

The New York Times

[Published on-line in New York Times March 30, 2020](#)

Re: Trump and Irish Famine Revisited

Robert Lyons

Kennebunkport, Maine

When the Great Famine swept through Ireland, 1845 to 1850, John Mitchel, Irish nationalist wrote: "The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine." Donald Trump did not cause the corona virus pandemic. But the president caused the catastrophic spread throughout the country by his denials and delays. He told the nation January 22: "We have it totally under control." And February 28: "It's going to disappear. One day, it's like a miracle, it will disappear."

As the death toll continues to rise, Trump is driven by the principle of laissez-faire economics which asserts the function of the state is to maintain order and security and to avoid interference with the initiative of individuals in pursuit of their own desired goals to achieve wealth.

This is the same school of economics Charles Trevelyan, assistant secretary to the Treasury of Britain in charge of Ireland's famine relief, adhered to during the Irish Famine.

Trevelyan is represented in the 1979 folk ballad, [The Fields of Athenry](#), the story of a starving man convicted for stealing from the abundant food supply:

But a lonely prison wall,
I heard a young girl calling
Michael they have taken you away,
For you stole trevelyn's corn.

Our gifted scientists may develop a vaccine to inoculate us from the deadly corona virus in a year and a half. But if our country is smart, it will inoculate us from the deadly virus occupying the White House in the November election, forever.