

Fenianism as a global phenomenon: Thomas O'Malley Baines, papal soldier and Fenian convict

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The nineteenth century was an age of globalization. Developments in transport and communications technology brought the Continents closer together; European peasantries were faced with new forms of competition and upheavals in customary social relations as well as with traditional subsistence crises. Millions of European emigrants sought opportunities in the new worlds of the Americas and Australasia. The spread of mass literacy and the popular press enabled the construction of new forms of political and cultural identity (some of which presented themselves in neo-traditionalist terms). One by-product of this globalising process was the Fenian movement, which to an unprecedented extent tried to coordinate a revolutionary organization in Ireland with a support network in America; hostile loyalists stereotyped Fenianism as the product of rootless American adventurers exploiting an easily-led peasantry. Another by-product was the role of new forms of mass devotional literature and improved communications in popularizing Ultramontane Catholicism; for the first time the pope as an individual (as distinct from his office) became the subject of devotion for a worldwide Catholic audience, many of whom saw Pius IX's struggle against Italian nationalism in eschatological terms.¹ This essay is an exercise in micro-history; it explores the impact of these trends on the life of a single individual, Thomas O'Malley Baines, born in 1844, evicted as a child from a smallholding on the marquess of Sligo's estate near Louisburgh, County Mayo,² a Papal soldier in 1860–2, a Fenian recruiter among British soldiers in the years before the Rising, a convict in Australia 1868–72, and finally an Irish nationalist, anti-Chinese agitator, saloonkeeper, and book peddler in California until his death in 1899.

The principal source for Baines' life is his autobiography, *My life in two hemispheres*

1 For Cardinal Manning's widely publicized view of the attack on the Papal States as a sign of the imminence of Antichrist see Robert Gray, *Cardinal Manning: a biography* (London, 1985), pp 175–6. Such views could have the awkward side-effect of precipitating millennialist movements which predicted the end or transformation of the papacy (for example, the Italian prophet described in Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels* [London, 1959], pp 68–71; the Canadian Métis leader Louis Riel expressed similar views in 1884). **2** Baines' origins on the Sligo estate are probably responsible for the mistaken view that he came from Sligo, propounded by William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, the editors of *Devoy's postbag* (Dublin, 1948–53), vol. 2, p. 154; the views are repeated by Keith Amos in *The Fenians in Australia* (Kensington, NSW, 1988), p. 87.

(3rd ed., San Francisco, 1889); this is a slight and badly written production, which does not deserve to rank with the major Fenian autobiographies. After a brief account of his life (saying almost nothing about his family and childhood) it becomes a rambling account of Baines' travels in California and Australia, full of vague laudations of distinguished Irishmen whom he encountered (obviously he hoped they would buy the book), and finally tailing off amidst advertisements and reprints of Young Ireland ballads. Its principal interest lies in the author's attempts to make sense of his troubled life, and to address some of the tensions between his support for the ancien régime in Italy, his membership of a revolutionary Irish secret society, and his denunciations of 'monarchical institutions' as a threat to America.³

Baines opens his account by describing the widespread shock among Irish Catholics early in 1860 at the realization that the Papal States faced an impending threat from the forces of Garibaldi. He equates the threat to the pope with the formative experience of his own childhood:

It dwells in my mind side by side with another picture, that of a family evicted in the famine days of '48, when the landlord, with ruthless hand, tore the roof from off an humble cottage and thrust into bleak winter a mother and her children, to battle with the blast and hunger fever as best she might. Yes, the two pictures are in my mind to-day, and in both was I an actor.⁴

The Baines family remained in Mayo after their eviction; the 1899 *Mayo News* obituary of Baines states that in 1874 his mother and a sister (Bridget) were living in Westport and that both were buried at Oughavale.⁵ Baines says nothing about his family circumstances or his whereabouts at the time he decided to join the Papal Brigade: 'As the reports of [Victor Emmanuel's] doings reached me through the medium of the press,⁶ I, with hundreds of others, enthusiastic for the welfare of the Church, and only anxious to lend a helping hand in her need, volunteered for the front.'⁷

Baines and other recruits made their way clandestinely to Dublin and then to Liverpool, where they met a papal agent. They travelled by rail to Hull, and sailed to Antwerp; the recruits gathered at Malines, where they signed enlistment forms and waited for a fortnight before proceeding to Vienna, and thence to the Papal States.

3 *My life in two hemispheres* (hereafter *LTH*) is available on microfilm at the University of California and the British Library. I wish to thank Donald Jordan of Menlo College for supplying me with a copy of the microfilm, and acknowledge the comments of Patrick O'Sullivan on the British Library copy. I also wish to acknowledge my use of the article on Baines in the Royal Irish Academy *Dictionary of national biography* (2005). 4 *LTH*, p. 8. 5 *Mayo News*, 24 June 1899. 6 Nationalist papers played a significant role in recruiting for the Papal Brigade: after making contact with an Austrian recruiter, A.M. Sullivan published elaborate advice for fellow-countrymen considering 'emigration to Italy', and the office of his paper, *The Nation*, became the centre of the recruiting effort. See A.M. Sullivan, *New Ireland* (London, 1877). 7 *LTH*, p. 7.

Secrecy was necessary since their passage could have been prevented under the Foreign Enlistment Act. Baines observes:

Out of this very secrecy I learned much that was useful to me, and it taught me, young as I was, to keep my eyes open and my mouth shut, and the lesson I learned was turned to good use for the old land.⁸

Rome and the surrounding territory ('the Patrimony of St Peter') was protected by a detachment of French regular soldiers, instructed by their government not to intervene elsewhere; the papal government therefore placed its forces (including French, Belgian and Irish volunteers) in fortresses throughout its other provinces: Umbria, the Marches, and Romagna. Baines served in the Adriatic port of Ancona, located in the most discontented part of the papal states; the French and Irish garrison stationed there hoped to prevent a juncture between the Piedmontese regulars coming down from the North and the Garibaldians marching up from Neapolitan territories.⁹ Baines thought that the Irish Battalion was militarily weakened because the militia officer (and future MP) Major Miles O'Reilly was given the command due to 'local political pressure being brought to bear from Ireland in O'Reilly's favour'. Baines would have preferred the command to be given to Major Fitzgerald, an officer seconded from the Austrian Army, 'a strict disciplinarian and idolized by his men . . . a native born Irishman and had nineteen years practical service in Austria in war and peace, as against the peaceable militia periodical drills of Major O'Reilly'. Baines laments that Fitzgerald was lost to the force 'because he could not and would not become a subordinate to a militia officer of one of the counties of Ireland'.¹⁰ He complains that the English consul at Ancona and the officers of an English mail steamer in the harbour encouraged discontent among the brigade and offered deserters free transportation back to Ireland; Baines writes: 'It is true there was considerable discontent among the most faithful of the Irish troops for the reason that the amount of food, consisting in a great part of macaroni, with which the race was not very familiar, as well as the almost total absence of potatoes . . . and the severity of the drills and the preparations for war naturally made a few malcontents'.¹¹ He also complains that they had no surgeons, and that the Italian physicians were 'charlatans' who practised 'an injudicious mixture of bleeding and starvation'. He praises an Irish interpreter ('the only one of us, barring the sergeant-major, who had a smattering of Italian') who accompanied the Italian doctors on their rounds and surreptitiously increased the diet prescribed for the invalids ('they must not expect Irish boys to live on soap suds and pipe-stoppers like themselves . . . they won't perish of hunger if I can help it').¹²

⁸ *LTH*, p. 8. ⁹ George Berkeley, *The Irish battalion in the papal army of 1860* (Dublin, 1929).

¹⁰ *LTH*, p. 15. Berkeley attributes O'Reilly's appointment to fear that placing an Austrian officer in command would encourage the view that the Austrians were inciting the papal resistance and his resignation as commander of Ancona and return to Austria to a disturbance by soldiers who had been recruited by exaggerated promises with regard to pay and conditions. (pp. 23, 69–70). ¹¹ *LTH*, p. 15. ¹² *LTH*, p. 17.

Ancona surrendered in September 1860, after being besieged from sea and land by Sardinian forces. The prisoners were kept under guard in a field for three days, then marched to Genoa, 'the march lasting thirteen days, on only one of which we were allowed any rest'; after a brief imprisonment they sailed to Marseilles. Baines shows himself particularly concerned to defend the Irish volunteers against the accusations made by the British press at the time that they were 'cowards' and 'mercenaries'. He quotes the Italian general who commanded the siege of Ancona and the report of the French General Lamoricière (commander-in-chief of the papal forces) as proof of their prowess in battle:

From the English point of view, they were fanatics, but certainly not mercenaries. They left country, home and friends to fight for a cause, in which, rightly or wrongly as Englishmen might judge, they deemed it honourable and holy to die . . . Mercenary considerations could have no place in their motives; for the pay of a Papal soldier was merely nominal, and his rations were poor indeed.¹³

After the surrender most of the Irish troops returned to Ireland (their expenses being paid by public subscription). Baines was among a group of thirty-six or thirty-seven who turned back at Naples and went to Rome, where they formed a small unit called the Company of St Patrick within the papal army, defending the remaining papal territory (the Patrimony of St Peter). As a mark of special honour Pius IX invited them to receive 'the Sacrament of the Eucharist . . . from his own hand on Christmas morning, 1860 . . . in the sisters' chapel of the Vatican'. It appears that this involved the distribution of pre consecrated Hosts rather than a full celebration of Mass. After communion, Baines continues,

His Holiness, Pius the Ninth, then held up the fisherman's ring which was reverently saluted by each communicant with a fervent kiss. After which, we, with the Franco-Belgian troops, our late comrades in the war, were marched to the Royal Salon of the Vatican, where we were supplied with refreshments, consisting of chocolate, coffee, and ice cream, we being waited upon, not by the household servants, but by the princes and peers of the church, namely, the cardinals and bishops, who vied with each other to honour us by waiting on us, and to show us the most marked attentions and courtesies.¹⁴

It was a remarkable experience for a sixteen-year-old from Louisburgh.

Baines remained in the papal forces until 1862, participating in several border skirmishes with Italian nationalist forces (he mentions specifically battles at 'Point Carriga' and 'Torrieto on the Tiber'). His comrades included Myles Keogh, later killed with Custer at the Little Big Horn.¹⁵ With the termination of hostilities, Baines left Rome for Ireland, arriving in Dublin in November 1862. He notes:

13 *LTH*, pp 9–11. 14 *LTH*, p. 12. 15 *LTH*, pp 17–18.

At that time, in Dublin, they were organizing a new Fire Department. [Sir John Gray] who was chairman of the Water Works Committee of the Corporation, was the leading figure in the enterprise. As almost all the new members were Papal soldiers, I resolved to join.¹⁶

Possibly we see here an exercise of Corporation patronage in favour of the former papal soldiers. Baines spent the next two years as a fireman.

Shortly after his return to Ireland Baines came into contact with the IRB. 'Of course', he said, 'the cause was to me a dear one and I readily joined.' From 1864 he worked (overseen by John Devoy) full-time as one of the IRB agents who mingled with Irish soldiers, trying to recruit them to the Fenian cause. He recalls swearing in thirty-nine soldiers in one day on the Curragh Camp in April 1865, narrowly escaping arrest through a warning from a friend.¹⁷ He writes: 'I enrolled many thousand men in the good cause, besides the number enrolled by those having authority from me.'

Baines was also a member of a 'Committee of Safety', led by John Cody and linked to Devoy, which assassinated informers despite the IRB leadership's disapproval of such tactics.¹⁸ He recounts one such incident:

There was one of those named George Clark who was detected disseminating treason among the [papal] Brigade [at Ancona] and encouraging them to desert and avail themselves of the protection offered by the English emissaries . . . he subsequently became a traitor after returning to Ireland at the expense of the English Government. He joined the revolutionary organization then existing and became a loud-mouthed advocate of the organization, but while pretending to be truthful he was found making visits to the detective office in the lower castle yard and betrayed his country and his companions. Detectives from the organization, however, were on his track, and after being fully satisfied as to his treachery he received a trial by a court-martial composed of those in authority, and [was] sentenced to death. It is needless for me to say that he was found shot on the banks of the Royal Canal in a dying condition, but was unable to furnish the names of those who gave him free transportation to his last home.¹⁹

Here Baines' narrative is like some War of Independence reminiscences, where a speaker describes an incident in a context implying his personal involvement, but does not specifically acknowledge this because of a residual inhibition against openly admitting to having taken life. It is also relevant that when Baines wrote this he still hoped to revisit Ireland.²⁰

¹⁶ *LTH*, p. 18. ¹⁷ *LTH*, p. 70. ¹⁸ Amos, pp 84–5. ¹⁹ *LTH*, pp 15–16. According to Berkeley (p. 70) Clark, a veteran of a Highland regiment, was one of two leaders of a mutiny at Ancona; when questioned he claimed the British Government had paid him £20 to enlist in the Brigade and stir up dissension. ²⁰ I owe this point to Peter Hart; for an example

In 1865–6 Baines worked with Michael O'Brien, the future Manchester martyr, on the organization in Britain.²¹ He was arrested at Liverpool on 16 August 1866 and returned to Ireland.²² A particular source of grief was the confiscation of his papal service medal; in later life he sought to obtain a replacement from the Vatican.²³ Baines was kept on remand until his trial on 12 February 1867, when he was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. He writes of his incarceration:

My prison life was a daily torture . . . Throughout the winter I was kept in a miserable cell, pierced through with cold and often famished with hunger. One hour was given for exercise in the ice-covered yard. No reading was allowed but such as was given out by the wardens; and you may be sure it did not inform me of what was going on in the outside world. No communication was allowed and the use of tobacco was forbidden . . . had it not been for a strong constitution I certainly would not have survived the terrors of that winter.²⁴

Baines' account of his experiences in Millbank Penitentiary and on board the *Hougoumont* (the last convict transport sent to Australia) is remarkably cursory; there is nothing like the detail contained in O'Donovan Rossa's prison memoirs or the recently published diary/memoirs of the voyage by Fennell, Cashman and Casey.²⁵ He does mention the Fenians' disgust and humiliation at being strip-searched on arrival in Millbank and their annoyance at having to share the ship with non-political convicts ('a contingent of the vilest cut-throats in England') between London and Portland.²⁶

of a memoir displaying this verbal pattern see Michael Flannery, *Accepting the challenge: the memoirs of Michael Flannery* (Dublin, 2001), pp 70–1. Note also Baines' sarcastic repetition of the references to free passage and detectives – the latter serving to emphasize that Clark's killers saw themselves as acting on behalf of a constituted authority. ²¹ *LTH*, pp 19, 53. ²² The statement by Terence Dooley that Baines was arrested in February 1867 seems to confuse trial and arrest (*The greatest of the Fenians: John Devoy and Ireland* [Dublin, 2003] p. 59). ²³ *LTH*, p. 80. ²⁴ *LTH*, p. 20. ²⁵ Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, *O'Donovan Rossa's prison life: six years in English prisons* (New York, 1874); C.W. Sullivan III (ed.), *Fenian diary: Denis Cashman on board the Hougoumont 1867–1868* (Dublin, 2001); Thomas McCarthy Fennell, *Voyage of the Hougoumont and life at Fremantle: the story of an Irish rebel*, ed. Philip Fennell and Marie King (Philadelphia, 2000); John Sarsfield Casey, *Journal of a voyage from Portland to Fremantle on board the convict ship 'Hougoumont' Cap Cozens commander October 12th 1867*, ed. Martin Kevin Cusack (Bryn Mawr, 1988). Baines is mentioned in the Cashman diary, pp 73, 137 (they were in adjoining bunks; see Amos, p. 107). Recent secondary accounts of the voyage may be found in Thomas Kenneally, *The great shame* (London, 1998), and Peter Stevens, *The voyage of the Catalpa* (London, 2002). ²⁶ *LTH*, pp 21, 47; compare Fennell, pp 61–2, and Cashman, pp 136–7. When visiting San Quentin prison during his later career as a bookseller, he told the warden that in his opinion the difference between English and American prisons was as great as that between heaven and hell. He promised to enlarge on his observations of American prisons in a subsequent edition which he intended to produce for sale in Ireland. See *LTH*, pp 35–6.

On 9 January 1868 they arrived off Fremantle in Western Australia. Baines observed: 'It seemed as if the whole police force of the colony had been sent to meet us . . . from terror of the Fenians'. They were set to work quarrying and roadmaking. Again he recalls only scattered details: the first march under the burning sun of Australia, after which they drank themselves sick from a stream; sleeping in 'the buggy church' (an insect-infested building used by all denominations); and hiding coins in a tin of paint, from which they were retrieved with his bare hands on release. When most of the civilian Fenians were released in May 1869, Baines and eight others were detained in prison as particularly dangerous characters.

On 11 March 1871 Baines and the remaining civilian Fenian prisoners received conditional pardons, which bound them not to return to Britain or Ireland during the unexpired portion of their sentence. They travelled to New Zealand (from whence they were promptly deported), and then to Sydney. After spending some fruitless months in the Queensland goldfields, Baines sailed for America, arriving on 1 March 1872.²⁷

Soon after his arrival in San Francisco Baines became a saloonkeeper 'on the southeast corner of Kearny and Pine' (possibly funded by a testimonial of £125 which he had received in Queensland).²⁸ This proved a risky business: in 1875 he was shot in the back by a discontented bartender, whom he refused to prosecute.²⁹ Baines was active in the 1877 Kearneyite movement (Workingmen's Party of California), a populist campaign against Chinese immigration. When he published *My life in two hemispheres* in 1889 his views on this subject had not changed:

There is another rising worthy Irishman, who is deserving of credit and well worthy of public mention in my humble work, namely, David Barry. He is deserving of all praise for his manly stand, in excluding at all times from his cigar factory all Chinese labour, and employing only the white race . . . Few businessmen in San Francisco would sacrifice their own interests as Mr Barry has done when it was within his power to employ cheap Chinese labour . . . He will always meet a hearty support from his fellow citizens on account of his unselfish nature.³⁰

The latter pages of the book duly include an advertisement for Barry's 'White Labour Cigars'. 'Poverty is a stranger in California', Baines boasts at another point, 'despite the treaty of introduction at their option of the children of Confucius, loving his nationality but lacking the moral principles'.³¹

²⁷ *LTH*, pp 21–5; *Amos*, pp 188–90, 194. ²⁸ *Amos* p. 194; *LTH*, p. 52. ²⁹ *Mayo News*, 24 June 1899; *LTH*, pp 41–2. ³⁰ *LTH*, p. 67. Baines does not appear to have been influenced by the more strictly labourist element of the Kearneyite programme, for his book praises numerous Irish-American businessmen, including executives of the railroad, whose political dominance was widely denounced. They were also potential book buyers. ³¹ *LTH*, p. 97. The Kearneyites demanded revision of the Burlingame Treaty between China and America, which permitted Chinese immigration. See Alexander Saxton, *The indispensable*

During a near-fatal illness in January 1877 Baines married a Miss McCarthy who had nursed him devotedly; he emphasizes that her sister and aunt were Dominican nuns. The couple had two sons, Robert Emmet Baines and Thomas Addis Emmet Baines.³²

Baines retained links with the IRB; a reference in *Devoy's postbag* suggests Devoy was aware of his presence in California.³³ In 1880 Baines revisited Australia to recover the remains of Patrick Keating, a Fenian military prisoner who had died in Western Australia.³⁴ He incidentally took the opportunity to visit Michael Dwyer's grave. Baines may have transacted other IRB business on this journey; he mentions that his mission had to be kept secret from the authorities, though he then describes the people and places he visited and reprints testimonials he received in Australia, some mentioning his status as a papal veteran.³⁵ Baines' presence in tandem with two other Fenian agents was made known to the authorities by an Australian Fenian who initially feared that they were planning a dynamite attack similar to those being carried out in Britain by IRB agents; Baines was almost arrested before the informant discovered and reported to the police the true purpose of his visit.³⁶ The authorities believed that the planned disinterment was abandoned; Baines claims Keating's remains were secretly dug up and brought to California 'by what means I am not at liberty to state',³⁷ where Baines tried unsuccessfully to raise funds to bring them back to Ireland for burial in Glasnevin. He stated that he felt responsible for Keating's fate because he had originally recruited him to the IRB, and during the voyage of the *Hougomont* Keating had expressed to him a wish to be buried in Ireland.³⁸ A San Francisco press report that Baines had gone to Australia to dig up buried treasure for the IRB indicate the colourful image he had acquired.³⁹

Shumsky's account of the Kearneyites stresses that late nineteenth-century San Francisco was a place of fluid identity and grandiose self-invention. At one end of the scale were the 'bonanza kings': self-made businessmen, sometimes of Irish descent, who rapidly adopted gaudy imitations of European aristocratic lifestyles and distanced themselves to varying degrees from their origins. Baines praises one of the 'bonanza kings', the former senator James G. Fair, for his generosity to the poor and distressed,⁴⁰ but recalls how another 'would not deign to either write a letter himself declining an invitation to act as vice president at an Irish national meeting held in the city of San Francisco in 1886, but directed his secretary to reply, declining

enemy: labour and the anti-Chinese movement in California (Berkeley, 1971). 32 *LTH*, pp 38, 39–43. 33 M. Moynahan to Mortimer Moynahan, in *Devoy's postbag*. 34 *LTH*, pp 85–96. 35 *LTH*, pp 98–105. 36 Amos, pp 259–65. Baines' memoir, unavailable to Amos, conclusively disproves the theory (which Amos mentions) that the whole story of Baines' visit was concocted by the informant as a practical joke against the police. 37 *LTH*, pp 88–9. 38 *LTH*, pp 46–7. Keating was a former private in the 5th Dragoon Guards, whose death sentence (inflicted by court-martial) was commuted to life imprisonment; he and the other military Fenian prisoners were retained when the civilians were released. He died in January 1874 of heart disease, exacerbated by prison labour. See Kenneally, pp 481, 545; and Stevens, p. 126. 39 Amos, p. 273. 40 *LTH*, p. 67.

the invitation in a curt manner'.⁴¹ The other side of this phenomenon was Emperor Norton the First (Joshua Norton), a businessman who reacted to business ruin by retreating into a fantasy world as the self-proclaimed Emperor of America, humoured and indulged by fellow-citizens who saw in him the emblem of their own possible fate.⁴²

Baines' last decades were spent in a more economically marginal position than any of the other memoirists. He became a book-pedlar (travelling the state on foot soliciting advance subscriptions for books) which suited his love of rambling. Baines' assertions of his nationalism grew increasingly flamboyant. He vowed never to shave his beard or cut his hair until Ireland was liberated, and became a familiar San Francisco character recognizable by his 'flowing locks, military cape, and soldierly bearing'.⁴³ Baines remained active at local level in Democrat and Irish politics (the Democrats having reabsorbed the remnants of Kearneyism). In 1883 he was Grand Marshal at a mock funeral honouring Patrick O'Donnell, 'the avenger of every patriotic Irishman in the world in giving his death blow to Carey the informer'. An advertisement for 'W.J. Mallady, Funeral Director and Embalmer', is accompanied by Baines' praise for his 'benevolence and charity' in lending a hearse and six horses for the occasion.⁴⁴ *My life in two hemispheres* formed part of this self-assertion: it presented his life in terms of 'what was suffered for love of country', and by leaving the text open through promises of further additions Baines could regard himself as retaining the power to commemorate or damn selected California Irishmen in the eyes of posterity.

Baines was active in the National League in the mid-1880s, and makes admiring references to Bradlaugh and even to Gladstone. At the same time he presents Britain as engaged in a continuing conspiracy against liberty in America as well as Ireland – a view then widespread among the depressed primary producers of western America who attributed the American government's persistent deflationary policies to British influence upon the Eastern élite.⁴⁵

A chapter on 'The Political Tutors of Young Ireland' represents Baines' attempt to reconcile his past loyalties with his subsequent attachment to American republicanism. The 'tutors' in question are the job-hunting Irish politicians of the 1850s who discredited parliamentary action, and the British government, which he presents as not merely supporting but creating revolutionary movements across Europe. His description of this betrays a certain ambivalence. Canning is praised for having seen that there was 'no certain progress for humanity under the baleful conventions of crowned despots' and the revolutionaries are described as 'asserting with fire and sword their inalienable rights to constitutional government'.⁴⁶ Elsewhere in the

⁴¹ *LTH*, p. 75. ⁴² Neil Larry Shumsky, *The evolution of political protest and the Workingmen's Party of California* (Columbus, OH, 1991). ⁴³ *LTH*, p. 23. The fact that he was 5 feet ten and a half inches in height – unusually tall for the period – must have added to this impression. ⁴⁴ *LTH*, p. 105. ⁴⁵ Richard Hofstadter, *The age of reform: from Bryan to FDR* (New York, 1955), and *The paranoid style in American politics and other essays* (New York, 1966). ⁴⁶ *LTH*, p. 107.

volume he tries to render the defence of the papal states in American terms by declaring that the pope's territories 'were his as legitimately as the quarter section of land which the honest citizen is entitled to in this Republic'.⁴⁷ At the same time the British are presented as working through a sinister network of faceless agents who are 'a minister in Vienna . . . a general in Hindostan . . . an admiral in Portugal . . . a Puseyite in Naples . . . a cabinet officer in Rome . . . a super-bible man in Ireland . . . an historian in one country and a pamphleteer in another, a pugilist in a third, a tourist in a fourth'. Palmerston is presented as 'the arch apostle of revolution in central and southern Europe' who

so worked the Foreign Office as to make it a 'Head Centre' of revolutionary movements . . . Is it to be wondered that Ireland rallied the little strength and pluck that she had left? Can anyone be surprised that she took a lesson from the Right Honourable and extremely versatile Palmerston? That she tried her luck with Phoenix societies and republican clubs?⁴⁸

The contrast between British praise for national self-determination in Italy, and opposition to it in Ireland, had often been commented on by Irish nationalists. Baines even touches on, without fully endorsing, the view widely canvassed in right-wing circles on the Continent and taken up by some prominent Irish priests, that Palmerston⁴⁹ was in fact the head of the Illuminati, a super-Masonic society conspiring the general overthrow of government, religion and morality in Europe.⁵⁰

Like other Irish-American polemicists, Baines responds to nativist accusations that the Irish were tools of a Roman plot against American liberties by positing a rival conspiracy theory in which Britain was said to be manipulating Protestant religious sentiment in order to regain control over America.⁵¹ He attributed Grover Cleveland's defeat in the 1888 presidential election to British machinations:

We can even at this remote day point out the secret, well-developed intrigues of the enemies of America in London now being directed to the United

47 *LTH*, p. 37. 48 *LTH*, pp 108–10. 49 Baines' hesitation is understandable, for Irish clerical exponents of this view frequently invoked the French revolutionary connections of James Stephens and John O'Mahony in order to suggest that they were not merely Palmerston's agents but his employees. 50 George F. Dillon, *The war of Antichrist with Christian civilisation* (Dublin, 1885). A revised version, edited by Denis Fahey with an introduction expounding his own anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, was produced by the Britons Society in 1950 as *Grand Orient Freemasonry unmasked as the secret power behind Communism*. Baines cites 'Dr Cahill, writing in July 1859' who seems to have advanced a similar thesis. The Illuminati have been a staple of conspiracy theorists since the French royalist Abbé Barruel blamed them for the French Revolution in the 1790s. 51 See Michael A. Gordon, *The Orange riots: Irish political violence in New York City, 1870 and 1871* (Ithaca, NY, 1993), pp 47–9, for Irish-American denunciations of the nativist American Protective Association as composed of draft-dodging Canadian Orangemen plotting to subject America to monarchic rule.

States as in the past toward Europe. The revolutionary emissaries of the past are now partly replaced by her wandering representatives known as the Salvation Army [whom Baines as a former saloon-keeper might have personal motives for disliking] . . . It is believed that temperance and salvation is not their objective motive, but rather to advance English interests, for which they are paid by British gold under General Booth, a general, it is presumed, who never yet smelled battle except afar off, and that under his false garb of Christianity . . . Every intelligent reader who reads this chapter on the art of English conspiracy throughout the Continent of Europe can readily see that this line she is now adopting of finding employment for her ex-convicts is a deep scheme to proselytise in her interests in this republic . . . she no longer has any penal settlements abroad and therefore . . . the off-scourings of . . . convict establishments . . . are taken and trained in the name of religion for the Salvation Army of the United States and Canada.⁵²

Baines also invokes his former papal service when criticising Leo XIII's rescript condemning the Plan of Campaign. He argues that the fault for this does not lie with the pope but with misinformation from 'some of his prejudiced representatives who visited Ireland⁵³ who are as ignorant of Ireland as an equivalent foreign visitor might be of Italy':

It is well known that the hand of British power was behind the conspirators who were instrumental in the destruction of the temporal power of the Pope. In fact she was in full sympathy with Napoleon III, Victor Emmanuel and the Prime Minister of Sardinia, Cavour, who were the arch-conspirators in the destruction of the temporal power in 1859 and 1860.⁵⁴ A country that was treacherous to the Pope and a party to the robbery of his dominions should not receive any encouragement from his Holiness now against the struggling of the Irish race for liberty from oppressive laws. The Irish have ever been faithful to the Holy See and came to its rescue when attacked by a combination of royal robbers by furnishing men and money for its defence.

He states that he writes 'under the guidance of two ex-Papal soldiers, who fought at Ancona and were taken prisoners of war at that place by Victor Emanuel's army in September, 1860'.⁵⁵

On 5 April 1899, while paying one of his regular visits to the priests at St Mary's

⁵² *LTH*, pp 110–11. ⁵³ A reference to Monsignor Persico. ⁵⁴ Napoleon III is included because of his failure to allow his troops stationed in Rome to reinforce the papal garrisons elsewhere in the Papal States during the invasion of 1860. ⁵⁵ *LTH*, pp 113–4. Baines does not comment on Pius IX's 1870 condemnation of Fenianism, possibly because it did not catch his attention during his imprisonment in Australia. The two ex-Papal soldiers may be Patrick McKeague, best man at his wedding, and Thomas Garvey, who lived at Point Tiburon. See *LTH*, p. 40 (McKeague), and pp 36–7 (Garvey).

College on the Mission road in San Francisco, Baines suffered a stroke; he died on 10 April in St Mary's Hospital, San Francisco. At the time of his death his son Robert Emmet Baines was a US soldier stationed in Cuba; newspapers in Mayo and San Francisco published brief accounts of his career.⁵⁶ His account of his own career is too fragmentary to provide a clear picture of how far he was a victim of the upheavals of nineteenth-century Ireland and how much responsibility he bore for his own sufferings and those of others; at times he gives the impression of a Eugene O'Neill character speaking in an idiom derived from *The Nation*. In the end, his self-portrait is a reminder of the ability of romantic nationalism and devotional Catholicism to give a degree of structure and meaning to many turbulent lives.

⁵⁶ *Mayo News*, 24 June 1899, 5; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 April 1899; *San Francisco Examiner*, 12 April 1899.