

TERROR. A REFLECTION

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One of the pieties of Medieval and Renaissance Europe and America was to christen infants, institutions and places with names chosen from the crowded pages of the Christian Calendar and from among the figures thronging the niches, pedestals and the stained glass windows of the great abbeys and cathedrals. This multitude featured not merely angels, prophets, apostles, popes, prelates, doctors, virgins and martyrs but also personifications of the Christian Virtues such as Holy Charity, Santa Fe and so on. In this way, it came about that in France there are several places called St. Just. One such, in Brittany, gave its name, with its echo of Holy Justice, to a family who's most famous, or infamous, son, a twenty six year old army officer, is linked forever to Terror. Louis Antoine de St. Just characterised by the French historian, Michelet, as "l'archange de la mort" (the archangel of death) has come down to us, with Robespierre, as a principal apologist and practitioner of la Terreur.

When the Convention split in 1793 with the departure of the Girondins, St. Just, President of the Convention and like-minded colleagues, desperate to reinforce their authority from a shrinking power base unleashed la Terreur. In Paris alone, 17,000 went to the guillotine affording the tricoteuses a daily show, seven days a week with, on average, 40 heads; not bad going in an era before killing had been organised along the industrial lines

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that recent history has made familiar. In the country as a whole over 300, 000 were cast into prison many of whom never emerged, done to death obscurely without process. From the technical point of view, la Terreur was undoubtedly a success, arguably too much so. Some colleagues in fear of their lives and determined on their own survival conspired successfully to bring Robespierre and St. Just themselves to the guillotine.

The fortuitous linkage, in the person of St. Just, of the concepts —Justice and Terror— gains added piquancy from the fact that both he and Robespierre made a specific link between the two to justify their policy. Robespierre declared that “la terreur n’est autre chose que la justice prompte, severe et inflexible” (Terror is nothing more than a justice that is quick, stern and unbending).

Aristotle’s famous definition of the purpose of tragedy that it should excite feelings of pity and terror in the heart of the beholder, requires a hero of high estate who does not understand his blindness, or hubris, until it is too late for him to avoid the inescapable and pitiless nemesis that fate has prepared for him. And this combination should procure for the spectator the therapeutic purging, or catharsis, by exciting those feelings of pity and terror. The effect is to reinforce our belief in the dignity and worth of man. Outside the theatre, terror has no therapeutic value; on the contrary.

The massacre of the Chouans in the Vendee, of the Kulaks in Russia, of the Jews in Auschwitz and elsewhere and other examples of terror in Cambodia and Rwanda diminish humanity and leave the spectators, contemporary and subsequent, with feelings of bewilderment, incomprehension, guilt and shame. In short, the effect is traumatic. As Robespierre also noted in the same passage quoted above “sans laquelle (la vertu) la terreur est funeste” (without which (virtue) terror is baleful). Arguably, the baleful nature of terror arises from the deliberate and indiscriminate murder of innocents. That may be its essential characteristic.

In contemplating these and so many other horrors, it is appropriate to consider the use and purpose of power. Wherever we are, we cannot escape it. In the family, in the workplace and in our wider role as citizens we both exercise it and are subject to the power of others. This familiarity enables us quickly to recognize its force, and our own, its legitimacy and its abuse, by others as well as by ourselves. Experience of family life offers many indispensable insights

Within the family and school, power, with its accompaniments, reward and punishment, is exercised and experienced. The touchstone of justice, or fairness, is never far away as individuals learn about innocence and complicity, their own and that of other members. By their nature, families are polyvalent entities making a wide range of demands on their members and seeking, in turn, to accommodate and support an ever widening and changing set of individual purposes. The capacity and flexibility of the entity as of the individuals within it being limited, differences of purpose inevitably arise. Resolving them is, typically, ad hoc and will be a function both of the norms established within the dynamics of the family and of the impact on members of the family of other entities to which they may belong, or may have belonged or been affiliated e.g. school, church, business, profession, government service and so on.

Compared with the family, other social entities typically have more specific purposes, make therefore a narrower range of demands on individuals but, per contra, by virtue of their specialisation and size accumulate much larger concentrations of power. The accompanying rewards, recognition and punishment are correspondingly greater, usually massively so, beside which the family appears puny.

In order to achieve their purposes, the first requirement of these social entities is to harness their resources so as to deploy them in such a way as to maximise the possibility of success. This entails particular disciplines with which individuals must comply in default of which they expose themselves to sanctions.

The individual usually comes quite quickly to recognise that much power is concentrated within the entity, that it is at the service of its discipline/reward system and that he is subject to it. In short, the entity's first requirement is order. To survive and prosper it must have the power to deal effectively and in a timely manner with all threats to, or infringements of, that order.

Through family life, individuals learn that order and justice are not co-terminous. What is permitted to one may not be permitted to another, or may be permitted today but not next week, or may be permitted by one power but not another. Similarly, an act may one day merit recognition or reward but another day or from another person receives neither. Time too, they learn, is frequently an important factor in the interplay between order and justice. When it is a question of "Everyone into the car" or "Everyone up to bed", there is no time then and perhaps even later for an enquiry into the rights and wrongs of a particular point at issue. Through the discrepancies and inconsistencies between so many and so varied determinations, taken in such varying circumstances, individuals also discern that there is a difference between authority and power. It is a gap that they are quick to exploit by challenging rulings as unfair. Sometimes the challenges succeed sometimes they don't, a corollary being that the legitimacy of authority appears to vary and that it is usually easier to challenge than power itself. In this way, an understanding of the individual's power and that of the power over him begins to emerge. Solidarity is another concept at play, usually most evident between parents, or other authorities, and between children, or citizens, but there are occasions when it transcends the power gap. Failing to own up to a fault, failing to speak out in support of another's innocence, telling tales about another's misdeeds or incriminating him or her falsely, may, in particular circumstances, be preferred so as to secure some benefit, to avoid punishment or loss. Solidarity is the casualty. For all the apparent ad hoc, even arbitrary, elements of family life the members will nevertheless perceive more or less clearly a

common purpose and rally round a basic consensus, not necessarily explicit, about the purpose and norms of what is inescapably a common project. In cleaving to that common project they accept that order, however imperfect, is essential and that on many occasions justice will have to take a lower priority.

In due time, the little sovereignties, each with its own will, energy and desires, in short, its identity, graduate and emerge from the family into a vastly more spacious arena. Freed from the time bound sway of their elders, they can, in retrospect, see that the *raison d'être* of the family that they have left was in large measure themselves and that their departure has in substantial measure also deprived the elders of part of their *raison d'être* and thus diminished them. If they are inclined to pursue the retrospect they will recognise, explicitly or implicitly, that the episodes of confrontation and strife were more than balanced by lengthy periods of calm permitting a steady process of development and growth; that the rugosities generated by many clashes of ego were dissolved and smoothed by the twin solvents, love and affection, and that the same re-agents, operating through common regard and common sacrifice, have cemented links that in most cases prove indissoluble. They will also apprehend that deep within this growing and learning process lay a paradox, namely that order takes precedence over justice but that order cannot endure long unless it creates an adequate justice and that the pursuit of both are tasks truly worthy to be called Sisyphean. This may be regarded as the common experience but for some it is not so and they emerge into the arena with enmity in their hearts and are never reconciled.

Pursuing the retrospect further, it would be reasonable for the newly graduated sovereignties to conclude, from this common experience of the exercise of power and the order that it sought to underpin, that the purpose was to create circumstances in which their entity, that is to say the family, but, more particularly, they themselves could grow and prosper. Transposing this and other lessons to the larger society that they join on leaving

the home they might consider that the purpose of power was indeed to create an order supported by a justice adequate to secure peace and thus the conditions for growth and prosperity. There is a sequence —order, justice, unity, peace and prosperity—.

Hegel's discussion about the nature of man and what distinguishes him from the animals centres on the notion that man's fundamental characteristic is a readiness to risk his life for prestige. Hypothesising about the First Man, he describes an encounter between him and another. The desire for recognition being, above all others, so powerful, the First Man demands recognition that he is a man from the other by showing that he is ready to risk his life. (Little boys often do this when they meet for the first time "Wanna a fight?" they ask.) The Second Man, being also human, has the same desire. Logically, the only way these desires can be satisfied is in a fight to the death. There can be only three outcomes; mutual annihilation, the death of one or the survival of both. In the first case there is no sequel, in the second, recognition is denied since there is no one to confer it. In the third case, one is the victor the other the vanquished, or, as Hegel put it, one becomes the master the other his slave. Although the slave thought he was ready to risk his life, he learnt, in the heat of the fight, that in fact he preferred to live rather than die and so threw in the towel. The slave's capitulation does not mean that he is not a man, he was, after all, ready to risk his life, but that the other is more manly. Logically, a third may appear who proves to be more manly still.

In the light of experience of family life and it may be said of life in general, and in the light of readings in history and politics, the penetration of Hegel's brilliant psychological insight has impressive plausibility. It is always a thrill to see a struggle between a champion and an underdog and usually the majority, we, the slaves, want the underdog to win and thus put an end to the regime of that particular master, be it in politics, business, tennis, soccer and so on provided always that our interests are

not engaged. It is a very different matter when our lives and our livelihoods are put at risk. Then we, the slaves, will rally to the master, assuming, that is, that we think that he will win.

There being no perfect order nor the possibility of it, there can be no perfect justice. Between what a particular order can offer and the reasonable demands of those subject to it, there will always be a gap. Anyone who has had to exercise authority or wield power knows that challenges are a daily occurrence and that meeting them successfully means first and foremost maintaining legitimacy. Where legitimacy is questioned the stakes are immediately higher. Defending the order means justifying its authority and being clear that if need be its power will be exercised. Some challenges can be seen off, others can be resolved by negotiation some entail battle.

If it is in the nature of man to seek recognition, if need be at the risk of life, it is the nature of order to be challenged. Among sovereignties, puny and great, harmony of desires can only be provisional as Man's history so abundantly demonstrates.

In terms of extent, longevity and influence on succeeding generations Rome must surely be regarded as the most successful order that the world has so far seen. That it should become Christian must in the early centuries have seemed impossibility. The factors that led to the conversion of Rome were of course many and their interrelationships many, complex and constantly evolving over time. But what is clear is that the readiness of the Christians to lay down their lives for their faith, often after severe tortures, made an impression on the upholders and guardians of the Roman order and the people in general. Irrespective of political or religious interest, they wanted to know why the Christians were ready to die. What they learnt was that they were seeking neither to overturn the Roman order, nor glory, at least, as it was then conventionally understood. Then, of course, they needed to know more.

History tells of challenges to order that succeeded but of many more that failed. Many had never any chance of success, were

ignominious failures but, strikingly, posterity even where there may be no sympathy for the cause, does not in most cases regard the protagonists with aversion or contempt, precisely because they were ready to, and in thousands of cases, did give up their lives. The history of Ireland furnishes many examples.

During the eighteenth century, Ireland expanded and prospered. The principal beneficiaries were the Protestant ruling class, less than a tenth of the population, most of who were descended from English and Scottish Protestants settled in Ireland by successive English monarchs during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Catholic majority, denied all political rights, deprived of their lands and with very few economic openings, lived for the most part in a state of resentful servitude, which from time to time found expression in violence. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the Protestants were becoming resentful too. From medieval times, the constitutional arrangement between England and Ireland had been that of two kingdoms, each with its own parliament Westminster and Dublin ruled by one sovereign, the king of England advised and supported by the two parliaments in respect of their own territories. Irish and English interests did not always coincide and, as the Europe of the nation states developed, Ireland assumed a greater strategic significance for England when the political and religious rivalries sharpened, at first with Spain and later with France. England could be attacked from the rear via Ireland and several such attempts were, in fact, made. It was only natural for Westminster to seek greater control and as natural for Dublin to resist and resent. During the course of the rapid advance of urbanisation in the eighteenth century, a growing middle-class emerged in Ireland professionals, civil and military servants, clerics, merchants and manufacturers overwhelmingly Protestant. Their expectations grew with the general expansion but they felt that the scope for fulfilling them was not commensurate. Trade restrictions imposed by Westminster were a particular bone of contention. A further exacerbating factor were the liberal ideas gen-

erated by the Enlightenment. The rebellion of the American colonies in 1776 and the liberal notions and political grievances that fuelled it made a big impact in Ireland and divided opinion among the Protestants. Solidarity with the crown was the dominant sentiment. The Protestants understood very well that in the last analysis the British army guaranteed their status and privileges, but there was, nevertheless, a surprising amount of sympathy for the American colonists as many Protestants ruefully concluded that they too lived in a colony and not as they had supposed in a kingdom, albeit tributary. There was also much criticism of the government unsuccessful conduct of the war. Another consequence of the rebellion was the despatch to America of the bulk of the British garrison quartered in Ireland and the inability of the crown to finance the recruitment and training of replacements. Conscious that their own security among the Catholics millions depended on an adequate military presence and that the Americans had enlisted Spain and France as allies, the Protestants flocked to establish, at their own initiative and expense, importing arms and munitions for the purpose, the Volunteers, a force that within a few short years grew to number 60,000 men, more than filling the gap left by the departed garrison.

In the event, there were few calls on the Volunteers to use their arms but they met, drilled and exercised frequently at local, regional and national levels. These meetings generated great enthusiasm conferring new consciousness and confidence on the emerging Protestant middle-class and providing it with an extra-parliamentary forum in which information and ideas could be exchanged and views and resolutions formulated. The Dublin parliament was largely the preserve of the grandees and the gentry. Ireland in general and the Volunteers in particular followed the Westminster's government's unsuccessful prosecution of the war with keen interest and found many parallels between their own and the colonist's predicament and in the attitude of the government towards colonist demands in America and in Ireland.

Sentiment in favour of greater autonomy strengthened. After the war was lost in N. America the Volunteers continued in existence for some years and had by then acquired, with its meetings and assemblies, some of the features of a political force. The Westminster parliament found it expedient to concede some long held Irish demands, particularly concerning trade. The Volunteers eventually disbanded and the government found the means to recruit and finance its own militias but not before there emerged from the new political consciousness achieved by the middle-class Protestants a political movement, the United Irishmen, campaigning for more autonomy and, showing unprecedented idealism, Catholic emancipation. Within the movement there were some who wanted to go much further. Chief among these was Wolf Tone.

Tone, a Dublin Protestant, had trained as a lawyer but quickly came to find pamphleteering and political activity more to his taste. He is regarded as the father of modern Irish republicanism. Infected by the example of the French Revolution, he and like-minded colleagues began to promote the notion of a fully independent republic to be secured by force of arms. The United Irishmen was proscribed and Tone himself and the other principals went into exile, in his case to America, whence he left for France. There he succeeded in achieving French citizenship, the rank of general in the French army and, most importantly, French military support for a rising in Ireland. England and France were once again at war. The population of Ireland was then equal to about half that of England, Scotland and Wales (today it is less than a tenth). A French foothold in Ireland coupled with a general uprising would have amounted to a severe threat to England's position in Ireland and to England itself. There were two risings aided by the French. Both failed. The second, in 1798, had virtually ended in fiasco when Tone almost certain that he was doomed set sail with another French force to try to rescue the cause. He and his companions were arrested as they stepped ashore. His protests that as a French citizen and

an officer in the French Army he should be treated as a prisoner of war were brushed aside. He was tried and sentenced to be hanged as a traitor.

Five years later, in 1803, there was another rising organised, financed and led by Robert Emmett. Like Tone, Emmett was from the Protestant middle-class, the son of a successful and highly regarded lawyer. At Trinity College, he distinguished himself as a student and as an orator but was later expelled for his inflammatory opinions before he could take his degree. He left Ireland for the continent where after spending some time in the Free City of Hamburg he found his way to Paris to seek the support of the French. He did not succeed and returned to Ireland in late 1802. He launched his attempt to seize power in July 1803.

The tradition of armed rebellion has continued into our own times notwithstanding the insurrection of 1920/21 that secured the independence of 26 of Ireland's 32 counties. One of the heroes of the latest phase was Bobby Sands who, with 11 others, died on hunger strike in 1981.

Unlike Tone and Emmett, Sands was neither a university man nor a Protestant but a Catholic who, after leaving school, was apprenticed to a manual trade, aged 15. Four years later, in 1973, and by now a member of the IRA, he was jailed for five years for a firearms offence. Released in 1976, he was rearrested the same year following an exchange of fire with government forces while "on active service" and sentenced to 14 years in prison where he died on hunger strike five years later.

Dr. Johnson, the celebrated English sage and wit, once opined, "Knowing that he is to die in a fortnight concentrates a man's mind wonderfully". With this in mind, it is instructive to review what these young men, who were respectively 35, 25 and 27 when they died, said and wrote when they knew that death was not only certain but also imminent.

From the dock, Tone declared

I heartily lament it (misfortunes brought upon Ireland) it is now nearly four years since I have quitted Ireland and consequently I have been personally concerned in none of this; if I am rightly informed very great atrocities have been committed on both sides, but that does not at all diminish my regret; for a fair and open war I was prepared; if that has degenerated into a system of assassination, massacre and plunder I do again most sincerely lament it... in this world success is everything; I have attempted to establish the independence of my country; I have failed... my life is forfeit and I submit; the Court will do their duty and I shall endeavour to do mine. [And further] I hope that I shall bear it as a man and that my death will not disgrace my life.

Later in the quiet of his cell, he wrote to his father explaining why he would not see him or any other member of his family (his wife was in France) he wrote "I had not the courage to support a meeting that could lead to nothing and would put us both to insufferable pain. I beg my sincerest and most respectful duty to my mother".

Tone's earlier writings before his exile and subsequent departure for France, give some outline of his convictions and motivations

To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break the connection with England the never failing source of our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country... these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissension, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in the place of the denominations Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter...these were my means.

If the American war of independence divided opinion Great Britain the French Revolution caused even greater divisions. The Irish statesman Burke, who represented an English constituency at Westminster, wrote a powerful critique of the French Revo-

lution in 1790. The revolution's most celebrated advocate in England, Tom Paine, wrote "The Rights of Man" as a riposte to Burke. Tone later wrote that though Burke had convinced England

matters were very different in Ireland an oppressed, insulted and plundered nation. As we well know experimentally, what is was to be enslaved, we sympathised most sincerely with the French people. Ireland was a nation divided between aristocrats and democrats. The Protestants, one sixth of the population, had the whole of the government, 5/6ths of the land, have been for above a century in the quiet enjoyment of the Church, the law, the revenue, the army, the navy, the magistracy, the corporations, in a word, the whole patronage of Ireland. With properties whose titles were founded on massacre and plunder, and being, as it were, but a colony for foreign usurpers in the land, they saw no security for their persons and estates but in a close connection with England, who profited of their fears, and as the price of her protection exacted the explicit surrender of the commerce and liberties of Ireland.

Emmett's speech from the dock remains one of the most famous and anthologised of the genre and has been a fruitful source of inspiration to Irish patriots and their sympathisers ever since. His trial was crowded into one very long day, did not end until nine o'clock at night and did not adjourn from the sweltering courtroom even for meals. To facilitate and speed up the proceedings, Emmett, on more than one occasion corroborated the testimony of the prosecution witnesses and dispensed with the witnesses for the, defence. What he had to say at the end of a long, exhausting day and for him, facing the death penalty, one of unimaginable pressure and stress, gives ample proof of his gifts as an orator and makes Trinity College's decision five years earlier to expel him understandable. It is reported that Emmett's testimony even reduced the harsh and coarse-grained Lord Norbury, his principal accuser, to tears as he pronounced sentence. The letters that Emmett wrote that night, he was executed the

following day, to his father and friends are of a piece with the tenor of his speech from the dock and throw further light on his mettle as a man.

In court Emmett declared,

if the last entrenchment of liberty should be my grave...my object has been to make Ireland totally independent of Great Britain... whose government upheld its dominion by impiety against the Most High... a government that had displayed its power over man as over the beasts of the field...

He went on to say that “my conduct (was) governed only by the convictions I have uttered and the emancipation of my country from inhuman oppression under which it has so long and too patiently travailed”.

Impatient at Lord Norbury’s interruptions and urgings to him to be brief Emmett cut in “Where is the vaunted impartiality, clemency and mildness of your justice if I stand at the bar of the court and dare not vindicate my character, what a farce is your justice!” and later “...and as a man to whom fame is dearer than life, I will make the last use of that life in doing justice to that reputation which is to live after me and which is the only legacy I can leave to those I honour and love and for whom I am proud to perish”. Still addressing himself to Lord Norbury who had interrupted again to insult Emmett and his fellow conspirators, he said “There are men concerned in this conspiracy... who would not disgrace themselves by shaking your blood-stained hand”. After Norbury has asserted that it is Emmett who is responsible for shedding blood, Emmett flares up

What, my lord, shall you tell me on my passage to the scaffold which that tyranny of which you are only the intermediate minister, has erected for my death that I am accountable for all the blood that has and will be shed in the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor? Shall you tell me this and must I be so very a slave as not to repel it? [Concluding, Emmett warns] My lord, you are impatient for

the sacrifice. The blood which you seek is not congealed by the artificial terrors which surround your victim; it circulates warmly and unruffled through its channels and in a little time it will cry to heaven.

In his peroration, Emmett said,

Be yet patient! I have but a few more words to say —my ministry is now ended. I am going to my cold and silent grave— my lamp of life is nearly extinguished. I have parted with everything that was dear to me in this life for my country's cause, and abandoned another idol I adored in my heart —the object of my affections—. My race is run —the grave opens to receive me, and I sink into its bosom—. I am ready to die — I have not been allowed to vindicate my character. I have but one request to make at my departure from this world — it is the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph; for as no man who knows my motives dares now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them rest in obscurity and peace; my memory be left in oblivion and my tomb remain unscrubbed, until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not until then, let my epitaph be written. I have done.

The idiom employed by Bobby Sands is very different from the clarity and sonority of his eighteenth century predecessors. Its lack of polish recalls in some measure the words of Sacco and Vanzetti. Sands' writings were written during the course of a much longer captivity, the four last years of his life, and in very difficult circumstances. He and his fellow IRA prisoners campaigning for political status (shades of Tone's request to be treated as a prisoner of war) refused prison uniform and to cover their nakedness and to keep warm wrapped themselves in blankets. Subsequently they declined washing and toilet facilities. Sands spent much of those last years in solitary confinement in his fouled cell without access to books, newspapers, radio, TV and writing materials. In the introduction to his collected writings, it is recorded that he wrote on lavatory paper and cigarette

papers with a biro refill that he kept concealed in his body. Tone and Emmett on the other hand were in jail only for a matter of weeks before meeting their deaths and members of the gentry as they were had only to call and writing materials were brought to them. And even if they knew or suspected that anything they wrote was very likely to be read, censored or suppressed by the authorities they at least had the freedom to unburden them selves in the peace and quiet of their cells. But notwithstanding this difference in circumstance and background it is striking how great the commonalities are.

During his long incarceration, Sands wrote poetry, short stories, and reflections and described the squalor and brutishness of life in jail “on the blanket”.

“How many have been murdered”, he asks “at their hands ...Too many! How many more Irish lives would be lost before the British decided they had murdered enough and were forced to get out of Ireland for ever?”

He records an exchange with one of his gaolers, who remarks “I wouldn’t be doing what you’re doing if I were in your position” to which Sands replies “I’m sure you wouldn’t; maybe that’s because you’re a screw (gaoler) and I’m a political prisoner”. Later he remarks, “I am a political prisoner, a freedom fighter. It is my political ideology and principles that my captors wish to change” and goes on to observe that to accept the status of criminal would be to degrade himself. And after hearing Mass one Sunday morning and reflecting on how his growing hatred frightens him he prophesies that “these young men (his fellow prisoners) will be fathers and these attitudes (the hatred and bitterness) will inevitably be passed to their children. This is the harvest Britain has sown”.

On 1 March 1981, the day Sands began his hunger strike he also began a diary. The last entry is on 17 March (St. Patrick’s day) at which point he weighed just under 58kg. He died on 5 May. In these pages he speaks of having broken his mother’s heart and of the “perennial war between the oppressed and an

alien, unwanted regime and claims the God given right of the Irish nation to sovereign independence and the right to assert it by armed revolution. On a more spiritual note, he writes human food can never keep a man alive for ever and consoles himself with “the fact” that he’ll get a great feed “up above (if I’m worthy)”. One of his last entries, on his 27th. birthday is to the effect that he has no doubts or regrets about what he is doing and he declares, “I’m free in spirit”.

On the same theme of Freedom, a frequently addressed topic, some years earlier in a lengthy poem entitled the Crime of Castlereagh, Sands had written

All things must come to pass as one
So hope should never die
There is no height or bloody might
That a freeman can’t defy.
There is no source or foreign force
Can break one man who knows,
That his free will no thing can kill
And from that freedom grows.

Common to these testimonies are anger and contempt for the alien oppressor, great concern about reputation but above all a fierce determination to refuse “slavery” and to be free and independent, if only in death. While there is recognition that they have caused death and suffering to others, including to their families, there is at the same time a certain serenity amidst all the anguish: they have no regrets because they know that they are doing the right thing and fought in the right cause. Sands testimony is more marked than that of the others by a spiritual element. Unlike them, he had during his long agony to fight on two fronts his oppressors and his body. He describes vividly how strong the temptation was while enduring the squalor and humiliation of being “on the blanket” to give up and that temptation was, of course, increased manifold once he started his hunger strike and had to endure the additional cravings of hunger

and thirst. All three had to conquer their fear of death but he had to overcome his body as well and to that extent his death may be regarded as even clearer evidence of the unquenchability of the human spirit. This apart, the congruence of the three testimonies is clear although perhaps not surprising, given that they were all writing in the same genre.

These texts are also noteworthy since they furnish data in support not only of Hegel's (a contemporary, though at that time an obscure one, of Tone and Emmett) hypothesis but those of other thinkers before him who also noted man's need for recognition, glory, esteem and so on. In "The Republic" of Plato a word is used that has given difficulty to translators. It is frequently rendered as spiritedness or mettleomeness both of which suggest, *inter alia*, impatience with the curb. On the last page of his Hunger Strike Diary, Sands wrote,

The body fights back (against the lack of food). But at the end of the day everything returns to the primary consideration, that is, the mind. The mind is the most important. But then where does this proper mentality stem from? Perhaps from one's desire for freedom. It isn't certain that that's where it comes from.

Setting aside the lack of certainty, freedom, liberty and independence all imply the acquisition of power, at any rate, over oneself.

Anyone who has to exercise power understands that power is contested every day on all sides, not necessarily in head to head confrontations, but the myriad rulings made at all levels or, in the case of parliaments and congresses preparing legislation, the myriads of proposed rulings to be embodied in legislation, are all fiercely contested on behalf of this or that interest or, on a broader front, by the opposition as a whole whose principal interest is to unseat the government. Effective power requires authority. In the case of a government the first authority for its power is order followed of course by justice. In fact, as

not only history but also the contemporary world show, the maintenance of order within their own jurisdictions is frequently beyond the capacity of the powers that be, be they states or families. A traditional practice of diplomacy was to withhold recognition of a new government until it had demonstrated that it was in effective control of its territory. The issue being order. In cases where there were settled arrangements for an orderly transfer of power recognition was a formality but where the transfer was contested e.g. in the case of coup, an assassination, civil war etc. other governments held off until the situation was clearer. The issue was order without which effective business between the jurisdictions would not be easy and might be impossible. For citizens, the first good required of a government is also order though closely followed by justice. But often this demand for justice is more urgent than the government's capacity to establish it. In the first instance, in response to a challenge to its authority a government will invoke order. Challengers will, for their part, as frequently invoke justice. It takes time to close the gap and even then it can never perfectly closed.

Paris appartient a tout le monde (Paris belongs to everyone) was a proposition widely current and as widely accepted during the Belle Epoque, a time when French culture and the French way of life had perhaps reached their apogee in terms of influence and imitation abroad. There is no comparable phrase referring to the USA today but it is the case that around the world there are millions who have lived, worked, studied or simply visited America and who, in their great majority, found the experience positive. In governments, businesses, universities and so on in every continent there are millions who, in their own situations, seek to apply what they can of what they learnt there. This is a consequence of the transformation of the USA over the last 100 years from a regional power to a super and now hyper power a period during which it has, in effect, been leading the flotilla into the future. The US played a decisive role in defeating Imperial Germany's expansion, was the key player in

crushing Nazism and having subsequently vanquished Communism is now left in undisputed possession of the field, undisputed that is by any other jurisdiction, though not by terrorists. This mighty progress was made possible by the ever-increasing depth and strength of her economic power. As one Japanese observed in amazement in 1945 as he saw the American ships streaming into Yokohama harbour “ I had no idea there were so many ships in the world”. Accompanying and facilitating this expansion was, and remains, the immense outpouring of American culture via, not only, of course, the arts- film, music, dance, books, poetry, TV; but also business practice, the development of civil society through consumer movements, legislation against all sorts of discrimination racial, gender and so on. So pre-eminent is American influence that elites around the world, almost without exception, see it as their ideal to try to secure for their own jurisdictions the amenities enjoyed by American citizens. Nor should this be surprising since no jurisdiction in history has achieved as good a fit between order and justice for its own citizens as has the United States of America. The combination of these two public goods brings in its train unity, peace and prosperity.

From the very beginning, in 1776, US leaders, in contrast to others, have shown a penchant for establishing explicit policy goals. The names of several US presidents have been attached to various “doctrines” and other policy pronouncements, while in the eighties a much-contested branch of the social sciences came into existence called “Reaganomics”. This practice has applied both to domestic and foreign policy, in the case of the latter frequently irritating others by what they detected as a missionary tone. Successive US presidents have been deeply and explicitly committed to containing and defeating Communism yet it is hard to argue that the current US dominance in the world was achieved by design. Rather it seems to have come about as result of millions of discrete decisions by Americans and others that were at the same creating the American prepon-

derance and the order that it has largely shaped. The speed of developments and the power of the technologies that in significant measure drove them have taken the world by surprise. Now it is virtually impossible to escape the all pervading and shaping American influence.

This new order irks many, as it is bound to do, in the light of what we know about ourselves and our resentment of alien rule and our sympathy for the underdog. It provokes many challenges. At one extreme, there is O. B. Laden, with his attack on the twin towers, and at another J. K. Rowling whose name is less well known, but whose books about the boy magician Harry Potter charm and delight millions of children and indeed grown ups around the world. It is reported that when the book was being turned into a film she stipulated that there should be no American accents in it. So many manifestations of culture have been swallowed up by America, reprocessed and sent out into the world again in Americanised versions via puissant distribution channels Dickens, Jane Austen, Hans Andersen, Pinocchio, Winnie the Pooh, El Cid, Aladdin and so on - that concern has grown that many familiar components of particular cultures are being changed or replaced at bewildering speed leaving cultural identities under threat.

Europe in general and Britain in particular, have benefited greatly from America's emergence over the last one hundred years and continue to benefit massively from the current order but even there where there are few differences of policy the current order grates because it is alien and inescapable. Little imagination is needed to envisage reactions among Palestinians, Pakistanis, Iranians and millions of others around the globe, where policy and cultural differences are sharper, since the TV screen furnishes plenty of illustrations daily of the frustration and rage so prevalent. So serious has criticism and hostility become that the US government recently decided to address the problem of its unpopularity abroad.

Within the present order, there are immense asymmetries, for example in relation to essential public goods such as order itself, legitimacy, access to information, to justice not to mention material goods. The case of Afghanistan is instructive. In 1979, Brezhnev invaded but his attempt to impose the Soviet order was defeated by the US which then, Cincinnatus like, returned home leaving Afghanistan, a territory with few of the amenities of a viable jurisdiction, exposed to whatever configuration of forces proved strong enough to take over; in the event, the Taliban. For the Afghan citizen, though it is scarcely valid to talk in such terms, there was scarcely any order, no justice, no unity much less peace and prosperity. Today, with the Taliban expelled, Afghanistan may be regarded as on the fringe of the order but even if a sustained effort is made to try to secure these precious public goods for the inhabitants it will be a work for many generations. Nowadays, the increasingly litigious nature of American society attracts frequent attention amid fears that, like so many other developments there, it will not be long before it jumps the Atlantic and become a feature of European life, as in fact is already happening. That this trend, good or bad as it may be, is developing must be evidence that in America citizens are acquiring greater access to the law and thereby to justice and that private companies, public corporations and other powerful institutions, including the government itself, can be successfully brought to account and obliged to pay compensation when it is proved that injustice or injury has occurred. The tobacco companies, for example, have been fined enormous sums and even companies outside the US jurisdiction, as the compensation for the Jewish victims of World War II shows, are increasingly subject to a progressive tightening of the Rule of Law. Nor as recent history demonstrates is the president exempt. The rising tide of political correctness, deplored by so many, especially in Europe, backed as it often is by legislative force, is another manifestation of the strength of the Rule of Law. Comparing life in the US, the centre of the order, with life in Afghanistan, very much on

the fringe, illustrates the vast asymmetries in relation both to public goods and material benefits. The US citizen knows that, for all its imperfections, weaknesses and shortcomings, the order he enjoys is of inestimable value, that it is the result of hundreds of years of sustained effort and that it requires further unremitting effort and commitment to maintain and develop. Accordingly, any challenge, or threat and a fortiori any attack causes alarm and dismay; alarm at the thought that something so precious is at risk and dismay that its value is not understood. The viewpoint is very different for someone living on the fringe. He enjoys few, if any, of the amenities available to his American counterpart and may not even believe that they can ever be realised. His version of the current order may be limited to a glimpse of US Marines' boots, their half-tracks and helicopters as they take the first steps to try to establish it. From the man at the centre to the man on the fringe there are a million gradations in perception and commitment in between.

The man most at the centre is the US president. Being elected by so many millions must be the biggest buzz; a most validating experience. But it is only for four years. There is, it is true, the possibility of a second term but only after the most rigorous of tests, namely four years in office and another election. And although the president is invested with immense powers he is not given *carte blanche*. His supporters in the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the country at large all have their aims, interests and power bases and they look to him to advance their causes. In a jurisdiction animated by the concept of advise and consent, they cannot simply be commanded but have to be persuaded. He must not disappoint them. There is also the opposition, his opponents, whose objective from the first day is to work to undermine his position so that in four years' time they will be able to dislodge him. Another factor that can often take on the guise of an opponent is time itself. The press of business is fierce. Decisions about matters important, urgent or both are demanded incessantly and mostly cannot be deferred. All in all,

he suffers many constraints and his room for manoeuvre is limited.

Gen. De Gaulle said that “gouverner c’est choisir” (to govern is to choose). The president, exposed more or less constantly to the public gaze, will succeed or not by the choices he makes and be judged thereon.

In human affairs, there is no such thing as a benign stasis. On the contrary, the human condition is one of constant flux. Nowhere is this more evident than where power, pursued so desperately and ruthlessly by so many, is concerned. The first duty of a prince, to use Macchiavelli’s word, must therefore be to order, which he must defend, from any challenge or threat, internal or external. This calls for constant vigilance and the capacity and the resolve to act decisively when action is called for whether to deny space to potential challengers or confront them head to head. It is axiomatic that he must maintain unity and support within his own jurisdiction and, where he can, enlist support from those outside it that can be useful.

In the case of a present-day prince, the president of the US, there is a new element. He presides not only over his own jurisdiction but also over the current global order, the continuing stability and prosperity of which has become a vital US interest strategically, politically and economically. The Cincinnatus mode is hardly an option any more. So, he must maintain unity at home and work to ensure that those outside the jurisdiction continue to have incentives political, security, economic (including on environmental and development issues) to support the order. As we have seen above, the durability of any order is critically dependent on its justice, which may be regarded both as its product and its continuing *raison d’être*. This means that our prince, in this case, George W. Bush, has a duty to justice both within and without the jurisdiction. How that duty is addressed and discharged will be of great significance for the success of the current order and, more specifically, for the success of his war against terrorism. But however committed he may be

to that duty he knows that he neglects the claims of his own jurisdiction at his peril. He is constrained to give them priority when conflicts arise with the claims of the wider order, as they are bound to, particularly over the allocation of resources. He is also aware that the instruments to promote justice outside the jurisdiction are not his to command, are in any case very variable and in many cases are worse than useless.

Down the ages, men and women have given up their lives for their convictions and beliefs; in the Coliseum at Rome, at the stake at Rouen, in the bull-rings of Spain, in torture chambers all over the world, on hunger strikes and in crowded buses with bombs tied around their waists. This type of behaviour is so well established that we must expect it to continue. It is part of the human condition but these kinds of deaths are not of course normal and when they occur there is always the question Why? Denying space to terrorists means working convincingly to improve the fairness and justice informing the order over which the prince presides. Meanwhile, of course, threats have to be countered and attacks foiled.

It was a wise man that said that no one ever went to war who thought he would lose. The future is as inscrutable for George W. Bush as for anyone else and if this blindness, or hubris, prevents him seeing an approaching nemesis his story will come to have some of the elements of an Aristotelian tragedy.