

Sean Worgan<sup>1</sup>

Keele University

**Bulmer Hobson 1905-1907: Mazzini's Ulster Disciple.**

Bulmer Hobson and Giuseppe Mazzini were republican nationalists, one Irish, one Italian. Hobson was part of Sinn Fein's Irish independence movement in the early twentieth century, while Mazzini was at the heart of the Italian Risorgimento (Resurrection), the nineteenth-century movement that sought to unify Italy as an independent nation. Despite the different timeframe and his doubts that such a thing as an Irish nation existed, Mazzini had a profound influence on Hobson.<sup>2</sup> Mazzini's approach informed Hobson's work in Ulster, both as part of the Irish Cultural Revival and the Sinn Fein independence movement. It also fed into Hobson's efforts to reconcile Catholics and Protestants, and to reform the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). In terms of the latter, Mazzini provided Hobson with the blueprint for doing this through the Sinn Fein movement. Yet for all this his influence on Hobson has passed unnoticed by historians. This essay attempts to rectify that by examining the Hobson-Mazzini praxis in the above areas. Before doing so however, it examines some of the reasons Mazzini's influence has been overlooked.

One reason for the oversight is historians' neglect of Mazzini's influence in Ireland. True, Nicholas Mansergh, Kevin Nowlan and, more recently, Colin Barr have looked at

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<sup>1</sup> Sean Worgan's (sean1worgan@hotmail.com) academic interests are in Bulmer Hobson and the radical ideas of the Irish Cultural Revival and independence struggle. His academic interests also span British and Irish history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as European history during this period. He holds a BA in Politics and Political History (Joint Honours), as well as an MA in Irish Studies. His Ph.D. was obtained from Keele University and was entitled 'Bulmer Hobson: An Ulster Nationalist 1902-1908'.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Mansergh, *The Irish Question 1840-1921: A Commentary on Anglo-Irish Relations and on Social and Political Forces in Ireland in the Age of Reform and Revolution* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965), pp. 76-82.

Mazzini in relation to Ireland, but none have given him his historical due. Mansergh criticised him for his too narrow definition of nationality, which questioned the very idea that Ireland was a nation, while Nowlan and Barr both qualify Mazzini's influence on the Young Ireland movement of the nineteenth-century.<sup>3</sup> Writing on Young Ireland, which took its name from Mazzini's revolutionary organisation Young Italy, Nowlan observes that its leaders had 'little interest in Mazzini's personal philosophy ... or the more violent aspects of the "Young" movements on the continent'.<sup>4</sup> Barr is even more definite noting that its 'leaders, whether Protestant or Catholic, were not particularly anti-clerical; its primary organ, *The Nation*, barely mentioned Mazzini or his ideas'.<sup>5</sup> This downplaying of Mazzini's influence, particularly in relation to Young Ireland, helps explain Marnie Hay's failure to recognise his influence on Hobson in her recent book, despite her acknowledgement of the Young Irelander, James Fintan Lalor's influence.<sup>6</sup> Yet it is precisely in the intellectual relationship between Mazzini and Young Ireland that we can begin to trace Mazzini's influence on Hobson.

Charles Townshend has made the comparison between Mazzini's *Rules for the Conduct of Guerrilla Bands* and the writings of the Young Irelander, James Fintan Lalor, which he bases on the works' shared technical nature.<sup>7</sup> This technical aspect provides the first link to Hobson, whose pamphlet, *Defensive Warfare*, is based on Lalor's writings.<sup>8</sup> In it Hobson sets out his strategy for removing the British from Ireland, yet at no point does he acknowledge Mazzini's influence. This is all the more notable since Mazzini's

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<sup>3</sup> Mansergh, *The Irish Question 1840-1921*, pp. 76-82.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin B. Nowlan, 'The Risorgimento and Ireland, 1820-48', in R. Dudley Edwards (ed.), *Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento* (Dublin: Italian Institute in Dublin, 1960), pp. 25-6.

<sup>5</sup> Colin Barr, 'Giuseppe Mazzini and Irish Nationalism, 1845-70', in C.A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (eds), *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1830-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 15-18.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 32 n.

<sup>8</sup> See Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Tralee: Anvil Books Ltd., 1968), p. 42 and 43.

Risorgimento colleague, Garibaldi, is quoted on the work's frontispiece.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, this does not seem to be due to a lack of influence on Mazzini's part but rather a deliberate policy of non-recognition on Hobson's. As with *Defensive Warfare*, Hobson fails to cite Mazzini elsewhere. The only direct reference I have found is in the first edition of Hobson's Sinn Fein newspaper, *The Republic*, although there is another unacknowledged reference to him in the paper. This is in Hobson's article, 'The Mind of the Nation', which borrows its title (and some of its self-help sentiments) from Mazzini's essay, 'To the Italians'.<sup>10</sup> But the prevailing tendency is not to acknowledge Mazzini, something which is further demonstrated in Hobson's memoirs, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, where he is not mentioned at all.<sup>11</sup> This helps to explain historians' lack of attention to Mazzini in relation to Hobson, but the real issue is why Hobson concealed his influence.

In short, Hobson could not afford to acknowledge Mazzini's influence. To have done so would have alienated large numbers of Catholic Irishmen, for whom Mazzini remained beyond the pale due to his secularism. This was a hangover from the views of the Archbishop of Dublin, Paul Cullen, who had been in Rome at the same time as Mazzini and who brought his views about him back to Ireland.<sup>12</sup> Playing down Mazzini's influence was a particular consideration once the Dungannon Clubs entered into relations with the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). This had happened even before Tom Kettle and Maurice Joy's approach to the Belfast Dungannon Club on behalf of Joseph Devlin, the leader of the AOH's Board of Erin section.<sup>13</sup> It was the product of

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<sup>9</sup> Bulmer Hobson, *Defensive Warfare: A Handbook for Irish Nationalist* (Belfast: The West Belfast Branch of Sinn Fein, 1909), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Curoi MacDare (Bulmer Hobson), 'The Mind of the Nation', *The Republic*, 20 Dec. 1906; Mazzini, 'Faith and the Future', in Mazzini, *Life and Writings, Vol. III: Autobiographical and Political* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1891), p. 76; Mazzini, 'To the Italians: The Programme of the Roma Del Popolo', in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man* (London: Dent and Sons Ltd., 1919), p. 231.

<sup>11</sup> Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*.

<sup>12</sup> See Barr, in Giuseppe, *Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 126.

<sup>13</sup> The National Archives (hereafter TNA) CO 904/117, Precis of Information—Crime Special Branch, CI Report [Belfast], 20 Dec. 1905.

the IRB's attempts to use the Hibernians in Ulster as 'a potential fifth column within the constitutional movement.'<sup>14</sup> As Fergal McCluskey has noted, in places like North Tyrone:

Despite a nominal secular republican ethos, local Fenians were overwhelmingly Catholic and would have had little compunction in tolerating or ignoring the exclusively Catholic character of Hibernianism.<sup>15</sup>

McCluskey has pointed to John Dillon, IRB man and County Delegate to the AOH Board of Erin, and his address at the Hibernian's 1904 St Patrick's Day demonstration in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. Here he assured Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh:

Our principles being faith and fatherland, we assure him [Cardinal Logue] we will always live faithful children of the Church, and pray that God spare him long days to rule over his flock.<sup>16</sup>

This was the same Cardinal Logue who reportedly called the *Irish Peasant* 'poisonous and anti-Catholic' for its series of articles on the Liberal Government's 1906 Education Bill and its editor's declaration that he favoured local control of Ireland's schools rather than the clerical manager system. Logue stated that if it continued he would be 'obliged to forbid his people to read it'; shocked by this the McCann family, who owned the paper, ceased publication immediately after 22 December 1906.<sup>17</sup> No wonder Hobson had to tread carefully over Mazzini.

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<sup>14</sup> Fergal McCluskey, *Fenians and Ribbonmen: The Development of Republican Politics in East Tyrone, 1898-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> McCluskey, *Fenians and Ribbonmen*, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Virginia E. Glandon, *Arthur Griffith and the Advanced Nationalist Press in Ireland 1900-1922* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 22.

Nor was it just Tyrone. It was equally important to censor Mazzini's influence in places like Armagh, where AOH lodges already provided a useful meeting place for Dungannon Clubs in their districts when non-IRB members were absent.<sup>18</sup> Through this, Dungannon Club publications were 'circulated amongst AOH and IRB men' and 'discussed in reading rooms in the city.'<sup>19</sup> In such circumstances it remained politic not to draw too much attention to Mazzini, and it is notable that Hobson's only citation of him was in 1906, after IRB policy in relation to the AOH had changed.<sup>20</sup>

Yet this was a double-edged sword, Hobson may have had to self-censor on Mazzini but it did not mean he had to abandon Mazzinian principles, he merely explored them through Young Ireland. Patrick Maume has noted that 'Young Irishmen saw themselves transforming the Irish nation from a mob dependent on the fickle oratory of a single leader or the favors of their "betters" into a self-reliant citizenry'.<sup>21</sup> This is what the Dungannon Clubs aimed at with the AOH Board of Erin, which was under the sway of 'a single leader', Joseph Devlin, whose oratory was such he was known as 'the pocket Demosthenes'.<sup>22</sup> The IRB's sharing arrangements with the AOH would help in this respect, imitating Young Ireland's tactics of disseminating its literature 'through networks of clubs, friendly societies and reading rooms based among the artisans of the towns'.<sup>23</sup> This would help pave the way for the creation of Young Ireland's 'self-reliant citizenry' through the Dungannon Clubs' programme. Accordingly, the Belfast Dungannon Club's manifesto called for the 'building up' of 'a people self-contained, self-centred, self-

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<sup>18</sup> TNA CO 904/117, *Precis of Information—Crime Special Branch, CI Report [Armagh]*, 26 April 1905.

<sup>19</sup> CI Report [Armagh], 3 Nov. 1905.

<sup>20</sup> Leader column, *The Republic*, 13 December 1906, p. 1. See footnote 71 and accompanying text.

<sup>21</sup> Patrick Maume, 'Young Ireland, Arthur Griffith, and Republican Ideology: The Question of Continuity', *Éire-Ireland*, 34: 2 (1999), 160.

<sup>22</sup> McCluskey, *Fenians and Ribbonmen*, p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> Maume, 'Young Ireland, Arthur Griffith, and Republican Ideology', 160.

reliant'.<sup>24</sup> Hobson repeated the same prescription in his Mazzinian article, 'The Mind of the Nation':

The battle is not with England, but with the people of Ireland — it is the battle of self respect, self-reliance and courage, against moral cowardice, the slavishness, the veneration of any authority however and by whoever assumed—that have marked the people of this country for generations.<sup>25</sup>

The three way link between Hobson, Young Ireland and Mazzini paved the way for Hobson to build on Mazzini's ideas through the Irish Cultural Revival. Writing on Thomas Davis' idealisation of the peasant as part of Young Ireland's bid to create a self-reliant citizenry, Patrick Maume draws comparisons with the Irish revival, whose social aspects fed into this.<sup>26</sup> The same crossover was at play in Hobson's work with the Ulster Literary Theatre and Dungannon Clubs, and it is in this space we find Mazzini's influence at work.

### **ULT and Dungannon Clubs**

Hobson had founded the ULT with David Parkhill in 1902, originally in the guise of the Ulster Branch of the Irish Literary Theatre.<sup>27</sup> Having re-launched it in 1904 the theatre became a cultural extension of the Sinn Fein movement in Ulster, anticipating and then feeding into the Dungannon Clubs' work.<sup>28</sup> There was a clear crossover in personnel between the ULT and the Belfast Dungannon Club, and their geographical position in

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<sup>24</sup> 'To The Whole People of Ireland: The Manifesto of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, 1905', taken from Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 93.

<sup>25</sup> Curoi MacDare (Bulmer Hobson), 'The Mind of the Nation', *The Republic*, 20 December 1906.

<sup>26</sup> Maume, 'Young Ireland, Arthur Griffith, and Republican Ideology', 160.

<sup>27</sup> Sam Hanna-Bell, *The Theatre in Ulster: A Survey of the Dramatic Movement in Ulster from 1902 Until the Present Day* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1972), p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Eugene McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre and the Northern Revival* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), p. 72 and 76.

Ulster meant both replicated the ‘inside/outside duality’ Gerald McNulty has identified at the heart of the ULT:

On the one hand, Belfast’s cultural nationalists sought to incorporate their project fully into the philosophy and methodology of revivalist practices. But they were only too aware that their surrounding hinterland [Ulster] was the space that most powerfully resisted any perceived moves toward cultural or political independence from Britain.<sup>29</sup>

McNulty explains the extract below, from the editorial in the second edition of the ULT’s journal, *Uladh*, in terms of the above duality. He notes that it was a heartfelt rejection of any suggested schism between the provincial art of Ulster and the national art of the rest of Ireland, as represented by Yeats’ Irish National Theatre Society (INTS). However, he recognises that it continues to uphold Ulster’s artistic distinctness, which *Uladh* noted had given rise to the ULT’s talent for satire.<sup>30</sup>

That the work in Ulster will for some time be of a critical and destructive nature, as well as constructive and creative, none who knows the school will deny. Here our satire will come in.<sup>31</sup>

Ulster’s satire was a product of its outside position in the inside/outside duality of its art, but the art itself was a reflection of where Ulster stood in relation to the rest of Ireland. It was the uniqueness of Ulster’s position that made Mazzini such an attractive

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<sup>29</sup> McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>31</sup> Editorial, *Ulad*, February 1905, p. 1.

proposition to Hobson and which, given the crossover between the ULT and Dungannon Clubs, gives the above statement an extra significance in terms of Mazzini.

Mazzini had outlined the same destructive-constructive duality in his advice to would be revolutionaries. In terms of the crossover with the Dungannon Clubs' programme and Hobson's position on *Uladh's* editorial board, it seems the above statement was a cultural version of Mazzini's political one below:<sup>32</sup>

They would learn that the work of destruction ends when the necessity and power of building up begins ; and that at the present day he who fails to combine the two—destroying with one hand to build up with the other—is unequal to the enterprise before him.<sup>33</sup>

This is reinforced by the fact Hobson was to outline Mazzini's duality as part of his Sinn Fein programme, noting in *The Republic* that:

Our work must be constructive as well as destructive; we must rebuild as well as destroy. And, though our first need is for a national political organisation to wrest this country from the grip of England, that is not our only need, nor must that organisation be purely political and neglect the many sided life of the nation.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Marnie Hay, 'Explaining Uladh: Cultural Nationalism in Ulster', in Betsy Taylor FitzSimon and James H Murphy (eds), *The Irish Revival Reappraised* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p. 121. Mazzini himself seems to have borrowed the idea of destruction-construction from the French Anarchist, Proudhon, however, Mazzini adapted the idea for use by a dedicated revolutionary group. Hobson employed it in the same way with the Dungannon Clubs, and was undoubtedly following Mazzini's example.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph Mazzini, 'Thoughts Addressed to the Priests of Italy upon the Evangelical Letter of Gregory XVI' (1834), in Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, Vol. I, p. 259.

<sup>34</sup> MacDare [Hobson], 'On Organisation', *The Republic*, 25 April 1907, pp. 6-7.



It repeated what Hobson had told an audience in New York in February about the need to organise the Sinn Fein movement on a constructive and destructive basis. However, both built on the position outlined in *Uladh* two years earlier.<sup>35</sup> In the period between 1905 and 1907 the cultural and political versions functioned in conjunction with each other.

The ULT continued to hold up its side of the bargain, attempting to move Ulster from an outside to an inside position. It sought to undermine the culture which sustained British rule in Ulster, while simultaneously promoting Irish culture in its place. It did so through plays like *The Turn of the Road* (1905) and *The Pagan* (1907). On the destructive side *The Republic* observed of the former:

... Rutherford Mayne, deals with the Ulster farmer—the product of the plantations—in all his hardness, his lust for money and lack of idealism. It is a clever analysis of the Ulster character.<sup>36</sup>

In contrast, *The Pagan* sought to link the northerner into the Gaelic revival that was taking place across Ireland. As Karen Vandeveldde has observed:

In *The Pagan* (1907), the author offers Protestants an opportunity to align themselves with the Gaelic revival by endowing a Celtic warrior with typically Protestant ideals of self confidence and diligence.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 'Bulmer Hobson's Speech: Aims, Methods and Workings of the Sinn Fein Movement', *The Gaelic American*, 23 February 1907.

<sup>36</sup> 'Ulster Literary Theatre', *The Republic*, 27 December 1906.

<sup>37</sup> Karen Vandeveldde, 'An Open Nationality: Rutherford Mayne, Gerald McNamara, and the Plays of the Ulster Literary Theatre', *Eire-Ireland*, 39: 1/ 2 (Spring-Summer, 2004), 12. Taken from findarticles.com, [http://calbears.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0FKX/is\\_1-2\\_39/ai\\_n6150062/print](http://calbears.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FKX/is_1-2_39/ai_n6150062/print), accessed 30 January 2007.

This fed directly into Mazzini's statement that 'the collective literature, the Art [sic] of one or of many nations, is inspired and informed solely by the immediate social *aim* of the epoch.'<sup>38</sup> In Ireland much of that social aim revolved around culture and in particular the work of the Gaelic League, which the various Sinn Fein organisations looked to in conjunction with the League's aim of de-anglicising Ireland.<sup>39</sup> This was because the Gaelic League, 'was not simply an agency for language instruction but aimed at stimulating Irish industries, encouraging social activities like ceildhthe (Irish dances) and learning Irish history from the works of the great unionist historian, W.E.H. Lecky.'<sup>40</sup>

Since such cultural activities also made room for Unionists it was entirely possible to incorporate them into a Mazzinian revolutionary framework. This is what Hobson seems to have done in the case of the ULT. Since there was a strong overlap with the Dungannon Clubs' work in places like Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone, where Hobson's Dungannon Club colleague, Patrick McCartan, immediately visited the local branch on his arrival from America, one can see how this fed into Hobson's political programme.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, there was also another overlap with Hobson's political work in the shape of David Parkhill's advocacy of Co-operation in his play, *The Enthusiast*, as 'a common practical solution' to the divide between Catholic and Protestant.<sup>42</sup> Hobson would advocate this as part of the Dungannon Clubs' social programme, but it is notable that Hobson's political ally in the Independent Orange Order (IOO), Robert Lindsay

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<sup>38</sup> Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, Vol. III, Preface, p. iv.

<sup>39</sup> Janet Egleson Dunleavy and Gareth W. Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 182-186.

<sup>40</sup> Richard P. Davis, *Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Fein* (Dublin: Anvil Books Ltd., 1974), p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> Sean Cronin, *The McGarrity Papers: Revelations of the Irish Revolutionary Movement in Ireland and America 1900-1940* (Tralee: Anvil Books Ltd., 1972), p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> Ben Levitas, *The Theatre of the Nation: Irish Drama and Cultural Nationalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 109.

Crawford, advocated the same solution.<sup>43</sup> Just as significant, *The Enthusiast* prefigured Crawford's call for a 'patriotic party with a sound constructive policy' by two months.<sup>44</sup> This illustrates the easy crossover between the cultural and political in the ULT's and Dungannon Clubs' work.

Patrick Maume and Matthew Kelly have drawn attention to the interrelationship between culture and politics in this period, noting in particular the importance of Literary Fenianism.<sup>45</sup> This idea, that the pursuit of separatism could be carried out through the cultural sphere, was at the heart of both the Dungannon Club and the ULT. A brief survey of the crossover in personnel between the ULT and Dungannon Club confirms the relationship in Ulster, and reinforces the view that a Literary Fenian agenda was at work:

Bulmer Hobson was in the Chair. Present were W MacDonnell, David Parkhill, Padraic Colum; Herbert and Wallace Jameson, Denis McCullough, James Scullion and Daniel McDevitt.<sup>46</sup>

Hobson, MacDonnell and Parkhill were all instrumental setting up the ULT, McDonnell having introduced the other two, while the poet and dramatist, Padraic Colum was an

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<sup>43</sup> Levitas, *The Theatre of the Nation*, p. 109. Possibly the connection derived from Daniel McDevitt, a founding member of the Belfast Dungannon Club and a Belfast Trades Council colleague of T.H. Sloan, Crawford's IOO colleague. See J.W. Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-10', *Irish Historical Studies*, 13: 50 (Sep. 1962), 138n, 139n. and footnote 45 and accompanying text.

<sup>44</sup> Levitas, *The Theatre of the Nation*, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup> Patrick Maume, *The Long Gestation: Irish Nationalist Life, 1891-1918* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1999), Matthew Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916* (Woodbridge, 2006), 'Dublin Fenianism in the 1880s: 'The Irish Culture of the Future?', *The Historical Journal*, 43 (2000).

<sup>46</sup> National Library of Ireland (hereafter NLI) MS 12, 175, Hobson Papers, Dungannon Clubs and Hungarian Policy Minutes. The first meeting was held on Wednesday, 8 March at 109 Donegal St, Belfast. N.B. Hobson refers to W. MacDonnell as W. MacDonald.

important figure in the southern Cultural Revival.<sup>47</sup> Hobson and his Dungannon Club co-founder, Denis McCullough, were also in the IRB and Daniel McDevitt also had connections to the Brotherhood, his shop in Rosemary Street, Belfast, being a rendezvous for Bolsheviks, the IRA and socialists.<sup>48</sup> It is against this backdrop that we should read Mazzini's influence on Hobson, not least because of another figure common to the ULT and Dungannon Clubs, Joseph Campbell.

McNulty has drawn attention to the importance of Campbell's northern perspective on the links between culture and politics.<sup>49</sup> However, Campbell's framework was one Mazzini had already outlined, albeit in an international context. In his essay, 'Faith and the Future' (1835), Mazzini observed 'the stupid presumption on the part of each people that they are capable of solving the political, social, and economical problem alone; in their forgetfulness of the great truths that the cause of the peoples is one.'<sup>50</sup> Although Mazzini was thinking in a European context, the fact he made the principle of nationality the basis of his cosmopolitanism, which the European dimension was part of, made it possible for Hobson to apply his recommendations to Ireland.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Hobson thought such an approach vital due to Ulster's inside/outside position within Ireland. The sense of 'Ulster difference' which had emerged in the wake of Home Rule becoming a political possibility meant that nationalism in the North had to resist and respond to a perception of Ulster as a lost cause within some elements of Irish

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<sup>47</sup> National Archive of Ireland (hereafter NAI) BMH WS 82, Bulmer Hobson, General Statement, 26 Jan. 1948, 2. Also in Hanna-Bell, *The Theatre in Ulster*, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Gerard MacAtasney, *Seán MacDiarmada: The Mind of the Revolution* (Dublin: Drumlin Publications, 2004), p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>50</sup> Mazzini, 'Faith and the Future', in *Life and Writings, Vol. III, Autobiographical and Political*, p. 77.

<sup>51</sup> Maurizio Isabella, 'Mazzini's Internationalism in Context: From the Cosmopolitan Patriotism of the Italian Carbonari to Mazzini's Europe of the Nations', in C.A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (eds), *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 38. See also in the same collection Nadia Urbinati, 'Mazzini's Democracy and the Legacy of Kant'.

nationalism.<sup>52</sup> This is why Mazzini became so important to Hobson, who wished to ensure Ulster was not left outside the Cultural Revival that was going on in the rest of Ireland. He saw Mazzini's framework as a way of ensuring this, which is why Hobson's article, 'On Organisation II', echoed 'Faith and the Future':

It is useless and stupid to try to subdivide the national life, it must be looked on as a whole; there can be no part of it re-built—no part of it on a firm basis unless every part has been re-built, each in its proper degree and place, and it is the proper proportioning of each part and the simultaneous development of all that will make for the complete Irish nation that Ireland's greatest have ever striven to achieve.<sup>53</sup>

Hobson wrote the above in 1907, at a time when he had concerns about the shape of a future Sinn Fein amalgamation. At this point it looked like the Dungannon Clubs' Ulster formula would be subsumed into the National Council's southern one. The danger of this was that Ulster would eventually become 'the lost cause' that some nationalists already saw it as.

To avoid such a possibility Hobson tried to launch a coup against Griffith, the National Council's leader, but even here he seems to have been acting out of Mazzinian principles.<sup>54</sup> Mazzini wrote that a failure to organise led to the triumph of reaction, as he noted, 'the cause is in ourselves, in our want of organisation, in the dismemberment occasioned in our ranks ...'<sup>55</sup> Hobson felt similarly about Ireland:

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<sup>52</sup> McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre and the Northern Revival*, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Curoi MacDare (Bulmer Hobson), 'On Organisation II', *The Republic*, 2 May 1907, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> See footnote 134.

<sup>55</sup> Mazzini, 'Faith and the Future', in Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, Vol. III., p. 76.

When we get the Irish people more organised, more united, the English Government will not be such a serious factor in a way, but we have in Ireland today all sorts or sets of reactionaries – bequests from the past – and it is they who are standing in path of the nation’s advancement ...<sup>56</sup>

Through the Dungannon Clubs’ organisation of Ulster, Hobson believed he had prevented dismemberment in Ireland’s ranks, hence his statement that: ‘To-day Orangemen, who for over a century have been the despair of Irish Nationalism, are becoming more national’.<sup>57</sup> Griffith’s sidelining of the Dungannon Clubs due to what Hobson’s colleague, Patrick McCartan, saw as jealousy, seemed to endanger all that had been achieved.<sup>58</sup> The Philadelphia IRB leader, Joseph McGarrity had recognised Hobson’s organising abilities by noting, ‘I think Hobson may yet make Protestant Ulster Irish and National’.<sup>59</sup> His protégé, McCartan, contrasted this with Griffith:

Griffith is a newspaperman. Take him out of that and he is useless. Hobson is an organiser and a businessman. I think Griffith would not be jealous of Hobson getting power but he may fear he would go too far and spoil the movement.<sup>60</sup>

Hobson would certainly have gone too far for Griffith, but this was part and parcel of his Mazzinian approach, which relied on the IRB’s resources to render it effective. Hobson’s Dungannon Club colleague, P.S. O’Hegarty expressed the view that Griffith was ‘deliberately trying to bring about a split with “the physical force men” because ‘he

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Bulmer Hobson’s Speech: Aims, Methods and Workings of the Sinn Fein Movement’, *The Gaelic American*, 23 February 1907.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> MacAtasney, *Seán MacDiarmada*, p. 25.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> McCartan to McGarrity, 29 Dec. 1906 (NLI, MS 17, 617, McGarrity Papers). N.B. Griffith had set up the Sinn Fein newspapers *The United Irishman* and its successor *Sinn Fein*.

doesn't want any of us in the National Council lest we'd frighten the priests and the mythical Commercial '82 men'.<sup>61</sup> The latter were potential converts from the Irish Party who found common ground with Griffith due to his placing of constitutional principles at the heart of the Sinn Fein programme: this was through his advocacy of independence along the lines of Ireland's 1782 constitution, which provided for an independent Irish parliament under the British Crown.<sup>62</sup> Yet political support from both the priests and the '82 men was incompatible with Hobson's Mazzinian conception of Sinn Fein. The former were incompatible with its secularism, while Hobson viewed the latter as reactionaries, classifying them as such on his American tour of February to April 1907.<sup>63</sup> The potential for trouble with Griffith increased after it became clear the Board of Erin leader, Devlin, was using the AOH for solely constitutional purposes.<sup>64</sup> This prompted a split with the IRB and pushed Clan-na-Gael's representative, Patrick McCartan, into a new policy of educating the AOH because 'it was too strong to be opposed'.<sup>65</sup> It opened up the opportunity for Hobson to push Mazzini's secular programme, even more so after P.T. Daly, the IRB's travelling organiser and secretary, expelled all IRB circles under the auspices of Robert Johnston and Henry Dobbin for trying to build up new circles based around the AOH (Board of Erin), which Hobson and McCullough detested.<sup>66</sup> As a result of this Hobson would not only have to educate the AOH, but also the IRB. He again turned to Mazzini to do this.

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<sup>61</sup> O'Hegarty letter unaddressed, 11 April 1907 (NLI, MS 5581, George Gavan Duffy Papers).

<sup>62</sup> This was as part of his Hungarian Policy. For a fuller explanation of the policy see Arthur Griffith, *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003 [1918, first published 1905]).

<sup>63</sup> 'Bulmer Hobson's Speech: Aims, Methods and Workings of the Sinn Fein Movement', *The Gaelic American*, 23 February 1907.

<sup>64</sup> McCluskey, *Fenians and Ribbonmen*, p. 40.

<sup>65</sup> Clan-na-Gael was the American organisation which bankrolled separatists in Ireland, including the IRB and Sinn Feiners. MacAtasney, *Seán MacDiarmada*, p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> Magee, *The IRB*, pp. 298 and 316-17.

### **Mazzini and the League of Dungannon Clubs**

In using the Dungannon Clubs as part of Daly's reform agenda for the IRB, Hobson was also imitating Mazzini, who had used Young Italy to reform the Carbonari. The latter was a secret republican organisation which operated along the same conspiratorial lines as the IRB. Mazzini, who had belonged to the Carbonari since 1829, saw Young Italy as superseding the older organisation, and it is probable Hobson saw the Dungannon Clubs and the IRB in the same light.<sup>67</sup> Certainly Mazzini's criticism of the Carbonari seems to parallel Hobson's and the reformers' criticisms of the IRB. Mazzini had observed the Carbonari's failure to involve broader sectors of the population in revolutionary activity, something the Dungannon Clubs' programme was aimed at rectifying with the IRB.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, from the early 1830s the Carbonari was increasingly seen in liberal and republican circles as an ineffective political organisation, but also as a milieu reflecting the values and ideas of a past generation, unable to address the challenges facing a revolutionary movement.<sup>69</sup> This criticism was also levelled at the IRB, which by the 1890s was regarded as moribund.<sup>70</sup>

Hobson turned to Mazzini to address the IRB's problems. In the Dungannon Clubs' newly launched newspaper, *The Republic*, Hobson told his readers:

Mazzini said, "It is an educational problem with which we have to do—it is to regenerate man in his ideas and his sentiments".

This is true in Ireland as in Italy.

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<sup>67</sup> Maurizio Isabella, 'Mazzini's Internationalism in Context: From the Cosmopolitan Patriotism of the Italian Carbonari to Mazzini's Europe of the Nations', in C.A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (eds), *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 37.

<sup>68</sup> Isabella, 'Mazzini's Internationalism in Context', p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> McGee, *The IRB*, p. 231 and 292.



He says “Men take as the subject of their studies the *world* and not *the man*, the house and not the living being who must inhabit it.”<sup>71</sup>

Hobson set about applying the same logic in a wider sense, as a means of linking the IRB, AOH and IOO under one secular nationalist banner.

On the eve of the formation of the League of Dungannon Clubs, Hobson had outlined the basis for his secular approach: ‘Make not a religious or political party, but the National Idea supreme in Ireland, and the Protestant North will lead the van for nationhood.’<sup>72</sup> It was on this basis that he proceeded with his programme, borrowing from what Bayley and Biagini have described as Mazzini’s secularised Protestantism.<sup>73</sup> Biagini has observed that for Mazzini tradition and conscience effectively meant ‘experience and intuition’.<sup>74</sup> The same experience and intuition seems to have been at play in Hobson’s concept of the *national idea*, which provided a base for him to develop his Mazzinian programme:

... the National Idea has grown, from the first consciousness of national feeling in the people—indistinct, indefinite and un-understood [*sic*] till today its appeal goes out to all men—the call of their mother, and her claim on their service and sacrifice.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Leader column, *The Republic*, 13 December 1906, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Bulmer Hobson, ‘The New Ulster’, *The Nationalist*, 30 November 1905.

<sup>73</sup> C.A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (eds), *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1830-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Biagini, ‘Mazzini and Anti-Clericalism’, in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, in C.A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (eds), *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 156.

<sup>75</sup> ‘The Progression of the National Idea’, *The Republic*, 27 December 1906.

Through the concepts of service and sacrifice Hobson was able to draw on Mazzini's revolutionary blueprint, which called on these qualities as part of the struggle for independence. The notion of service, features throughout Hobson's 'Confessions of Faith of an Irish Nationalist,' feeding into the linked ones of duty and sacrifice. In Hobson's fifth 'Confession' he states: 'Every Irishman and every Irishwoman owes a definite service to Ireland and it is their duty to render that service.'<sup>76</sup> By outlining the link between service and duty as part of his 'Confession of Faith', Hobson echoed Mazzini directly, who had elevated them to the level of religious principles and who Nadia Urbinati describes as 'the proponent of the religion of duty'.<sup>77</sup> This built on what Hobson had counselled in his third 'Confession' that 'the National (*sic*) faith may be put on a firmer basis and that National duty may be shown clearly to be the great public duty that is in reality incumbent (*sic*) on us all.'<sup>78</sup>

For both Hobson and Mazzini this service was linked to sacrifice. In his fifth 'Confession' Hobson quoted Lecky on precisely this: "The conscience of mankind", as Lecky pointed out, "has ever recognised self-sacrifice as the supreme element of virtue," and self sacrifice in the service of the nation has been in every country considered the most noble and most praiseworthy of all forms of sacrifice.<sup>79</sup> But Hobson was not thinking in terms of Patrick Pearse's blood sacrifice of Easter 1916. He was opposed to Pearse's concept of a blood sacrifice, stating that the 'Executive Committee of the Irish Volunteers did not share his passion for self immolation ... They wanted to build up a real strength in Ireland, which would be sufficiently powerful to defend the country against conscription and wrest control of the administration from the British

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<sup>76</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Bulmer Hobson), 'The Confession of Faith of an Irish Nationalist V', *Irish Freedom*, May 1911.

<sup>77</sup> Nadia Urbinati, 'The Legacy of Kant: Mazzini's Cosmopolitanism of Nations', in Bayly and Biagini, *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Hobson), 'Confession of Faith III', March 1911.

<sup>79</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Hobson), 'Confession of Faith V', May 1911.

Government.<sup>80</sup> This too was in line with Mazzini who had asked rhetorically: “Have you the right to inundate your country with kindred blood, in the hope that blood will moisten the tree of your liberty?”<sup>81</sup> Hobson’s attitude is wholly understandable in the context of the Mazzinian blueprint he had followed with the Dungannon Clubs. This was based on Mazzini’s idea of a social sacrifice, which he had outlined in ‘Faith in the Future’: ‘Yes; the peoples lack faith; not the individual faith which makes martyrs, but the common, *social* faith, which gains victories.’<sup>82</sup> Although Mazzini was talking about the peoples of Europe we have seen that Hobson was able to apply Mazzini’s European thinking to Ireland in a national context.<sup>83</sup> In terms of Mazzini’s concept of social faith this could be applied to the Catholic and Protestant ‘peoples’ of Ireland. Thus in Hobson’s second ‘Confession of Faith’ he stated that ‘no Irishman or section of Irishmen is the enemy.’<sup>84</sup> In 1906/7 Hobson was trying to develop this principle through social initiatives like the Co-operatives, which David Parkhill and the ULT had advocated to solve ‘this damned division of the people.’<sup>85</sup> Through such initiatives Hobson also aimed to develop the kind of social faith among Catholics and Protestants that Mazzini had called for.

To some extent Hobson’s aim of developing social faith among Protestants was sat ill with Mazzini’s revolutionary blueprint. Mazzini had stated that ‘every social revolution is essentially religious’, and that ‘the supreme question ... is a *moral* and *social* one.’<sup>86</sup> However, he was also ‘dismissive of Protestant individualism, which he contrasted with

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<sup>80</sup> Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 75. The Irish Volunteers had been called out by the IRB as the mainstay of the Easter Rising.

<sup>81</sup> Mazzini, ‘Italy, Austria, and the Pope: a Letter to Sir James Graham, Bart’ (1845), in Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, Vol. III, p. 252.

<sup>82</sup> Mazzini, ‘Faith and the Future’, in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man*, p. 153.

<sup>83</sup> See footnotes 50 and 51 and accompanying text.

<sup>84</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Hobson), ‘Confession of Faith II’, February 1911.

<sup>85</sup> Ben Levitas, *The Theatre of the Nation*, p. 109.

<sup>86</sup> Mazzini, ‘Faith and the Future’, in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man*, p. 214 and 146.

his own emphasis on the individual's social obligation to his nation and humanity'.<sup>87</sup> This may well have caused Hobson problems but for the fact that Protestant Dissent, such as that which predominated in Ulster, was a case apart. Biagini has noted:

Protestant Dissenters who were his [Mazzini's] most enthusiastic supporters were also indefatigable champions of social responsibility and, like Mazzini, regarded life as a pilgrimage of duty.<sup>88</sup>

This focus on duty created an absolute link with Mazzini's and Hobson's social programme. It did so because it fed off the work of popular Unionist ideologues like M.J.F. McCarthy and Horace Plunkett.

McCarthy had criticised the Irish Party for 'seeking improvement from "external" sources' and not from "reform within ourselves".<sup>89</sup> This echoed Mazzini who had noted of the triumph of reaction, 'the cause is in ourselves, in our want of organisation, in the dismemberment occasioned in our ranks'.<sup>90</sup> As part of the Irish Party the AOH looked for precisely the sort of improvement from external sources that Unionists and the Dungannon Clubs disapproved of. This opened up the possibility for organisation along Mazzinian lines since McCarthy's thinking chimed with the Dungannon Clubs' Sinn Fein programme (ourselves alone). Plunkett's work offered the same opportunity since for him the "Irish Question is, in its most difficult and most important aspects, the problem of the Irish mind and the solution of this problem is to be found in the strengthening of

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<sup>87</sup> Biagini, 'Mazzini and Anti-Clericalism', in Bayly and Biagini, *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 158.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Henry Patterson, 'Independent Orangeism and Class Conflict in Edwardian Belfast: A Reinterpretation', *Royal Irish Academy Proceedings*, 80 (1980), 1-27, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Mazzini, 'Faith and the Future', in *Life and Writings*, Vol. III., p. 76.

the Irish character”.<sup>91</sup> Given that Plunkett had outlined the use of Co-operation as part of building up character, his thinking was easily co-opted as part of an attempt to give Ulster Unionists a Mazzinian social focus. What aided Hobson in this was Unionists' and the Dungannon Clubs' shared sociological focus. Hobson noted in his fifth ‘Confession’ that: “The true human point of view as Comte pointed out is not individual but social.”<sup>92</sup> In this respect it is significant that Patterson has further noted that both McCarthy and Plunkett reproduced an Irish version of ‘that nineteenth-century sociology of which the work of Samuel Smiles is the best known example’.<sup>93</sup>

The Dungannon Clubs aimed to realise this on a practical level as part of a Mazzinian programme. Hobson turned to Comte as part of this, but also to Herbert Spencer, who fitted neatly into his Mazzinian social programme. Hobson stated that:

In his *Data of Ethics* Herbert Spencer warned: So long as the existence of a community is endangered by the actions of communities around it must remain true that the interests of individuals must be sacrificed to the interests of the community as far as is needful for the community’s salvation.<sup>94</sup>

Spencer’s notion of sacrificing individual interests to those of the community fitted comfortably with Hobson’s Mazzinian one of social sacrifice. In a practical sense it tied in with the work of the Industrial Revival, the Farmers’ Co-operative Movement, and the Gaelic League which:

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<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Patterson, ‘Independent Orangeism and Class Conflict in Edwardian Belfast’, 21.

<sup>92</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Bulmer Hobson), ‘Confession of Faith V’, *Irish Freedom*, May 1911.

<sup>93</sup> Patterson, ‘Independent Orangeism and Class Conflict in Edwardian Belfast’, 6.

<sup>94</sup> MacLeda (Bulmer Hobson), ‘The Confession of Faith V’, *Irish Freedom*, May 1911.

... does not look for help from without but from within ... They have enthusiasm and energy and the capacity to sacrifice individual interests for the national good, which is in the last analysis the real stuff of which alone nations are built.<sup>95</sup>

This Irish Ireland approach chimed perfectly with the notion of duty that characterised the Dungannon Clubs. McCartan expressed this when he observed that the strength of the Irish Ireland movement was that:

It teaches that the individual must be made to recognize that he himself owes a duty to the nation and that he cannot delegate his duty to others. In this respect, it is at variance with what is known as parliamentarianism, which leads the people to believe that they can evade their personal responsibility to the nation by delegating it to some 83 individuals who will do all that is necessary.<sup>96</sup>

The same thinking can be found at the heart of McCarthy's writing on the Irish Party, who he noted 'had over-politicised the mentalities of the Irish, leading them to expect inevitable material improvement from legislative change.'<sup>97</sup> It was a useful basis upon which to build with the IOO, and fitted neatly with Hobson's aim of developing a civil religion from Ulster's Dissenting beliefs. This was the key to carrying out a constructive programme centred round the overlap between Mazzini's ideas and Sinn Fein. However, to sustain this Hobson also drew on the Catholic concept of suffering, which he borrowed from Mazzini.

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<sup>95</sup> Bulmer Hobson, 'Forces at Work in Present Day Ireland', *The Gaelic American*, 14 December 1912.

<sup>96</sup> McCluskey, *Fenians and Ribbonmen*, p. 71.

<sup>97</sup> Patterson, 'Independent Orangeism and Class Conflict in Edwardian Belfast', 6.

The central component of Hobson's civil religion was faith. Such faith was linked to suffering, which Mazzini had noted nations are educated through.<sup>98</sup> Nadia Urbinati commented of Mazzini that, "Faith" in the cause of nationality and the humanitarian apostolate of a nation grew along with the setback of his project.<sup>99</sup> It was the same for Hobson, who wrote in his opening 'Confession' that '... when adversity follows adversity that nation, though it has lost its wealth and material prosperity, usually finds its own soul.'<sup>100</sup> For Hobson Ireland's faith was strengthened by the fact she had lost her wealth and prosperity, but through material loss and suffering she had gained spiritual strength. Further proof of this can be seen in Hobson's statement that:

The faith of an Irish nationalist, then is different from the Imperialist creeds—different in this, that it sees that the destinies of men and of nations are things of to-morrow as well as things of to-day, and that it does not profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul.<sup>101</sup>

Hobson was at pains to stress the difference between Irishmen and Englishmen, perhaps with Mazzini's scepticism over this in mind. He continued:

... this is what nationality means to a country like Ireland—it means that instead of engaging in a mad and headlong rush for wealth, we have discovered that money and power and iron ships are not the only things worth having, that the nation like the individual has a soul, and that national action in its best and highest is the expression of that soul.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Mazzini, *Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini*, Vol. II., Critical and Literary, p. 82.

<sup>99</sup> Urbinati, 'The Legacy of Kant', in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, p. 16.

<sup>100</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Bulmer Hobson), 'Confession of Faith I', *Irish Freedom*, December 1910.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

The solution to this so far as Hobson was concerned was to take a leaf out of Mazzini's book. In his third 'Confession' Hobson criticised 'some modern schools of thought' for 'affect[ing] to scoff at National sentiment'.<sup>103</sup> This echoed Mazzini who, in addressing the Italian people, stated:

It is time to call it back [Italian democracy] from barren criticism to the National School, with its constructive methods, its tendencies to correlate and harmonise; from a materialism that presumes to understand, explain, determine the motion while it destroys the motive power, to the old and ever present doctrine of the Spirit, that harmonises motion and motor.<sup>104</sup>

In an Irish context one could read 'the ever present doctrine of the Spirit' as the national idea, which at times seems almost to have functioned on a mystical basis for Hobson. This gave Ireland common cause with Mazzini's view that:

Materialism broke asunder that social bond, that instinct of collective brotherhood to which Rome and our early republics owed their greatness, to make the *individual* the centre, the end, and aim of our early endeavour, and substituted for the idea — earlier conceived in Italy than elsewhere — of a providential educational design and common progress, the cold lifeless conception of a *fated* alternation of triumph and ruin, life and death.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Hobson), 'Confession of Faith III', March 1911.

<sup>104</sup> Mazzini, 'To the Italians: The Programme of the Roma Del Popolo', in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man*, p. 238.

<sup>105</sup> Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, Vol. II, p. 155



Hobson saw Ireland as afflicted by similar ills, laying the blame squarely with the English for invading:

Instead of having evolved a civilisation that might lead Europe in every intellectual and social and moral improvement, we are limping hindmost in a career of selfish money-getting in which the finer fruits of life wither and turn to bitterness.<sup>106</sup>

With P.T. Daly doing his best to advance the Irish Ireland agenda by trying to link up the republican movement with Cumann na nGaedheal, Hobson saw a real possibility of using the Dungannon Clubs in conjunction with the Cultural Revival and the Sinn Fein movement to rebuild Ireland's Gaelic social institutions.<sup>107</sup> To do so effectively Hobson had set up a strong central organisation in Ulster, which would link up with the Sinn Fein organisation, Cumann na nGaedheal, in the South, for which Daly was also a full-time organiser.<sup>108</sup>

### **Mazzini's Organisational Blueprint**

The logic of Hobson's and Daly's positions was the eventual unification of all three Sinn Fein organisations. Thus, having called on Mazzini's educational approach, Hobson went on to write:

The Sinn Fein idea can sweep Ireland from end to end just as soon as the Sinn Fein organisations organise the country.

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<sup>106</sup> Fergus MacLeda (Bulmer Hobson), 'Confession of Faith IV', *Irish Freedom*, April 1911.

<sup>107</sup> Magee, *The IRB*, p. 299.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

The movement is making very rapid progress through the country. [But] The greatest need is a strong central organisation.<sup>109</sup>

In calling for such an organisation Hobson was again following Mazzini's organisational blueprint, while expressing his hopes for the Dungannon Clubs in the process. Mazzini had already called for an Italian equivalent in his essay, 'Note on the Organisation of Young Italy', which Hobson quoted the last paragraph from, on the need to regenerate man in his ideas and sentiments.<sup>110</sup> As a means of doing this for the IRB through the Dungannon Clubs he turned to Mazzini's blueprint for Young Italy, which is particularly apparent in the Dungannon Clubs' organisational arrangements.

Additional Rule 3, which called for a monthly report from the Dungannon Clubs and IRB centres [heads] in the provinces, owes its origins to Mazzini's advice to Young Italy in 'Organisation of the Association'.<sup>111</sup> The same was true of Additional Rule 3c, which states the report should contain details of the 'Names of all members of local Boards and their attitude to Sinn Fein'.<sup>112</sup> Both of these stipulations can be found in the extract from Mazzini below:

Each provincial congress directs the most important affairs and operations of the society in its own province: it selects the signs of recognition for the provincial members, and transmits to them the instructions of the central congress, forwarding to it in return a monthly report of the progress of the association in its

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<sup>109</sup> Leader column, *The Republic*, 13 December 1906, p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> See accompanying text to footnote 71. Mazzini, 'Note on the Organisation of Young Italy' (1861), in *Life and Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 180-181.

<sup>111</sup> NLI MS 17, 453, Dungannon Clubs First Conference of Clubs: Additional Rules Passed at a Subsequent Meeting of the Executive, n/d. There is a Mazzinian crossover with the Quakers, which as a member of the Society of Friends Hobson would have been aware of: the ideological conformity created by constant Executive scrutiny through monthly reports has strong parallels with the Quaker system of scrutiny through queries and advices.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

province, the material means collected, and the state of opinion in different localities, with observations as to the measures required to be taken.<sup>113</sup>

Additional Rule 3c of the Dungannon Clubs' constitution, which borrowed from Mazzini by stating the report should contain details of the 'Names of all members of local Boards, and their attitude to Sinn Fein', had its origins in the Belfast Dungannon Club's manifesto. This noted that:

Four million and forty-eight thousand, five hundred pounds (£4,048,500) is levied in this country by way of local taxation, exclusive of the agricultural grant, amounting to another 750,000. The spending of these monies is in the hands of our own people, and were Irish manufactured goods exclusively specified by every Board in Ireland, and were Irish materials alone used in all works under their control, restarted industry and manufacture would result.<sup>114</sup>

As the Dungannon Clubs expanded there were greater opportunities to exploit this bounty of local money, and Hobson used Mazzini's prescription to Young Italy as the basis for the Dungannon Clubs' constitution to ensure this happened.

This would obviously help in the pursuit of the Dungannon Clubs constructive programme, and dovetailed neatly with the Sloan-Crawfordites' and the constructive aspect of Mazzini's thought. In terms of the latter, discerning the attitude of the local boards in a bid to see if they would aid Sinn Fein's constructive programme was the

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<sup>113</sup> Mazzini, Autobiographical Notes Continued [from 'Note on the Organisation of Young Italy'], in *Life and Writings*, Volume I., pp. 242-243.

<sup>114</sup> 'Manifesto of the Dungannon Club', in Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, pp. 96-97.

Ulster equivalent of Mazzini's call in 'Organisation of the Association' for details of 'the state of opinion in different localities'.

Building on Mazzini's prescription, Hobson extended Additional Rule 3 to provide for a monthly report to the Executive from all Clubs and Centres on:

- a) What local industries exist in their district.
- b) What local industries could be started in their district.<sup>115</sup>

The purpose of this was to ensure Hobson's and the Executive's control over the process, but also to support Ireland's existing industries and foster new ones. In this way Hobson would build up the national economic life through constructive initiatives. Extending this principle, Additional Rule 10 stated:

- That the Executive appoint from its members Sub Committees for c) industry, and e) General and Social Questions.<sup>116</sup>

All this was in line with Mazzini's prescription and it is notable that Additional Rule 4 stated: 'That all Clubs be recommended to start co-operative banks on lines furnished by the Executive', something in line with Mazzini's constructive programme.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> NLI, MS 17, 453, Dungannon Clubs' First Conference of Clubs: Additional Rules Passed at a Subsequent Meeting of the Executive, n/d.

<sup>116</sup> This occurred at the same meeting the Executive passed Additional Rules 3a and b and Rule 4. The Executive also made provision for sub-committees on a) Organisation, b) Education, d) Physical Training and Athletics.

<sup>117</sup> NLI, MS 17, 453, Dungannon Club's First Conference of Clubs: Additional Rules Passed at a Subsequent Meeting of the Executive, n/d.

Hobson saw the use of Co-operatives as particularly important in financing industry and later wrote that ‘capital for the development of the country is not available readily enough and in sufficient quantity for our needs, [so] we are of necessity driven to look for a co-operative way of escape from the present position.’<sup>118</sup> This constituted a further extension of Mazzini’s logic, which called for the formation of Peoples’ Banks and advised workmen that: ‘The remedy for your present condition is the *union* of capital and labour in the same hands.’<sup>119</sup> In short these were the Co-operative Banks Hobson called for in ‘On Co-operation’, his May 1907 article for *The Republic*.

The parallel between Hobson’s thinking on the issue and Mazzini’s can also be seen in the latter’s statement on the distribution of credit, which:

... ought to be carried out, not by the Government nor by a Central National Bank, but by local Banks administered by elective Communal Councils and with the supervision of the Central Government.<sup>120</sup>

Through the Dungannon Clubs and the planned Sinn Fein League, Hobson aimed to imitate Mazzini’s thinking across Ulster and beyond. For the local banks in Mazzini’s plan read the Raiffeisen banks that were being used in Ireland in conjunction with the Unionist Horace Plunkett’s Co-operative efforts.<sup>121</sup> In the same way, for communal councils read Dungannon Club branches, and for supervision by the central government read the Dungannon Clubs’ Executive. Hobson aimed to use the last two to offset government influence, and prevent a repeat of what happened with Plunkett’s Co-

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<sup>118</sup> B.H. (Bulmer Hobson), ‘On Co-operation’, *The Republic*, 9 May 1907, p. 9.

<sup>119</sup> Mazzini, ‘The Duties of Man’, in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man*, p. 108.

<sup>120</sup> Mazzini, ‘Conclusion’, in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man*, p. 117.

<sup>121</sup> Trevor West, *Horace Plunkett: Co-operation and Politics, An Irish Biography* (Gerrard’s Cross: Colin Smythe, 1986), p. 35 and 89.

operative programme, which had been co-opted into the previous Conservative and Unionist Government's policy of constructive unionism.<sup>122</sup> As Hobson noted the Co-operative movement:

... must not be tied down, and regulated, and hampered by any English overseeing authority. It must be free to develop and adapt itself to the needs of the people, and above all things, it must never allow itself to be subsidised, or assisted by the English authority in any way.<sup>123</sup>

Hobson could not permit any subsidy or assistance because this would prevent him from 'build[ing] a co-operative system that will war with his [the Englishman's] economic conquest of this country.'<sup>124</sup>

From all of this Hobson had a policy capable of uniting the IRB, liberal Unionists and the AOH due to its conformity to Mazzini's view that 'Questions of *political* organisation will overlay the true, the supreme question which is a *moral* and *social* one.'<sup>125</sup> However, the other Sinn Fein leader, Arthur Griffith, did not share this idea of what the Sinn Fein policy should be.

### **Hobson, Griffith and Mazzinian Sinn Fein**

Michael Laffan has stated that Griffith 'hated British rule but did not simply reject British wealth and power; Ireland, too, should have its place in the sun.'<sup>126</sup> He also notes that

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<sup>122</sup> Andrew Gailey, *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The Experience of Constructive Unionism 1890-1905* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), p. 18.

<sup>123</sup> B.H. (Bulmer Hobson), 'On Co-operation', *The Republic*, 9 May 1907, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Mazzini, 'Faith and the Future', in Jones (ed.), *The Duties of Man*, p. 146. N.B. I have also used the earlier *Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1891). This was probably Hobson's source, since *The Duties of Man* does not contain the preface to 'Faith and the Future', which Hobson cites.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Fein Party, 1916-23* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

under Griffith Sinn Fein was careful not to produce a social policy.<sup>127</sup> Both aspects were in contrast to Hobson, who due to his Mazzinian views took the contrary position. Since Hobson's was an evolutionary approach, with Ireland 'evolving her own national life,' some sort of compromise might have been reached.<sup>128</sup> However, this became impossible after the Philadelphia Clan-na-Gael leader, Joseph McGarrity, insisted toward the end of Hobson's tour of America's east coast (February to April, 1907) that the three Sinn Fein organisations amalgamate.<sup>129</sup>

As a step toward this there was a meeting in Dundalk in early April where delegates from the Dungannon Clubs and Cumann na nGaedheal decided to amalgamate both organisations into the Sinn Fein League. This happened on 21 April 1907 and the SFL's first object was declared to be "the regaining of the sovereign independence of Ireland". This was a compromise aimed at bringing the National Council in later on. Thus, while Griffith's King, Lords and Commons formula, which was based on the constitution granted to Ireland in 1782, was rejected, the Dungannon Clubs' republicanism was not declared.<sup>130</sup> Hobson probably felt able to compromise, despite Mazzini's warnings against this, due to the assumption the Dungannon Clubs and Cumann na nGaedheal would capture the SFL's Executive.<sup>131</sup> This did not happen however, and Griffith's Dublin contingent became the dominant force instead. McCartan wrote to McGarrity in Philadelphia:

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Press, 1999), p. 6.

<sup>127</sup> Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, p. 258.

<sup>128</sup> 'The Republic', *The Republic*, 13 Dec. 1906.

<sup>129</sup> That is the Dungannon Clubs, Cumann na nGaedheal and the National Council. NLI MS 17, 457, McGarrity to McCartan, 3 Mar. 1907.

<sup>130</sup> Davis, *Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Fein*, p. 33.

<sup>131</sup> Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, Vol. I., p. 183.

The Convention in Dundalk came off alright but Dublin sent a big crowd and evidently had a slate made out as there were seven Dublin men elected on the Executive and three Belfast men while nobody from any place else in Ireland were [sic] elected though there was a representative from Glasgow and one from London.<sup>132</sup>

This was a problem because Hobson had modelled the SFL's constitution on the Dungannon Clubs', which concentrated power in the Executive's hands. This had enabled Hobson to pursue a Mazzinian programme by directing the Dungannon Clubs, but this power now resided with Griffith. What made matters worse was that although P.T. Daly was elected president and Denis McCullough one of the honorary secretaries, Hobson only held a place on the Executive Committee. Richard Davis has observed that: 'The significance of this apparent demotion is that Hobson being *persona non grata* to Griffith might – if given higher office – have been less likely to achieve a settlement.'<sup>133</sup> Given Hobson's Mazzinian brand of republicanism, which rejected compromise on principle, Davis's assessment seems correct. It was this that prompted Hobson and his supporters, including P.S. O'Hegarty, to try to outvote Griffith on the 1782 constitution at the National Council's convention in August 1907.<sup>134</sup> However, this failed when the motion put forward by P.T. Daly and John Sweetman was passed which amalgamated the SFL and National Council under a policy which was the 1782 formula in all but name. This stated that '... no voluntary agreement would be entered into with England until the British Government recognised the compacts made between the parliaments of Ireland and Britain, and which stated that the only authority competent to make laws binding on the people of Ireland was the parliament of Ireland – a right which was

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<sup>132</sup> NLI MS 17, 617, McCartan to McGarrity, 4 May 1907.

<sup>133</sup> Davis, *Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Fein*, p. 33.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.



acknowledged by Great Britain to be established and not at any future time.' Davis has remarked, 'It is impossible to see how this position differed from that held by Griffith throughout the controversy'.<sup>135</sup> With it Hobson's Mazzinian experiment finally came to an end.

### **Conclusion**

So much of Hobson's programme was centred round using Mazzini's ideas to bring together the AOH, IOO and IRB that there was never any chance that Mazzini's influence would continue once Griffith gained control of the SFL. In addition, Griffith, far from Ulster, did not appreciate as Hobson had, that a socio-economic approach stood a far greater chance of tackling the North's problems. The upshot of this was the strangling at birth of the Unionist/nationalist coalition Hobson hoped to nurture in Ulster. With Hobson also sidelined politically due to his failure against Griffith, there was no longer anyone capable of managing the delicate balance between the Unionist and nationalist groups.

In any case the IRB was increasingly less willing to underpin such a coalition, not that Griffith would have sanctioned the amount of IRB input needed to sustain it. Although the reformers within the organisation still held sway over the physical force men (despite their loss of the Sinn Fein organisation to Griffith), they were not the liberal secularists Hobson's IRB group was. It was not coincidental that that after Hobson's defeat by Griffith the IRB abandoned its progressive secular approach. This is illustrated in its courting of the AOH, which the IRB aimed to convert to Sinn Fein. In April 1909 the IRB reverted to a conspiratorial approach in trying to amalgamate the Board of Erin with

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<sup>135</sup> Davis, *Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Fein*, p. 35.

the American section, which Clan-na-Gael controlled.<sup>136</sup> This halted the previous policy (implemented in Carrickmore and elsewhere) of trying to educate the Board of Erin along secular lines.<sup>137</sup> In effect it also ended any chance of an accommodation with the Sloan-Crawfordites and other liberal Unionists. Following on from this, Lindsay Crawford's efforts to educate Unionists also faltered and he finally gave up the ghost in 1910, emigrating to Canada in June.<sup>138</sup>

During the period 1905-1907 Hobson was certainly Mazzini's Ulster disciple, not least because he adopted Mazzini's blueprint for Young Italy, which Hobson saw as the best way of accomplishing his aims with the Dungannon Clubs. That Hobson failed to achieve his aims effectively ended the Mazzinian experiment in Ulster and prevented it ever really taking hold in Ireland as a whole. True, Hobson did not stop looking to Mazzini's teachings: he did so in the IRB's new paper, *Irish Freedom*, of which he became editor in 1910. However, with the failure of the Dungannon Club project Hobson lost his only real chance to put Mazzini at the heart of the Irish independence movement. This would certainly have been possible given Mazzini's links to the Young Ireland movement, that had enjoyed somewhat of a revival through Literary Fenian organisations like John O'Leary's Young Ireland Society, which was modelled upon the former.<sup>139</sup> But Hobson's failure meant the demise of his socio-economic interpretation of Mazzini, with its emphasis on this as the route to independence. Such an approach could only ever have continued under an Ulster led Sinn Fein movement.

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<sup>136</sup> McGee, *The IRB*, 322-3.

<sup>137</sup> NLI MS 17, 617, McCartan to McGarrity, 26 July 1906.

<sup>138</sup> Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association', 151.

<sup>139</sup> See Matthew Kelly, 'Dublin Fenianism in the 1880s: "The Irish Culture of the Future"?' *The Historical Journal*, 43 (2000).

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