

## The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, OCT. 16, 1920

### THE FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

There is abundant evidence that the conscience of the civilized world is revolted, and that civilized public opinion is hardening into unqualified condemnation of "the reign of brigandage and bloodshed," mislabeled the "government" of Ireland.

It is a wholesome symptom of a change for the better in the near future that the outraged conscience of civilization is arousing the lethargic conscience of the English people; and that world indignation at English atrocities in Ireland is having its effect in informing the British public of what is being done in Ireland in their name. For paradoxical as it may seem to all, and incredible to many, the British people are about the last in the civilized world to know the truth about Ireland. Ill-informed, deliberately and with malice aforethought misinformed, their ignorance or misinformation permitted those things which, as one of the greatest of English newspapers puts it, make England's name "stink in the nostrils of the world." Informed and aroused, the people of Great Britain, like other civilized peoples, will stand aghast at the horrors of Irish misgovernment, until finally, as the same great newspaper says in the last issue to reach us, "they stink in the nostrils of the British people."

Our readers will find more interest and information in the following direct excerpts from articles in British newspapers and other periodicals than from the most accurate second-hand summary of the evidences to which we refer. The Manchester Guardian, under the caption of "The Degradation of Irish Government," says:

"Has the Government yet realized the depth of degradation into which it is sinking in Ireland? We can recall nothing in British annals the least comparable to the gross and scandalous excesses now almost daily committed by the agents of the law and forces of the Executive in Ireland. The nearest approach to a parallel in any modern civilized State is perhaps to be found in the pogroms formerly committed by members of the 'Black Hundred' under the Tsar's Government. . . . But that, under a British Government, armed constabulary or even armed soldiers—their occupations in Ireland are now almost identical—should commit deliberate and cold-blooded murders and give up, as happened this week at Balbriggan, nearly a whole town to the flames, would be incredible if the facts were not unfortunately well authenticated. . . . Reprisal in kind is not a tolerable form of action on the part of any Government calling itself civilized. It is the method of the Corsican vendetta or of the Indian scalp hunt. Let it be said, without more ado, these things have got to stop. They stink in the nostrils of the British people. They make us, with perfect and irrefutable justice, the mock and the reproach of the world. Is there anybody who thinks they are a sign of strength? They are a sign not of strength but of extraordinary and, so far as this country is concerned, of unparalleled weakness. They are, in fact, the negation of government and the organization in its place of anarchy."

The Nation intelligently voices the desire of thinking Englishmen for peace with Ireland.

"British opinion," says the Nation, "has moved fast and far on the Irish question during the last few years, but the British Government has moved as fast and as far in the con-

trary direction. The British people want peace with Ireland. They have no desire to add another chapter to the history of revolting war and unnatural bloodshed; they have no relish for taking up the role that Germany and Austria-Hungary have been forced to drop; they know that no people can impose its rule on a neighbour without danger and disgrace. What does it matter to the ordinary Englishman that a court is sitting in Nenagh to which the people of Tipperary of all classes resort with full confidence for the administration of justice? Wednesday's papers report that a captain in an English unit dispersed this Arbitration Court and seized all its documents. The President of the Court, when asked by what authority the Court was sitting, replied, 'By the authority of the people of Tipperary.' The English captain could boast a higher authority: the authority by which many a German captain acted in Belgium, for he is the officer of an Army of Occupation. There is the Irish Question in a nutshell. . . . The British people want to escape from this false position, but unfortunately the Government are every day committing the nation more deeply to its enormities and its dangers. . . . The Liberal leaders and the Labour leaders have behind them a body of opinion which is not measured by their representation in a House of Commons elected to hang the Kaiser. Let them declare themselves. England is concerned for her security, and her security can be guaranteed by arrangement or treaty with an Irish Government as it is to be secured in another instance by treaty with an Egyptian Government. She is anxious that no body of Irishmen should suffer, as the Catholics of Belfast are suffering now, from the intolerance of their neighbours. There is only one way to secure that result and that is to let Irishmen determine their own constitution. The British army and the British police are the obstacles at once to Irish unity and the friendship of Britain and Ireland. Ulster cannot do without Nationalist Ireland; Nationalist Ireland cannot do without Ulster. . . . They can and will come to terms when Great Britain ceases to guard her power and Ireland is not obliged to guard her freedom. It is only on such lines that peace can be made, and Liberal and Labour leaders have not a day to lose if they wish to avert the catastrophe to which both peoples will be driven, if peace is not made and made quickly."

The New Witness is particularly fearless and outspoken. In a recent number its Irish correspondent writes:

"It is now possible to tell as a coherent whole the story of British policy in Ireland in the immediate past, the present, and the immediate future. When Parliament rose the military government in Ireland was instructed to break the Republican movement before Parliament reassembled. The period of the recess was chosen for the carrying out of the plan of the British militarists, firstly, in order that during its operation those directing it should be free from criticism, and, secondly, in order that when it reassembled Parliament might be presented with the accomplished fact of a broken Republican movement in Ireland, and a cowed people. It was then intended to pass and bring into immediate operation the Partition and Plunder Bill, making Partition Ulster a mandatory over the rest of Ireland, and flinging some sops to the more malleable of the disgruntled Southern Unionists, such as Lord Middleton, to keep them quiet. The methods by which the Republican movement were to be broken were three—or let me say two, for there is one method which I hesitate to accept. Sinn Féin charges against the British Government that the first method was the assassination of certain members of the Dáil Éireann. I have had under my hands documents purporting to demonstrate the complicity of British General Staff officers in the organization of a campaign of assassination directed against members of the Dáil and other prominent Republicans. They are documents so damning that one must suspend judgment upon them until the defence has been heard. Copies of these documents have been furnished to the editor of The Times. The charges cannot be passed over in silence, or conclusions must be drawn. They must be answered if they can be answered. Let us leave it there for the moment."

There is no doubt about the other methods, which consist in the

arrest and imprisonment of the Dáil and hundreds of local Republican leaders, and an intensified campaign of terrorism against the mass of the Irish people, in which life is frequently taken and property not spared. . . .

"The scheme as a whole has been put away by the action of the Lord Mayor of Cork. The Government terrorists had hoped to carry out their operations against the Irish people during the recess more or less quietly. Terence MacSwiney has focused the attention of the world on the British regime in Ireland, hence the venom with which the terrorists pursue him. They have now apparently hardened their hearts and determined to brazen the whole thing out and be damned to the world's censure. The pace of the campaign of terrorism is quickening again."

J. L. Hammond, in the London Daily News, during the course of an article analysing the present Coercion Act which he declares, "after close study of some dark and melancholy passages in our history, beats any thing ever suggested in the most intimate secrecy of the Home Office in those days of panic and violent misrule." . . . After describing the hitherto unheard of powers that the Act places in the hands of police and military, he says:

"Nobody pretends that this is justice or that it is aimed at the discovery and punishment of murder. It is the establishment of a military tyranny as complete as the German tyranny in Belgium. I went into the army like most Englishmen when we were engaged in that war for liberty which our Government has turned into one of the grimmest jokes ever played by the devil on mankind. What I saw of courts-martial would convince any reasonable person that soldiers can do almost anything in the world except administer justice."

Meeting one of the arguments that are used to lull the conscience of Englishmen he asks:

"What reason has anyone for thinking that the powers taken under these regulations will not be used? The Government have told us they were urgently needed."

And he very pertinently adds: "They have been used already to try and to sentence the Lord Mayor of Cork. What was his offense? In the autumn of 1914, when we were in desperate straits for munitions, Sir Edward Carson said he would not allow a single rifle to leave Ulster. A few months later he was made a Cabinet Minister. The Lord Mayor of Cork, who never took the oath of a Privy Councillor, is sent to prison for belonging to an organization which is no more unconstitutional than the organization Sir Edward Carson founded in Ulster as a provisional Government."

He thus concludes: "When we were discussing Austria's rule in Italy, or her treatment of her Slav subjects, we saw clearly enough that lawless government makes lawless men. The delusion that you can make men less lawless by making your government more lawless is as old as tyranny itself, but Englishmen know that it is false when they see it tried anywhere else. And it is not a doctrine congenial to Englishmen. Mr. Lloyd George says to Ireland: 'I will make the price of your freedom so terrible that you will not pay it.' The horrors of life in Ireland will cease when England says 'the price of the reconquest of Ireland is so terrible that I will not pay it; I have too much respect for my traditions and my character in the world.'"

The Daily Herald, discussing Bonar Law's letter attempting to justify the Government's course with regard to Lord Mayor MacSwiney, brands that course as "brutal, callous murder."

"It is a gross insult to the intelligence of our people to argue otherwise. From the pen of Mr. Bonar Law such arguments are criminal. He and his colleagues, Lord Bickenhead, Arthur Balfour, and their supporters, Edward Carson and his followers, know perfectly well that in 1914 they should, according to their own argument, have been tried as rebels and shot. They raised an army, hoisted their own flag, flouted the government of the king. If the letter of Mr. Bonar Law is good law, instead of being alive today he and his fellow-rebels named above and their accomplices should either have paid the death penalty or should now be serving terms of penal servitude. These men did everything; and more, in promoting secret conspiracy and rebellion that is now charged against Terence MacSwiney. They

have been rewarded by place and power; he lies at the door of death."

"When Mr. Bonar Law and his colleagues think of responsibility for murder and outrage in Ireland they should each examine his own conscience. If they will do so they will discover that on their consciences, and on the conscience of 'King' Carson, rests all the shame and horror of the present condition of affairs. It is they, and they alone, who have brought Ireland and England to the present impasse."

The editor of the Daily Herald concludes with an appeal to British Labor and points to the urgency for immediate action: "for the British Government," he avers, "means to stamp out the Irish Republic in blood. Its intended murder of MacSwiney is merely a step to further wholesale murder."

"The sands are running low. Unless we move swiftly it is not only the murder of a Lord Mayor we shall have to account for but the murder of a people."

One of the most remarkable pronouncements on the Irish situation is a letter from General Sir Hubert Gough who refused to lead his troops against the Ulster rebels in 1914 and thus had his share in killing the constitutional movement in Ireland. Writing to the Manchester Guardian, endorsing and supporting the position taken by that great Liberal organ, he says in part:

"I don't think any truthful or sane person can avoid the conclusion that the authorities in Ireland are deliberately encouraging—what is more, actually screening—reprisals and counter-murders by armed forces of the Crown. The police and army are being organized as one body and being recruited with a special view to reprisals."

"The most sinister feature of the present policy is that lax discipline is actually connived at. This can only have one result—namely, create the most dangerous demoralized force, a terror not only to people in that country but eventually to the Government."

He adds: "I've some evidence I'm not at liberty to disclose which makes me strongly suspect that actual murder is organized as a method of Irish Government."

We might multiply indefinitely such evidence of an awakening conscience and a roused public opinion in England. We shall conclude with an extract from a letter to the Daily News from Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, M. P., whose brother is the Duke of Portland.

"The ultimate responsibility for this state of things rests upon the shoulders of the British electorate, who complacently allow in Ireland a reign of brigandage and bloodshed."

"These horrible pogroms in the North and the South, these equally terrible murders of policemen prove the hopeless breakdown of British rule; human nature cannot stand the strain. Apparently British Government in Ireland exists for no other purpose but to stir up the brute and boisterous force of violent men."

It will be evident that all England from the rank and file of the Labor Union to the most highly placed amongst the aristocratic ruling classes are being deeply stirred as they realize the naked and brutal facts of Irish misgovernment and feel the sting of the world's scorn of British hypocrisy. It is interesting to note how often this consideration recurs. Remarkable on the intensity of continental feeling as voiced by the continental press, the correspondent of the Daily News writes:

"The case of the Lord Mayor of Cork and the treatment of Ireland generally are undoubtedly reviving upon the continent some of the feeling against England and the English that was so marked during the Boer War. The policy of repression in Ireland is doing not a little to injure British and French unity."

We think on the whole the outlook is brightening. Whether English public opinion and the inherent sense of British fair play and justice, so long lulled into sleep by a venal press controlled by corrupt and conscienceless politicians of the Beaverbrook type, will at length be whipped into wakefulness and compelling activity by the world's scorn and contempt, or the fatuous policy of destruction go on, it may be too soon certainly to determine. If the latter happen, "then indeed," in the words of The Nation, "the lot is cast against the British Empire. It will destroy its victim and perish with it."

### BISHOP FALLON'S WARNING TO LLOYD GEORGE

Though Bishop Fallon's solemn and vigorous protest wired to Lloyd George from Belfast was promptly cabled to the Canadian press, our readers will welcome the more detailed statement from Irish papers, now at hand, which we publish on page 1 of this issue of the RECORD.

All Canada knows how ardently, how consistently, through good report and evil report, Bishop Fallon believed in and worked for the consolidation of the British Empire, the perpetuation and permanence of those free institutions and ideals of liberty by which, after a wide experience in other lands, he believed the British Empire was informed and vitalized, and which, more effectively than other political entities, it tended to conserve and disseminate. His policy on this matter earned for him the elusive and elastic title of Imperialist—a title of doubtful credit and dubious significance. Bishop Fallon himself, as those who know him intimately are well aware, not only seldom or never used the term, but studiously avoided it. His ideal was a Commonwealth of free nations growing ever freer yet united more firmly because more freely for the Common Weal of all; each true to its own best ideals and traditions, safeguarding its own particular interests, yet always guided and at times, if necessary, overruled by the paramount interest of the general good of the Commonwealth.

Just as in the freest communities, and for the sake of that very freedom, the individual interest must often yield to the common good. The thing may be impossible; Bishop Fallon may have been mistaken. We are not arguing, we are explaining. Commonwealth is the term he was wont to use; he eschewed the misnomer—Empire. What is there to apologize for in such an ideal or in the efforts made for its realization? Even those whose ideas of imperialism are inevitably associated with the horrors of Amritsar and Balbriggan can at least be fair enough and intelligent enough to distinguish what they are pleased to term the imperialism of Bishop Fallon from the imperialism of Carson and Beaverbrook.

The whole world was thrilled, its war-worn and heart-sick peoples fired with hope at the project of the League of Nations which was to do away with barbarous war, to establish and maintain peace on the principles of justice and right, banishing forever the savage doctrine of Might and substituting therefor the rule of Right; whose guiding principle should be that so clearly enunciated by its great advocate and eloquent exponent: "The interest of the weakest is as sacred as the interest of the strongest."

That the great heart of humanity leaped to welcome this great ideal is one of the things that in these days of dark and dismal disappointment gives ground for hope of better things to come and the eventual realization of that great hope which was mocked and flouted by the still-born League of Nations, fathered by the discredited political tricksters of the Paris Peace Conference.

So too, though this to hell-with-the-Pope, loyalist mob hooting and howling at the imperialist bishop is not without its elements of grim and ghastly humor, the ideal of a British Commonwealth may yet inform British policy in Ireland and elsewhere when an indignant and disgusted British electorate hurls from power the strife-breeding, murderous crew who now misgovern Ireland in their name. In bringing about that devoutly to be wished consummation Bishop Fallon's solemn warning and protest may go far toward awakening the mind and conscience of England to the fact that under the pretence of "the security of the Empire" they are really "digging the grave of the British Commonwealth."

And if the ideal of a British Commonwealth, where there is already a common language, common ideals and institutions, an existing political entity and a recognized common interest and purpose, be impossible, then what hope is there for a League of Nations? What hope for civilization?

The comments of the press are encouraging to those who still cherish the hope that this ideal, this first step toward the formation of a real League of Nations, may yet be realized. The Irish Times, the most influential organ of Irish Unionism, uses the selfsame terms as Bishop Fallon in respect of arming the Ulster loyalists, characterizing it as a direct incitement to civil war. Many Eng-

lish papers have expressed their horror at the callous shamelessness of the proposal to arm the Orange mob to assist the forces of law and order. One example must suffice. The Westminster Gazette thus concludes an outspoken article:

"It is difficult to imagine anything much more inhuman than the creation of such a force in present circumstances. The troubles in Ulster have been due to political and religious faction fights between people of rival parties and hostile creeds. They were begun by those, well-disposed towards British rule, who would not allow Nationalist workmen to earn their living by their side. If there is another riot not only will the Government be known to be definitely on one side, but that side will be organized and drilled, and also, we suppose, armed. We are told that the force is to be protective and not provocative. Its mere existence will be provocative, and many Ulster Nationalists must be praying to be saved from its protection. The effect of this step on the South of Ireland must be deplorable. The Sinn Féin military formation will see their rivals and their exemplars in organizing rebellion, officially blessed and recognized as an arm of the British authority. For the new force will be of necessity the Ulster volunteers in all but name. Its members will still retain their allegiance to Sir Edward Carson, and if the Government had wished to demonstrate that he rules also over their decisions in Irish matters they could scarcely have taken a more convincing step."

Here again this great journal repeats in almost identical terms, though naturally more amplified than the telegram, Bishop Fallon's solemn warning. Such comments are by no means confined to the Liberal or Opposition papers, and it may be hoped that the reckless and conscienceless "reconquest" faction in the Cabinet, which now seems to have the upper hand, may be forced by an aroused and indignant public opinion to abandon this unspeakable outrage on the decencies of civilized government.

### HOW HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

By THE OBSERVER

The reader of London and Dublin despatches these days has an excellent chance to reflect on the way in which history repeats itself. "Malignant Stupidity" did not commence in the English administration of Ireland just at the time when Mr. Lloyd George found it necessary so to characterize it, a couple of years ago; it has been an outstanding feature of that administration at all times in the past.

Over and over again the Irish people have been driven to desperation by cold-blooded financial exploitation, backed by religious hatred; the whole inextricably entangled in the exigencies of English politics and on every such occasion, the same course has been pursued by Dublin Castle bureaucrats. House to house provocation for a year or two; which was inevitably followed by sporadic acts of violence; and these followed by suspension of the ordinary laws, the setting-up of drum-head courts; and the final act in the tragedy has always been to unleash armed brigands on the homes of the people under the pretence of police and military repression.

That is what was done in 1798, and in 1810, and in 1848, and in 1867, and is now being done once more. Good-natured optimists of the type of Mr. T. P. O'Connor persuaded themselves and persuaded the people of Ireland that there was in England a wide and deep public sentiment of sympathy for Ireland. I have never seen any positive evidence of any such sentiment. English sentiment towards the Irish people was, for ages, pure hatred founded on religious prejudice and on the ages of wholesale calumny with which English politicians and English profiteers had covered their exploitation of Ireland.

Today, religious hatred is not so keen, because today the majority of the people of England care nothing about religion; but the dead weight of prejudice remains. English public opinion is indifferent in regard to Ireland. If the politicians decided to pass Home Rule, for instance, the bulk of the English people would shrug their shoulders and wouldn't care; and, on the other hand, if Dublin Castle decided to shoot or exile every tenth man in Ireland, the English public would be

equally indifferent. There is no public opinion in England in favor of or in sympathy with Ireland. The English electorate have voted twice for a Home Rule policy; but in each case they did so merely because it was the policy for the time being of the Liberal party to conciliate the Irish M. P.'s; and the English people were at the time disposed to support the Liberal Party, not because of Home Rule but in spite of it.

On the other hand, the dead weight of indifference can be easily transformed into active opposition; and the traditional antipathy to allowing a Catholic minority to govern a Protestant minority can always be easily aroused in the English public.

Gladstone understood this perfectly. He knew that his English supporters stood by him not because of Home Rule but in spite of it. When the general election of 1892 was approaching, he appealed to the electors to give him a majority over all other parties. But they did not; and he found himself obliged to introduce his second Home Rule Bill. At that time, Irish mothers were teaching their children to pray for this great benefactor and friend of Ireland; but the cold fact remains that he never introduced a Home Rule Bill except when the Irish M. P.'s held the control of the House of Commons.

When Mr. Asquith introduced a Home Rule Bill in 1912, the same situation existed. The two English parties were deadlocked; and the Irish M. P.'s held control of the House. Two general elections had taken place; and with the same result: an English practical deadlock; and a chance for the Irish M. P.'s to force the hand of a government of either party.

The English Liberals accepted Home Rule, under these circumstances; just as they would have accepted any other Irish policy which would keep their party in power.

The people of England care little today whether the Irish people are given over to the official banditry or not. One thing they are clear about, and that is that the Protestant minority shall not be compelled to obey a Parliament for all Ireland. But the Liberals would have swallowed even that in 1914 rather than see the Asquith Government defeated.

To sum up the case in their regard the English electors in general are coldly indifferent to Irish affairs except in so far as they affect English parties and English politics. The settlement of the Irish question depends on them only indirectly; the main anti-Irish force today is English capital; and the main English consideration is the fortunes of English profiteers. The banks, the railways, the mortgagees, the money lenders, the stock brokers; it is to these that English governments are now obliged to turn for permission to settle the Irish question; and that permission is not likely to be given for a long time to come.

In all of which Anglo Irish history is once more repeating itself.

[Note.—An interesting and natural point of view; but, we think, too sweepingly pessimistic. "You cannot indict a whole nation."—E. C. R.]

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

EVIDENCE, if any additional are needed, of the distance that has been travelled by non-Catholics away from all faith in the supernatural, is furnished by a letter in the Toronto Globe on "The personality of God." It is written by a Presbyterian of name—one who is particularly active in the work of that denomination, and is, besides, not unknown to Canadians as a writer of graceful verse. The views enunciated in the letter in question are frankly Unitarian, and go even beyond the ordinary Unitarian standpoint in that the writer appears to place Mohammedanism on a level with Christianity as an exponent of the Divine Mind. And the tone of quasi-intellibility maintained throughout seems to close the door on discussion so far as the correspondent is concerned.

HERE is what the writer has to say of the Presbyterian position in the matter: "If Unitarians happen to agree with some of the best findings of the Presbyterian Church as represented by one of its most eminent Doctors of Divinity, why, we are very glad. Names do not serve a church that loves the truth, with 'Forward' as its watchword." Fine words, truly! and marking an immense "advance" on old Presbyterian standards. The writer's scornful attitude towards the Blessed Trinity contrasts strangely with the