

Troubled Histories

by Bernard Rorke

'We are a parcel of mongrels', George Bernard Shaw famously snorted, speaking of 'that hackneyed myth, the Irish race'. Today we cannot afford to view articulations of nationalism with such cosmopolitan disdain. If we concentrate attention on 'invented traditions' and 'imagined communities', we risk treating nationalism as a cognitive error to be made good by clear-sighted analytical demystification. What matters now, in our attempts to understand nationalism, is not whether communities are imagined, but how.

There are three phases in the imagining of the 'Irish national community'. The first, 'heroic', phase runs from literary and cultural revival in the late nineteenth century through to insurrection, war, and independence in 1922; it is in these years that the revolutionary elite that was to construct the independent Irish state is formed.

The second, 'banal phase' - the 'devil's era', in Joyce's phrase - was characterised by Eamonn deValera's pragmatic commitment in the 1930s to the idea of *having* a 26-county state and *dreaming* about a 32-county nation.

Traditional nationalist and republican attitudes adjusted in the face of statehood and government for deValera's 'slightly constitutional' republican Fianna Fail party in 1932. Fianna Fail were obliged to confront the problem of law and order, and the legitimate source and monopoly of the means of violence in a democratic community. It would have been political suicide suddenly to deny the 'heroic', irredentist, physical force tradition its place in the national memory. So, as D. George Boyce puts it, the people of Ireland were presented with two traditions of violence: a *legitimate*

one, stretching from Wolfe Tone, through the Fenians, to the men and women of 1916 and 1919-23; and an *illegitimate* one, dating from the period when a truly 'national' government had taken power democratically in 1932.

DeValera's idealised vision of an agrarian, homely, Catholic society, 'a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to things of the spirit', could scarcely accommodate Northern Ireland; nor did it. The constitution of 1937 made clear that the Irish constituted a 'Catholic nation'. Despite their repeated and vociferous protests against partition, 'the boundaries of the minds of Irish public figures and politicians had shrunk with the boundaries of the state' (Boyce).

Banal nationalism had seemingly eclipsed the 'physical force' variant. By the time the 1956 IRA border campaign had fizzled out, it appeared the eclipse was total. Yet when the modest demands for civil rights in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s were met with a level of sectarian state violence which shocked the outside world - attempted pogroms by Loyalist mobs, internment without trial, and systematic brutality against the minority population, which culminated in Bloody Sunday in 1972 - 'physical force' irredentism re-emerged and a new phase in Irish nationalism was precipitated.

Provisional IRA atrocities then provoked a critical reaction, and a corresponding perspective on the 'birth of the nation', among many Irish academics and citizens. This so-called 'revisionist scholarship' in turn came under attack from neo-nationalists for 'serving the history needs of the establishment'. In contrast to the old Faith and Fatherland, neo-nationalists offered 'nation, nationality and tradition' as 'among those continuities that make meta-narratives possible' (Seamus Deane). This, as Tom Dunne suggests, is no more than another sophisticated plea for a

refurbished nationalism.

Much of this refurbishing rests upon a 'simplistic application of Franz Fanon's One Big Idea to an Irish situation redefined as post-colonial' (Foster). This redefinition implies that pre-independence Ireland functioned much as British colonies did elsewhere in Africa and Asia and that, although the national situation has reproduced the appearance of First World social reality and social relationships, the underlying structure is closer to that of the Third World. But, as Liam Kennedy asserts, this strategy is a largely empty enterprise. The war of independence was not a war of liberation in a classic Third World sense. And today, on every significant economic and social indicator, Ireland is amongst the richest countries in the world. In the nineteenth century Ireland was at the core of the British Empire; today it is an integral part of the developed world.

Nationalist assertions that the revolution is 'unfinished', and readings of the 'Troubles' as a colonial residue, require a myopic rejection of the reality of Protestant Ulster. After four hundred years Northern Protestants can no longer be credibly described as frontier settlers in an exposed imperial possession. Francis Mulhearn insists that any 'solution' must recognise that Irish nationalism has no rightful, nor realistic, claim to their allegiance.

But not only is the theoretical weakness of the irredentist, physical force tradition clear in this final phase; its morbid degeneration is also evident. Provisional IRA 'volunteers' marked the eightieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising with a literal crucifixion: using nail-studded baseball bats, they hammered spikes into their 18-year-old victim's arms and legs.

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Cosmopolitan Democracy

by Daniele Archibugi

Cosmopolitan Democracy is a project of boundless ambition. Its aim is to build a world order capable of promoting democracy in three different but complementary dimensions: *within nations; among states; and globally*. It envisages a union of states midway between the two principal models of existing state systems: the confederation, an association of sovereign states which, through an appropriate treaty, have reached an agreement on given issues - the United Nations, for example; and the constitutionally much more rigid federation, whose members delegate fundamental aspects of their domestic sovereignty, and their external sovereignty, to central government: for instance, the United States and Switzerland.

'Cosmopolitan' is used in its eighteenth-century sense as a notion of citizenship of both the state and the European *res publica*: 'the term cosmopolitan, when applied to political institutions, implies a layer of governance that constitutes a limitation on the sovereignty of states and yet does not itself constitute a state. In other words, a cosmopolitan institution would coexist with a system of states but would override states in certain clearly defined spheres of activity' (Kaldor).

'Democracy' is envisaged as a process of interaction between the needs of civil society and those of political institutions: a process that is the outcome of a conflict in which the people (*demos*) seek to assert their power (*kratos*); that has not been completed in any country, including those in which the principles of democracy are most consolidated and developed; and that, because it is an historical process, must be viewed comparatively, not absolutely.

The project of cosmopolitan democracy recognises existing states, but proposes to integrate their functions with new institutions based on world

citizenship. These institutions should be entitled to manage issues of global concern as well as to interfere within states whenever serious violations of human rights are committed.

Democracy inside nations. Unlike federalism, cosmopolitan democracy encompasses states with



different political constitutions. This does not entail uncritical acceptance of the dogma of non-interference, as is the case in the confederal model. On the contrary, the cosmopolitan model sets out to disseminate methods of government among the various political communities, and hence gradually to make all the member countries of the international community democratic. Nonetheless, the conception of democracy underpinning the cosmopolitan model suggests that differences between political systems will continue to exist in one form or another. Hence the need for an international organisation in which different systems may coexist.

Since one state's intervention in the domestic affairs of another has no legal founding and may be instrumental, the cosmopolitan model entrusts civil society, as opposed to national governments, with the task of 'interfering' in the domestic affairs of each individual nation. The aim of this interference is to increase political participation in all of them. The conception of democracy summarised above suggests that all the nations in the world, albeit at very different stages in the democratic process, have something to gain by critical analysis of their own political

systems in the light of others' experience.

Democracy among States. Relations between nations are managed by intergovernmental organisations. Multilateralism is the tool used to ensure non-interference and to prevent single states from perpetrating acts which have harmful consequences for other members of the international community.

If the arbitration of intergovernmental institutions has no effect, disputes between states are passed on to international judicial institutions whose jurisdiction the states are compelled to accept. If a member of the international community refuses to obey the ruling of the judicial authority, the international community may adopt coercive measures, including economic, political and cultural sanctions. Military force is only the *extrema ratio* if these prove ineffective. It is controlled directly by the bodies of the Union and must be authorised by the institutions of world citizens. States which participate in an armed conflict are duty-bound to minimise the number of casualties on either side. The international community must also appeal to the citizens of the state which has violated international law to overthrow their government and replace it with one which abides by international law.

Global Democracy. The management of global issues such as the environment and the survival of humankind are delegated to both intergovernmental and transnational institutions. Global civil society participates in political decision-making through new permanent institutions. The latter may have both specific competences (for the environment, disarmament, and so on) and broader political mandates (such as the defence of fundamental rights).

Some of these issues may be addressed on a regional basis through specially established organisations. Others are entrusted to fully-fledged global institutions. These institutions - whose function is essentially advisory, not