

1949:

- 'New Geneva – in Waterford' [abridged reprint from *JRSAI*], *Irish Digest* 32:4 (Feb. 1949), 64-7. [EA]
 'The Dumb and the Stammerers in Early Irish History', *Antiquity* 23 (Mar. 1949), 20-31.
 'Letter from Ireland', *Peace News* 4 Mar. 1949, 3.
 'The Truth and the truth!', *CIG* 11 Mar. 1949, 13-17.
 'Pacifism in Ireland', *Peace News* 13 May 1949, 3.
 'Opening a Celtic Window', *Irish Press* 11 June 1949, 6.
 'The County Libraries and the Censorship', *Irish Writing* 8 (July 1949), 66-76. [GW]
 'Wanted, Unofficial Travellers', *Peace News* 1 July 1949, 2.
 'Dangan Revisited', *Irish Press* 8 July 1949, 4. [GW]
 'Friendship, Personal or Official', *Peace News* 22 July 1949, 4.
 'Henry Flood of Farmley', *Kilkenny People* 17 Sept. 1949, 4. [LN]
 'Books Aren't Groceries!' [abridged reprint from *Irish Writing*], *Irish Digest* 35:1 (Nov. 1949), 41-4. [GW]
 'Passage East in Waterford History' [reprint from *JRSAI*], *Waterford News* 30 Dec. 1949, 7. [EA]

1950:

- 'The Kilkenny Theatre, 1802-1819' [reprint from *Dublin Magazine*], *Old Kilkenny Review* 3 (Jan. 1950), 24-32.
 'Life and Leisure in Kilkenny', *Irish Monthly* 78 (Apr. 1950), 158-65.
 'From the Liffey to the Shannon', *Irish Press* 10 June 1950, 6.
 'Henry and Frances', *Dublin Magazine* 25 (Apr.-June 1950), 27-35. [EA]
 'The Statue and the Calvary, Ernest Renan', *The Listener* 31 Aug. 1950, 299-300. [CD]
 'Materialism without Marx', *Envoy* 3:9 (Aug. 1950), 25-9. [LN]
 'The Invader Wore Slippers', *The Bell* 16:2 (Nov. 1950), 43-51. [EA]

- 'The Compulsory Conversion Campaign of 1941 (I)', *CIG* 15 Dec. 1950, 10-11.
 'The Compulsory Conversion Campaign of 1941 (II)', *CIG* 29 Dec. 1950, 4-6.
 'Prison Interview with Archbishop Stepinac', *Peace News* 29 Dec. 1950, 3.
 'Sachalin Island (I)' [trans. from Russian of Anton Chekhov], *Envoy* 4:13 (Dec. 1950), 37-46. [LN]
 'Who were the "Stammerers"?' *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 80:2 (July 1950), 228-36.

1951:

- 'Sachalin Island (II)' [trans. from Russian of Anton Chekhov], *Envoy* 4:14 (Jan. 1951), 42-9. [LN]
 'Shaw', *The Bell* 16:4 (Jan. 1951), 29-36.
 'The Compulsory Conversion Campaign of 1941 (III)', *CIG* 5 Jan. 1951, 6-7.
 'Old and New', review of Douglas Hyde, *I Believed*, in *Irish Times* 20 Jan. 1951, 6. [LN]
 untitled review of Ronald Hingley, *Chekhov*, in *Envoy* 4:15 (Feb. 1951), 74-6.
 untitled review of David Mathew, *The Mango on the Mango Tree*, in *The Bell* 16:5 (Feb. 1951), 68-9.
 'Keeping Cool about the Cold War', review of Joseph Harsch, *The Curtain Isn't Torn*, in *Peace News* 16 Mar. 1951, 5.
 'A Lively Russian', review of Henri Troyat, *Pushkin*, in *Irish Times* 17 Mar. 1951, 6. [LN]
 'In Europe's Debatable Lands 1—Yugo-Slavia', *Irish Times* 26 Mar. 1951, 4.
 'In Europe's Debatable Lands 2—Dubrovnik and Cavtat', *Irish Times* 27 Mar. 1951, 4.
 'In Europe's Debatable Lands 3—On Korcula', *Irish Times* 28 Mar. 1951, 4.
 'In Europe's Debatable Lands 4—Montenegro', *Irish Times* 29 Mar. 1951, 6.
 'In Europe's Debatable Lands 5—Macedonia', *Irish Times* 30 Mar. 1951, 4.
 'In Europe's Debatable Lands 6—Croatia', *Irish Times* 31 Mar. 1951, 5.
 'A Visit to Lepoglava', *CIG* 20 Apr. 1951, 6-7. [LN]
 'Autoantiamericanism' [response to Seán O'Faoláin], *The Bell* 17:2 (May 1951), 12-21.
 untitled reviews of H.F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*; Constantia Maxwell, *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges*; and Margaret McNeill, *By the Rivers of Babylon*, in *The Bell* 17:2 (May 1951), 63-5.
 'Imperial Days', review of Ivan Bunin, *Memories and Portraits*, in *Irish Times* 19 May 1951, 6.
 'Two Travel Books', reviews of A.H. Broderick (ed.), *Brittany*; and Frank O'Connor, *Leinster, Munster and Connaught*, in *The Bell* 17:4 (July 1951), 65-6.
 'Nurseries of Writing', *The Bell* 17:5 (Aug. 1951), 7-12. [CD]
 'Penguins and Pelicans', various short reviews, in *The Bell* 17:5 (Aug. 1951), 60ff.
 untitled review of F.C. King, *The Weed Problem, A New Approach*, in *The Bell* 17:5 (Aug. 1951), 70ff.
 'Envoy and Mr. Kavanagh', *The Bell* 17:6 (Sept. 1951), 32-41. [EA]
 untitled reviews of Benedetto Croce, *Croce, the King and the Allies, extracts from a diary*; and Sam Hanna Bell et al., *The Arts in Ulster*, in *The Bell* 17:6 (Sept. 1951), 61-3.
 untitled review of Shane Leslie, *Salutation to 5*, in *Irish Writing* 16 (Sept. 1951) 59-61. [LN]
 untitled review of *Last of the Irish R.M.s* by Christopher Lynch-Robinson, in *The Bell* 17:7 (Oct. 1951), 66ff.
 'The Sense of Evil and the Sense of Guilt (I)', *The Bell* 17:8 (Nov. 1951), 39-49. [EA]
 untitled review of Charles Snow, *The Masters*, in *The Bell* 17:8 (Nov. 1951), 64-6. [LN]
 'The Sense of Evil and the Sense of Guilt (II)', *The Bell* 17:9 (December 1951), 36-45. [EA]
 untitled review of Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett: Anglo-American Irishman*, in *The Bell* 17:9 (Dec. 1951), 58ff.
 'The Old Kilkenny Archaeological Society and Its Successors' [reprint from Radio Éireann broadcast], *Old Kilkenny Review* 4 (1951), 20-7.

1952:

- untitled reviews of Francis King, *The Dividing Stream*; and Margaret Bullard, *Wedlock's the Devil*, in *The Bell* 17:10 (Jan. 1952), 61-2.
 untitled reviews of Noel Blakiston, *Canon James*; and Ada Leverson, *Bird of Paradise* and *The Twelfth Hour*, in *The Bell* 17:11 (Feb. 1952), 62ff.
 'A King's Story', *The Bell* 17:12 (March 1952), 85-90. [CD]
 'Two Great Critics', reviews of E.M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy*; and Edmund Wilson, *Classics and Commercials*, in *The Bell* 17:12 (March 1952), 117ff. [EA]

'British Royalty and Ireland', *The Bell* 18:3 (June 1952), 176-83. [CD]

1953:

'The Forced Conversions' [reprint from *CIG*], *The Sword* 13 (Mar.-Apr. 1953), 22-5.

'On the Way to Limerick', *The Countryman* Spring 1953, 51-2.

'Kilkenny Classical', *Ireland of the Welcomes* July-Aug. 1953, 18-21.

'Stocktaking in the Irish Provinces', *Twentieth Century* 154 (Oct. 1953), 287-93.

'Yugoslavia', *CIG* 16 Oct. 1953, 10.

'Trieste', *Peace News* 20 Nov. 1953, 4.

1954:

'I...I suppose so, *Maria Cross Reconsidered*', *The Bell* 19:2 (Jan. 1954), 32-52. [CD]

'A Debate on Partition', *Manchester Guardian* 3 May 1954, 4.

'Portrait of a Minority', *The Bell* 19:7 (June 1954), 33-9. [EA]

'"We are the People of Burke..."', *Twentieth Century* 156 (Nov. 1954), 422-34.

'Saints, Scholars and Civil Servants', *The Bell* 19:10 (Nov. 1954), 59-64. [CD]

1955:

'A House of God', *Twentieth Century* 157 (May 1955), 423-35. [EA]

'No Petty People? 1, Rosscullen and the Reformation', *Irish Times* 13 May 1955, 5.

'No Petty People? 2, King or Republic?', *Irish Times* 14 May 1955, 9.

'No Petty People? 3, The Right of Private Judgment', *Irish Times* 16 May 1955, 5.

'No Petty People? 4, The Ulster-Sussex Axis', *Irish Times* 17 May 1955, 5.

'No Petty People? 5, Dingle Irredenta', *Irish Times* 18 May 1955, 7.

'No Petty People? 6, Fighting the Springtime', *Irish Times* 7 June 1955, 5.

'No Petty People? 7, Resistance in God's Name', *Irish Times* 8 June 1955, 5.

'Ireland and Neutrality', *Peace News* 17 June 1955, 1.

'A Cure for the Crowd', review of Walter Lippmann, *The Public Philosophy*, in *Irish Times* 2 July 1955, 6.

'Spontaneity', review of Lillian Hellman (ed.), *Selected Letters of Chekhov*, in *Manchester Guardian* 22 July 1955, 4.

'Diocesan History', review of J.R. MacNamee, *History of the Diocese of Ardagh*, in *CIG* 22 July 1955, 7-8.

'Yugoslavia', review of Hallam Tennyson, *Tito Lifts the Curtain*, in *Peace News* 5 Aug. 1955, 4.

untitled review of J.D. Jump, *Matthew Arnold*, in *Manchester Guardian* 5 Aug. 1955, 3.

'The Minority Voice', *CIG* 26 Aug. 1955, 1ff. [LN]

'The Minority Voice', *Kilkenny People* 10 Sept. 1955, 9. [LN]

'Reflections of an Unjustified Stay-at-Home' [response to Iain Hamilton], *Twentieth Century* 158 (Oct. 1955), 311-23.

'The Glastonbury Myth', review of L. Lionel Smith Lewis, *St Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury*, in *CIG* 18 Nov. 1955, 8.

'The Ascertainment of Truth', *Pax* [Journal of the Irish Pacifist Movement], Christmas 1955, 11-13.

1956:

'The Human Beast', reviews of Edward Crankshaw, *Gestapo, Instrument of Tyranny*; and Felix Kersten, *The Kersten Memoirs*, in *Irish Times* 4 Apr. 1956, 5. [LN]

'Slieve Bloom', *Irish Times* 10 May 1956, 7. [GW]

'Croats in the Irish Republic', *Twentieth Century* 159 (June 1956), 549-61. [EA]

'In County Cavan', *Irish Times* 27 July 1956, 5. [GW]

'In County Monaghan', *Irish Times* 6 Aug. 1956, 5. [GW]

'Legend and Literature', review of James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, in *CIG* 7 Sept. 1956, 10.

'Tolstoi's Home', *Irish Times* 6 Nov. 1956, 5. [CD]

'A Visit to China 1— Small Feet and Big Noses', *Irish Times* 16 Nov. 1956, 5. [CD]

'A Visit to China 2— Temples and Churches', *Irish Times* 17 Nov. 1956, 7. [CD]

'A Visit to China 3— The Bridge to Ru Ko Chow', *Irish Times* 20 Nov. 1956, 7. [CD]

'A Visit to China 4— The Bird Ching-wei', *Irish Times* 21 Nov. 1956, 5. [CD]

'Americans and the Russian Revolution', reviews of George Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*; and Chester

Bowles, *The New Dimensions of Peace*, in *Irish Times* 15 Dec. 1956, 7.

1957:

- 'Siberian Journey 1— Thinking of Chekov', *Irish Times* 7 Jan. 1957, 5. [CD]
- 'Siberian Journey 2— Brave New World', *Irish Times* 8 Jan. 1957, 5. [CD]
- 'Major Ernest Swifte, An Appreciation', *Irish Times* 22 Aug. 1957, 5.
- 'Journey to Shanghai', *Peace News* 30 Aug. 1957, 2. [CD]
- 'Drama in Drainpipes, A Soviet Novel', review of Vladimir Dudintsev, *Not By Bread Alone*, in *Irish Times* 28 Oct. 1957, 5.
- 'Protestantism and Unionism, Are They the Same Thing?' *The Plough* 1:1 (Sept. 1957), 5.
- 'On the Fringe' [trans. from Serbo-Croat of Ivo Andritch], *Icarus* [TCD], Michaelmas 1957, 3-7.
- 'Holy Russia, Czarism and Communism', review of John Lawrence, *Russia in the Making*, in *Irish Times* 11 Dec. 1957, 5ff.
- 'The country house — the life of the gentry' [Radio Éireann Thomas Davis Lecture, 1954], in R.B. McDowell (ed.), *Social Life in Ireland, 1800-45* (Dublin, 1957), 28-42. [EA]

1958:

- 'Boycott Village', *Twentieth Century* 163 (Jan. 1958), 49-55. [EA]
- 'Light on Russia', reviews of S. Wolin and R. Slusser (eds.), *The Soviet Secret Police*; and Louis Fischer, *Russia Revisited*, in *Irish Times* 11 Jan. 1958, 6.
- 'Ireland and Neutrality', *Peace News* 7 Mar. 1958, 5.
- 'Spanish Protestants 1— Disabilities Without Martyrs', *Irish Times* 27 May 1958, 5. [CD]
- 'Spanish Protestants 2— Irish Mother Church', *Irish Times* 28 May 1958, 5. [CD]
- 'The Elusive Celts', review of T.G.E. Powell, *The Celts*, in *Irish Times* 12 July 1958, 6.
- 'After the Revolution', review of Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*, in *Irish Times* 27 Sept. 1958, 6. [CD]
- 'Improvised Bullring', *Manchester Guardian* 13 Oct. 1958, 5.
- 'A Land for Heroes', review of Milovan Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, in *Irish Times* 15 Nov. 1958, 6.
- 'Tito's Marxist Heretic', review of Milovan Djilas, *Land Without Justice* [reprint from *Irish Times*], in *Peace News* 21 Nov. 1958, 6.
- 'Without the Bible in Spain', *Twentieth Century* 164 (Dec. 1958), 556-65. [EA]
- 'Escape to Spain 1— Blissful Ignorance', *Irish Times* 1 Dec. 1958, 7. [GW]
- 'Escape to Spain 2— The Legacy of Heroism', *Irish Times* 2 Dec. 1958, 5. [GW]
- ★ 'Was Early Ireland Christian?', review of Maire and Liam de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*, in *Irish Times* 9 Dec. 1958, 5. [LN]

1959:

- 'Zhivago's Creator', review of Boris Pasternak, *The Last Summer*; J.M. Cohen (ed.), *Prose and Poems of Pasternak*; Boris Pasternak, *An Essay in Autobiography*, in *Irish Times* 18 July 1959, 6. [CD]
- 'The One That Got Away', *Irish Times* 11 Nov. 1959, 8.

1960:

- 'The Bishop', *Twentieth Century* 167 (Feb. 1960), 126-39. [EA]
- 'By-products', *Kilkenny Magazine* 1 (Summer 1960), 7-10.
- 'The Eggman and the Fairies', *Twentieth Century* 168 (July 1960), 46-57. [EA]
- 'Mr. Pfeffer of Sarajevo', *nonplus* 4 (Winter 1960), 33-44. [EA]

1961:

- 'Return to Hellas', *Twentieth Century* 169 (Jan. 1961), 34-48. [EA]
- 'Church and State in the U.S.A', *Irish Times* 28 Jan. 1961, 7.
- 'Gort', *Ireland of the Welcomes* 10:2 (July-Aug. 1961), 26-9.

1962:

- 'American Impressions 1, In Salt Lake City', *Irish Times* 4 June 1962, 7. [GW]
- 'American Impressions 2, In the Deep South', *Irish Times* 5 June 1962, 7. [GW]
- 'A Sacrilegious Twist?, American Law and School Prayers', *Irish Times* 20 July 1962, 7.
- 'The Honorary Foreign Corresponding Member', *Kilkenny Magazine* 7 (Summer 1962) 23-9. [CD]

- 'Towards Extinction', review of Elspeth Huxley, *The Mottled Lizard*, in *Irish Times* 1 Sept. 1962, 8.
 'Among the Satellites', review of Anton Zischka, *The Other Europeans*, in *Irish Times* 15 Dec. 1962, 8.

1963:

- 'Myths of Druidism', review of G.A.L. Owen, *The Famous Druids*, in *Irish Times* 2 Feb. 1963, 8.
 'The Dead Sea Scrolls', review of A.N. Gilkes, *The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in *Irish Times* 9 Mar. 1963, 8.
 'Ladies for Burning', review of Geoffrey Parrinder, *Witchcraft, European and African*, in *Irish Times* 23 Mar. 1963, 10.
 'Grandmother and Wolfe Tone', review of Brian Inglis, *West Briton*, in *Kilkenny Magazine* 9 (Spring 1963) 38-45. [GW]
 'The Final Solution –1, The First Phase', *Irish Times* 3 June 1963, 8. [GW]
 'The Final Solution –2, The Organisation Man', *Irish Times* 4 June 1963, 10. [GW]
 'The Final Solution –3, The Dreams Collapse', *Irish Times* 5 June 1963, 8. [GW]
 'The Final Solution –4, Grounds for Hope', *Irish Times* 6 June 1963, 8. [GW]
 'In Ireland's Golden Age', review of Ludwig Bieler, *Ireland, Harbinger of the Middle Ages*, in *Daily Telegraph* 30 Aug. 1963, 15.
 untitled reviews of Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Swift, The Man, His Works and the Age*; and Sybil Le Brocq, *Cadenus*, in *Kilkenny Magazine* 10 (Autumn-Winter 1963), 115-18.
 'Scapegoat', review of Moshe Pearlman, *The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, in *Irish Times* 9 Nov. 1963, 12.
 'Denmark's Finest Hour', review of Harold Flender, *Rescue in Denmark*, in *Irish Times* 22 Nov. 1963, 10.

1964:

- 'On Loving Bulls', *Irish Times* 2 Mar. 1964, 8. [CD]
 'Why the Orthodox Hesitate?', *Irish Times* 15 Apr. 1964, 10.
 'The Sunset of Parlourdom', review of E.M. Forster, *Howards End*, in *Hibernia* 28:5 (May 1964), 15. [LN]
 'Carl von Ossietzky, A Hero of the German Resistance', *Irish Times* 6 June 1964, 10. [CD]
 'The Little Nations', review of Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nationalism and Communism, Essays, 1946-1963*, in *Irish Times* 11 August 1964, 7.
 'Postscript to Prague', *Irish Times* 24 Aug. 1964, 8. [LN]
 'A Tiger in a Suitcase, New Look at Old Saints', *Irish Times* 28 Sept. 1964, 8.
 'Good Man and True', review of Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, in *Irish Times* 27 Oct. 1964, 7.
 'An Irish Ecumenical Movement', *Irish Times* 18 Dec. 1964, 10. [EA]

1965:

- 'Himmler and Piasecki', review of Roger Manville and Heinrich Fraenkel, *Heinrich Himmler*; and Lucian Blit, *The Eastern Pretender, the story of Boleslaw Piasecki*, in *Irish Times* 14 Apr. 1965, 9.
 'Am I an Irish Republican?', *The United Irishman* [*An tEireannach Aontaithe*] 19 (Dec. 1965), 3ff. [LN]

1966:

- 'Kilkenny Castle, A National Lead', *Irish Times* 4 Apr. 1966, 10.
 'The Writer and Independence', *Irish Times* 28 July 1966, 10. [LN]
 'The Jews and the Vatican', review of Saul Friedländer, *Pius XII and the Third Reich*, in *Irish Times* 7 Oct. 1966, 10.
 'The Butlers', *Old Kilkenny Review* 18 (1966), 35-7.

1967:

- 'A Book in My Life, *The Polyglots*', review of William Gerhardie, *The Polyglots*, in *Irish Times* 17 Jan. 1967, 10. [LN]
 'The End of Satire', *Irish Times* 22 March 1967, supplement, iii.
 'Thalburg Revisted', *Kilkenny Magazine* 15 (Spring-Summer 1967), 36-46. [CD]
 'The Butler family rally in August', *Hibernia* 31:5 (May 1967), 15.
 'Saints and Scholars', review of Owen Neeson, *The Book of Irish Saints*, in *Irish Times* 21 Nov. 1967, 9.

1968:

- 'American Students in Rebellion –1', *Irish Times* 18 June 1968, 10. [GW]
 'American Students in Rebellion –2, The Blockade and the Bust', *Irish Times* 19 June 1968, 12. [GW]
 'American Students in Rebellion –3, Stop the Gym', *Irish Times* 20 June 1968, 12. [GW]
 'American Students in Rebellion –4, The Afro-Americans and the Day of Wrath to Come', *Irish Times* 21 June 1968, 10. [GW]
 'Old Soldiers', review of Monk Gibbon, *Inglorious Soldier*, in *Hibernia* 32:8 (Aug. 1968), 19.
 'A Visit to Hesse and Some Thoughts about Princes', *Irish Times* 20 Sept. 1968, 12. [EA]
 'A Sordid Chapter of Church History and Cardinal Seper', *Grille: The Irish Christian Left* 2 (Autumn 1968), 25ff.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 1 (1968), 9-13.
 'The German Rally', *JBS* 1 (1968), 24-7.
 'Kilkenny Castle', *JBS* 1 (1968), 56-60.
 'Behind the Iron Curtain', *JBS* 1 (1968), 68-9.
 'The Erle of Ormond Schandalised', *JBS* 1 (1968), 69-70.

1969:

- 'Czech Religious Persecution', *Irish Times* 6 May 1969, 13.
 'Czech Religious Persecution' [reprint from *Irish Times*], *Svobodnoye Slovo* [Free Word, A Carpatho-Russian Monthly, USA] May-June 1969, 12-13.
 'Protestant Timidity', *Hibernia* 7-20 Nov. 1969, 7.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 2 (1969), 79-84.
 'Irish Families', review of Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland*, in *JBS* 2 (1969), 136.

1970:

- 'Ten Thousand Saints', review of Eoin Neeson, *The Book of Irish Saints* [reprint from *Irish Times*], *Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society* 14 (1970), 631-639.
 'Eoin O'Mahony, the man who tried to change the quality of life', *Irish Times* 21 Feb. 1970, 12. [EA]
 'Nore & Barrow', *Ireland of the Welcomes* May-June 1970, 9-13. [EA]
 'Foreword', *JBS* 3 (1970-1), 151-152.
 'Walter Butler', *JBS* 3 (1970-1), 191-196.
 'Eoin O'Mahony', *JBS* 3 (1970-1), 204-207.

1971:

- 'Whatever Became of Artukovitch? Reflections on a Croatian Crusade', *New Blackfriars* [Journal of the Oxford Dominicans] Feb. 1971, 56-63. [EA]
 'From Peenemunde to Youghal', *Hibernia* 11-24 June 1971, 8.

1972:

- 'Pope O'Mahony', *HM Forces Catholic Year Book 1972* [reprint from *JBS*], 15ff.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 4 (1972), 229-232.
 'The Tomb of Miss Butler's Leg', *JBS* 4 (1972), 236.

1973:

- 'A Thousand Tribes', review of Francis Byrne, *Irish Kings & High Kings*, in *Hibernia* 8-20 June 1973, 14.
 'Escape from the Ant-hill', *Treblin Times* 1 (Sept. 1973), 2.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 5 (1973-4), 309-13.
 'A Visit to America', *JBS* 5 (1973-4), 318-19.
 'Kilkenny in the Days of the Dukes', *JBS* 5 (1973-4), 339-47.
 'Butler's Island in Georgia', *JBS* 5 (1973-4), 354-8.
 'The Butlers of Priestown', *JBS* 5 (1973-4), 377-88.

1974:

- 'New Geneva in Waterford' [multiple reprint], *Journal of the Old Wexford Society* 5 (1974-5), 57-63.

1975:

- 'From Kilfarboy to Kilkenny', reviews of Seosamh Mac Mathuna, *Kilfarboy*; Jack Fitzsimons, *The Parish*

- of Kilbeg; and Robert Wyse Jackson, *The Story of Kilkenny*, in *Hibernia* 10-23 Jan. 1975, 32.
 'History in Stone', review of Brian de Breffny, *The Houses of Ireland*, in *Hibernia* 13-26 June 1975, 24.
 'A Protestant Predicament', *Hibernia* 25 July-14 Aug. 1975, 8.
 'Divided Loyalties', *An Cosantóir, The Irish Defence Journal* 35 (Aug. 1975), 288-90. [EA]
 'Foreword', *JBS* 6 (1975-6), 415-19.

1976:

- 'Topical Thoughts on Shaw', *Irish Times* 8 Jan. 1976, 8. [LN]
 'Food for Thought', review of Cecil King, *The Cecil King Diary 1970-74*, in *Hibernia* 30 Jan.-12 Feb. 1976), 26.
 'Speer in Spandau', review of Albert Speer, *Spandau, The Secret Diaries*, in *Irish Times* 20 Mar. 1976, 8.
 'The Bell, An Anglo-Irish View', *Irish University Review* 6 (Spring 1976) 64-72. [EA]
 'Peter and Paul', review of Michael Grant, *Saint Paul*; and J.B. Phillips, *Peter's Portrait of Jesus*, in *Irish Times* 1 May 1976, 8. [LN]
 'Strange Encounter', review of Denis Johnston, *The Brazen Horn*, in *Irish Times* 15 May 1976, 8.
 'The Failure of the Irish Dream', review of Anthony Cronin, *Dead as Doornails*, in *Irish Times* 3 July 1976, 8.
 'Russia's Decline and Fall', review of Edward Crankshaw, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace, The Drift to Revolution*, in *Irish Times* 21 Aug. 1976, 8.
 'Leavis on Lawrence', review of F.R. Leavis, *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence*, in *Irish Times* 4 Sept. 1976, 8. [LN]
 'The zig-zag wall', reviews of Jack Chen, *Inside the Cultural Revolution*; Livio Maitan, *Party, Army and Masses in China*; and Han Suyin, *Wind in the Tower, Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Revolution, 1949-1975*, in *Irish Press* 18 Nov. 1976, 6.
 'Chinese Fantasy', review of Hugh Trevor-Roper, *A Hidden Life, The Enigma of Sir Edmund Backhouse*, in *Irish Times* 26 Nov. 1976, 10.
 'The Protestant Centuries', review of J.C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition*, in *Irish Times* 11 Dec. 1976, 9.

1977:

- 'The Shee Alms House in Kilkenny', *Irish Times* 4 Jan. 1977, 8.
 'The One and the Many', review of Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, in *Irish Press* 3 Feb. 1977, 6.
 'Celtic Trails', review of Gerhard Herm, *The Celts*, in *Irish Times* 26 Feb. 1977, 8.
 'Drop-out theologian', review of Charles Davis, *Body as Spirit*, in *Irish Times* 5 Mar. 1977, 8.
 'Itard and the Noble Savage', review of Harlan Lane, *Wild Boy of Aveyron*, in *Irish Times* 9 Apr. 1977, 10.
 'The Poet and the Machine', reviews of Paul Ferris, *Dylan Thomas*; and Daniel Jones, *My Friend, Dylan Thomas*, in *Irish Times* 7 May 1977, 8.
 'Making Good Germans', review of Henry Faulk, *Group Captives: The Re-education of German Prisoners of War in Britain, 1945-48*, in *Irish Times* 7 July 1977, 8.
 'The Outsider', review of Alexander Gladkov, *Meetings with Pasternak*, in *Irish Times* 6 Aug. 1977, 11.
 'Orbits', review of Victoria Glendinning, *Elizabeth Bowen, Portrait of a Writer*, in *Irish Press* 20 Oct. 1977, 6.
 'Days of Promise', review of Rebecca West, *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, in *Irish Times* 17 Sept. 1977, 11.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 7 (1977), 505-10.
 'The Charles II Charter', *JBS* 7 (1977), 541-4.
 'Lady Morgan of Kilkenny', *JBS* 7 (1977), 564-7.
 untitled review of Patrick Bolger, *The Irish Co-operative Movement*, in *Irish University Review* 7 (Autumn 1977), 283-5.

1978:

- 'The ant on top of the hill', review of David Irving, *The War Path*, in *Irish Press* 20 July 1978, 6.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 8 (1978-9), 593-7.
 'Kiltinan Castle', *JBS* 8 (1978-9), 601-03.
 'Anglo-Irish Twilight, the Last Ormonde War', *JBS* 8 (1978-9), 631-41. [EA]
 untitled reviews of J. Anthony Gaughan, *The Knights of Glin*; Con Costello, *In Quest of an Heir*; et al., in *JBS* 8 (1978-9), 666-72.

'Epilogue to Vol. 1, Ireland and Germany', *JBS* 8 (1978-9), 683-8. [EA]

1979:

'A Sort of Justice', review of Airey Neave, *Nuremberg, A Personal Record of the Trial of the Major Nazi War Criminals*, in *Irish Press* 4 Jan. 1979, 6.

'Trio', review of John Pearson, *Facades: Edith, Osbert & Sacheverell Sitwell*, in *Irish Press* 8 Feb. 1979, 12.

'A Lament for Archaeology 1— In praise of lay pretenders or lay antiquarians', *Irish Times* 31 July 1979, 4. [EA]

'A Lament for Archaeology 2— Archaeology has become one of the "whore sciences"', *Irish Times* 1 Aug. 1979, 5. [EA]

'Wanderings', reviews of Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-45*; and I.F. Stone, *Underground to Palestine*, *Irish Press* 13 Sept. 1979, 6.

1980:

'Beauty and the Beast', review of H.O. Meissner, *Magda Goebbels*, in *Hibernia* 5 June 1980, 26.

'Enthusiasts, appeasers and the rise of Nazi Germany', review of Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right, British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-39*, in *Irish Press* 4 Sept. 1980, 6.

'Irreconcilables', reviews of D.H. Ott, *Palestine in Perspective, Politics, Human Rights and the West Bank*; and T.G. Fraser, *The Middle East 1914-1979*, in *Irish Press* 16 Oct. 1980, 6.

'Foreword', *JBS* 2:1 (1980-1), 5-8.

'Irish Outings 1980' *JBS* 2:1 (1980-1), 34-5.

'The Kilkenny Theatre 1801-1819' [reprint from *Dublin Magazine*], *JBS* 2:1 (1980-1), 37-44.

1981:

Henry Marshall [pseud.], 'Little K', *The Freethinker* 101 (June 1981), 99-101. [CD]

'Lighthouses in a Stormy Sea', review of J.D. Holmes, *The Papacy in the Modern World*, in *Irish Press* 15 Oct. 1981, 6.

1982:

'Deaf ears', review of Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, in *Irish Press* 14 Jan. 1982, 6.

'Old rivalries', review of Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England, Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns*, in *Irish Press* 9 Sept. 1982, 6.

'Delicate Balance', review of Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King Jr.*, in *Irish Press* 20 Nov. 1982, 9. [LN]

'The long table', review of W.D. Griffin, *A Portrait of the Irish in America*, in *Irish Press* 4 Dec. 1982, 9.

'Beirut's Agony', review of Jacobo Timerman, *The Longest War*, in *Irish Press* 24 Dec. 1982, 14.

'Foreword', *JBS* 2:2 (1982), 149-51.

'The Symposium of Family Societies', *JBS* 2:2 (1982), 172-3.

'Who was Bernard Biragra?' *JBS* 2:2 (1982), 187-9.

1983:

1984:

'Nemesis', review of David Bonavia, *Verdict in Peking, The Trial of the Gang of Four*, in *Irish Press* 8 Sept. 1984, 6.

'The Member for Kilkenny', *JBS* 2:3 (1984), 347-56.

1985:

'The Pope and the Innocent Englishman', *Books Ireland* 93 (May 1985), 69ff.

'Neglected Fictions', review of Howard Sturgis, *Belchamber*, in *TLS* 18 Oct. 1985, 1182.

'Foreword', *JBS* 2:4 (1985), 361.

'A Future for Kilkenny Castle', *JBS* 2:4 (1985), 432-4.

1986:

- 'Ireland in the Nuclear Age', *Irish Review* 1 (1986), 28-33. [LN]
 'The Father of Prehistory', *Social Biology and Human Affairs* [Journal of the British Social Biology Council], 51 (1986), 76-89. [CD]
 'The Butlers', *Ireland of the Welcomes* Nov.-Dec. 1986, 20-3.
 'New Geneva in Waterford' [multiple reprint]. *Horological Journal* [Journal of the British Horological Institute] 129 (Sept. 1986), 16ff.
 'Protective Colourings', review of Leon Ó Broin, *Protestant Nationalists in Revolutionary Ireland*, in *TLS* 31 Jan. 1986, 108.
 'A fight that failed', review of John Gray, *City in Revolt*, in *TLS* 21 Mar. 1986, 297.
 'Foreword', *JBS* 3:1 (1986-87), 4-5.
 'The Next Stage for Kilkenny Castle', *JBS* 3:1 (1986-87), 61-2.
 'Mount Juliet, Kilmurry and the Carricks', *JBS* 3:1 (1986-87), 65-71.

1987:

- 'Monk Gibbon, An Appreciation', *Irish Times* 6 Nov. 1987, 15.

1988:

- 'The Children of Drancy', *Irish Review* 4 (Spring 1988), 1-6. [CD]
 'Foreword', *JBS* 3:2 (1988-9), 125-7.
 'The Duke of Ormonde and the Huguenots', *JBS* 3:2 (1988-9), 160-5. [LN]

1992:

- 'The Party, Leningrad in 1932', in A. Bernelle (ed.), *Decantations, A Tribute in Honour of Maurice Craig* (Dublin, 1992), 10-12.
 'The Last Izmerenje' [reprint], in B. Share (ed.), *Far Green Fields: Fifteen Hundred Years of Irish Travel Writing* (Belfast, 1992), 25-34. [EA]

1997:

- 'Little K' [reprint], in P. Lopate (ed.), *The Anchor Essay Annual, The Best of 1997* (New York, 1997), 186-228. [CD]

1998:

- 'Elizabeth Bowen' [reprint], in E. Walshe (ed.), *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered, The Farahy Addresses* (Dublin, 1998), 15-17. [EA]

2001:

- 'In Europe's Troubled Lands', *Irish Pages* 1 (Spring 2002), 144-68.

2002:

- 'Specialists in a Soviet School', *Dublin Review* 9 (Winter 2002-3), 38-46.

1c. Radio broadcasts

Sept. 1947, Radio Éireann

'Four Talks on Europe':

- 1 – 'Introduction'
- 2 – 'Switzerland'
- 3 – 'Italy'
- 4 – 'Yugoslavia'

17 Oct. 1947, BBC 3rd Programme

'Journey to Split'

1 Jan. 1949, BBC 3rd Programme

- 'Materialism without Marx'
 'Journey to Sachalin Island'

- 10 Jan. 1950, RÉ
 'The Anglo-Irish Contribution to Kilkenny'
- Feb. 1950, RÉ
 'Life and Leisure in Kilkenny'
- ?? May 1950, RÉ
 'Life and Leisure, Summary of the Series'
- Aug. 1950, BBC 3rd Programme
 'Renan'
- 25 May 1951, RÉ
 'Walter von Buttlar'
- ?? 1951, RÉ
 'The Old KAS and Its Successors'
- 21 Feb. 1954, RÉ [Thomas Davis Lectures, series III]
 'The country house and the life of the gentry'
- 25 May 1954, RÉ
 'Archaeology, the Bull of Minos and O'Riordan'
- 9 January 1955, RÉ [Thomas Davis Lectures, series VII]
 'Maria Edgeworth'
- 24 Jan. 1960, RÉ
 HMB's translation of *The Cherry Orchard* produced
- 13 and 20 Sept. 1960, BBC 3rd Programme
 re the Edgeworths (two parts)

Appendix 2:

The Kilkenny Debates: Topics and Participants

1954 [23 April]

Topic: 'That Ulster's best interests lie with the United Kingdom.'

Chair: Myles Dillon

Participants:

Colonel W.W.B. Topping

William Douglas

Sean MacBride

Eoin O'Mahony

1955 [20 May]

Topic: 'In an Atomic Age can a Small Nation Stand Alone?'

Chair: Terence de Vere White

Participants:

Declan Costello

Noël Browne

Owen Sheehy-Skeffington

Eric Dorman O'Gowan

Basil Liddell Hart

1956 [12 May]

Topic: 'Should Ireland revise her language policy?'

Chair: Cecil Woodham Smith

Participants:

Sean O'Hegarty

Myles Dillon

Risteárd Ó Glaisne

Seán O'Faoláin

David Greene

Gearailt Mac Eoin

Myles na gCopaleen

1957 [25 May]

Topic: 'Economic Survival – Is European Free Trade the Answer?'

Chair: Sean MacBride

Participants:

Per Federspiel

James Byrne

Garrett Fitzgerald

Juan N. Greene

1958 [17 May]

Topic: 'Has the Press Abused Its Freedom?'

Chair: Roger McHugh

Participants:

Vivian de Valera

Christopher Hollis

Brian Inglis

James R. Heavey

1959 [30 May]

Topic: 'That Irish education is out of touch with modern life'

Chair: Edward A.A. Shackleton

Participants:

W.B. Stanford

John O'Meara

among others

1960 [21 May]

Topic: 'That Ireland's foreign policy is unworthy'

Chair: Alec Newman

Participants:

Owen Sheehy-Skeffington

Lionel Booth

Richard Moore

Declan Costello

Kennedy F. Roche

Patrick M. Quinlin

1966 [21 May]

Topic: 'That Rhodesia's Declaration of Independence was Justified'

Chair: R.B. McDowell

Participants:

A.K. Asmal

J.S. Sheppard

Gerald Sparrow

Lionel Fleming

Hillary Jenkins

1971 [?? May]

Topic: 'Should Ireland should join the E.E.C.?'

Chair: Donall Ó Morrain

Participants:

Oliver Snoddy

Michael Sweetman

Raymond Crotty

T.J. Maher

Bibliography and Sources

I. Primary Material

1. Manuscripts
2. Periodicals
3. Printed
4. Interviews and other sources

II. Secondary Material

1. Printed
2. Unpublished theses and articles

I. Primary Material

1. Manuscripts

BRITAIN

British Library, London

George Bernard Shaw Papers

Add. MS. 50548: Correspondence

Add. MS. 63186: Correspondence

Plunkett Foundation, Long Hanborough, Oxon.

Margaret Digby Papers

Correspondence

Irish Statesman Papers

Correspondence

Horace Plunkett Papers

Correspondence

Diaries

Notebook entitled 'Notes for book' [undated (c.1929)]

University of Oxford

Bodleian Library

J. Lawrence Hammond Papers

MS. 19: Correspondence

Gilbert Murray Papers

MS. 190: Correspondence

Merton College

Max Beerbohm Papers

Ms. 632: Correspondence

IRELAND

Hazelbrook Cottage, Dublin [papers in possession of the Sheehy Skeffington family]

Owen Sheehy Skeffington Papers
Correspondence

Kilkenny County Library, Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council Records
Minute-book for period 29 Jan. 1951-20 June 1955

Lilliput Press, Dublin [papers in possession of Antony Farrell]

Hubert Butler Papers
Correspondence

Maidenhall, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny [papers in possession of the Crampton family]
These papers were organized by Robert Tobin during the period Summer 2000-Spring 2002.

Correspondence
Alphabetical correspondence
Kilkenny Debates file
Papal Nuncio Incident file

Letterbooks [existing transcriptions of HMB's letters]
'Letters Home, 1910-1939'
'A Visit to China' [1956]
'U.S.A.' [1962]

Notebooks
'Beginning' [undated (c.1980s)]
'Some notes on trip to Russia' [undated (c.1920s/30s)]
untitled/ black patterned softcover [undated (c.1940s)]
untitled/ blue with red binding [1973]
untitled/ royal blue with rust red binding [1982]

Manuscripts
'1920-23' [13pp., undated (c. 1970s/80s)]
'The Angel Victor's Mail Bag' [2pp., undated (1960s)]
'The Appleman and the Poet' [11pp., undated (1960s)]
'Destruction in Ireland' [3pp., undated (1970s/80s?)]
'Fiume II' [4pp., undated (late 1940s)]
'Ignorance and Moujik [Muzhik] Government' [9pp., undated (late 1940s)]
'An Introduction' [9pp., undated (1980s)]
'James Joyce in Trieste' [9pp., undated (1940s?)]
'Libraries' [7pp., undated (1970s/80s)]
'On Korcula' [4pp., undated (late 1940s)]
'Reagan and the Wall of Separation: A View from Ireland' [7pp., 1981]
'Russia (autobiographical)' [5pp., undated (1980s)]
'The Sandwich-board Man and the Table-mat' [25pp., undated (1960s)]
'"Spanish Here": An Impression of Tenerife' [3pp., undated (1960s)]
'A Stroll Around Leningrad' [7pp., undated (c.early/mid-1930s)]

“‘Those Russians’” [21pp., undated (c.1930s)]
 ‘Two Utopias’ [11pp., 1984]
 ‘Woodstock’ [3pp., undated (1980s?)]
 ‘Yugoslav Clubs’ [16pp., undated (c. late 1940s)]

untitled/ collection of mss. on community [undated (c. 1941)]
 untitled/ re Irish and Swiss neutrality [14pp., draft w/ notes, c. 1946]
 untitled/ re the founding and purpose of the KAS [6pp., undated (1940s?)]
 untitled/ re scheme to organise small provincial clubs [3pp., undated (1940s)]
 untitled/ re St. Patrick’s Day and Irish belonging [8pp., 1948]
 untitled/ re the proclamation of the Irish Republic [6pp., 1949]
 untitled/ re controversy over Gladstone’s bust [6pp., undated (1950s)]
 untitled/ re *TTS* and the academy [1p., undated (1960s/70s)]
 untitled/ re Ian Paisley [3pp., undated (c. early 1970s)]
 untitled/ re the Dublin May Day Meeting of 1949 [6pp., undated (late 1970s)]

National Archives of Ireland, Dublin

Department of Foreign [External] Affairs Papers
 Ref. A55/7: Correspondence

National Library of Ireland, Dublin

Myles Dillon Papers
 Ms.33039: Correspondence

Trinity College Library, Dublin

Hubert Butler Papers

Manuscripts [headings taken from archive index]:

Ms. 10304/91, 95: Anglo-Irish individuals
 Ms. 10304/140, 142: Ecumenism
 Ms. 10304/145, 161, 167-8, 170-2: Ireland
 Ms. 10304/177a, 188b: Kilkenny
 Ms. 10304/212-13: Literary
 Ms. 10304/241: Pattern of persecution and the Nuncio Incident
 Ms. 10304/267: Religion and its survival
 Ms. 10304/290: Russia
 Ms. 10304/298: Owen Sheehy Skeffington
 Ms. 10304/323: USA – religion
 Ms. 10304/391, 96, 99: Yugoslavia
 Ms. 10304/417, 424, 439, 442-44: Miscellaneous

Notebooks [miscellaneous subjects]:

Ms. 10304/454-6
 Ms. 10304/460-6
 Ms. 10304/500, 534

Correspondence [headings taken from archive index]:

Ms. 10304/577: Correspondence regarding KAS
 Ms. 10304/597: General alphabetical correspondence
 Ms. 10304/611: Correspondence regarding the Nuncio Incident
 Ms. 10304/625: Correspondence with Susan [Peggy] Butler
 Ms. 10304/636-7: Correspondence with Eric Dorman O’Gowan
 Ms. 10304/641-3: Correspondence with editors and publishers

Ms. 10304/647: Correspondence with broadcasting organizations
 Ms. 10304/1056: Correspondence from scrapbooks

R.B.D. French Papers

Ms. 9800: Correspondence

Denis Johnston Papers

Ms. 10066/287-8: Correspondence

Dorothy Elvery Kay Papers

Ms. 10548: Correspondence

Thomas MacGreevy Papers

Ms. 8112: Correspondence

Ms. 8117-8: Correspondence

Arnold Marsh Papers

Ms. 8325: *A Dynamic Democracy* [unpublished, January 1944]

Ms. 8327: *Yesterday, Today and Forever* [unpublished, undated (1940s?)]

Ms. 8340-1: *Memoirs* [unpublished, undated (1960s?)]

Ms. 8400-1: Correspondence

Arland Ussher Papers

Ms. 9004: 'The Mind of Ireland and the Face of Europe' [broadcast script, undated (1940s/50s?)]

Ms. 9031-4: Correspondence

Ms. 9037-40: Correspondence

Library of University College Dublin

Adrian Fisher Papers

Ms. P164: Correspondence

Representative Church Body Library, Dublin

W.L.M. Giff Papers

Ms. 553: *A Short History of Our Church* [unpublished, undated]

Michael Hurley Papers

Ms. 487: Correspondence

Hugh A.C. Maude Papers

Ms. 262: Correspondence

W.A. Phillips Papers

Ms. 60: Correspondence

U.S.A.

Burns Library, Boston College, Massachusetts

Edward Dunsany Papers

Correspondence

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts*Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study*

John Graham Brooks Papers
 MC 185: Correspondence

Houghton Library, Harvard College

Edwin Lawrence Godkin Papers
 b MS 1083: Correspondence

Horace Reynolds Papers
 b MS 1787: Correspondence

William Rothenstein Papers
 b MS Eng 1148: Correspondence

Berg Collection, New York Public Library, New York

Elizabeth Bowen Papers
 Correspondence

Augusta Gregory Papers
 Correspondence

George W. Russell Papers
 Correspondence

Healy Collection, Stanford University, California

Ernest A. Boyd Papers
 Ms. 11/184: Correspondence

2. Periodicals**[all periodicals published in Ireland unless otherwise stated]***All Ireland Review**The Bann Disc**The Bell**Better Business**British Weekly* [London]*Bulletin of Department of Foreign Affairs**Catholic Bulletin**Catholic Standard**Christian Century* [Chicago]*Christus Rex**Church of Ireland Gazette**Church of Ireland Monthly**Cork Review**Daily Express**Daily Telegraph* [London]*Divinity**Dublin Historical Record*

Dublin Magazine [New Series]
Dublin Review
Envoy
Evening Standard [London]
Focus
Foreign Affairs [New York]
Hermathena
Hibernia
Horizon [London]
Ireland To-day
Iris Óda: A Kilkenny Review
Irish Bookman
Irish Catholic
Irish Independent
Irish Monthly
Irish Press
Irish Statesman
Irish Times
Irish Writing
Journal of the Butler Society
Kavanagh's Weekly
Kilkenny Journal
Kilkenny Magazine
Kilkenny People
The [Kilkenny] Post
The Listener [London]
Manchester Guardian
The Month [New Series]
New Divinity
New English Weekly [London]
New Review [London]
New Statesman [London]
nonplus
The Observer [London]
Old Kilkenny Review
Peace News
The Plough
Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society
Saturday Night [Toronto Star]
Scrutiny [London]
Search
Social Biology and Human Affairs [London]
The Spectator [London]
Studies
Sunday Express [Irish edition]
Sunday Independent
The Tablet [London]
The Times [London]
Treblin Times
Twentieth Century [London]

3. Printed

Adams, W.G.S., 'Introduction', in Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman* (Oxford, 1949) v-xiii.

AE: see Russell, George W.

- Agricultural Co-operation in Ireland: A Plea for Justice by the I.A.O.S.*, ed. I.A.O.S. (Dublin, 1911).
- Allen, William Sheridan, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: the experience of a single German town, 1930-1935* (London, 1966).
- Anderson, Benedict, 'Selective Kinship', *Dublin Review* 10 (Spring 2003), 5-29.
- Arendt, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1965; London, 1994).
- *The Rise of Totalitarianism* (1951; 2nd edn., San Diego, 1979).
- Benda, Julian, *The Treason of the Intellectuals [La Trahison des Clercs]*, trans. R. Aldington (1928; New York, 1969).
- Bennett, Louie, 'The Plunkett Economic Pattern', in National Co-operative Council (ed.), *Sir Horace Plunkett Centenary Handbook* (Dublin, 1954), 7-10.
- Berkeley, George, *A Word to the Wise: or, an exhortation to the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland* (Dublin, 1749).
- Birmingham, George A., *An Irishman Looks at His World* (London, 1919).
- Blanshard, Paul, *The Irish and the Catholic Power* (London, 1954).
- Bodkin, Thomas, *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (Dublin, 1949).
- Bolton, F.R., *The Caroline Tradition of the Church of Ireland* (London, 1958).
- Böll, Heinrich, *Irish Journal*, trans. L. Vennewitz (1967; London, 2000).
- Bowen, Elizabeth, 'The Big House', *The Bell* 1:1 (Oct. 1940), 71-7.
- *Bowen's Court* (1942, 1963; Cork, 1998).
- 'The Cult of Nostalgia', *The Listener* 9 Aug. 1951, 225-6.
- 'James Joyce', *The Bell* 1:6 (Mar. 1941), 40-9.
- *The Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. H. Lee (New York, 1986).
- 'Notes on Eire': *Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill [sic], 1940-42*, eds. J. Lane and B. Clifford (Aubane, Co. Cork, 1999).
- *The Shelbourne* (1951; London, 2001).
- Boyd, Ernest A., 'Introduction', in Standish O'Grady, *Selected Essays and Passages*, ed. E.A. Boyd (Dublin, 1918), 1-19.
- Browne, Noël, *Against the Tide* (Dublin, 1986).
- Browne, R.E.C., 'Neurosis in the Church of Ireland', *Divinity* 2:3 (Nov. 1946), 63-9.
- Bullard, R.W., *Inside Stalin's Russia: The Diaries of Reader Bullard, 1930-34*, eds. J. and M. Bullard (Charlbury, Oxon, 2000).
- Bury, J.B., *The Life of St. Patrick and His Place in History* (1905; Mineola, NY, 1998).
- Butler, Hubert: see Appendix 1.
- Camier, J.W., *The Representative of the Church of St. Patrick (The Church of Ireland or the Church of Rome – Which?)* (Dublin, 1937).
- Carlyle, Thomas, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. M.K. Goldberg et al. (1841; Berkeley, 1993).
- The Church of Ireland A.D. 432-1932 (The Report of the Church of Ireland Conference held in Dublin, 11th-14th October, 1932)*, eds. W. Bell and N.D. Emerson (Dublin, 1932).
- Church of Ireland House of Bishops, 'Mixed Marriages', *CIM* Aug. 1970, 1-2.
- 'C.I.R.' [pseud.], 'Gigmanity Uprooted', *The Bell* 11:2 (Nov. 1945), 689-96.
- Clyde, William, *A.E.* (Edinburgh, 1935).
- Coates, C.C., *Some Less-Known Chapters in the Life of A.E. (George Russell). Being the Substance of a Lecture Delivered at Belfast, November, 1936* (Dublin, 1939).
- Connolly, Cyril, *The Evening Colonnade* (London, 1973).
- Corkery, Daniel, 'The Nation That Was Not a Nation', *Studies* 23 (Dec. 1934), 610-22.
- *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (1931; Cork, 1966).
- Cowan, Fred, 'Odd Man In', *Focus* Feb. 1958, 19-21.
- Craig, Harry, 'A Protestant Visits Belfast', *The Bell* 7:3 (Dec. 1943), 236-44.
- Craig, Maurice, *Dublin 1680-1860* (Dublin, 1952).
- *The Volunteer Earl* (London, 1948).
- Cronin, Anthony, *Dead as Doornails* (1976; Oxford, 1987).
- *Heritage Now: Irish Literature in the English Language* (New York, 1982).
- Cruise O'Brien, Conor, *Memoir: My Life and Themes* (Dublin, 1999).
- 'Memorial Address', *Cork Review* (1991), 95-6.
- *States of Ireland* (New York, 1972).

- [as ‘Scrutator’], ‘Verdict on the “The Bell”’, *The Bell* 10:5 (Aug. 1945), 431-7.
- Cuffe, Hamilton [Earl of Desart] and Sybil Lubbock, *A Page from the Past* (London, 1936).
- de Blacam, Aodh, ‘AE As I Knew Him’, *Irish Monthly* 63 (Sept. 1935), 606-13.
- Dáil Eireann Debates* vol. 163, cols. 730-1 [4 July 1957].
- Davies, Noelle, ‘Patriotism: An Emotional Need? [II]’, *Focus* 1:5 (May 1958), 19-25.
- Delahanty, James, ‘“Histerical” Perspective’, *Focus* 1:2 (Feb. 1958), 13-15.
- ‘To Our Readers’, *Kilkenny Magazine* 1 (Summer 1960), 3-4.
- Dixon, F.E., review of HMB, *Ten Thousand Saints*, in *Dublin Historical Record* 26 (June 1973), 116.
- Dobbs, Kildare, ‘Ireland’s new middlemass: like immigrants in their own country’, *Saturday Night [Toronto Star]* (Feb. 1970), 42-3.
- *Running to Paradise* (Toronto, 1962).
- Dodds, E.R., *Missing Persons: An Autobiography* (Oxford, 1977).
- Douglas, James G., *Memoirs of James G. Douglas (1887-1954)*, *Concerned Citizen*, ed. J.A. Gaughan (Dublin, 1998).
- Eglinton, John, *Bards and Saints* (Dublin, 1906).
- *A Memoir of AE: George William Russell* (London, 1937).
- Emerson, N.D., ‘St. Patrick: A Survey of Some Present-day Opinions’, in *The Celtic Church: Past, Present and Future* (Limerick, 1963), 16-28.
- Fahey, Denis, *The Rulers of Russia* (Dublin, 1938).
- Fennell, Desmond, *Mainly in Wonder* (London, 1959).
- Fingall, Elizabeth, Countess of, *Seventy Years Young* (1937; Dublin, 1995).
- FitzGerald, Brian, *The Anglo-Irish: Three Representative Types – Cork, Ormonde, Swift, 1602-1745* (London, 1952).
- Fleming, Lionel, *Head or Harp* (London, 1965).
- Fogg, Rushworth, ‘Irish Protestant Stirs a Tempest’, *Christian Century* 70 (11 Mar. 1953), 298-300.
- Fox, R.M., *China Diary* (London, 1959).
- Freyer, Grattan, ‘A Letter from Ireland’, *Scrutiny* 6:4 (Mar. 1938), 376-85.
- Gibbon, Monk, *Austria* (London, 1953).
- ‘In Defence of Censorship’, *The Bell* 9:4 (Jan. 1945), 313-22.
- *In Search of Winter Sport* (London, 1953).
- *An intruder at the ballet* (London, 1952).
- *Mount Ida* (London, 1948).
- *The Pupil: A Memory of Love* (Dublin, 1981).
- *The red shoes ballet: a critical study* (London, 1948).
- *The Rhine and Its Castles* (London, 1957).
- *Swiss Enchantment* (London, 1950).
- *The tales of Hoffmann: a study of the film* (London, 1951).
- *Western Germany* (London, 1955).
- Gilmore, George, ‘The Republic and the Protestants’, *The Bell* 16:5 (Feb. 1951), 11-15.
- Gogarty, Oliver St. John, *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street* (1937; Dublin, 1994).
- Gray, Tony, *Mr Smyllie, Sir!* (Dublin, 1991).
- Greacen, Robert, *Brief Encounters: Literary Dublin and Belfast in the 1940s* (Dublin, 1991).
- ‘Report from Dublin’, in R. Greacen (ed.), *Irish Harvest* (Dublin, 1946), 9-14.
- Gregg, J.A.F., *The ‘Ne Temere’ Decree: A Lecture* (rev. edn.; Dublin, 1943).
- Gregory, Augusta, *Lady Gregory’s Diaries, 1892-1902*, ed. J. Pethica (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1996).
- *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916-1930*, ed. L. Robinson (London, 1946).
- Griffin, Victor, *Enough Religion to make us hate: Reflections on religion and politics* (Dublin, 2002).
- *Mark of Protest* (Dublin, 1993).
- Guinness, Bryan, *Dairy [sic] Not Kept: Essays in Recollection* (Salisbury, Wilts, 1975).
- Guthrie, Tyrone, ‘Introduction’, in Anton Chehov, *The Cherry Orchard*, trans. HMB (London, 1934), 3-4.
- Gwynn, Stephen, *Henry Grattan and His Times* (Dublin, 1939).
- *Oliver Goldsmith* (London, 1935).
- Hackett, Francis, ‘A Muzzle Made in Ireland’, *Dublin Magazine* 11 (Oct.-Dec. 1936), 8-17.
- Hackett, Joseph P., ‘Shaw and Yeats’, *Studies* 32 (Sept. 1943), 369-78.
- Hadden, Victor, ‘Protestants and Local History’, *Focus* Sept. 1958, 7-10.
- Hamilton, Hugo, *The Speckled People* (London, 2003).

- Hammond, T.C., *Marriage - My Choice: What Shall It Be?* (Dublin, 1936).
- Hanley, Michael, 'The Strange Case of the Parson's Son', *Hibernia* Dec. 1949, 30-1.
- Heard, Gerald, 'Epilogue', in Margaret Digby, *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman* (Oxford, 1949), 297-308.
- Henn, T.R., *Five Arches* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1980).
- Hewat, Simon, 'The Protestant Minority in Ireland', *CIM* June 1967, 11-13.
- Hoffer, Eric, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (1951; New York, 1989).
- Hone, J.M., 'The Anglo-Irish', *The Bell* 2:6 (Sept. 1941), 13-30.
- *Ireland since 1922* (London, 1932).
- *W.B. Yeats, 1865-1939* (London, 1942).
- Hone, J.M. and M.M. Rossi, *Bishop Berkeley: His life, writings, and philosophy* (London, 1931).
- *Swift, or the Egotist* (London, 1934).
- Inglis, Brian, *Downstart* (London, 1990).
- 'An Engaging Assailant', *The Spectator* 13 Feb. 1953, 178.
- *West Briton* (London, 1962).
- Ireland, Denis, 'Reflections on the Death of a Novelist', *Envoy* 3:8 (July 1950), 35-40.
- Jacob, F.L., 'Some implications for rural Ireland of membership in the European Economic Community', *New Divinity* 3:2 (Winter 1972), 142-9.
- Johnston, Denis, *The Brazen Horn* (Dublin, 1976).
- 'A Decade in Retrospect: 1939-1949', *The Month* 3:2 (Feb. 1950), 86-94.
- *Nine Rivers from Jordan* (London, 1953).
- *Orders and Desecrations*, ed. R. Johnston (Dublin, 1992).
- Kavanagh, Patrick, 'The Gallivanting Poet', *Irish Writing* 3 (Nov. 1947), 62-70.
- 'Parochialism', *Kavanagh's Weekly* 1:7 (24 May 1952), 2.
- untitled review of Arland Ussher, *Three Great Irishmen*, in *The Spectator* 15 Aug. 1952, 226.
- Kelleher, John V., 'Ireland...And Where Does She Stand?', *Foreign Affairs* 35 (Apr. 1957), 485-95.
- 'Irish Literature To-day', *The Bell* 10:4 (July 1945), 337-53.
- Kerr, W.S., *The Independence of the Celtic Church in Ireland* (London, 1931).
- Kinch, F.H., *Should I Join the Church of Rome?* (Dublin, 1937).
- Knox, Rawle, 'Protestants in Eire', *The Spectator* 23 Sept. 1949, 380-1.
- Lecky, W.E.H., *Democracy and Liberty*, 2 vols. (1896; London, 1899).
- *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. L.P. Curtis (Chicago, 1972).
- *The Political Value of History* (London, 1892).
- Leslie, Shane, *The Film of Memory* (London, 1938).
- The Liberal Ethic*, ed. Irish Times (Dublin, 1950).
- Lyall, Archibald, *The Balkan Road* (London, 1930).
- *Russian Roundabout: A Non-political Pilgrimage* (London, 1933).
- Lynd, Robert, 'Anglo-Irish Literature', in B. Hobson (ed.), *Saorstát Eireann/Irish Free State: Official Handbook* (Dublin, 1932).
- Luce, J.V., 'In Retrospect: Professor W.B. Stanford', *Search* 26:2 (Summer 2003), 107-11.
- McAdoo, H.R., *No New Church* (Dublin, 1945).
- McDermott, R.P. and D.A. Webb, *Irish Protestantism To-day and Tomorrow: A Demographic Study* (Dublin, 1945).
- MacEgan, Donal, 'Alison Phillips and His Parsons: Disasters to the T.C.D. Light Infantry', *Catholic Bulletin* 24 (Oct. 1934), 808-14.
- McQuaid, J.C., 'Foreword', in Anthony Henry Count O'Brien of Thomond, *Archbishop Stepinac: The Man and His Case* by (Dublin, 1947) v.
- Macalister, R.A.S., *Ancient Ireland: A Study in the Lessons of Archaeology and History* (London, 1935).
- Magan, William, *The Story of Ireland: A history of an ancient family and their country* (Shaftsbury, Dorset, 2000).
- Malone, Conor, 'Mr. Tierney on Mr. Russell', *Catholic Bulletin* 28 (Jan. 1938), 39-43.
- Mannin, Ethel, *All Experience* (London, 1932).
- *Forever Wandering* (London, 1934).
- Marcus, David and Terence Smith, 'Foreword', *Irish Writing* 1 (1946), 7-8.
- Marsh, Arnold, '1935: The Beginning of a New Age', in Mount Street Club (ed.), *Work To Do: A Survey of the Unemployment Problem* (Dublin, 1945), 116-20.

- [as An Gobán Saor], *Economics for Ourselves* (Dundalk, 1934).
- *Ireland's New Foundations* (Dundalk, 1942).
- 'The Social Order', in Irish Christian Fellowship (ed.), *Looking at Ireland* (London, 1937), 101-21.
- Maurice, F.D., 'Reasons for Co-operation', in D. Reisman (ed.), *Democratic Socialism in Britain*, ii: *The Christian Socialists* (London, 1996), 13-43.
- Maxwell, Constantia, *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges* (1940; rev. edn., Dundalk, 1949).
- *Dublin under the Georges, 1714-1830* (1936; rev. edn., London, 1956).
- Mercier, Vivian, 'The Fourth Estate: "The Times" (Irish)', *The Bell* 9:4 (Jan. 1945), 290-7.
- Milne, Ewart, *Drums without End* (Portree, Isle of Skye, 1985).
- 'Medley in Spain', *Ireland To-day* 2:9 (Sept. 1937), 41-8.
- 'Notes from a journal', *Irish Writing* 35 (Summer 1956), 95-113.
- Mitchell, Mairin, *Storm over Spain* (London, 1937).
- Moody, T.W., 'Edmund Curtis', *Hermathena* 63 (May 1944), 69-78.
- Moore, George, *Hail and Farewell*, ed. R. Cave (1911; Gerards Cross, Bucks, 1985).
- Morrow, Larry, 'Arland Ussher', *Envoy* 3:8 (July 1950), 7.
- [as 'The Bellman'], 'Meet Elizabeth Bowen', *The Bell* 4:6 (Sept. 1942), 420-6.
- [as 'The Bellman'], 'Meet R.M. Smyllie', *The Bell* 3:3 (Dec. 1941), 180-8.
- Murphy, Richard, *The Kick* (London, 2002).
- Murray, John, 'Tito and the Catholic Church', *Studies* 42 (Mar. 1953), 23-38.
- Murray, T.L., 'Another View', *Horizon* 5:25 (Jan. 1942), 22-6.
- Newman, Jeremiah, 'Vocational organisation & the Co-operative Movement', *Christus Rex* 12:3 (July 1958), 171-84.
- Norman, H.F., 'George Russell', in Horace Plunkett Foundation (ed.), *Year Book of Agricultural Co-operation: 1936* (London, 1936), 22-3.
- O'Brien, Kate, *Farewell Spain* (1937; London, 1985).
- O'Connor, Frank, *My Father's Son* (1968; Belfast, 1994).
- O'Faoláin, Seán, 'A Challenge', *The Bell* 1:5 (Feb. 1941), 5-6.
- 'Daniel Corkery', *Dublin Magazine* 11 (Apr.-June 1936), 49-61.
- 'The Divided Generation', *The Bell* 17:11 (Feb. 1952) 5-11.
- 'Evenings on a Farm at Sandymount', *The Bell* 13:6 (Mar. 1947), 67-8.
- 'Fifty Years of Irish Writing', *Studies* 51 (Spring 1962), 93-105.
- *The Irish* (1947; London, 1980).
- 'An Irish Council', *The Bell* 11:1 (Oct. 1945), 557-64.
- 'The Mart of Ideas', *The Bell* 4:3 (June 1942), 153-7.
- 'On a Recent Incident at the International Affairs Association', *The Bell* 18:9 (Feb. 1953), 517-27.
- 'The Price of Peace', *The Bell* 10:4 (July 1945), 281-90.
- 'This is Your Magazine', *The Bell* 1:1 (Oct. 1940), 5-9.
- 'To What Possible Future?', *The Bell* 4:1 (April 1942), iv-9.
- 'Toryism in Trinity', *The Bell* 8:3 (June 1944), 185-97.
- *Vive Moi!*, ed. J. O'Faolain (London, 1993).
- 'Yeats and the Younger Generation', *Horizon* 5:25 (Jan. 1942), 43-54.
- O'Flaherty, Liam, *I Went to Russia* (London, 1931).
- Ó Glaisne, Risteárd, 'Comment: Protestant Ascendancy', *Focus* Feb. 1959, 30-1.
- 'In Focus', *Focus* July 1963, 154.
- *The Irish Language: A Protestant speaks to his co-religionists* (Longford, 1965).
- 'Our World', *Focus* Mar. 1958, 23-7.
- *To Irish Protestants* (Dublin, 1991).
- 'We Introduce Ourselves', *Focus* Jan. 1958, 3-7.
- O'Grady, Hugh Art, *Standish James O'Grady: The Man and the Writer* (Dublin, 1929).
- O'Grady, Standish, *All Ireland*, ed. J. Kelly (1898; Poole, 1999).
- 'The New United Ireland', *New Review* 93 (Feb. 1897), 129-42.
- [as Luke Netterville], *The Queen of the World, or Under the Tyranny* (London, 1900).
- *To the Leaders of Our Working People*, ed. E. Hagan (Dublin, 2002).
- *Toryism and the Tory Democracy* (London, 1886).
- O'Riordan, Michael, *Catholicity and Progress in Ireland* (London, 1905).

- O'Sullivan, Donal, *The Irish Free State and Its Senate* (London, 1940).
- Olden, Thomas, *The Church of Ireland* (London, 1892).
- Ormonde, Marquess of, 'Address at the handing over of Kilkenny Castle to the Kilkenny Castle Restoration Committee – August 12th, 1967', *JBS* 1 (1968), 14-15.
- Ortega y Gasset, José, *The Revolt of the Masses*, authorized trans. (1930, 1932; London, 1993).
- Orwell, George, *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, 4 vols., eds. S. Orwell and I. Angus (London, 1968).
- Ossietzky, Carl von, *Works*, 8 vols., eds. W. von Boldt et al. (Reinbek, 1994).
- Peck, Carola, *Mariga and her Friends* (Ballivor, Co. Meath, 1997).
- Pfeffer, L[eo], *Istraga u Sarajevskom Atentatu* (Zagreb, 1938).
- Phillips, W.A., 'Editorial Preface', in W.A. Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland*, 3 vols. (London, 1933), i. v-ix.
- Plunkett, Horace, 'Foreword', in Horace Plunkett Foundation (ed.), *Agricultural Co-operation in Ireland: A Survey* (London, 1931) i-xii.
- *Ireland in the New Century* (1905; Dublin, 1982).
 - *Noblesse Oblige: An Irish Rendering* (Dublin, 1908).
- Potterton, Homan, *Rathcormick: A Childhood Recalled* (Dublin, 2001).
- Powell, Anthony, 'Periodical Prejudices', *The Spectator* 8 Nov. 1946, 488.
- Power, Arthur, *From the Old Waterford House* (1949; Waterford, 2003).
- Quinn, Owen, 'On or About Samuel Beckett', *The Bell* 19:4 (Mar. 1954), 25-32.
- Rea, Fred, 'Protestantism in the New Ireland', in Irish Christian Fellowship (ed.), *Looking at Ireland* (London, 1937), 51-65.
- 'Protestantism in the Day of Small Things', *Focus* June 1959, 15-16.
- Robinson, Lennox, *Curtain Up* (London, 1942).
- 'Odious Comparisons', *Better Business* 4 (Nov. 1918), 24-6.
- Rodgers, W.R., *Irish Literary Portraits* (London, 1972).
- Rudd, Niall, *Pale Green, Light Orange: A Portrait of Bourgeois Ireland, 1930-1950* (Dublin, 1994).
- Russell, George W. (AE), *Co-operation and Nationality* (1912; Dublin, 1982).
- 'Foreword', in Joseph O'Neill, *Land Under England* (London, 1935), 5-7.
 - 'Lessons of Revolution', *Studies* 12 (Mar. 1923), 1-6.
 - *Letters from AE*, ed. A. Denson (London, 1961).
 - *The National Being* (1916; Dublin, 1982).
 - *Some Passages from the Letters of AE to W.B. Yeats* (Dublin, 1936).
- Russell, W.M.S., 'Saints, Tribes and Ancestors', review of HMB, *Ten Thousand Saints*, in *Biology and Human Affairs* 40 (1975), 118-30.
- Ryan, John, *Remembering How We Stood* (1975; Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1987).
- Sadleir, Randal, *Tanzania: Journey to Republic* (London, 1999).
- Seanad Éireann Debates*, vol. 48, cols. 105-12 [5 June 1957].
- Seaver, George, *Albert Schweitzer, Christian revolutionary* (London, 1944).
- *David Livingstone: his life and letters* (London, 1957).
 - *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic* (London, 1937).
 - *Francis Younghusband, explorer and mystic* (London, 1952).
 - *John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg, Archbishop* (London, 1963).
 - *Nicolas Berdyaev: An introduction to his thought* (London, 1950).
- Shaw, Bernard, *Collected Letters, 1911-1925*, ed. D.H. Laurence (London, 1985).
- *John Bull's Other Island* (1907, 1930; London, 1984).
 - *The Matter with Ireland*, eds. D.H. Greene and D.H. Laurence (London, 1962).
- Sheehy Skeffington, Owen, *Election Address of Dr. Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Candidate for the Constituency of Dublin University* (Dublin, 1951).
- Smyllie, R.M. [as 'Nichevo'], *Carpathian Contrasts* (Dublin, 1938).
- Stanford, W.B., *Memoirs* (Dublin, 2001).
- *A Recognised Church: The Church of Ireland in Éire* (Dublin, 1944).
- Stanford, W.B. et al., 'Protestantism Since the Treaty', *The Bell* 8:3 (June 1944), 218ff.
- Starkie, Walter, *Raggle-Taggle: Adventures with a Fiddle in Hungary and Roumania* (London, 1933).
- *Spanish Raggle-Taggle: Adventures with a Fiddle in North Spain* (London, 1934).
- Strong, L.A.G., *Green Memory* (London, 1961).

- Sulzberger, C.L., *A Long Row of Candles: Memoirs and Diaries 1934-54* (London, 1969).
- Tawney, R.H., *The Attack and Other Papers* (1953; Nottingham, 1981).
- Taylor, Geoffrey, *The Emerald Isle* (London, 1952).
- *Insect Life in Britain* (London, 1945).
 - *Some British Beetles* (London, 1948).
 - ‘Some Irish Naturalists as Men of Letters’, *Irish Monthly* 68 (Nov. 1949), 513-18.
 - *Some Nineteenth Century Gardeners* (London, 1951).
 - ‘Two 18th Century Irish Writers’, *The Bell* 15:1 (Oct. 1947), 6-18.
 - *The Victorian Flower Garden* (London, 1952).
- Tierney, Michael, ‘A Prophet of Mystic Nationalism – A.E’, *Studies* 26 (Dec. 1937), 568-80.
- Toksvig, Signe, *Irish Diaries 1926-1937* (Dublin, 1994).
- Tracy, Honor, *Mind you, I’ve said nothing!* (London, 1953).
- ‘Vienna to Zagreb: A Change of Climate’, *The Listener* 1 Nov. 1951, 728-9.
 - ‘Yugoslavia: A Time of Flux’, *The Listener* 8 Nov. 1951, 773-4.
- T[ravers], P[amela], *Moscow Excursion* (London, 1934).
- Trench, Chalmers [Terry], *Fifty Years Young: The Story of An Óige* (Dublin, 1981).
- *Nearly Ninety: Reminiscences* (Ballivor, Co. Meath, 1996).
- Trevor, William, *Excursions in the Real World: Memoirs* (London, 1993).
- Unsigned, ‘Is There Freedom of Discussion in the Republic?’, *British Weekly* 25 Dec. 1952, 11.
- Unsigned, ‘NORTH AND SOUTH’, *Bulletin of Department of Foreign Affairs* 28 Apr. 1952, n/p.
- Unsigned, ‘A Policy for the Church of Ireland’, *CIM* Aug. 1939, 129.
- Ussher, Arland, *The Face & Mind of Ireland* (1950; Old Greenwich, CT, 1979).
- *From a dark lantern: a journal*, ed. R.N. Parisious (Dalkey, Co. Dublin, 1978).
 - *Journey through Dread* (London, 1955).
 - *The juggler: selections from a journal*, ed. R.N. Parisious (Mountrath, Co. Laois, 1982).
 - *The Magic People* (London, 1950).
 - ‘The Neutral Nation’, *New English Weekly* 28 Sept. 1944, 184.
 - *Postscript on Existentialism and Other Essays* (Dublin, 1946).
 - *Sages and Schoolmen* (Dublin, 1967).
 - *Spanish Mercy* (London, 1959).
 - *Three Great Irishmen: Shaw, Yeats, Joyce* (London, 1952).
- Ussher, Arland and Carl von Metzradt, *Enter these enchanted woods: an interpretation of Grimm’s fairy tales* (Dublin, 1957).
- Viney, Michael, *The Five Per Cent: A Survey of Protestants in the Republic* (Dublin, 1965).
- Vowles, Peggy, ‘Hubert Butler and the First Years of the Library Service in Coleraine’, *Bann Disc* 2 (1995), 63-5.
- Webb, D.A., ‘A Singular Protestant’, *Hibernia* 21 Nov. 1969, 7.
- Webster, Eileen F., ‘History in Our Schools’, *The Bell* 7:3 (Dec. 1943), 192-200.
- Weil, Simone, *Selected Essays, 1934-43*, ed. and trans. R. Rees (London, 1962).
- West, Rebecca, *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia* (1942; Edinburgh, 2001).
- White, W.J., ‘Inside Trinity College’, *The Bell* 10:1 (Apr. 1945), 63-75.
- Whitman, Walt, *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. J.E. Miller (Boston, 1959).
- Whyte, J.H., review of R.B. McDowell (ed.), *Social Life in Ireland 1800-45*, in *IHS* 11 (Sept. 1959), 362-3.
- Whyte, William H., *The Organization Man* (London, 1957).
- Wyse Jackson, Robert, ‘Jacky Barrett’, *The Bell* 6:6 (Sept. 1943), 503-8.
- Yeats, W.B., *Autobiographies* (1955; London, 1987).
- *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (London, 1979).
 - *The Senate Speeches of W.B. Yeats*, ed. D.R. Pearce (London, 1960).
 - *Wheels and Butterflies* (New York, 1935).

4. Interviews and other sources

Interviews

All interviews were conducted by Robert Tobin unless otherwise indicated.

Mr. Maurice Craig, Dublin, 16 August 2001.

The Rev. Canon and Mrs. Edward Grant, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, April 2002.
 The Very Rev. Victor Griffin, Dublin, 26 August 2001.
 Professor J.V. Luce, Dublin, 21 July 2003.
 Professor R.B. McDowell, Dublin, 11 September 2001.
 Mr. James O'Brien, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny, 28 July 2003.
 Mr. Risteárd Ó Glaisne, Dublin, 22 July 2003.
 Mrs. Elizabeth Smith [interview conducted by the Rev. Declan Smith], Co. Kerry, Winter 2001.

Unpublished writings and speeches

Grant, Edward F., *The Fethard Boycott: Recollections and Reflections* (2002). [Courtesy of the Rev. Edward F. Grant].
 Sadleir, Randal, untitled speech, delivered at Dublin Castle in commemoration of the former Office of Arms (2001). [Courtesy of Mr. Randal Sadleir].
 Strunz, Erwin, 'My Connection with the Kagrán Group in 1938' (undated). [Courtesy of Mrs. Julia Crampton].

II. Secondary Material

1. Printed

- Adams, Bernard, *Denis Johnston: A Life* (Dublin, 2002).
 Adams, Michael, *Censorship: the Irish Experience* (Dublin, 1968).
 Akenson, Donald, untitled review of R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland 1869-1969*, in *New Divinity* 6:2 (Winter 1975), 139-41.
 Allen, Nicholas, *George Russell (AE) and the New Ireland, 1905-30* (Dublin, 2003).
 Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; London, 1991).
 Ascherson, Neal, 'Foreword', in HMB, *In the Land of Nod* (Dublin, 1996) ix-xiv.
 Backstrom, Philip N., *Christian Socialism and Cooperation in Victorian England* (London, 1974).
 Barnard, T.C., 'Crises of identity among Irish protestants 1641-1685', *Past & Present* 127 (May 1990), 39-83.
 — *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven, CT, 2003).
 Barrington, Brendan, 'Introduction', in B. Barrington (ed.), *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart 1942-1944*. (Dublin, 2000), 1-60.
 Beckett, J.C., *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* (London, 1976).
 — 'The Anglo-Irish Tradition in Literature', *Lagan* 2 (1944), 44-7.
 — *The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923* (London, 1966).
 Bellah, Robert N. and Phillip E. Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion* (San Francisco, 1980).
 Bence-Jones, Mark, *The Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London, 1987).
 Bew, Paul et al. (eds.), *Passion and Prejudice: Nationalist-Unionist Conflict in Ulster in the 1930s and the Founding of the Irish Association* (Belfast, 1993).
 Bolger, Patrick, *The Irish Co-operative Movement: Its History and Development* (Dublin, 1977).
 Bourke, Angela, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story* (London, 1999).
 Bowen, Desmond, *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism* (New York, 1995).
 — *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland, 1800-1870* (Dublin, 1978).
 Bowen, Kurt, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Kingston, Ontario, 1983).
 Brady, Ciaran, "'Constructive and Instrumental": The Dilemma of Ireland's First "New Historians"', in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin, 1994), 3-31.
 Brown, Malcolm, *The Politics of Irish Literature* (London, 1972).
 Brown, Terence, 'Butler and Nationalism', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 94-100.
 — 'Cultural Nationalism 1880-1930: Introduction', in S. Deane et al. (eds.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry, 1991), ii. 516-20.

- *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY, 1985).
 - *Ireland's Literature: Selected Essays* (Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, 1988).
 - 'Louis MacNeice and the Second World War', in K. Devine (ed.), *Modern Irish Writers and the Wars* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1999), 165-77.
- Buckland, Patrick, *Irish Unionism I: The Anglo Irish and the New Ireland, 1885-1922* (Dublin, 1972).
- Bunting, Madeleine, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule 1940-1945* (London, 1995).
- Burke, Andrew, 'Trinity College and the religious problem in Irish education', in J. Kelly and U. Mac Gearailt (eds.), *Dublin and Dubliners: essays in the history and literature of Dublin City* (Dublin, 1990), 95-126.
- Carpenter, Andrew, 'Double Vision in Anglo-Irish Literature', in A. Carpenter (ed.), *Place, Personality and the Irish Writer* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1977), 179-87.
- Carroll, Denis, *They Have Fooled You Again: Michael O'Flanagan (1876-1942), priest, republican, social critic* (Dublin, 1993).
- Carsten, F.L., *The Rise of Fascism* (1967; London, 1970).
- Chadwick, Owen, *The Christian Church in the Cold War* (London, 1992).
- *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Clyde, Tom, *Irish Literary Magazines: An Outline History and Descriptive Bibliography* (Dublin, 2003).
- Collini, Stefan, *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture* (Oxford, 1999).
- 'Introduction', in C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge, 1998) vii-lxxi.
 - *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991).
- Connolly, Peter, *No Bland Facility: Selected Writings on Literature, Religion and Censorship*, ed. J.H. Murphy (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1991).
- Connolly, S.J., 'Precedent and principle: the patriots and their critics', in S.J. Connolly (ed.), *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), 130-58.
- *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1992).
- Cooney, John, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin, 1999).
- Cornwell, John, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London, 1999).
- Craig, Maurice, *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size* (London, 1976).
- Crampton, Richard, 'Working on the Saints: Clues to the Irish Genome', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 119-35.
- Cronin, Mike, *The Blueshirts and Irish Politics* (Dublin, 1997).
- Curtis, L.P., 'The Anglo-Irish Predicament', *20th Century Studies* 4 (Nov. 1970), 37-63.
- d'Alton, Ian, 'A contrast in crises: southern Irish Protestantism, 1820-43 and 1885-1910', in A.C. Hepburn (ed.), *Minorities in History* (London, 1978), 70-83.
- 'A Perspective upon Historical Process: the case of Southern Irish Protestantism', in F.B. Smith (ed.), *Ireland, England and Australia: Essays in honour of Oliver MacDonagh* (Canberra, 1990), 70-91.
 - *Protestant Politics and Society in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980).
- de Vere White, Terence, *The Anglo-Irish* (London, 1972).
- 'Social Life in Ireland, 1927-1937', *Studies* 54 (Spring 1965), 74-82.
- Daly, Mary E., 'The Economic Ideals of Irish Nationalism: Frugal Comfort or Lavish Austerity?', *Éire/Ireland* 29 (Winter 1994), 132-48.
- *Industrial Development and Irish National Identity 1922-1939* (Dublin, 1992).
- Darton, Lawrence, *An Account of The Work of the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, 1933-1950* (London, 1967).
- Deane, Seamus, 'Autobiography and Memoirs, 1890-1988' in S. Deane et al. (eds.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry, 1991), iii. 380-3.
- 'Heroic Styles: the tradition of an idea', in S. Deane et al., *Ireland's Field Day* (London, 1985), 45-58.
- Dempsey, Pauric, 'Trinity College Dublin and the New Political Order', in M. Cronin and J.M. Regan (eds.), *Ireland: The Politics of Independence, 1922-49* (London, 2000), 217-31.
- Dennis, Norman and A.H. Halsey, *English Ethical Socialism: Thomas More to R.H. Tawney* (Oxford, 1988).
- Diamond, Sigmund, *Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities with the Intelligence Community* (New York, 1992).

- Digby, Margaret, *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman* (Oxford, 1949).
- Doherty, Richard, *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War* (Dublin, 1999).
- Donoghue, Denis, *We Irish* (Brighton, 1986).
- Dooley, Terence, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland: A Study of Irish Landed Families* (Dublin, 2001).
- Dudley Edwards, Owen, 'Maria Cross Roads: A Study of "Donat O'Donnell"', in R. English and J.M. Skelly (eds.), *Ideas Matter: Essays in Honour of Conor Cruise O'Brien* (Dublin, 1998), 357-77.
- English, Richard, *Ernie O'Malley: IRA Intellectual* (Oxford, 1998).
- *Radicals and the Republic: Socialist Republicanism in the Irish Free State, 1925-1937* (Oxford, 1994).
- Falconi, Carlo, *The Silence of Pius XII*, trans. B. Wall (London, 1970).
- Fallon, Brian, *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930-1960* (Dublin, 1998).
- Farrell, Antony, 'Editing the Master', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 78-81.
- Faughnan, Sean, 'The Jesuits and the drafting of the Irish constitution of 1937', *IHS* 26 (May 1988), 79-102.
- Fisk, Robert, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939-45* (Dublin, 1983).
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'Commemoration in the Irish Free State: a chronicle of embarrassment', in I. McBride (ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), 184-203.
- *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (1977; Cork, 1998).
- Fitz Simon, Christopher, 'A Country Scholar', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 70-4.
- Fletcher, John, 'Beckett and the Second World War: *In Memoriam, 1906-1989*', in K. Devine (ed.), *Modern Irish Writers and the Wars* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1999), 178-89.
- Ford, Alan, 'James Ussher and the creation of an Irish protestant identity', in B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (eds.), *British consciousness and identity: the making of Britain, 1533-1707* (Cambridge, 1998), 185-212.
- '"Standing one's ground": religion, polemic and Irish history since the Reformation', in A. Ford et al. (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland Since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), 1-14.
- Ford, Alan et al., 'Preface', in A. Ford et al. (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland Since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995) vii-x.
- Forsyth, James, *Tyrone Guthrie: A Biography* (London, 1976).
- Foster, John Wilson, *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival: A Changeling Art* (Syracuse, NY, 1987).
- 'Strains in Irish Intellectual Life', in L. O'Dowd (ed.), *On Intellectuals and Intellectual Life in Ireland: International, Comparative and Historical Contexts* (Belfast, 1996), 71-97.
- Foster, R.F., *Charles Stewart Parnell: The Man and His Family* (Hassocks, Sussex, 1976).
- 'For the meeting of hearts', review of HMB, *Escape from the Anthill*, in *TLS* 6 Sept. 1985, 980.
- *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland* (London, 2001).
- *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988).
- *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1993).
- 'Something to Hate: Intimate Enmities in Irish History', *Irish Review* 30 (2003), 1-12.
- *The Story of Ireland* (Oxford, 1995).
- *W.B. Yeats: A Life, I: The Apprentice Mage 1865-1914* (Oxford, 1997).
- *W.B. Yeats: A Life, II: The Arch-Poet 1915-1939* (Oxford, 2003).
- Fussell, Paul, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York, 1980).
- Gailey, Andrew, *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The experience of constructive unionism 1890-1905* (Cork, 1987).
- 'An Irishman's World', *Irish Review* 13 (Winter 1992-3), 31-9.
- Garvin, Tom, 'Change and the Political System', in F. Litton (ed.), *Unequal Achievement: The Irish Experience 1957-1982* (Dublin, 1982), 21-40.
- Gildea, Robert, *Marianne in Chains: In Search of the German Occupation, 1940-1945* (London, 2002).
- Glendinning, Victoria, *Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer* (London, 1977).
- Goldhagen, Daniel J., *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1996).

- Goldring, Maurice, *Pleasant the Scholar's Life: Irish Intellectuals and the Construction of the Nation State* (London, 1993).
- Goldstone, Katrina, "'Benevolent Helpfulness'? Ireland and the International Reaction to Jewish Refugees, 1933-9", in M. Kennedy and J. M. Skelly (eds.), *Irish Foreign Policy 1919-66: From Independence to Internationalism* (Dublin, 2000), 130-5.
- Greacen, Lavinia, *Chink: A Biography* (London, 1989).
- Greenwood, J.O., *Friends and Relief* (York, 1975).
- Grimes, Brendan, *Irish Carnegie Libraries: A Catalogue and Architectural History* (Dublin, 1998).
- Gross, John, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life Since 1800* (London, 1969).
- Grubgeld, Elizabeth, 'Anglo-Irish Autobiography and the Genealogical Mandate', *Éire/Ireland* 32+33 (1997-8), 96-115.
- Guillory, John, 'Literary Critics as Intellectuals: Class Analysis and the Crisis of the Humanities', in W.C. Dimock and M. T. Gilmore (eds.), *Rethinking Class: Literary Studies and Social Formations* (New York, 1994), 107-49.
- Hagan, Edward, *'High Nonsensical Words': A Study of the Works of Standish James O'Grady* (Troy, NY, 1986).
- 'Introduction', in Standish O'Grady, *To the Leaders of Our Working People*, ed. E. Hagan (Dublin, 2002) vii-xxvii.
- Harmon, Maurice, *Sean O'Faolain: A Life* (London, 1994).
- Hart, Peter, *The I.R.A. and Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1998).
- 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland', in R. English and G. Walker (eds.), *Unionism in Modern Ireland* (London, 1996), 81-98.
- Hill, Jacqueline R., 'National festivals, the state and "protestant ascendancy" in Ireland, 1790-1829', *IHS* 24 (May 1984), 30-51.
- 'Religious toleration and the relaxation of the penal laws: an imperial perspective, 1763-1780', *Archivum Hibernicum* 44 (1989), 98-109.
- 'Popery and Protestantism, Civil and Religious Liberty: The Disputed Lessons of Irish History 1690-1812', *Past & Present* 118 (Feb. 1988), 96-129.
- Hilton, Boyd, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford, 1988).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-91* (New York, 1994).
- Hood, Susan, *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance: The Survival of the Office of Arms* (Dublin, 2002).
- Hoppen, K. Theodore, *Ireland Since 1800: Conflict and Conformity* (London, 1989).
- Horgan, John, *Seán Lemass: The Enigmatic Patriot* (Dublin, 1997).
- Howe, Stephen, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford, 2000).
- Hughes, H. Stuart, *Consciousness and Society* (1958; Brighton, 1979).
- Jackson, Alvin, 'Irish Unionism, 1870-1922', in D.G. Boyce and A. O'Day, *Defenders of the Union* (London, 2001), 115-36.
- 'J.C. Beckett: politics, faith, scholarship', *IHS* 33 (Nov. 2002), 129-50.
- James, F.G., 'The Church of Ireland and the Patriot Movement in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Éire-Ireland* 17 (Summer 1982), 46-55.
- Joll, James, *The Origins of the First World War* (2nd edtn; London, 1992).
- Jones, Gwyn E., 'The Origins of Agricultural Advisory Services in the Nineteenth Century', *Social Biology and Human Affairs* 46 (1981), 89-106.
- Jordan, Heather Bryant, "'A Particular Flair, A Hound's Nose, A Keen Scent": Sean O'Faolain's Editorship of *The Bell*', *Éire/Ireland* 29 (Winter 1994), 149-60.
- Kearney, Richard, 'Between Politics and Literature: The Irish Cultural Journal', *The Crane Bag* 7:2 (1983), 160-71.
- 'The Right To Be a Minority', *The Crane Bag* 5:1 (1981), 88-93.
- Kearns, Kevin, 'Dublin's crumbling fair city', *Geographical Magazine* 55 (Feb. 1983), 80-5.
- Kelly, James, 'Conservative Protestant political thought in late eighteenth-century Ireland', in S.J. Connolly (ed.), *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), 185-220.
- Kelly, John, 'Introduction', in Standish O'Grady, *All Ireland*, ed. J. Kelly (Poole, 1999), n/p.
- Kennedy, Dennis, *The Widening Gulf: Northern attitudes to the independent Irish state 1919-49* (Belfast, 1988).

- Kennedy, Liam, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism* (Belfast, 1996).
- Kenner, Hugh, 'The Politics of the Plain Style', in N. Sims (ed.), *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1990), 183-90.
- Keogh, Dermot, *Ireland and the Vatican: The Politics and Diplomacy of Church-State Relations, 1922-1960* (Cork, 1995).
- *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork, 1998).
 - *Twentieth-Century Ireland: Nation and State* (Dublin, 1994).
- Kerrigan, Gene, 'The Life and Irish Times of Douglas Gageby', *Magill* 3:3 (Dec. 1979), 14ff.
- Kiberd, Declan, 'The Perils of Nostalgia: A Critique of the Revival', in P. Connolly (ed.), *Literature and the Changing Ireland* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1982), 1-24.
- 'Samuel Beckett and the Protestant Ethic', in A. Martin (ed.), *The Genius of Irish Prose* (Dublin, 1985), 121-30.
 - 'Yeats, Childhood, and Exile', in P. Hyland and N. Sammells (eds.), *Irish Writing: Exile and Subversion* (London, 1991), 126-45.
- King, Carla, 'Defenders of the Union: Sir Horace Plunkett', in D.G. Boyce and A. O'Day (eds.), *Defenders of the Union* (London, 2001), 137-58.
- [as Carla Keating], *Plunkett and Co-operatives: Past, Present and Future* (Cork, 1983).
- Kuch, Peter, *Yeats and AE: the antagonism that unites dear friends* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1986).
- Larkin, Emmet, 'Church, State, and Nation in Modern Ireland', *American Historical Review* 80 (Dec. 1975), 1244-76.
- Lee, Hermione, *Elizabeth Bowen* (rev. edn.; London, 1999).
- Lee, J.J., 'Aspects of Corporatist Thought in Ireland: The Commission on Vocational Organisation, 1939-43', in A. Cosgrave and D. McCartney (eds.), *Studies in Irish History presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), 324-46.
- *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989).
 - *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1918* (Dublin, 1973).
- Leerson, Joseph Th., *Mere Irish & Fíor-Ghael: Studies in the idea of Irish nationality, its development and literary expression prior to the nineteenth century* (Amsterdam, 1986).
- Leighton, C.D.A., *Catholicism in a Protestant Kingdom* (London, 1996).
- Levine, Philippa, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge, 1986).
- Longley, Edna, 'Close-cropped grass comes up sweet', review of HMB, *The Sub-prefect Should Have Held His Tongue*, in *TLS* 1 Feb. 1991, 8.
- *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1994).
- Longley, Edna and Gerald Dawe, 'Introduction', in E. Longley and G. Dawe (eds.), *Across a Roaring Hill: The Protestant imagination in modern Ireland* (Belfast, 1985) i-xiii.
- Lord, Eric and Marjorie Reeves, 'Themes of the 1930s', in M. Reeves (ed.), *Christian Thinking and Social Order: Conviction Politics from the 1930s to the Present Day* (London, 1999), 3-18.
- Luce, J.V., *Trinity College Dublin: The First 400 Years* (Dublin, 1992).
- Lyons, F.S.L., 'The Burden of Our History', in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin, 1994), 87-104.
- *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1891-1939* (Oxford, 1979).
 - *Ireland Since the Famine* (1971; London, 1985).
 - 'The Meaning of Independence', in B. Farrell (ed.), *The Irish Parliamentary Tradition* (Dublin, 1973), 223-33.
 - 'The Minority Problem in the 26 Counties', in F. MacManus (ed.), *The Years of the Great Test* (Dublin, 1978), 92-103.
 - 'T.W.M.', in F.S.L. Lyons and R.A.J. Hawkins (eds.), *Ireland under the Union: Essays in honour of T.W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), 1-35.
- McAdams, J.L., *Ellen, Countess of Desart and Captain the Hon. Otway Cuffe* (Kilkenny, 1959).
- McAteer, Michael, *Standish O'Grady, AE and Yeats: History, Politics, Culture* (Dublin, 2002).
- McBride, Ian, '"The common name of Irishman": protestantism and patriotism in eighteenth-century Ireland', in T. Claydon and I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998), 236-61.
- 'Introduction: memory and national identity in modern Ireland', in I. McBride (ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), 1-42.

- McCormack, Bridget, *Perceptions of St Patrick in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000).
- McCormack, W.J., 'Far-Seeing Gifts: Hubert Butler, 1900-1991', *Éire/Ireland* 26 (Spring 1991), 95-100.
- *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History* (Cork, 1994).
 - 'Irish Gothic and After 1820-1945: Introduction', in S. Deane et al. (eds.), *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry, 1991), ii. 831-54.
- McCourt, John, *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste, 1904-20* (Dublin, 2000).
- McDermott, R.P., 'The Church of Ireland since Disestablishment', *Theology* 73 (May 1970), 208-14.
- MacDonagh, Oliver, *Ireland: The Union and its aftermath* (London, 1977).
- *States of Mind: A Study in Anglo-Irish Conflict 1780-1980* (London, 1983).
- McDonald, Frank, *The Destruction of Dublin* (Dublin, 1985).
- McDowell, R.B., *The Church of Ireland 1869-1969* (London, 1975).
- *Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists* (Dublin, 1997).
 - *The Irish Convention 1917-18* (London, 1970).
 - *Land and Learning: Two Irish Clubs* (Dublin, 1993).
- McDowell, R.B. and D.A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin, 1592-1952: An academic history* (Cambridge, 1982).
- McGarry, Fearghal, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork, 1999).
- McKee, Eamonn, 'Church-state relations and the development of Irish health policy: the mother-and-child scheme, 1944-53', *IHS* 25 (Nov. 1986), 159-94.
- Maguire, Martin, 'The Church of Ireland and the problem of the Protestant working-class of Dublin, 1870s-1930s', in A. Ford et al. (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland Since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), 195-203.
- "'Our people": the Church of Ireland and the culture of community in Dublin since Disestablishment', in R. Gillespie and W.G. Neely (eds.), *The Laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: All Sorts and Conditions* (Dublin, 2002), 277-303.
- Mannheim, Karl, *Ideology and Utopia* (1936; London, 1960).
- Manning, Maurice, *The Blueshirts* (Dublin, 1970).
- Martin, Augustine, *Bearing Witness: Essays on Anglo-Irish Literature*, ed. A. Roche (Dublin, 1996).
- Martin, F.X., 'The Thomas Davis Lectures, 1953-1967', *IHS* 16 (Mar. 1967), 276-302.
- Mazower, Mark, *The Balkans* (London, 2000).
- Meaghey, Alan, *The Irish Protestant Churches in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2000).
- Mercier, Vivian, 'Victorian Evangelicalism and the Anglo-Irish Literary Revival', in P. Connolly (ed.), *Literature and the Changing Ireland* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1982), 59-101.
- Miller, David W., *Church, State and Nation in Ireland 1898-1921* (Dublin, 1973).
- Milne, Kenneth, 'The Church of Ireland Since Partition', in B. Bradshaw and D. Keogh (eds.), *Christianity in Ireland: Revisiting the Story* (Dublin, 2002), 220-31.
- Moody, T.W., 'Irish History and Irish Mythology', in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin, 1994), 71-86.
- Moynihán, Julian, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1995).
- Mullarkey, Kieran, 'Ireland, the pope, and vocationalism: the impact of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*', in J. Augusteijn (ed.), *Ireland in the 1930s* (Dublin, 1999), 96-116.
- Murphy, Brian, 'The Canon of Irish Cultural History: Some Questions', *Studies* 77 (Spring 1988), 68-83.
- Nolan, Jerry C.M., 'Standish James O'Grady's Cultural Nationalism', *Irish Studies Review* 7 (Dec. 1999), 347-57.
- O'Brien, Gerard, *Anglo-Irish Politics in the Age of Grattan and Pitt* (Dublin, 1987).
- O'Callaghan, Margaret, 'Language, nationality and cultural identity in the Irish Free State, 1922-7: the *Irish Statesman* and the *Catholic Bulletin* reappraised', *IHS* 24 (Nov. 1984), 226-45.
- O'Donoghue, David, *Hitler's Irish Voices* (Belfast, 1998).
- O'Dowd, Liam, 'Intellectuals in 20th Century Ireland: And the case of George Russell (AE)', *The Crane Bag* 9:1 (1985), 6-25.
- 'Neglecting the Material Dimension: Irish intellectuals and the problem of identity', *Irish Review* 3 (1988), 8-17.
 - 'Town and Country in Irish Ideology', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 13 (Dec. 1987), 43-53.
- Ó Drisceoil, Donal, 'Censorship as propaganda: the neutralisation of Irish public opinion during the Second World War', in B. Girvin and G. Roberts (eds.), *Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance* (Dublin, 2000), 151-64.

- *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society* (Cork, 1996).
- Ó Drisceoil, Proinsias, 'The Kilkenny Debates', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 108-18.
- O'Faolain, Julia, 'A snug and needy place', *TLS* 24 Mar. 2000, 16.
- O'Leary, Don, *Vocationalism and Social Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000).
- O'Riordan, Manus, *Portrait of an Irish Anti-Fascist: Frank Edwards 1907-83* (Dublin, 1984).
- Owens, Rosemary Cullen, *Louie Bennett* (Cork, 2001).
- Pankhurst, Richard, *William Thompson (1775-1833): Pioneer Socialist* (1954; London, 1991).
- Parker, R.A., *A Yankee Saint: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community* (1935; Hamden, CT, 1973).
- Pašeta, Senia, *Before the Revolution: Nationalism, Social Change, and Ireland's Catholic Elite, 1879-1922* (Cork, 1999).
- Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992).
- Robinson, Tim, 'Butler among the Saints', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 170-5.
- Royle, Stephen A., 'The Historical Legacy in Modern Ireland', in R.W.G. Carter and A.J. Parker (eds.), *Ireland: Contemporary perspectives on a land and its people* (London, 1989), 113-43.
- Said, Edward, *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994; New York, 1996).
- Saunders, Frances Stonor, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London, 1999).
- Schmitt, Hans A., *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness* (Columbia, MO, 1997).
- Sheehy, Michael, *Is Ireland Dying?: Culture and the Church in Modern Ireland* (London, 1970).
- Sheehy Skeffington, Andrée, *Skeff: The Life of Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 1909-1970* (Dublin, 1991).
- Shovlin, Frank, *The Irish Literary Periodical, 1923-1958* (Oxford, 2003).
- Skinner, Quentin, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8 (1969), 3-53.
- Smyth, Damian, 'Illegitimate Aspirations', *Fortnight* 297 (July-Aug. 1991), 31-2.
- Smyth, Gerry, *Decolonisation and Criticism: The Construction of Irish Literature* (London, 1998).
- Somerville-Large, Peter, *The Irish Country House: A Social History* (London, 1995).
- Steinberg, Jonathan, *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust 1941-1943* (London, 1990).
- 'Types of Genocide? Croats, Serbs and Jews, 1941-5', in D. Cesarani, *The Final Solution: origins and implementation* (London, 1994), 175-93.
- Stevens, David, 'Religious Ireland (II): Protestants in the Republic', in E. Longley (ed.), *Culture in Ireland: Division or Diversity?* (Belfast, 1991), 141-6.
- Stradling, Robert A., *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Manchester, 1999).
- Summerfield, Henry, *That Myriad-Minded Man: A Biography of George William Russell (A.E.), 1867-1935* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1975).
- Tanner, Marcus, *Ireland's Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation's Soul, 1500-2000* (New Haven, CT, 2001).
- Taylor, Marilyn, 'Millisle, County Down: Haven from Nazi Terror', *History Ireland* Winter 2001, 34-7.
- Taylor, William R., *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (1957; Cambridge, MA, 1979).
- Tobin, Robert, 'Butler and the Churches', in C. Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), 88-93.
- 'Did the Nuncio Wear Slippers?: Hubert Butler and Protestant Dissent in 50s Ireland', in P.J. Mathews (ed.), *New Voices in Irish Criticism* (Dublin, 2000), 205-12.
- "'Tracing again the tiny snail track": Southern Protestant Memoir since 1950', *Yearbook of English Studies* (2005): forthcoming.
- Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 1997).
- Torchiana, Donald T., *W.B. Yeats and Georgian Ireland* (1966; Washington, D.C., 1992).
- Trilling, Lionel, *The Liberal Imagination* (Garden City, NY, 1950).
- Troeltsch, Ernst, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World*, trans. W. Montgomery (1912; Philadelphia, 1986).
- Vance, Norman, *Irish Literature: A Social History* (2nd edn.; Dublin, 1999).
- Vaughan, W.E. and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Irish Historical Statistics: Population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978).
- Walker, Brian, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, myth and politics in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996).
- Walsh, Brendan M., 'Trends in the Religious Composition of the Population in the Republic of Ireland,

- 1946-1971', *Economic and Social Review* 6 (July 1975), 543-55.
- Watson, George, *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival* (1979; Washington, D.C, 1994).
- Watson, Julia, 'Ordering the Family: Genealogy as Autobiographical Pedigree', in S. Smith and J. Watson, *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography* (Minneapolis, 1996), 297-323.
- Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (1930; London, 2000).
- Weiler, Gershon, untitled review of Arland Ussher, *Sages and Schoolmen*, in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 47 (1969), 108-9.
- West, Cornel, 'Lionel Trilling: Godfather of Neo-Conservatism', in J. Rodden (ed.), *Lionel Trilling and the Critics: Opposing Selves* (Lincoln, NB, 1999), 395-403.
- West, Trevor. *Horace Plunkett, Co-operation and Politics: An Irish Biography* (Gerrards Cross, Bucks, 1986).
- Wheatcroft, Geoffrey, 'Messages from a gentle protestant', review of HMB, *In the Land of Nod*, in *TLS* 28 June 1996, 14-15.
- White, Jack, *Minority Report: The Protestant Community in the Irish Republic* (Dublin, 1975).
- Whyte, J.H., *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923-1979* (2nd edn.; Dublin, 1980).
- Woods, Lawrence M., *British Gentlemen in the Wild West* (New York, 1989).

2. Unpublished theses and articles

- Burgess, Eleanor, 'Hubert Butler of Maidenhall' (2001).