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PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS

An extract from a new book by Desmond Gregory, "The Beneficent Usurpers: a History of the British in Madeira", to be published in 1988.

Dr. Robert Reid Kalley was a doctor of medicine, a wealthy man and a fervent Calvinist (a member of the Free Church of Scotland) and also a very persuasive advocate. He arrived in Madeira in 1838, taught himself the Portuguese language, qualified as a doctor in Lisbon and then proceeded at his own expense to found no less than 17 schools, the teachers and books employed in which he paid for out of his own pocket. He also set up his own dispensary and gave medical advice and treatment and medicines completely free to those who were unable to pay, having obtained from the local authorities permission to import the medicines free. He was publicly acclaimed for his great philanthropy, and if he had only been content to confine himself to philanthropy, he would have encountered no opposition, save perhaps among local doctors who claimed he was taking away their patients. But Kalley was an ardent religious preacher, anxious to convert the Madeirans to Calvinism.[1] He began to hold meetings at his house on Sundays and on public holidays, attended by up to twenty people, at which he read and expounded the scriptures. He did the same at his surgery, to his patients awaiting medical advice, and enjoyed here more than in a pulpit

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1. **Elucidário Madeirense** vol. 2 pp 207-9.
A very full account is given of Dr. Kalley's activities in Madeira from the Protestant point of view in Rev. Herman Norton's **Record of the facts concerning the persecutions at Madeira in 1843 and 1846** (New York 1849), W. Carus Wilson's **The Madeira Persecutions** (London Religious Tract Society 1856) and J. Roddam Tate's **Madeira or the spirit of anti-Christ in 1846** (London 1847), and from the Catholic viewpoint in Anton Manoel de Sant Anna e Vasconcellos's **Revista histórica do proselytismo anti-católico na Ilha da Madeira pelo Dr. Robert Reid Kalley** (Funchal 1845).

a completely captive audience.[2]

Complaints were lodged against him in Lisbon and the Governor of Madeira, in May 1841, gave an order that his addresses must stop. However there was a public outcry, representations by prominent citizens were made to the Governor on his behalf, and the municipality of Funchal accorded him a public vote of thanks. Kalley then saw the bishop of Funchal and agreed to cease addressing the people on subjects which were patently religious, in consequence of which the Governor agreed to rescind the order he had issued earlier.[3] Kalley however was not a man who found it easy to keep his word where evangelisation was concerned. After a visit he paid to Scotland in the course of 1842, to confer with various religious leaders, he returned to Madeira full of zeal and resumed his active proselytising. But only when Kalley induced some disciples to visit the Presbyterian chapel, where they then received communion according to the Calvinistic rite, and only when he spoke disrespectfully of the Catholic Church and some of its teachings, did the clergy, led by a new bishop, make vigorous protests to the Lisbon government.[4]. The Governor, receiving orders to act, arranged for the police to picket Kalley's house to prevent any Portuguese visiting him, and sent an order to the relevant parishes to stop the teaching in Kalley's schools. The police also tried to prevent patients attending Kalley's surgery.

According to a letter Kalley wrote in June to the *Glasgow Scottish Guardian*, three of his converts had been imprisoned and awaited trial for apostasy and two others had gone into hiding, charged with a similar offence. Bibles had been seized from people's hands and a canon had demanded the bibles be burnt.

2. Kalley to Wathen 2 September 1841 Bible Society records (1841 box).

3. Wilson op. cit. p. 5.
Kalley to Stoddart 27 May 1843 copy enclos with Stoddart to Aberdeen no. 13. 31 May 1843 FO 63/570.

4. Stoddart to Bidwell 25 February 1843 pte. Stoddart to Aberdeen no 13 31 May 1843 and enclos FO 63/570.

Nevertheless, his letter went on, he continued to give two discourses daily at which as many as 100 might be present, and was still receiving applications to receive communion at the Scottish kirk.[5]

Kalley maintained that in preaching the gospel he was protected by the recent treaty signed with Portugal in 1842. He complained of being attacked in the press as well as from every parish pulpit and called an atheist, infidel, heretic, anti-Christ and unbaptised Devil, while women who attended his meetings were accused of being prostitutes.[6] The consul Stoddart, while awaiting instructions from London on how he ought to act in the matter, persuaded Kalley to stop admitting people to his house on Sundays and holidays, but the doctor still continued to give religious instruction at his surgery.[7]

Consul Stoddart (like most other British residents, as opposed to the winter visitors) had little sympathy with Kalley. He told the Foreign Office he considered the local authorities had shown great forbearance in trying to carry out their instructions in a way that would seem the least offensive. But Kalley, he went on, was obstinate and tried to interpret laws and treaties in a manner that suited his own views.[8] And when, in September 1843, Kalley was arrested, charged not only with heresy but being an accomplice to blasphemy and apostasy, and was not even permitted bail (since these offences carried the death penalty), Stoddart again blamed Kalley's stubborness. "He seems [wrote Stoddard] to glory in being a martyr to such a cause." The case also had its comical side, for Kalley had the audacity to employ Henry Veitch as his adviser — someone who "puritan folks call one of the greatest sinners on the island".[9] One can only speculate on Veitch's motives in agreeing to sponsor the doctor's cause —

5. Norton op. cit. pp. 16-19.

6. Kalley to Stoddart 27 May 1843 copy FO 63/570.

7. Stoddart to Aberdeen no 13 31 May 1843 FO 63/570.

8. Ibid.

9. Stoddart to Bidwell 4 September, 17 November 1843 pte FO 63/570.

perhaps out of sympathy with a fellow Scot but perhaps also from dislike of Stoddart who, he thought, had "usurped" his place as consul, and from a desire to be revenged on Lord Aberdeen, once again Foreign Secretary, for the injury the latter had done him in recalling him to England in 1828.

Aberdeen, understandably, took the view that there was all the difference in the world between suffering interference in the practice of religion by a British subject such as Kalley and trying to convert the Portuguese, and that if the local authorities decided to deport the doctor from Madeira, the latter could have no just cause of complaint. But over the matter of Kalley's arrest, detention and denial of bail, it was the opinion of the judge conservator, accredited to the British in Lisbon, that the Funchal judge had exceeded his powers, violated Portuguese laws and in consequence British privileges. The Portuguese government were therefore requested to arrange for Kalley to be given bail and brought before a judge who currently acted as judge conservator to the British in Funchal.[10]

Meanwhile Kalley, while still in prison, had behaved with characteristic arrogance, and irritated consul Stoddard by writing him a "dictatorial letter" in which he demanded immediate action. He seemed to think, wrote Stoddart bitterly, "I have an army of my command to enforce all he may require".[11] At the same time a number of visitors and a few of the old-established residents signed a petition to Aberdeen in which they requested Kalley's release, that damages be awarded him, and that the British government provide proper protection for Bitish citizens. The petition was signed by (among others) the Duchess of Manchester, four sons of peers, one fellow of an Oxford college, a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and two Anglican clergymen.[12]

10. Canning to Stoddart no. 6 5 August no. 7 30 August 1843 drafts, Bidwell to Stoddart no. 9 18 October 1843 draft FO 63/570.

11. Stoddart to Bidwell 5 December 1843 pte FO 63/570.

12. Petition of residents enclos with Stoddart to Aberdeen no. 29 11 December 1843 FO 63/570.

Kalley was to be freed on bail on New Year's Eve 1844 and a Lisbon court annulled the verdict against him, on the grounds that the judge delivering it had no competence to deal with the matter. Two months later the same judge, now sitting as the judge conservator, declared the charge against Kalley annulled on the grounds that there existed no law to punish offences of which he stood accused. Truly a Gilbertain situation, as Stoddard was at pains to point out.[13]

Kally now resumed his active preaching, causing much excitement and bitterness. One of the converts was put in prison for failing to show respect for a procession in which the sacred host was carried, while another convert of his, a woman, was sentenced to death for blasphemy and heresy (a sentence commuted to five years in prison). And letters of protest were received in Madeira form the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh and Perth, the United Association of Presbyterians and the Rose Street congregation in Edinburgh.[14]

The Governor grew increasingly worried about the constant disturbances and the threat they posed to public order, as is clear from the letters to Lisbon. And when a commision set up by the bishop had pronounced the translation of the Portuguese bible, used by Kalley and the teachers in his schools, to be adulterated and inaccurate, he ordered that every copy of it, together with various pamphlets and tracts that Kalley had been distributing, should be impounded immediately. And he once again sent out an instruction that teaching must cease in all Kalley's schools.[15] In September he thought it necessary to dispatch to the parish of S. Antonio de Serra (a parish where Kalley had been most active) a full-blooded military expedition to arrest the members of the Protestant sect. 70 soldiers accompanied the magistrates and took away for trial in Funchal, on board a frigate

13. Stoddart to Bidwell 11 March 1844 pte FO 63/591.

14. Stoddart to Bidwell 14, 18 May 1843 pte, Stoddart to Aberdeen no. 19 26 June 1844 and enclos FO 63/591.

15. Governor Azevedo to Minister of Commerce no. 611 4 February, no. 627 10 April no. 649 23 May, no. 650 24 May, no. 720 28 December 1843, no. 814 25 May, no. 853f 14 August 1844 copies Arquivo do Governo Funchal.

sent round to Machico, five women and seventeen men. There were of course the usual complaints (very possibly perfectly true) that the soldiers had used excessive force.[16]

When an order was given by a Lisbon court to start fresh proceedings against Dr. Kalley, on the grounds that he had asserted publicly doctrines contrary to the state religion, Kalley, fearing he would be deported, decided to go to Lisbon himself. There a settlement of a sort was reached through the mediation of Lord Howard de Walden, the British minister in Lisbon, and Kalley agreed to cease his preaching and drop his claim for damages, on the understanding he would not be charged. However, when he returned to Funchal he found himself arrested again, though on this occasion he was allowed bail.[17] On receiving a warning form Lord Aberdeen that he could not ensure him further protection, if he insisted on proselytising, Kalley decided to depute his work to a Scottish minister recently arrived, the Rev. William Hewitson.

Though Kalley since 1843 had been an elder of the church in Funchal, his missionary work with the Portuguese had been independent of that church and of the Scottish Colonial Committee. And when the latter in 1844 decided to send out Mr. Hewitson to function as an active missioner among the Madeiran population, it was without the knowledge of Kalley, though the doctor welcomed Hewitson's arrival.

Hewitson had instructions to create a Presbyterian organisation among the island's population and had a room placed at his disposal by the resident minister, Dr. Wood, in which he was able to receive enquirers as well as converts to the Calvinist faith; though when Wood reported to the committee, the latter adopted an ambiguous approach, warning both Hewitson and Kalley "to

16. Governor Azevedo to Minister of Commerce no. 880 5 October 1844 copy Arquivo do Governo Civil Funchal.
Wilson op. cit. pp. 19-21.
Vasconcellos op. cit. p. 35.

17. Stoddard to Bidwell 8 February 1845 pte FO 63/608.
Wilson op. cit. pp. 36-71.

be very cautious and guarded in every step they took."[18] This warning it seems was never attended to and Hewitson continued to give communion to many of Dr. Kalley's converts, though by now 28 were lodged in goal, awaiting trial for religious offences. It was not long before Hewitson received a visit from the notary public telling him he must discontinue allowing Portuguese into his house if they went there for religious purposes, and soon after he realised that he was being watched by the police. Nevertheless he pressed on with his work, staying in Madeira till the following spring when he returned to Scotland on leave.[19]

In June of 1845 Kalley himself had returned to Scotland, having received an invitation from the General Assembly of the Free Church there, and in August addressed the Assembly in person. The Assembly renewed its expressions of sympathy for Kalley and for his "fellow sufferers" and requested the Church's Colonial Committee to assist him in supplying ministerial services.[20]

Receiving such encouragement, Kalley went back to his work in Madeira fired now with renewed zeal and determined to disregard previous promises he had made to cease his evangelisation. Meanwhile the bishop of Funchal had left the island and gone to Lisbon, announcing that he would not return until he had secured the expulsion of Kalley. Also in 1846 a new civil Governor had been appointed (albeit only temporarily) who was not only a native of Madeira but someone hostile to the British community, as was his colleague the new chief of police, his personal friend and appointee. According to the evidence of Roddam Tate, a ship's purser, a friend of Kalley, one who assisted in the work of conversion and later published a tract and letters highly critical of consul Stoddart, the Governor Valentim de Freitas Leal had other reasons for disliking the British, quite apart from his disapproval of their proselytising element. He was

18. Purves op. cit. 15-16.
Colonial Committee minute book Dep 298 no. 260 f. 112.

19. Wilson op. cit. pp. 36-71.
Purves op. cit. p. 17.
Colonial Committee minute book no. 260 ff. 134, 158.

20. Colonial Committee minute book no., 260 ff. 108-9, 155.

incensed by the way British merchants were buying extensive tracts of land and thus appearing to make a bid to take over the island for themselves; and at the way a number of them were making huge profits by chartering ships to carry Madeiran emigrants across the Atlantic to the West Indies, encouraging thus an exodus that put in danger many estates, especially in the north of the island, where most of the lands of the Governor lay. But whatever the reasons for his anglophobia, de Freitas was quite determined to stop the serious threat to public order which Kalley's activities seemd to pose.[21]

Matters finally came to a head in August 1846, when de Freitas Leal and the chief of police connived at the actions of a Jesuit canon, a certain Father Conego Telles, in inciting an anti-Protestant mob to attack the house of Kalley and his friends, at times when it was known those houses were frequented by Kalley's Portuguese converts. On 2 August a fair-sized mob consisting of 50-60 people and led by the Jesuit canon Telles, attacked the house of two maiden ladies, the Misses Rutherford, who had allowed the building to be used for Protestant religious meetings. The mob broke into the Rutherfords' house, terrified the inhabitants and beat the expelled the Portuguese, crying out, in response to protests "There is no law for Calvinists". When appeal was subsequently made by one of the Rutherfords to the chief of police, the latter sent her back the reply that he could not protect her or her house while she permitted it to be used by Portuguese for Protestant worship[22].

Kalley, now fearing an attack on his own house, appealed to the Governor for protection, an appeal that Stoddart reinforced. But this was clearly of no avail, and the attitude of de Freitas Leal is revealed in the letter he sent back to Kalley, in which he wrote that though he had ordered the police to patrol around Kalley's house, "I look upon you to be the cause of all these

21. Roddam Tate op. cit. pp. 7-9.
Norton op. cit. p. 45.

22. Roddam Tate op. cit. pp. 10-26.
Wilson op. cit. pp. 46-50.
Stoddart to Palmerston no. 14 18 August 1846 and enclos FO 63/628.

disturbances. This is the fruit of the tree you have planted in this island, nor will it ever produce anything else but discord and trouble."[23]

Given this lack of cooperation on the part of the local authorities, it can hardly have come as a great surprise when, on the night of 9 August, several hundred people, again led by Telles, broke into Kalley's house, broke up a meeting with considerable violence, and set fire to his library. Kalley was not there at the time but realising his life was in danger, fled in the disguise of a sick woman and was carried in a litter on board the *Forth*, a ship which was lying in Funchal harbour. The mob then marched on the British consulate and, thinking that Kalley was inside, threatened that they would burn it down if he were not handed over to them. Stoddard appealed to the Governor for troops and, when these arrived, persuaded the crowd that Kalley was now on a British ship. A number of Kalley's friends and associates also took refuge on British ships, including his brother-in-law Dr. Miller, Roddam Tate and the Rutherford sisters, while two other English families were given asylum in the British consulate.[24]

It was evident from subsequent accounts that the Civil Governor and the chief of police who were present when Kalley's house was attacked had made no effort to restrain the mob, and the military commander, though he had troops ready as well as artillery to intervene, was instructed by the Governor not to do so.[25]

Palmerston, on learning of these events, at once dispatched two British warships to safeguard British lives and property, but in fact there was never any need for them. It was Kalley alone who had been the target, together with his Portuguese converts.

23. Governor de Freitas Leal to Kalley 4 August 1846 copy FO 63/628.

24. Stoddart to Palmerston no. 14 18 August 1846 and enclos FO63/628.
Roddam Tate op. cit. pp. 47-61.

25. Roddam Tate op. cit. p. 61.
Governor de Freitas Leal to Minister of Commerce no. 1155 13 August 1846 copy Arquivo do Governo Civil Funchal.
Wilson op. cit. p. 78.

Of the latter, 100 fled to the mountains, while a further 400 found refuge aboard the British steamships *Lord Seaton* and *William*, and were carried away to Demarara and various British West Indian islands.[26] Over the course of the next few months a further 500 left the island, though how far these were motivated by genuine religious conviction and how far by the material distress the people of Madeira were then enduring, it is not possible to say.

Meanwhile the government in Lisbon, sensing a diplomatic crisis, had acted with great alacrity. A commission of three was sent out at once to investigate what had gone wrong in Madeira, and it did not take long to censure the actions of both the Governor and the chief of police. The former agreed to resign at once, the latter waited to be dismissed. Even so, there was some delay in bringing the rioters to justice. Fifteen were eventually indicted and nine of these were placed under arrest, including the notorious Canon Telles, but it proved impossible to secure convictions. Roddam Tate, the most important witness, had refused to testify before leaving Madeira, perhaps because he feared for his safety, and all the other witnesses had already departed to the West Indies. In any case a Funchal jury was most unlikely to find the men guilty.[27]

Before his arrest, Telles had been active in getting signatures to a petition addressed to the Queen of Portugal. It was signed by 178 and the signatures included those of all senior officials on the island as well as a very large number of clergy. The petitioners asked for a decree against the activities of foreign missionaries as well as their agents foreign and native, and this resulted, four years later, in a new law to this effect. It became a criminal offence in Portugal to deny or throw doubt on Catholic dogma or to try to defend a doctrine that had been condemned

26. Wilson op. cit. pp. 94-7.
Stoddart to almerston no. 15 29 August 1846 FO 63/628.
Roddam Tate op. cit. pp. 67-81, 88.

27. Speech by Palmerston House of Commons debate 15 July 1847 Hansard Parliamentary Debates 3rd series vol. XLIV (1847) pp. 334-6.

by the Catholic Church.[28]

The bishop of Funchal now returned to his see. He immediately ordered all young persons who refused the sacraments or to come to mass to be prosecuted for apostasy, as well as for the crime of heresy. And he also issued a pastoral address, in which he referred to Kalley's teaching as "the proud and Satanic philosophy of that inimical man", attributed the potato disease and other ills affecting Madeira to the influence of Kalley's teaching, and ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung in thanks for being rid of "that wolf from Scotland".[29]

Stoddart had never shown the slightest sympathy for the work of Kalley and his missioner friends and he clearly felt that in the end Kalley had got what he deserved. As he pointed out in a letter to Bidwell, Kalley had broken all his promises not to preach or admit Portuguese to his house; he had organised his own little congregation and among his papers had been found a list of upwards of 200 Portuguese names under the heading of "Communion roll", with separate lists of deacons and elders and the word 'presbyter' inscribed against many; while he had also allegedly connived at the performance of illegal marriage ceremonies. What had happened on 9 August had been, in Stoddart's experience of living 28 years in Madeira, completely out of character, and he and most of the British residents dissociated themselves from what Kalley had done.[30]

In consequence of his attitude, and of the strictures of Roddam Tate, who gave the widest publicity to his own version of these events in the form of a polemical pamphlet and various letters to the press, Stoddart had to suffer both censure and abuse. *The North British Review* for example was extremely critical of his action in going off to his country house, though forewarned of an imminent attack on Kalley's, and of his "pusil-

28. Roddam Tate op. cit. p. 87
Wilson op. cit. pp. 96-7.

29. Wilson op. cit. pp. 98-9.

30. Stoddart to Bidwell 25 September 1846 pte, Stoddart to Palmerston no. 19 27 October 1846 FO 63/628.

lanimity" which encouraged the mob to besiege the consulate. It cited with approval the words of Tate, that "Englishmen must blush for the honour of their country when they see the flag of England lowered in peace which was not lowered in war — lowered to the rabble of Portugal, which was not lowered to the armies of France".[31] Stoddart did not reply publicly — his official position prevented this — but in private letters he wrote to Bidwell he defended his actions and put straight the record of what had happened at the British consulate. "You say I ought to have bullied the Portuguese, but had you been Governor you would have thought me a confounded bore and bully . . . You say I should have barricaded my doors and windows but I never had occasion to *lock* my door or *shut* my windows, so why fire from a house that was not attacked?"[32]

Palmerston was much influenced by Tate's account and censured Stoddart for not acting more firmly. Stoddart had, in Palmerston's words, failed to show all that "firmness and energy required in an officer of the British crown" and was sent on leave in 1847. Told that he might return as consul, he was at the same time solemnly warned that unless in future he "showed more energy, activity and zeal in protecting British subjects, and in asserting British rights in Madeira than (he had) evinced during the last year and a half", he must expect to be replaced.[33] The mood of Palmerston was clearly that revealed three years later in the better known episode of the Greek government and Don Pacifico.

In the House of Commons, in July, Palmerston was questioned about the events and managed to fend off a member's move to get the official correspondence produced. He told the House that, though treaties existed to guarantee to British subjects the free exercise of religious opinion, when that freedom became involved in proselytising other nationals, that was a very

31. Wilson op. cit. pp. 79-80.

32. Stoddart to Bidwell 31 October 1846 FO 63/628, 14 February, 18 April 1847 FO 63/666.

33. Palmerston to Stoddart no. 3 22 September 1846 draft, minute by Palmerston on Stoddart to Palmerston no. 19 27 October 1846 FO 63/628.

different question. He asked the House if it could not see a parallel in a party of Jesuits, of Spanish or Portuguese nationality, coming to England to try to convert it, and "would not our natural feelings be wounded?" Kalley, he went on, had been forced to leave, not by an act of government but by the tumult of a small minority. He deplored the acquittal of those charged with riot (due to "the vicious composition of the jury") but he welcomed the removal of the highest officials. The government would give its support of course to any just claims for compensation, but in reply to Kalley's request for British protection in all his rights, if he were to return to Madeira, the answer must be he could not expect it, if he intended to proselytise.[34]

Kalley never returned to Madeira, but later joined some of his refugee converts who had managed to settle in Illinois, and he then went on to practise in Brazil where he founded an Evangelical church. Dr. Miller, his brother-in-law who was also an elder of the Scottish Free Church, stayed on in Madeira for several years and tried to continue Kalley's work, though naturally with much greater discretion. He opened several schools for the poor in the remoter country districts, in which the bible was not at first taught, since that would have meant their instant closure, but at least, Miller wrote, the children attending were not being taught any "Popery".[35] But when finally in 1850 teaching of scripture *was* introduced, the teachers at once came under fire and under threat of imprisonment.[36] The Governor in 1851 announced his intention of enforcing the law against any form of proselytising, and four years later the bishop forbade the use of the Portuguese bible in schools, on the usual grounds that the text was corrupt and had been maliciously interfered with.[37] Yet this was the text that 20 years earlier the Vicar Capitular had

34. Palmerston speech Debate in House of Commons 15 July 1847 Hansard op. cit.

35. Miller to Bible Society 18 May 1848 Bible Society records (1848 box 1 p. 186).

36. Miller to Bible Society 19 February 1850 Bible Society records (1850 box 1 p. 135).

37. Miller to Bible Society 16 August 1855 Bible Society records File MNO.

warmly welcomed when distributed by the Bible Society. It was Kalley who, through his indiscreet zeal, had wrecked the good work of that institution by bringing discredit on the text employed. A letter written by a Mr. Walker from a Funchal address in 1853 and addressed to the secretary of the society makes this point quite explicitly: "You are no doubt aware that your society is held in extreme horror here", and he went on to request that no letter or paper should be addressed to him in Madeira if it showed evidence on its outside that it had come from the Bible Society.[38]

38. Walker to Bible Society 2 February 1853 Bible Society records File U-Z.