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Ferriter:
Getting Important Things Wrong

Desmond Fennell

Labour Comment:
Work, Work, Work, Work
(back page)

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Crusading Against Evil

The war against evil in Iraq last year was a war against what the British Foreign Secretary now calls the “*Fascist police state*” of Saddam Hussein. Ireland was a party to that war by facilitating the transport of US military personnel and armaments to the battlefield. This year the evil that is being made war upon in Iraq consists of the elements which were liberated by the destruction of the “*Fascist police state*”. The liberation became an occupation when the invading liberators hung about, installed a Government which they had brought with them in their baggage train, and set about making laws for the selling off of Iraqi property to rich foreigners at bargain prices. The liberated people of Iraq are now called by various names: insurgents, rebels, fanatics, murderers.

The United Nations refused to authorise the invasion before the event, but it subsequently authorised the Occupation, and UN personnel were actively attempting to normalise the US puppet Government as the legitimate State of Iraq when the Iraqi resistance/rebellion/insurgency etc. demolished UN headquarters and drove the organisation out of the country. The first puppet Government headed by Chalabi (who had Eoghan Harris as an adviser) was then discredited, and was replaced by a second puppet Government with which the US invasion force had prudently equipped itself. Allawi has no more credibility than Chalabi had, but it seems that the US will see things through to the bitter end with him. It commands overwhelming military power, and will

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The Irish Times: Its Lies And Evasions

The carefully constructed lies and evasions of *The Irish Times* are a house of cards with no foundation. The former *Daily Mirror* editor Roy Greenslade’s allegation of a “*cover-up*” can now be vindicated even if it is conceivable that *The Irish Times* did not see the ‘white nigger’ letter before January, 2003.

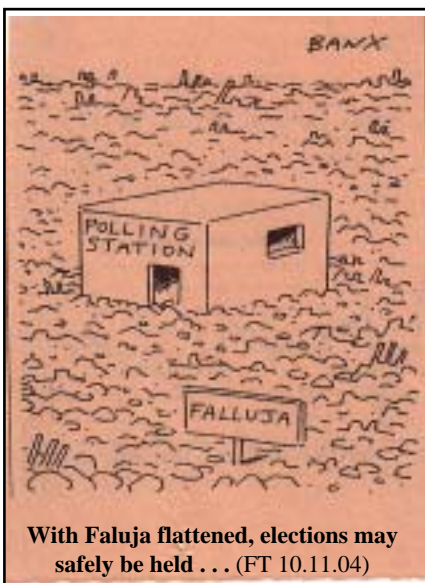
(For an account of the background to the saga, see *The ‘White Nigger’ Story* on page 10.)

BRADY WRIGGLES

On 29th April 2004 *The Irish Times* published a letter from Conor Brady, the Editor of *The Irish Times* from 1986 to 2002. In this letter he denied that *The Irish Times* reporter, Rachel Donnelly, saw the infamous ‘White Nigger’ letter of 2nd October 1969 when reporting on releases from the Public Record Offices at Kew. He went on to claim that:

“She identified one letter, written on December 29th, 1969 by the head of the Irish section at the Foreign Office, Mr Kelvin White, to the British Ambassador in Dublin, Sir Andrew Gilchrist”.

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With Faluja flattened, elections may safely be held . . . (FT 10.11.04)

Lest we forget . . .

“There is nothing whatever improper in propaganda and the sooner it is realised that we are indulging in propaganda, the sooner it will be recognised that it will be better for that propaganda to be good rather than bad.” Henry Strauss, House of Commons, 12th October 1939.

“I hope the literary record will convince people once and for all that the Second World War was a very great evil for everybody concerned, and however many individual stories of courage and endurance there were, should never again become the subject of nostalgia, glorification and fond reflection”. *Imagination At War. British Fiction And Poetry 1939-1945*. Adam Piette. Papermac. London. 1995.

It was interesting to see the contrast with the way the 11th November was commemorated in Ireland and in the UK. It seems that ‘Poppy Day’ lasts practically the month now in the UK, again inarguably, in one of its periodic militaristic phases. Prime Minister Blair has at least five wars under his belt and how New Labour glories in the

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Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney:**
Work And More Work

use that power to whatever degree is necessary—necessary to avoid loss of face, not to prevent defeat. American military defeat is simply not a possibility.

The old regime of the Republican Party was not supportive of last year's invasion. They knew that Saddam was no threat to neighbouring states, and that the stability of Iraq under the Baath party was not something to be dismissed lightly. And James Baker (Secretary of State under Bush Snr.) reminded people of how he warned Saddam before the 1991 war that, if he engaged in all-out resistance, using all his weaponry, Iraq would simply be obliterated by the superior US weaponry, including w.m.d. if necessary. The threat was credible because the USA, as top democracy in the world, knows no restraint in these things. It is the only state which has used nuclear weapons. It did not use them to ward off defeat, but to accelerate a victory which was already certain. And it used them exclusively against civilian populations. So the threat was credible. And Saddam responded rationally to it—and was therefore not the incalculable madman of last year's war propaganda.

The US will use its overwhelming military power in whatever way seems useful to it, and it expects that the moral influence of brute force on the populace of Iraq will elicit a sufficient degree of passive compliancy to enable its puppets to pass muster as representatives.

Brute force is certainly one of the great moral influences in history. Sometimes it brings about total compliance in the long run, but sometimes its effect is only short term—but, as Lord Keynes said as the British Empire was nearing its end and could only proceed from hand to mouth: in the long run we are all dead. The moral effect of the system of terror established in Ireland by the Williamite conquest of the 1690s lasted for a century and a half. But, since it failed in the end, there is obviously another source of moral influence in the world.

The conditions of civilised living in Iraq were systematically destroyed by the invading forces last year. The purpose can only have been to reduce the society to chaos with the object of reconstructing it as a compliant democracy, subservient to the Anglo-American world. The reconstruction is proving more difficult than anticipated. The elements of Iraqi life which had resisted the liberal secularism of the Baath regime became active when the state was destroyed and are an obstacle to democratic/individualist atomisation and regimentation. The Occupation forces are finding it difficult to do what they want, and they are determined that the elements which they liberated from Baathist liberal secularism shall not have their way. So the chaos continues.

And what moral standards apply in chaos—a chaos deliberately induced by

those who moralise against it? A famous and influential English political philosopher held that a strong State was the indispensable condition of civilised living, and that, without such a state, life was “*nasty, brutish and short*”. And Hobbes, during his eventful lifetime, supported whoever at any moment offered the prospect of a strong state: Charles I, Cromwell, and finally Charles II.

The heirs of Thomas Hobbes took an active part in destroying a Western-oriented regime in Iraq, and preventing its replacement by an Islamic regime—and Ireland did what was required of it. And Margaret Hassan disappeared in the chaos. Shortly before that Ken Bigley was executed. On the same day that Bigley was killed, an Iraqi wedding party was wiped out by an American bomb—an event that barely registered in the news.

Ken Bigley worked on an American military project, but the case of Margaret Hassan excited more disgust: was she not dedicated to the welfare of the Iraqi people? But the matter was more complicated than appeared. Margaret Hassan had worked for the *British Council* in Iraq before the 1991 war, and subsequently she became Director of *Care* in Iraq. The *British Council* is a propaganda organisation of the British State committed to furthering its interests world-wide. *Care* is a “*non Governmental Organisation*” engaged in charitable works. But, during the 1990s, it came to rely very heavily on Government funding. The chief contributor of its multi-million budget is the United States Government, with the British Government running a close second. Contributions from charitably-inclined members of the public now account for only a fraction of its huge budget. It is now a state-funded body, and it is therefore natural that it should render services to the States which fund it. And those services are rendered in areas where the states themselves are regarded with hostility.

A few years ago *Care* was found to have engaged in espionage activities on behalf of the United States in Kosovo. Despite that, and despite the refusal of *Care* as an organisation to condemn the present invasion of Iraq, Margaret Hassan continued in active membership. She condemned the invasion, but that was only a personal gesture. The organisation whose activities in Iraq she directed tacitly supported the invasion, engaged in normalising activities under the Occupation, and refused to withdraw when the Iraqi

resistance indicated that all such activity would be treated as hostile.

One might express moral outrage that Ameranglia uses charitable organisations for espionage or propaganda purposes, but that would be hypocritical. Bush and Blair see themselves as engaged in a war to rid the world of evil, and as between good and evil there is no legitimate neutrality, and no entitlement to do good works which succour the forces of evil. They pay the piper, and they insist that he must play a virtuous tune. On their own terms what they are doing is beyond criticism.

The most evil thing in the world today is this notion of evil which inspires the activities of the Anglo-American combination and carries their activities beyond the sphere of rational calculation. What we see today is not mere power-politics in pursuit of definite interests. It is what Bush named it before his advisers got at him—a Crusade: the final fling of Christianity to establish total dominance in the world. Hobbes described the Catholic Church as the ghost of the Roman Empire presiding over its grave—or words to that effect. The present situation might be described in similar terms with relation to Protestantism, whose cultural residue is rampant in the world a century after the rise of Darwinism in England gave it the *coup de grace* as a system of actual belief. Its posthumous revival may be dated to 1917, when Britain unbalanced its mind by gaining possession of the Garden of Eden and associated territories, and issued the Balfour Declaration awarding Palestine to the Jews in preference to its inhabitants.

A few years later it persuaded the ‘world’, in the form of the League of Nations, to confirm that award. After 1945 the Socialist Government in Britain tried to call off the project, which was certain to lead to mayhem in the Middle East, but the United Nations General Assembly, controlled by President Truman and Stalin, insisted it must go ahead. The ‘world’, in the era of general democracy and national rights, decided to oust one people from a territory they had inhabited for over a thousand years and insert another people in their place. Of course evasive language was used, but everybody involved knew what was being decided.

Did League of Nations and United Nations resolutions impose a moral obligation on the Palestinians to accept ethnic cleansing peacefully and with a good heart, and to offer no resistance to

genocide? Or is that a question that should not be asked?

It is largely because of the consequences of the conquest of the Garden of Eden by Britain that the world now lives in a moral morass. And even if, against all realistic expectations, a rudimentary and subordinate Palestinian state is now established by Washington, that will not erase the history of the last 87 years.

A possible beneficial effect of the irrational American preoccupation with Iraq is that Iran might be equipped with the means of defending itself when Ameranglia gets around to dealing with it. Only weapons of mass destruction are adequate means of defence today. And the only real w.m.d.s are nuclear weapons.

Half-a-century ago Ameranglia overthrew a democratic regime in Iran and installed a puppet dictatorship. The dictatorship signed the non-proliferation treaty. The United Nations agency for

nuclear matters is now holding Iran to the deal made with the dictatorship, and trying to keep it defenceless for Washington.

It is obvious that there can be no return to anything like stability in world affairs until a wide range of states become capable of defending themselves.

Both India and Pakistan developed nuclear weapons a few years ago, and were condemned for doing so, and had sanctions applied against them. But, when the time came for them to have their next war, they didn’t have it. They were deterred by the probable scale of the consequences.

There can be no semblance of equality in international affairs while the great majority of states lack the means of self-defence. And nuclear weapons have an unprecedented equalising power. Such are the facts of life brought about by the exercise of British and American power during the last century. ●

The Irish Times: Its Lies And Evasions continued

Brady goes on to say that:

“Over recent days I have confirmed with the London Editor of *The Irish Times*, Mr Frank Millar, that Ms Donnelly’s examination yielded only this one letter. She did not come across another letter, dated October 2nd 1969 from the ambassador to Mr White”.

Brady goes to some pains to make it clear that Ms Donnelly found only one letter concerning Major McDowell. But Ms Donnelly’s examination did not reveal just one letter. Her report of January 3rd, 2000 shows that she discovered two letters. One of the letters was indeed dated December 29th, 1969, but there was another letter which she referred to, although she was rather coy about the date. She refers to this letter as being written in “November 1969” by W.K.K. White to Andrew Gilchrist.

Why suppress knowledge of the “November 1969” letter? The contents of the letter, which we publish on page x, make the question superfluous. If the “November 1969” letter is known about, it would almost require an act of will not to have looked for the ‘White Nigger’

letter because paragraph 3 refers back to Gilchrist’s letter of 2nd October—the famous ‘White Nigger’ letter that Brady claims *The Irish Times* knew nothing about.

If paragraph three did not pique the interest, even the most passive of *Irish Times* reporters would have to be intrigued by paragraph five of the “November 1969” letter which starts:

“McDowell did not seek ammunition for use against his Editor, but he did, as you forecast, mention rather apologetically that Editor’s excessive zeal.”

Needless to say, this damaging statement is not mentioned in Rachel Donnelly’s report of January 3rd 2000. But she does quote the part which shows the British encouraging McDowell “to forward the moderates’ cause in the paper”. That quotation is interesting in itself. But it becomes even more interesting in the context of a conversation in which the then Editor of *The Irish Times* Douglas Gageby was considered to be an extremist by his colleague, Major McDowell.

The interesting question also arises of what ammunition Whitehall could have

provided to McDowell if he had asked for it on this occasion.

It is of only minor interest to the *Irish Political Review* whether Donnelly and Millar misled Brady or whether Brady's factual error had another cause. The point is that *The Irish Times* brazenly published a letter about its own handling of a story which it knew, or ought to have known, was untrue.

However, Brady's position in this matter is disingenuous. The former Editor of *The Irish Times* has taken a keen interest in this story. Before he wrote his letter he took the trouble to contact Jack Lane to verify some facts on the matter. At one stage he was threatening to sue the *Sunday Independent* over something it had written on the story, but then thought better of it. It is almost inconceivable that he did not read again the article written by Rachel Donnelly before he wrote his letter.

Of course, Brady was not content merely to deny a cover-up in his letter of 29th April 2004. Readers of the *Irish Political Review* can now savour the pomposity of the following extracts from his letter:

"To allege a cover-up is gravely defamatory of me in my role as editor, as well as of the other journalists involved. I do not know why or how the letter of October 2nd, 1969 did not come to the attention of our reporter. The fact is that it did not."

Even better, Brady continues on the subject of the 'white nigger' letter:

"Does Mr Greenslade or anyone else seriously believe, if such a letter had been uncovered by Irish journalists at this time and "covered up" by someone else, that this would not have become instantly known throughout the various newsrooms? There would have been uproar—most especially in *The Irish Times*. If he believes otherwise, Mr Greenslade does not understand the values that imbue the journalism of this newspaper".

KENNEDY SLIDES

So much for former Editor Brady! But what are "the values that imbue the journalism of this newspaper"? What are the values that imbue the current Editor of *The Irish Times*, Geraldine Kennedy? More to the point, what are the values of the oath-bound directory of *The Irish Times Limited*, the entity that controls the newspaper? Finally, what are the values of the oath-bound directory of *The Irish Times Trust Limited* which controls the oath-bound directory which controls the newspaper?

The newspaper which failed to correct its "Editor Emeritus" Conor Brady on 29th

April 2004 couldn't resist commenting on a letter from Niall Meehan, the respected lecturer on Media Studies. The Editor, Geraldine Kennedy, made the following extraordinary statement on the 'white nigger' letter:

"The contents of the letter in question were published in *The Irish Times* on January 27th, 2003, as soon as its existence was drawn to my attention." (*The Irish Times*, 23.4.04.)

We will leave it to our readers to decide how many factual inaccuracies are contained in the above sentence. The contents of the 'white nigger' letter were published by *The Irish Times* in the sense that almost all the words and all the paragraphs were reproduced. However, the report was preceded by a denial of its accuracy from Major McDowell. The paragraphs of the letter were not published in the same order as the original and they were interspersed with rebuttals from McDowell.

Also, the first paragraph of the 'white nigger' letter was not published at all. This paragraph indicated that the letter was a response to a letter of September the 24th and No. 10 Downing Street. As readers of the *Irish Political Review* know, the meeting between Ambassador Gilchrist and Major McDowell was in response to a request from the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson who thought McDowell wished to supply intelligence services (see *Irish Political Review*, August 2004).

But what are we to make of Kennedy's assertion that the contents of the letter were published "as soon as its existence was drawn to my attention"? Jack Lane sent a letter to *The Irish Times* indicating that he had notified it of the 'white nigger' letter on 10th January 2003 and that Kennedy herself had acknowledged the letter on 15th January 2003. Needless to say, Lane's letter was not published in *The Irish Times*. The truth is that *The Irish Times* only published details of the 'white nigger' letter on the day after the *Sunday Independent* did so on 26th January 2003.

McDOWELL IN A HOLE

We will now examine the incredible denials of *The Irish Times*, which it published along with details of the 'white nigger' letter on 27th January 2003. In that article, *The Irish Times* quoted from the letter of 7th November 1969 as 'evidence' to support McDowell's denials. Yes! It had the brazen effrontery to quote from the letter that *Irish Times* journalist Rachel Donnelly referred to on 3rd, January 2000; the same one that Conor Brady had no memory of in his letter of 29th April 2004 and that we now publish on page x.

But this time the newspaper had to be even less informative than Donnelly was.

The 'white nigger' letter had become public knowledge, so telling readers that the British wanted McDowell to "forward the moderates' cause in the paper" could not be published again in the report of 27th January 2003 (for that would only serve to confirm the accuracy of Ambassador Gilchrist's report, that is, the 'White Nigger' letter). However, the report did let slip that McDowell "asked No. 10 Downing Street if *The Irish Times Ltd* could contribute towards a peaceful and satisfactory outcome". So McDowell was not acting as an individual but was representing the company which controls the newspaper.

The only quotation that *The Irish Times* has from the letter of 7th November is to the effect that McDowell offered to act as a "link" because "the present situation was so serious and so different".

Readers are invited to count the number of words and sentences between the word "link" and "the present situation was so serious and so different" in the letter of 7th November, 1969.

Of course, the *Irish Times* report is a misrepresentation of the letter of 7th November, 1969. W.K.K. White could not "see a go-between role for him". So the "link" aspect of McDowell's services was not important to the British.

The letter of 7th November, 1969 does not contradict in any way the "white nigger" letter of 2nd October, 1969. On the contrary it confirms its substance. The meeting between White and McDowell was about Irish matters and "the newspaper world especially". While McDowell offered himself as a "link", White says "this does not exclude the point of guidance you recorded in your letter of 2 October, but it goes further". There is the reference to the possibility of McDowell, a newspaperman, forming "an honourable alliance with the official world" and the British Foreign Office official is "grateful" for McDowell's offer of services.

Although there is no more racist abuse of Gageby, White says to Gilchrist that McDowell "did, as you forecast, mention rather apologetically that Editor's excessive zeal".

A TATTY PAPER!

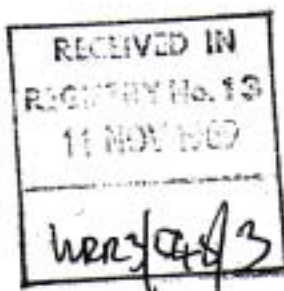
None of this is reported in *The Irish Times* report of January 27th, 2003. Its arrogance and contempt for its readers is breathtaking. Can anyone take its pretensions as a newspaper of record seriously anymore? The reputation of *The Irish Times* is now in tatters.

John Martin

Next Month: We Publish Another Document that *The Irish Times* Did Not See!

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Western European Department,



7 November, 1969.

I owe you a letter recording my meeting with McDowell on 30 October. I am sorry for the brief delay, but I have been away from the Department for most of this week.

2. McDowell 'phoned just after I had returned from Belfast. He had only a few hours to spare, but had I think arranged those few hours in the hope that he could meet someone from the Office. The short time available meant that I could not arrange for others to join us, but this was perhaps no bad thing at a first meeting.

3. We had a lengthy talk over lunch, ranging over many Irish matters, and the newspaper world especially, but if I had to sum up very briefly what McDowell really had to say I think it would be that he wants to help and is willing to be used as a link. (This does not exclude the point of guidance you recorded in your letter of 2 October, but it does go rather further). I do not think he has anything specific, or dramatic, in mind; the offer is rather the result of those feelings of duty and anxiety that many who are emotionally both British and Irish must now be experiencing. (I suppose Constantine Fitzgibbon is another current example.) McDowell himself said he had hitherto, for obvious newspaper reasons, tried to keep free of those constraints that follow if a newspaperman forms an honourable alliance with the official world, but the present situation was so serious and so different he thought he ought to offer his services. His qualifications are his contacts in both capitals, and his acceptability in Whitehall terms through his service in the Judge Advocate General's department.

4. I said we were grateful for this offer, and we would certainly bear it in mind. However, there was no attempt in Dublin to ostracise you or dramatise a conflict by cutting the obvious diplomatic links. But after years of relative quiet we were faced with a new situation, and in deciding how best to handle it obviously we were glad to learn of possible new resources. I promised to return his hospitality on his next visit, and he seemed content.

His Excellency
Sir Andrew Gilchrist, K.C.M.G.
British Embassy,
Dublin.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

5. McDowell did not seek ammunition for use against his Editor, but he did, as you foresaw, mention rather apologetically that Editor's excessive zeal. He also told me that he knew Seadon, of the Belfast Telegraph, who is a contact of Oliver Wright's, and who was once briefly lent to the Irish Times by Lord Thompson to advise on the paper's finances.

6. At the moment I think it would be useful, so far as we in the Department are concerned, to keep in touch with McDowell, to keep him briefed in general terms, and to encourage him to forward the moderates' cause in his paper. This is very much what you had in mind. Beyond that I cannot see a go-between role for him, but that would be more a matter for you to suggest if you found some need to you.

7. I am sending a copy of this letter to Oliver Wright in Belfast.

(N.E.N. White)

c.c. Mr. John Peck
Mr. Allinson (FUSD)

CONFIDENTIAL

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Lest we forget . . . continued

remnants of imperialism. Zoe Williams, writing in the *Guardian Weekend*, 13th November noted that the wearing of the poppy has become “a process magnified on telly, where the struggle to get their poppy going first is so competitive that I’m amazed some éminences grises don’t wear six or seven”. I was slightly amused to see the oh so liberal *London Review of Books* peddling what they obviously believe will be a Christmas best seller. *Nelson: Britannia’s God of War* by Andrew Lambert. Stirring title that—how the chattering classes, political/academic/journalistic love to stir up patriotic jingoism as long as someone else pays the price. And how bathetic that, somehow, *it is always* the poor and uneducated who end up doing just that.

A report in the *Independent*, 11th November 2004—ironically enough—pointed out that; “Unfit soldiers with a reading age of 11 are being used as frontline troops because of a shortage of

manpower”. The report for the Ministry of Defence by Brigadier Mungo Melvin admitted that “Seventy per cent of the 2003 intake at the Army’s Catterick training camp had a reading age of 11... There were also problems with heavy drinking among some recruits”. As the Brigadier pointed out: “Instructors were under heavy pressure to pass as many candidates as possible” and “quality was often sacrificed to quantity”. And if the UK itself can’t supply war fodder, well there is a neutral country which has systematically been made to feel bad about its past, but under the guidance of the Irish Times *et al* can surely be persuaded to step up to the plate one more time—yes?

Indeed on 15th November 2004, the *Irish Times* had a long article titled *War dead Are Remembered At Ecumenical Service In Dublin*. There was also a rather gorgeous photo of our President Mary McAleese, dressed in black, and both

hands entwined with an elderly frail man who was, we were told, a Maj-Gen David O’Morochoe, OBE, President of the British Legion. The poor gent had so many medals festooning his chest, with a glittery gong ribboning his neck, that one feared for his balance. The Irish Government was represented by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Conor Lenihan. Brig-Gen Gerry McNamara represented the Defence Forces. There was a flurry of wreath laying by the diplomatic corps of 19 countries, the two minute silence was observed, the Last Post was sounded and was followed by a reading of the *Kohima Epitaph* and the *Reveille*.

The Dean of St. Patrick’s, the Very Rev. Robert McCarthy, took the service. (The *Irish Times*, which does not normally capitalise such proper nouns, did so for the Very Rev.) The US ambassador, Mr. John Kenny read the first lesson and the sermon was given by the Very Rev.

R.S.J.H. McKelvey, the Dean of St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. Dr. McKelvey gave a Churchillian speech, highly politicised and propagandistic. He thanked God for the "realists" who truly recognised what was at stake in 1939, warning that "*in the event of England being invaded, the Nazis would not have stopped at Fishguard, Holyhead, Liverpool or Stranraer*". He went on:

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance, persistence and, reluctantly, war when all else fails... murder must be faced down... that could only be done by armed might and at great cost in human life... if the UN is to do so, it must be willing to be more than a talking shop if it is to retain the confidence not only of the free world, but of the oppressed people wherever they may be. Otherwise the fate of the UN will be similar to that of the League of Nations..."

These Bush-like sentiments have been met with a studied silence everywhere—not a whiff of liberal dissent, not even a protesting letter. Though *the Irish Times* said the service was ecumenical, it didn't bother recording the attendance of the other churches, Catholic, Jewish or Muslim.

But Ireland has its own reason to remember 11th November. It was on that date, in 1580, that English soldiers under Lord Grey de Wilton murdered six hundred men, women and children in what is known as the Smerwick Massacre. Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton had just been appointed as her Lord Deputy of Ireland by the English Queen Elizabeth I who wanted him to put down the Desmond Rebellion in Munster.

The Desmonds were being—how shall we say—awkward—they just didn't like to be exploited by the English. Lord Grey's Secretary whom he had brought with him to Ireland was none other than "*that gentle murderous poet*" Edmond Spenser—as Séan Moylan famously named him. Spenser was present at the massacre as was another soon to be famous man, Walter Raleigh, then a 28-year-old captain. Lord Grey was the man for the appointed task and the pacification of the region was accomplished with great cruelty. A favourite strategy was to burn the crops, and steal the cattle so as to reduce the Irish population to starvation and famine without too much effort.

Lord Grey laid siege to Dún an Óir fort near Smerwick on the Dingle peninsula, while by sea the English Admiral Sir William Winter had heavy guns with which he bombarded the fort. After a few days, those in the fort surrendered. Talks were

held about which there are several different reports. Even Lord Grey's differed from that of his Secretary, Spenser. The Commander of the Fort and his officers were told by Lord Grey on the morning of 11th November to bring out their colours and their weapons and armour and lay them down on the ground outside the Fort. This was done as ordered by the trusting surrendering officers. Lord Grey thereupon ordered them back into the fort—now unarmed—and according to his own report: "*Then put I in certain bands who straight fell to execution. There were six hundred slain.*" Captain Walter Raleigh was one of those put in to do the slaughtering. (A pertinent warning against premature decommissioning.)

Cyril Falls in *Elizabeth's Irish Wars* (London, 1950) wrote: "*the cold horror of this has continued to leave its mark on the pages of history over three centuries and a half*".

The natural resources which England sought in Ireland were food and people. The people were required to man the English army and navy in pursuit of imperial expansion. And if living conditions in Ireland were intentionally reduced to a starving minimum, as they consistently were by the English, the result was a steady stream of young men and women having to leave Ireland and take up work in slave-labour conditions in Britain and throughout her colonies.

Apart from its emotive propagandistic significance, the other purpose of Poppy Day is its fund-raising aspect. It is a very nice earner for the Royal British Legion. And, in case its attraction might wane in the fading mists of time since the Great War, the Poppy has now been successfully 'attached' not just to the Second World War, but to all British military engagements since the Great War, including the Black and Tan War, up to and including the illegal Iraqi occupation. Not a real Poppy, mind you—that would be too expensive—but an imitation poppy as befits a piece of propaganda.

As the Irish President sat listening in St. Patrick's Cathedral, it would be nice to think that she truly reflected on Ireland's sacrifices and who demanded them and who caused them. Who is again perhaps demanding them—certainly not from her son, but from other mother's sons and daughters whose impoverishment insures their ensnarement in war work? Should the Irish people look forward to seeing the President attending a commemoration of the victims at Smerwick? Perhaps she

could be persuaded to read Peter Barham's new book, *Forgotten Lunatics Of The Great War* (Yale University Press, 2004), and be appraised of the horrors that get airbrushed out by colourful poppies, gaudy gongs and grandiose titles.

Could an annual commemoration at Smerwick be made an antidote to Poppy Day?

Michael Stack.

POPPY SYMBOLISM:

"In Northern Ireland it is too often worn to demonstrate the superiority, or at least the superior number, of one community over the other. This year the period surrounding Remembrance Sunday has been even more problematical because of the British Legion's appeal to people to revive a custom, abandoned by a war weary British public in the 1920s, of observing two minutes silence at 11 a.m. on Armistice Day, the moment when the first World War is said to have officially ended.

"In Britain, this must have seemed a harmless exercise in communal nostalgia. But in Northern Ireland, where official agencies have worked long and hard to persuade employers to eliminate divisive symbolism in the workplace, the situation has been more complicated. There has been, at the very least, the fear that coercion or the threat of coercion will be involved in observing these tribal pieties.

"As one weary nationalist living in West Belfast said to me: "There's hardly a family in this area which hasn't lost somebody fighting in the British army during one of the world wars. The only Northern Ireland VC in the last war was a Catholic from the Falls Road. But the hard political reality is that the poppy is seen as a loyalist symbol. As for Remembrance Sunday, it's getting like the Orange marching season. It goes on for weeks."

"We had been talking about the case of Donna Traynor. Ms Traynor is a newsreader with BBC Northern Ireland, an able young woman with an exceptionally sympathetic screen presence.

"Last year she told her employers that she did not want to wear a poppy when reading the news. She explained that she would refuse to wear a sprig of shamrock, if she were asked, on St Patrick's Day because in Northern Ireland all symbols of this kind are seen as divisive by one side or the other.

"Inevitably, Ms Traynor's appearance, minus poppy, was noticed and there were reports that the corporation's switchboard was "jammed" with complaints about her undecorous appearance. This year, BBC Northern Ireland laid down a line that all presenters who appeared on screen reading the news during the 10 days leading up to November 11th would wear a poppy.

"It seemed as if the whole of Northern Ireland was waiting to see what Ms Traynor would do. When questioned, the BBC Northern Ireland press office told me: "Donna is on the roster to read the news. If she does so, she will be wearing a poppy".

"And so she did. Her appearance was duly noted by both sides. Nationalists saw it as the BBC telling one of its employees, who happened to be a Catholic to wear a poppy—or else. Unionists did not have to comment. Ms Traynor's photograph, showing the poppy, was featured prominently in both the News Letter and the Belfast Telegraph"

(Mary Holland, Irish Times 14.11.1996).

An Cor Tuatail

Molad Binnne hÉadair

Doibinn beic i mDinn Éadair,
firbinn beic ós a bán-muir
cnoc lánmáir, lonnmáir, líonmáir
beann fíonmáir, fíonmáir, ástmáir.

Beann a mbíod fionn is fianna,
beann a mbíod coirn is cuad;
beann dá rus ua Duibne dána,
lá, Gráinne de úroim ruada.

Beann is comglas sad tuad
is sad mullad, comglas, corrad;
beann bilead, mionad, beannad,
cnoc creamad, cnodad, cranad.

Beann is doibne d'uir Éireann
glébeann ós fairrse faoileann;
a creisean is céim cruaid liom -
beann álainn Éadair doibinn.

In praise of Beann Éadair

Pleasant to be in Beann Éadair
truly pleasant to overlook its foaming seas
a plentiful, ship-filled, busy hill
a peak abounding in wine, fruitfulness and valour.

A peak frequented by Fionn and the Fianna
a peak where there were drinking-horns and goblets;
a peak where bold Ó Duibhne seized,
once, Gráinne for elopement.

A peak where every hillock is covered in green shrubbery
as is every equally green, marshy crest
a forested, verdant, (deer-)antlered peak,
a hill abounding in herbs, nuts and trees.

The most pleasant peak in the land of Ireland,
crystal clear over the gull-abiding ocean;
a hard step for me to leave it -
the pleasant, beautiful peak of Éadar.

Beann Éadair, the Peak or Hill of Éadar, is modern-day Howth Hill. *Tóraíocht Diarmada agus Gráinne* (Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne) is the story of the elopement of Diarmuid Ó Duibhne of the Fianna with Gráinne, daughter of King Cormac Mac Art, who was betrothed to Fionn Mac Cumhaill himself. In this story Fionn is a jealous curmudgeon, and Gráinne is a spoiled, selfish strap who puts a spell on Diarmuid to overcome his loyalty to Fionn.

Kilmichael: Beating The Retreat

Books Ireland for November carried a rare review of Meda Ryan's new book on Tom Barry by Rory Brennan. Rare because this must be one of the most ignored books ever published. However, its influence is very pervasive because it is a polemic that counters and destroys the central thesis of the most recent guru of the revisionist historians—Peter Hart—and his claim that there was no false surrender at the Kilmichael ambush.

This review makes no mention of why this book was written. We are invited to simply believe that “*Ryan revisits the controversies of Barry's military leadership, notably the question of a false surrender by the British at the Kilmichael ambush*”. The strange conclusion is reached that, “*Though much can be*

reconstructed, this seems to me to be lost in the fog of war”. This is despite the fact that Ryan reconstructs practically every blow of the ambush and any reader of her book would wonder what she could possibly have omitted and of course she deals with the false surrender at length.

Then we are told, “*It is quite easy for a man who has honourably surrendered to think he is going to be shot anyway, and so to resume firing*”. What does that mean? A false surrender is admitted. But it is suggested that the soldier has second thoughts, changes his mind and starts firing again. Meanwhile his surrender has been accepted and the guard of the attackers lowered. They come into the open, are fired upon by a soldier who has apparently surrendered, and a couple are killed.

Whatever the psychology of the British soldier in question (which certainly cannot be known), what he has done amounts to a *false* surrender. Is it not oxymoronic to call such a person honourable?

An alternative explanation to justify British unmilitary behaviour is offered. “*Or he may never have grasped that his comrades had already surrendered*”—and so he presumably continues firing on his own. Again a surrender is definitely broken by this freelancer who also appears to be a little deaf and a deadly danger to all his fellow soldiers, who if this was for real, would be entitled to shoot him dead on the spot. I wonder was he one and the same as the ‘honourable’ tergiversator envisaged earlier or were they possibly different individuals? In any case, two reasons are given justifying this false surrender and this behaviour suddenly becomes the most natural thing in the world for our reviewer. In fact, one is left with the definite impression that false surrenders were the order of the day at Kilmichael!

“The one thing that is certain in combat is that it is chaotic and the Barry that emerges from this study was certainly a killer in wartime, no offhand murderer.” There is nothing whatever chaotic about a successful ambush of professional soldiers, all commissioned officers who had served in World War I, which is what the Auxiliaries were at Kilmichael. These were no rag tag band of Black and Tans. These guys knew what they were about and they knew when they should fire and not fire and whether they should surrender or not—and when they should try the false surrender trick (and were unlikely to be deaf). Any chaos is planned for very carefully. They would not have survived a day if they were the undisciplined, idiosyncratic mob portrayed by our reviewer. And Barry knew this well because he was with them throughout the whole war and learned his craft with them. It was a battle between professionals and the most competent won. Anything and everything but chaos was a factor at Kilmichael. As for being a killer in war, Barry’s killing in the War of Independence was as nothing compared to what he did in WWI but that is not the killing our reviewer has in mind. This latter killing is never held against him, or even mentioned by our revisionists, so they are certainly not upset by his killing skills *per se*. It’s the cause, stupid.

It is worth pointing out that the false surrender trick was not unique to Kilmichael. The ambush nearest to where I happen to come from was the ambush of Auxiliaries on a train at Rathcoole (North Cork). The IRA Commandant, Con Meaney, gives an account that includes the following:

“An N.C.O. and 13 military were together in one compartment. The Volunteer Battalion Commandant called on the military to surrender but the answer was a rifle shot from the train, which was immediately replied to by slug loaded shot-guns and limited rifle fire from the Volunteers. The Volunteers had only 4 regular Magazine .303 rifles and two single shot .303 rifles.

“The firing lasted about seven or eight minutes when the ambushed party shouted “We surrender”. The Commandant then ordered, “Stop firing”. Firing then ceased but after an interval of about 30 seconds another shot was fired from the train and the Volunteers immediately resumed their fire.

“In less than a minute, in response to another shout of “We surrender” from the train the Commandant again ordered the Volunteers to stop firing and the

military were ordered to come out of the train and leave their arms” (*The Boys Of The Millstreet Battalion Area*, Aubane Historical Society, 2003—available through Athol Books).

The first collapse in Hart’s allegations became apparent in an exchange of letters in the *Irish Times* initiated by Pdraig O’Cuanachain in 1998, who was reacting to a diatribe on the subject by Kevin Myers. Myers did not engage further in the debate but Hart and others joined in. The Editor decided to end the exchange when Hart effectively conceded the argument while simultaneously reasserting it—and claiming it was all down to confusion, fear, the darkness etc. The hope was clearly that it would be all left hazy and unclear but with the definite assumption that there was indeed a massacre of unarmed soldiers.

This ploy was foiled by Meda Ryan who produced a most detailed account of the ambush and refuted all Hart’s allegations about it and other events in West Cork. Now a new ploy has emerged. Ryan’s book cannot be answered or ignored any longer so it’s a case of ‘forget it, lads’ and move on to some other target to discredit the War of Independence.

Below is an unpublished letter to *The Village* in response to a plea from Brian Hanley that we forget about the whole thing and move on from Kilmichael.

‘MOVING ON FROM
KILMICHAEL’

Brian Hanley, as a historian, urges us to move on from Kilmichael (The Village. 6/11/04). A very laudable aim. But why are we discussing Kilmichael at all, 80 odd years after the event? At the time, the leaders on both sides, those of the IRA and General Crozier of the Auxiliaries all agreed that there had been a false surrender and all concerned then ‘moved on’ on that basis. We are discussing it again because a few years ago Peter Hart claimed to know better than Crozier, Barry etc and that there was no false surrender and moved the debate back over 80 years.

The case for the false surrender has been reconfirmed again (principally by Meda Ryan and Brian Murphy) but despite the issue being gone into in great detail Mr. Hanley will not give a view on the issue because he claims it does not matter. He ‘cares little’ about it, he says. This is hardly a creditable attitude for any self-respecting historian in current circumstances. The accusation of

shooting soldiers dead in cold blood after a genuine surrender is a serious matter and a serious historical issue at any time.

After Hart made his accusations we were told—screamed at—in no uncertain terms by a whole array of people that it was indeed a war crime of the first order and that it had happened at Kilmichael. Now there is a deafening silence from those people and indifference from Mr Hanley.

Instead, Mr Hanley poses a whole range of other very interesting questions to be answered. I thought it was a historian’s job to answer questions and to pose them in order to answer them. But Mr Hanley leaves them all hanging in the air. But how can one have confidence in him finding or accepting credible answers to these other very pertinent questions when he won’t give a clear answer to the one central question that started all this debate and which has now been discussed and debated in minute detail in books, pamphlets, reviews, letters to papers, meetings, on the Internet etc. for some years now. The question simply is—was there or was there not a false surrender at Kilmichael?

It seems to me that in not answering that question his plea for ‘moving on from Kilmichael’ is really a plea to avoid a straight answer to a very straightforward question. It is just not good enough—and it won’t do after all the hubbub that has been created in recent years about this incident in the War of Independence.

Jack Lane,
10th November 2004.”

From Athol Books:

Kilmichael: The False Surrender: a discussion by
Peter Hart, Pdraig O’Cuanachain, D.R. O’Connor Lysaght, Dr. Brian Murphy, & Meda Ryan,

with:

Why The Ballot Was Followed By The Bullet by **J. Lane & B. Clifford.**

48 pages. ISBN 1 903497 00 0.

Aubane Historical Society. November 1999.

Euro 5 (£4).

Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter by *Meda Ryan*

Mercier Press, ISBN 1-85635-425-3

Euro 25 (£20)

Write to: Athol Books, PO Box 6589,
London N7 6SG

or order online:

www.atholbooks.org

The 'White Nigger' Story

DECEMBER 2002

Jack Lane of The Aubane Historical Society finds the following letter in Public Record Office (Kew).

This letter, indicating that McDowell wished to place the newspaper under British State influence, was sent in a period of extreme tension between Britain and Ireland following the outbreak of war in Northern Ireland and Jack Lynch's "we cannot stand idly by" speech. It receives first publication in the January 2003 *Irish Political Review*.

JANUARY 3RD 2003

The *Irish Times* publishes a report on British Government document releases.

JANUARY 10TH, 2003

Jack Lane notifies *The Irish Times* of his discovery, enclosing a copy of the letter.

JANUARY 15TH, 2003

Geraldine Kennedy queries the "veracity" of the letter.

JANUARY 26TH, 2003

The letter is published in the *Sunday Independent*.

JANUARY 27TH, 2003

The "contents" of the letter are published by *The Irish Times* but the paragraphs are not in the same order as the original and the first paragraph is not mentioned. The article by "an *Irish Times* reporter" is preceded by a denial from McDowell and there was a reference to another letter dated November 1969 implying that McDowell's intention was merely to act as a "link".

FEBRUARY 2ND, 2003

Professor Ronan Fanning says in the *Sunday Independent* that the idea that the British Ambassador would lie to his superiors in secret "beggars belief".

20TH SEPTEMBER 2003

Martin Mansergh begins to write a weekly column for the *Irish Times* and introduces his column by praising what Major McDowell did "to protect its independence". This provoked a reopening of the debate about McDowell's role.

APRIL 19TH, 2004

After more than a year the story is resurrected by former *Daily Mirror* Editor Roy Greenslade in an article in the *Guardian*. Questions are asked about *The Irish*

Times handling of this story when it emerges that the 'white nigger' letter was available to the public three years before Jack Lane brought it to the attention of Geraldine Kennedy.

APRIL 23RD, 2004

Geraldine Kennedy claims that "the contents of the letter in question were published in *The Irish Times* on January 27th, 2003, as soon as its existence was drawn to my attention".

A subsequent letter sent to *The Irish Times* by Jack Lane correcting the above assertion was not published.

Roy Greenslade apologises to *The Irish Times* for saying that the allegations of the British Ambassador were not published by the newspaper, but implies that the letter was suppressed by *The Irish Times* for three years.

APRIL 29TH, 2004

Conor Brady the editor of *The Irish Times* at the time the 'white nigger' letter was released by the PRO in January, 2000, denies that *The Irish Times* was aware of it. He says that only one letter relating to Major McDowell was discovered by *The Irish Times* and this was dated December, 29th, 1969.

MAY 2004

The Irish Political Review reveals that Cecil King, the former *Daily Mirror* proprietor wrote in his published diaries that McDowell was in M.I.5.

JULY 2004

The Irish Political Review describes the extraordinary powers accorded to Major McDowell in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of *The Irish Times Limited*.

AUGUST 2004

The Irish Political Review discovers another document from the British Public Records Office indicating that the meeting between Major McDowell and the British Ambassador in which McDowell was alleged to have described Gageby as a "whitenigger" was initiated by the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. The document also revealed that Wilson was under the impression that McDowell's "offer of assistance may relate more to intelligence than to journalistic activity".

SEPTEMBER 2004

The Irish Political Review reveals that the directors of *The Irish Times Limited*

and *The Irish Times Trust Limited*, the entities which control the newspaper, are bound by an Oath of Secrecy which is sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths.

DECEMBER 2004

The Irish Political Review reveals that the Editor Emeritus of *The Irish Times* Conor Brady was allowed to publish false information regarding the handling by *The Irish Times* of the story. He said incorrectly that the paper was only aware of one letter relating to McDowell in the British Public Records Office.

The Irish Political Review reveals that *The Irish Times* was aware of another letter dated November 1969 more than three years before Jack Lane notified it of the 'white nigger' letter. This other letter referred to the October 2nd, 1969 letter (the 'white nigger' letter) and confirmed much of the content of that letter.

McCreevy's Legacy

The 2005 Budget will be the first budget since the departure of Charlie McCreevy. The electoral success of Fianna Fail since 1987 has ensured a remarkable stability in budgetary policy. During his tenure McCreevy followed the script set out for him in the late 1980s by the Haughey government. There has been no significant deviation from such policies in all that time.

McCreevy can claim some innovations of his own. Most notably, the introduction of Tax Credits, which ensured that tax relief benefited the low paid. He also introduced individualisation of both Tax Bands and Tax Credits (e.g. the PAYE Credit). This writer is in favour of individualisation of the Tax Bands on the basis that the double Tax Bands were an inefficient way of supporting the family. The best way of supporting families is through increasing Child Benefit but, although these Tax Credits increased by a greater amount than the rate of inflation, the level of increase was far less than was needed to make much difference.

However, these two innovations were early on in McCreevy's tenure. There was nothing new in his recent budgets. He had completely run out of ideas. In show business terms, 'he was a great act, which had gone on too long'.

A "great act"!? Well maybe not a 'great act'. Although the introduction of Tax Credits will always redound to his

credit there were many less defensible policies. The Special Savings Scheme in which the Government chipped in one Euro for every five saved at the end of five years was pure madness. It was, in effect, a massive subsidy to the more prosperous element of the middle class for no good reason.

McCreevy also failed to tackle the one glaring anomaly in the Irish Tax system: mainly the absence of property taxes. Indeed he proved to be a soft touch for property developers. The various property incentives that were due to end in 2004 were extended to 2006, adding fuel to already raging property prices.

Less controversial was his 1% pension fund. Many commentators believe that this is a far-sighted policy which will provide for the needs of future pensioners. In my view this is a mistaken view. A society is not like an individual. An individual stops working when he retires. If the state pension is not adequate he must put money aside during his working years. But a society goes on forever. Although individuals might retire there will always be a proportion of the population that will be working.

It makes no sense for the government to invest in the Wall Street or Tokyo Stock Markets, even if those markets were giving a positive return, which they are not. If the Government wants to provide for the future needs of the country, it would be far better either to increase the proportion of the Budget devoted to capital expenditure, thereby sacrificing current consumption for future productivity within the country, or reduce the National Debt. The policy of investing state money in stock markets and property is just borrowing in order to save. It has no effect on the real economy.

McCreevy has also been criticised for having a poor grasp of economics. He is famous for saying you should only spend when you have it. This, of course, goes against orthodox Keynesian theory which recommends the opposite: spend your way out of a recession and cut back during the boom times. But the problem with the latter theory is that very often there is a time lag and by the time the expenditure has had an effect the economy will have recovered. I doubt if McCreevy's poor grasp of economics did any damage to the economy.

On the subject of a poor grasp of economics, the *Sunday Independent* gave McCreevy a glowing send off. It praised

him for his low tax policies which it explained explained Irish economic success and castigated the ICTU for going in the opposite direction. The article was reminiscent of First World War Generals employing the tactics of bygone battles.

The era of the Celtic Tiger ushered in by Haughey is over. Ireland has become victims of its own success. Now that the countries of Eastern Europe have entered the EU, the State will no longer be able to

compete on the basis of low wages and low taxes for a share of Multi-National investment. New policies have to be developed. It remains to be seen if Cowen is the man to deliver. But there is no doubt that McCreevy's time was up. His arrogance would have made him a liability in any other department.

Yes! A job in Europe! You can see Fianna Fail's point.

John Martin

The Birth of Amerope: A Historical Retrospect from 2050

This experimental piece draws on the manner of writing European history that I advocated in my book The Revision of European History published by Athol Books last year. It is written on the assumption that in the near future North America and the European Union will be seen as a single entity—Amerope—requiring historical treatment; that this will involve an even-handed and coordinated account of American and European history since the 1400s; and that this, in turn, will lead to a common periodisation of these shared histories and a more realistic periodisation of European history than the 'medieval' distortion introduced by reactionary Italian intellectuals in the 1400s.

What we now call Amerope, meaning the geopolitical and cultural entity formed by the USA, Canada, and Europe to the border with Russia, had its remote origins in the century and a half after 1492; the formative period of the Columbian Age. As that age came to an end in the decades following 1945, when the West rejected the rules of western civilisation and its Age of Chaos began, Amerope was in fact, if not in name, an established political and military reality. All that remained for its territorial completion was its extension into eastern and southeastern Europe under the aegis of the European Union; a completion accomplished in the first twenty years of the present century. The term 'Amerope', become conventional in the last thirty years, has had the virtue both of describing a new western reality since World War II and of indicating the changed preponderance as between Europe and its former North American colonies. In adjectival usage, as 'Ameropean', it replaced the previously conventional 'Euro-American'.

The event that led ultimately to the emergence and development of Amerope was, of course, the discovery of the American continent by Europeans in 1492. From the beginning of history, through Roman times, the Age of Transition and Europe's first or Pre-Columbian age—roughly 1000 to 1492—America and

Europe had existed in ignorance of each other. Consequently, during the 1400s up to 1492, the general circumstances and historical developments in America and Europe were entirely unrelated.

The American continent in its last Pre-Columbian century was mainly inhabited by tribal societies, some nomadic or semi-sedentary, others settled, most of them frequently at war. Politically, the typical unit was the chiefdom comprising a number of tribes. Occasionally, where a number of chiefdoms formed a confederation, such as, in North America, that of the Sioux, or belonged to a common language group, such as the Algonquian or Iroquoian peoples, they amounted to incipient nations.¹ In the Rio Grande basin, north of Mexico, a group of settled tribes, later known as Pueblo, lived in villages of multi-storeyed houses built of stone or adobe. Only in Mesoamerica, reaching from southern Mexico to Honduras, and on the Pacific or Andean side of South America, did states exist. Here there were cities, some inhabited exclusively by priests, nobles and officials, others also by farmers, merchants and craftsmen.

1. For ease of comprehension, I am obliged to use, anachronistically, some names of areas and places which were bestowed later by Europeans.

The many nomadic tribes lived by hunting, fishing and gathering, occasionally accompanied by slash-and-burn agriculture. The settled and semi-sedentary peoples farmed principally maize, beans and squash, but also, manioc, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and chilis. In some places cotton and tobacco were grown. Domesticated animals comprised turkeys, pigs, guinea pigs, occasionally dogs, and in South America, llamas and alpacas. For tools, weapons and art, the materials used were mainly stone, wood, bark, fired clay, feathers and reeds; but some peoples worked copper, gold, silver, and for sharpness used the glassy rocks, obsidian and chalcedony. Bronze was smelted only in the Andes. Because of the absence of the wheel and of horses or other draft animals, burdens were carried only by humans and the fastest communication was by relays of runners.

On the Atlantic coast of North America, southwards from the St. Lawrence estuary to Virginia, the principal tribes were the Micmac, Abenaki, Massachuset, Wampanoag, Narraganset, Wappinger, Lenape and Powhatan. The arc of islands extending east and south from Florida to Venezuela was inhabited in its northern part—including the Bahamas, Cuba and Haiti—by Arawak people of the Lucayan and Taino tribes. On the islands which completed the arc towards the Venezuelan coast were Carib; warlike cannibals who raided the Taino islands in search of women and human meat..

In the northern part of Mesoamerica, people were conscious of a classic period between 300 and 600 AD. Then the great Olmec city of Teotihuacàn had extended its political and cultural influence far and wide. The currently dominant civilisation of the Mexica (or Aztecs), centred on the lake city of Tenochtitlan, was in that tradition. Originally a wandering people from the north speaking a Nahua language, the Mexica had been driven to take refuge on the marshy lake island where they built their city. After having served the nearby Tepanec as mercenaries, in 1428 they formed an alliance with Texcoco on the lakeshore and, led by Izacoatl, overthrew the Tepanec and set about building an empire. Under Moctezuma (1440-1469) and the two emperors who succeeded him, it reached the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific and Guatemala.

Tenochtitlan, which had a substantial merchant class, grew to a population of 200,000. The Mexica innovated in astronomy, agriculture, architecture and

picture writing. Their chief gods were Tlaloc (rain) and Huizilpochtli (war) It was a loose empire inasmuch as it left the subject peoples their own religions and festivals; but it was also stern in its requirements of tribute and of warriors, delivered or captured, for sacrifice in the great pyramid temple of Tenochtitlan. These sacrifices, which amounted to thousands annually, were intended to secure the continuance of good order in the heavens and on earth.

Further south, in Yucatan, Guatemala and Honduras, the Maya looked back to a classic past in the fourth to ninth centuries. Living in city-states which were often at war, they had been and remained the most intellectually advanced people in America. In their classic period, their priests and warriors had reached high attainments in architecture, engineering, astronomy, fresco painting and sculpture. They were particularly gifted in mathematics and the measurement of time and used a form of picture writing. Here, too, merchants formed an important class. After the collapse of the older civilisation around 900, many Maya had migrated from Guatemala to the Yucatan peninsula and there, from the twelfth century, a revival occurred. The city-states formed a federation dominated by Mayapan. Then, in 1441, a general rebellion brought the ascendancy of Mayapan to an end and the federation dissolved into separate chiefdoms.

Far to the southwest, in the Andes running parallel to the Pacific coast, the Inca were the currently dominant people. Centred on Cusco in Peru, they were an elite caste of the Quechua tribe which since the 1200s had developed a distinctive military culture. With the accession of their king, Viracocha Inca, in the early 1400s, expansion began and was continued by his son, Pachacuti (1438-71), who founded an empire. His son, Tupa, overcame the Chimu civilisation to the north, founded Quito, and as emperor (1471-93) pushed the Inca frontiers south into northern Chile and Argentina.

It was an empire of the centralised and homogenising kind, minutely administered, and with a state religion of a heaven god who was represented by the sun and embodied in the emperor. There was social mobility for outstanding soldiers, an extensive road system, and effective social welfare for the collectivised peasantry. Irrigation and terracing served agriculture; gold, silver, copper and tin were mined, and bronze smelted. Various knotted bunches of string kept accounts and conveyed

messages. Inca art work was principally in gold, silver, pottery and woven fabrics.

The Mexica and Inca empires had each a population of around nine million. Their armies, the largest in America, fought with little strategy or tactics. The force they constituted was roughly equivalent to that of Babylonian or Egyptian armies around 1700 BC.

In the 1400s, western Europe, including Portugal, Italy and Spain, was a Catholic and predominantly agricultural society, with peasants and artisans living in villages under temporal or ecclesiastical lords. The countryside was punctuated by castles and monasteries. Towns and cities abounded, with four of the latter, Paris, Milan, Venice and Naples, having more than 100,000 inhabitants. Of the small cities, many were architectural works of art.

While universities grew in number, trade and pilgrimage routes criss-crossed the continent and its adjacent seas. The dominant commercial powers were the Hansa, Venice and Genoa, with Bruges figuring as the main north-south entrepot until that role passed to Antwerp. Banking and credit were largely transacted by the Medici of Florence and their branches, while the four annual fairs at Lyons were used for the settling of accounts and the issue of bills of exchange. In the coastal parts of Spain and Portugal, Genoese merchant-financiers were well established. Among the upper classes in several countries, vernaculars were replacing French. Chivalric literature was in vogue, and the arrival of book-printing spread it widely. European armies, in part equipped with primitive muskets and cannon, would have been more than a match for Roman legions.

As Europe moved towards the end of its first age, signs pointed towards the second. A growing strong desire for mastery of the world in all its aspects characterised the century and expressed itself in multiple innovation. The outstanding innovation, in the second half of the century, was the incipient passage of monarchy from suzerainty to sovereignty, or put differently, the gradual emergence of the absolutist state. In France, England and Spain, the central political aim was to establish a compact nation-state corresponding, respectively, to the ancient Roman unities of Gallia, Britannia and Hispania.

In England and France this development was favoured by three factors. In 1453 the Hundred Years War ended with the English evacuation of France except

for Calais. On France's eastern side, with the death of Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy in 1477, Burgundy ceased to be a troublesome, independent power. France, under Louis XI (1461-83), acquired parts of its territory, while the rest, including the Low Countries, passed by marriage to the Habsburgs of Austria. Finally, in England the twenty-year War of the Roses, which conveniently decimated the old English nobility, ended in 1485 with the accession of the first of the Tudors, Henry VII.

Meanwhile, in Spain, movement towards national unity was promoted by the marriage and joint rule of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. They strengthened the royal power as against nobles and bishops and in 1484 established the Inquisition. With Gibraltar taken in 1462, all that remained of Muslim power in Spain was the kingdom of Granada. The crusade launched against it in 1482 strengthened national cohesion; its annexation in 1492 completed the *Reconquista*. In the same year the Spanish Jews were given a choice between conversion and expulsion.

Innovation in other countries took a variety of forms. Portugal, which had entered the century as a compact nation-state but a poor one, struck out into the Atlantic. In 1415 Prince Henry had taken Ceuta, a Muslim port opposite Gibraltar where the caravans from West Africa, carrying gold, ivory and slaves, discharged their wares. It was the start of a Portuguese effort to bypass the middlemen who controlled this trade.

In the following decades Portuguese mariners explored the African coast, merchants followed them, and a fortified trading settlement was established in Guinea. Elsewhere in the Atlantic, sugar plantations were established on Madeira, the Cape Verde islands discovered, and the Azores occupied in 1432. That was the furthest point west so far reached by Europeans. Then, in 1488, when Bartholomew Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope, the prospect of a sea route to India beckoned. If realised, it would circumvent both the middlemen who conducted the caravans of spices and Eastern luxury goods to the coasts of Syria and Egypt and the others who received and exported these goods. Not only that: it would circumvent the Ottoman Turks who were taking control of the caravan routes.

Flanders, under the Burgundian dukes, innovated mainly in painting and music. Painters practised a new realism and for the first time used oils and canvas. Their

work, along with the new music of the Flemish composers, radiated influence through much of Europe.

In Italy some city-states pioneered state absolutism. But national unity, however much desired by Machiavelli and other patriots, was prevented by the absence of a power sufficiently strong to effect it. Instead, a chauvinistic, anti-modern movement of literati and classical scholars aspired to revive *Italia* through a cultural renewal of ancient Rome in a Christian context. Partly influenced by this movement, there was striking innovation, with wide European influence, in sculpture, painting, architecture and statecraft, and in the critical study of classical and Christian texts. In the wake of the Genoese merchant-financiers, some Genoese mariners migrated westwards. The Genoese shared with the Portuguese and Spaniards, an interest in bypassing the middlemen both of Morocco and of the Middle East.

In the southern and eastern German lands, around the middle of the century, European mathematics was founded. Drawing on Arab-Greek mathematics, it went beyond it. It was a mathematics with an astronomical bias and therefore useful for navigation. Simultaneously, there was advance in the precision working of metal for the making of machines and instruments. The invention of book-printing was merely its first important fruit. Nuremberg became the European centre both for the publishing of books on astronomy and mathematics and for the manufacture of instruments used in astronomy and navigation.

In the Church, it was a matter of would-be innovation. The reformist conciliar movement of 1409-42 healed the Great Schism of the previous forty years but failed to achieve the reforms it called for. During part of this period, the Hussites of Bohemia, foreshadowing with their demands the future Protestant rebellions, made war widely until they were brought to heel with some concessions granted. In 1484 Giovanni Battista Cibo, of a Genoese shipping family, became Pope as Innocent VIII. One of the line of art-loving 'Renaissance popes', he encouraged the persecution of witches.

Occasionally since ancient times, some had speculated that a voyage westward into the Atlantic would ultimately reach land of some kind. Strabo, whose *Geography* was known in pre-Columbian Europe, was specific. Given that the earth was round, he wrote, 'if the immensity of the Atlantic ocean did not prevent it, we

could sail from Iberia to India along the same parallel over the remainder of the circle'. That the Atlantic was navigable for quite some distance had been shown by the Portuguese. Advances in ship design and in navigational aids made a more lengthy voyage seem possible. For one thing, Ptolemy's *Geography* published in a Latin version in 1406 had introduced the notion of latitude and longitude, and by the 1480s the Portuguese had devised a method of calculating latitude from the sun. Now their discovery of what looked like a route to India around Africa spurred thought of besting them by finding a transatlantic route.

The Genoese sea captain, Cristoforo Colombo, made that enterprise his personal project. Having read every relevant book and studied every possibly relevant map, he tried in vain to interest the Portuguese king, failed in an approach to the Spanish monarchs, put out feelers to France and England, and finally, in 1492, won a commission from Ferdinand and Isabella. When his three caravels sailed from Palos on 3 August of the same year, many factors besides the royal commission contributed to the venture: finance from, among lesser sources, the treasuries of Aragon and Castile and a Florentine businessman; caravels, originally designed by the Portuguese for ocean-going and using the lateen sail borrowed from the Arabs; compasses, a Chinese invention transmitted by the Arabs; hour-glasses from Venice; an improved astrolabe designed by Martin Boheim of Nuremberg; and an almanac predicting the positions of celestial bodies compiled by the German mathematician Johann Muller (known also as Regiomontanus).

Nearly a month later, Columbus made his final departure from Gomera island in the Canaries, the land farthest west under Spanish control. If the Azores, far to the north and farther west, had been a Spanish possession, he might well have sailed west from there. He would then have been likely to make landfall among the Wappinger or Lenape, in the vicinity of present-day New York. But the Azores were Portuguese and therefore unavailable to him.

Sailing west from the Canaries, the first people he encountered were the Lucayan of Guanahani in the Bahamas. He called their island San Salvador and took formal possession of it in the name of Spain. In the following weeks, on Cuba and Haiti, he encountered the Taino people and heard of the fearsome Carib. Taking possession of Haiti, he called it La Espanola [this should have a tilde on the

n] and remained for some time. There, on Christmas Day, shortly before returning to Spain, he founded the first European town in America, La Navidad, and left thirty-nine of his men to people it.

In the course of the following hundred years, in America, Asia and Africa, Europe Overseas developed (that was what New Spain, New France, New Netherlands, New Sweden, New England, Nova Scotia and so on would amount to). Of that new reality, the Spanish, Portuguese and French settlements in America formed the largest part. That was the main context in which Amero- pe was born. The rest of it was the emergence of various kinds of Protestantism in Europe, and in particular in England. The seed of what would become Amero- pe was sown when in 1607 and 1620, respectively, English Protestants made two settlements on the Atlantic coast of North America. The first was on an island in Powhatan territory in the river the settlers called James. The second was among the Wapanoag at the place where the newcomers founded a town called Plymouth. The first of these settlements developed into the colony of Virginia, the second into Massachusetts. Later, these two colonies played the leading roles in the founding of the United States of America.

As this new republic grew, it became for its citizens and for Europeans America *par excellence*, and for Europeans the principal part of the Europe Overseas to which millions of them were migrating. It rose to that status and prominence because more completely than any other part of the American continent, except remote Argentina, it became inhabited by Europeans rather than by indigenous people; the settlers came from almost all the countries of Europe; and the United States, more than any other part of Europe Overseas, embodied the Faustian desire to master the world in all its aspects which had increasingly characterised Europe since the start of its Columbian age.

Given this inherited, unlimited drive and the soaring population, the United States became in the course of the twentieth century more powerful than Europe and twice played a decisive role in Europe's great wars. Following the second of these, it associated itself closely with Western Europe for matters of common defence as well as industrially and commercially, so that gradually, out of this working together under American preponderance, there emerged the geopolitical and cultural unity we call Amero- pe.

Desmond Fennell

REVIEW: *The Transformation Of Ireland 1900-2000* by Diarmuid Ferriter. Profile Books, London, 2004. 880pp.

Getting The Important Things Wrong

“In 1900 Ireland was a restless, impoverished, neglected corner of the British Empire. By 2000 it had become the “Celtic Tiger”. How did this happen?”

That is what Diarmuid Ferriter's book is about, according to its blurb.

Ferriter tells us in his Introduction that—

“Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland*... was refreshing in its determination to move away from the grand narrative of Irish history; the story of Ireland... could no longer be told as a “morality tale”. Foster's book... stressed themes as much as events, a welcome approach... explaining the relativity of historical understanding by reference to perception”.

I presume it is understanding relative to perception which allows Ireland in 1900 to be described as an impoverished, neglected corner of the British Empire. To an ordinary understanding, which assumes that there is an objective world capable of being described, and which does not retreat from events to “*themes*”, Ireland in 1900 cannot appear as impoverished and neglected. It was undergoing a profound social transformation, brought about by the interaction of native forces with the finest political talent of the British Empire. That was the era of “*killing Home Rule with kindness*”, the kindness consisting of the abolition of the Anglo-Irish land-owning caste, whose historical mission under the Williamite conquest had been to stifle the native impulse of life in Ireland and to Anglicise the Irish.

The rich literature of that fundamental economic and social reform, which was accompanied by a strong political reaction against Redmond's Home Rule Party, is not given even a single listing in Ferriter's 32-page Bibliography.

The 20th century began with a bang in Ireland, in comparison to which the “*Celtic Tiger*” development was a small quiet affair. And a historian who does not launch himself on that bang will not be able to account for what subsequently happened in any coherent way—if, indeed, what happened is any longer the business

of historians whose understanding is relative to perception, and whose perception is directed by blinkers. History-writing which does begin with the social transformation which occurred in the first decade of the century is unlikely to produce anything but litanies—lists of essentially disconnected items.

I suppose litanies perform an effective religious function. I have never been religious so I do not know. But religion has to do with a world outside time and causation, while history is a causative sequence of events in time.

The distinction between events and themes is not one that I can grasp. Themes, to my mind, are events in music. They are the subjects through whose activity music is constituted. The sonata form which has been basic to European music for a quarter of a millennium, is a kind of drama enacted by the inter-relationship of a couple of themes. Without these themes, these definite subjects—without tunes—music as we know it would not exist. History likewise exists through the activity of definite subjects. But, when historians talk of themes, it is for the purpose of brushing aside the subjects of the actual historical process in Ireland and replacing them with a kind of subjectless meandering.

Thirty years ago Althusserian Marxism dominated academic life in Britain and Ireland. It proclaimed the philosophy of ahumanism and defined history as a process without a subject. Marxism collapsed along with the Soviet Union in 1990, and I notice that the Professors who were strict Althusserians in the 1970s never mentioned him any more. And, as far as I know, they never described the mental process through which they travelled from Althusserian Marxism to post-Marxism—which is very understandable, since it was not through a process of thought that they made the journey, but through mere adaptation to the altered power-structure of the world. But the collapse of Marxism has left behind it a residue of much of what was worst in it—the worst of all being the displacement of the active human subject.

If “*narrative history*” is to be abolished (with regard to Ireland only, of course), then history is being abolished. Ever since the time of Herodotus history has been a narrative of the human adventure in this world. Even writers who believed in the existence of another world which gave purpose and meaning to life in this world wrote an account of affairs in this world as a narrative—a story. Long ago I happened to come across *The Two Cities* (a history of the world) by Otto, the Bishop of Freising in Bavaria (11th century), and it still stands for me as the beginning of post-Ancient history. Otto was very much a believer in the existence of two worlds, and he saw this world as existing in the light (or shade) of the other world. But he still wrote the story of this world as a human adventure. Dante enmeshed the representatives of the Eternal within the Temporal—the Popes—in the story of this world and passed human judgment on them in his *Inferno*. And Milton seemed intent on pressing on the Eternal the narrative form—the sonata dynamics—of the Temporal.

Life in this world is no longer lived under the aspect of eternity—at least, not in Ireland now. And yet this is the moment when it is decreed that the story of life in this world must no longer be told. Eternity has gone, and history is to follow it. And what then? A kind of totalitarian straitjacket for the mind! That is certainly what Foster means when he talks of replacing narrative with “*themes*”.

I recall from olden times an argument that human life in this world was sustainable only in connection with belief in another world. I thought then that it was an absurd argument. In the 1970s I could see that the Althusserian philosophy denied the reality of human existence. When Professor Bew pressed it on my attention in 1971 or 1972 I recoiled from it. At the time I thought it was a passing aberration. But the developments of the past thirty years suggest otherwise. It is still there, and it has not been improved by the loss of the Marxist wrapping in which it first appeared. A humanity is flourishing in the era of post-Marxism. Fukuyama, the American Straussian ideologist, announced the arrival of the Last Man ten years ago, and I notice that his latest book is about a post-human future.

If “*the story of Ireland can no longer be told as a morality tale*”, where will morality be got in future? There are two conceivable sources of morality—inspiration from another world and

experience in this world. There is no necessary conflict between these two, which have usually functioned in combination.

The word ‘morality’, in its Roman source, meant custom. The Romans existed by virtue of their customs, and they told themselves the story of themselves for the purpose of consolidating their customs and keeping themselves Roman.

But the revisionist ideology does not recognise custom as a source of morality. It inclines towards the contrary view that something which is customary is likely to be immoral. The long anti-Catholic cultural revolution in English society after 1540 was a campaign to destroy the morality of custom.

If history and custom are ruled out of order as authenticating influences of human conduct, that means that morality can only be transcendental. It can only come from beyond this world. In that case this world can only cease to be immoral if it is re-moulded in accordance with decrees formulated beyond it. England committed itself to the destruction of all that existed, believing that it was the chosen Providential agent of the other world. It was absorbed in theocratic fanaticism for about three centuries. When its God died on it in the late 19th century, the habit of destruction in a higher cause had become so ingrained that it carried on regardless. In the 1880s Seeley, an Oxford Professor who twenty years earlier had begun the euthanasia of God by writing his biography (*Ecce Homo*), made the revelation that the English State was not, as hitherto supposed, the agent of a transcendental Providence, but that it was itself the force of Providence. His phenomenally popular lectures on *The Expansion Of England* constituted England itself into the transcendental determinant of morality for the rest of humanity. That was England’s idea of itself during the quarter of a century leading up to 1914, the era of “*Greater Britain*”. And its persistence after 1918 was one of the reasons why the League of Nations amounted to nothing. It seems to me that, even though England is now a pale shadow of what it was then, it became the transcendental determinant of morality in Irish academia when the influence of the Catholic Hierarchy declined and the Fenian tradition was rejected around 1980.

What does “*explaining the relativeness of historical understanding by reference to perception*” mean? I suppose it could

mean that things are seen differently from the viewpoints of different interests. Looking at the same general situation, the British government, the Home Rule Party, the IRB, the Ulster Unionists etc. would see different things in it. But there is nothing new in that observation, least of all in Ireland.

It could also express a radical subjectivist epistemology—the pretentious use of concepts from metaphysics being a feature of revisionist writing. But I think most philosophers, however subjectivist, would regard perception as being heavily conditioned by understanding. Immaculate perception is not a practical possibility. Individuals perceive under the guidance of some form of understanding which is prior to perception. While different things are seen from different viewpoints, much the same things are seen from the same viewpoint. A viewpoint in that regard is a form of prior understanding. I took some trouble to get at the different viewpoints from which the Irish situation was seen over the centuries, and if I had time I would have written three histories of Ireland since 1690 from the three major viewpoint—Irish, Anglo-Irish, and Ulster Scots. I did not think that a true history could be written in any other way. Each lived, and perceived, according to its own understanding. There was not a sufficient element of common outlook between the three (not even between the Anglo-Irish and the Ulster Scots) to permit the three to be taken as one for the purpose of a common history. The differences between them were not of a kind with class or regional differences in other countries. They lived in different worlds. And the Irish and the Ulster Scots would willingly have lived their own lives entirely out of the presence of the others. The Anglo-Irish could not do so, of course, because they were parasitic, chiefly on the Irish. Their function was to command the others, to manage them, to realise West Britain—which they failed to do. What revisionism amounts to is an attempt to accomplish that Anglo-Irish function through blotting out Irish history.

Ferriter presents his history as “*post-revisionist*”. What that means is that it takes the revisionist positions for granted. It is an incoherent collection of bits and pieces which has been hailed by the revisionists as a masterpiece because it does homage to them, and omits what should be omitted.

There are 33 sub-sections in the long

first chapter, but they do not include one on the All For Ireland League, or on the influence of the Boer War on the Liberal Imperialist politics of Home Rule. The rejection of the Home Rule Party in Co. Cork in 1910 is not mentioned. The 1918 Election is barely mentioned, and is not connected with the War of Independence. There is a strange statement about the latter:

“There were many acts of defiance during a war of independence which was the most obvious manifestation of a direct change in the tactics of the republican movement. It was of pivotal importance to expand opposition to British rule into an all-out war.”

No reason is given about why there was a war, but we read on page 113: “the surge in militarism should not be seen as the only appeal of a quest for Irish independence”, and republican “militarism” is mentioned again on page 209.

The sequence of events suggests that there was a war because the independence which the electorate voted for was denied by the British Government. The sentence quoted seems to say that the appeal of independence was that it would have to be fought for. This is in accordance with Charles Townsend’s dogma that the Irish had a proclivity for political violence.

“*Militarism*”, as I understand it, described a political culture which is dedicated to warfare and which seeks wars to fight. It does not describe the adoption of military methods by a country whose democratic will is opposed by an Imperialist Army.

Ferriter does not apply the term to the actual militarist affair of the time—the decision of the British Empire to make war on Germany after the outbreak of the European War in 1914.

“Despite the evolution or organised political nationalism in the South in the late nineteenth century, at the dawn of the twentieth century there was considerable support in both Ireland and England for the maintenance of the Act of Union of 1800” (p29).

England, of course, was insisting on it, and continued to insist on it after 1918, which is why there was a war. But where is the evidence of considerable support for the Union in Ireland? That support had become so vestigial that the UK parties in 1900 did not even contest elections in most of Ireland. No Union party contested the issue with the Home Rule Party outside Ulster. And the Home Rule Party certainly

did not “*support*” the Union in 1900. It sat in the Westminster Parliament under duress and tried to gain concessions. The duress was that Britain made it perfectly clear that it could not consider Irish independence. And the Home Rulers did not think that nationalist Ireland could muster the military force needed to defeat the British Army. Is that *support*?! Has Maynooth gone through the looking-glass? (Ferriter lectures there.)

“The rhetoric of the rising was subsequently used selectively. It also went to the heart of the question of who knew the will of the people better than the people themselves, which was why, in the context of the North, the Rising became much derided in the 1970s ... As F.X. Martin noted long ago, it would be deceptive to insist that the Rising was ‘necessary and inevitable’ as far as contemporaries were concerned, as this imposes a pattern of events in the years preceding 1916 which was not visible even to extreme republicans” (p150).

I assume that the evasive convolutions here are a product of genuine mental incoherence rather than deviousness.

There was no “*will of the people*” in 1916. Elected government was suspended in 1915. There were two forces acting on the people—the British Government which wanted them as war-fodder for the Empire, and the IRB, which took advantage of a situation in which mass slaughter had become commonplace, to force the issue with regard to independence. By committing the Home Rule Parliamentary Party unconditionally to the expansionist war of the Empire—whose Imperialist character had been clarified by the campaign of conquest launched in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in November 1914—Redmond went outside his electoral mandate of 1910, and he acted without an electoral mandate from the end of 1915.

The 1916 conflict was conducted outside the structures of representative politics. It was not a contest to discover the will of the people. Britain was going to have none of that until its need for cannon-fodder ended. It was a conflict to determine the will of the people, in the sense of forming it. When the matter was put to the people, they decided for those who had organised the Rising and against those who had recruited so many tens of thousands of them as cannon fodder.

The quote from F.X. Martin strikes me as mere gibberish. I read his article about 35 years ago, when I was being caricatured

as an Orange Unionist by the Dublin 4 types who began to become ‘revisionists’ about ten years later. I would have been glad of the help of sound reasoning from any source to sustain the position I had taken up. All that I can now remember from Martin is that I found him useless.

And, *a propos* the North: Ferriter’s treatment of it is abysmal. Six Counties were kept within the British State, in accordance with the will of one of the peoples in them, but were excluded from the institutions which made the British state functional as a multi-national State. The 6 Counties were sealed off from the democratic political life of the state, and the running of them was farmed out to the intensely anti-Catholic majority whose business was to hold in check the Catholic minority of one-third.

“To ignore Ulster unionist opposition was of course essential, as it sullied such a simplistic canvas” (p196). That is Ferriter on a letter written by Erskine Childers in 1919. But Ferriter can ignore the perverse arrangement made by Britain for the governing of the North, even after those arrangements produced mayhem.

They *must* be ignored so that Catholics can be denounced for bigotry or nationalist fanaticism, or whatever, by spoofer in the Republic who have no experience of life in “*the Northern Ireland State*” and who lack the will or the talent to imagine it. And it does not improve things a bit that Ferriter throws in some denunciation of Protestant bigotry as well. What matters is that he averts his mind from the unique mode of Government which Westminster devised for the bit of Ireland which it decided to hold within the UK—the rule of a small anti-Catholic majority over a large Catholic minority outside the mediating institutions of the state. Britain, the transcendental source of revisionist morality, must remain beyond the reach of revisionist critical faculties—otherwise their world would collapse.

▲ premium on cultural and racial unity and an external rather than an internal enemy” (p216). I think this is the first time I have seen it said that Sinn Fein was racially selective. I thought it was eager to embrace Saxons, but the Saxons would not be embraced, and that it was very proud of the Norman element. Unfortunately, Ferriter gives no evidence of the racism which he alleges. As to the external enemy—was that a delusion?

The Kilmichael Ambush was

“infamous”—naturally: good reviews were desired (p299).

Protestants were killed in West Cork in 1922 because they were Protestants, but for the purpose of being killed “abusive political language” was applied to them. A list is given: landgrabber, loyalist, imperialist, Orangeman, Freemason. But not “*informers*” apparently.

70 Protestants were shot in this way in Co. Cork, we are told, and there was a 34% reduction in the Protestant population between 1911 and 1926 as a consequence, this being “the single greatest measurable change of the revolutionary era” (p228. P. Hart is the authority for this statement).

I would have thought that the removal of the apparatus of the English State after so many centuries was the outstanding change, and that the exodus of Protestants—who in the South were with few exceptions the people of the English State in Ireland—was connected with the removal of their state.

I had the impression that Orangemen, Freemasons, etc. (as well as Catholics) were shot for being informers against the democracy, and that, even though in some cases there might have been an element of personal vendetta, it was presented as action against informers. Ferriter presents no evidence that anybody was shot on the charge of being Freemason. He just asserts dogmatically that it was the case.

Ferriter quotes Sean O Faolain about the RIC in this regard: they were “shot down as traitors... But they were not traitors. They had their loyalties and stuck to them”. The implication of this is that there could only be treason to the Crown, and that the democracy has no standing in the matter.

The RIC served a State which the Irish electorate had accepted under duress for four generations—it had not been consulted at all in the matter until the 1830s. When the electorate in 1918, having been blooded by the Great War and its 1916 offshoot, disregarded the duress and voted for independence, the RIC became quite clearly the agency of a foreign occupation, and its continuing loyalty to the Crown became treason.

That is how Britain treated Balkan affairs in the early 1990s. When Croatia and Bosnia voted for independence, the Yugoslav State was judged to have become an occupying force in them and its servants were judged to lack legitimacy. The Yugoslav Constitution made provision for

the secession of its component parts, but the independence movements in Croatia and Bosnia decided that those procedures were themselves oppressive and by-passed them. And, in the case of Bosnia, it was evident that the small majority for independence was made up of an alliance of two hostile communities which could reach no agreement on how a Bosnian State should be conducted. Nevertheless, the British attitude was democracy, in the form of a referendum vote, was sacred, and that it de-legitimised the Yugoslav State in Bosnia. In the case of Ireland, the British Constitution refused to contemplate independence, and the British State simply disregarded the democratic vote.

The Versailles Treaty of 1919, of which Britain was the architect, purported to inaugurate the era of universal democracy and national rights, but Britain’s first action in that era was to over-rule the Irish democracy and carry on governing by force in defiance of it. That is a fact which should be kept alive in the interest of developing a realistic international morality—as distinct from the tacking between Utopian ultra-democracy and the *realpolitik* of mere force which is the British mode. But, for Ferriter, “propaganda from Britain understandably focused on the idea of murderous thugs intimidating normally law-abiding people into support of a Dail, which though proclaiming democratic legitimacy was merely a theatre of war” (p223).

If that is understandable, what would be unreasonable? The Dail was a “*theatre of war*” only because the Crown made war on it.

After this it is understandable that the ‘Treaty’, signed under the threat of total war, barely registers in Ferriter’s mind. He makes one notable comment:

The starkness of the Irish delegation’s position was revealed in the final communication sent by Griffith to de Valera on 6 Dec. 1921, the day on which the Treaty was signed: “We were on the point four times of breaking on the crown, which I told the cabinet I would not break on. The issue was peace or war. We decided our course that they gave in on fiscal autonomy and other matters.” Griffith’s letter was a significant reminder that the Irish were not the only side obsessed with symbols, given that it was Britain who made the oath the sticking point” (p242).

“*Obsessed with symbols*”? The Irish had taken an Oath to the Republic, and they took it in earnest. The inviolability of Oaths had twice been a central issue in

British Constitutional history: in 1688-9 and again 1714. On both occasions the issue was resolved in favour of the legitimacy of perjury in affairs of state—and the Protestant conscience in command of the State embarked on a career of casuistry that would shame a Jesuit. A willingness to break oaths became in effect a qualification for entry to political office. (I described some of this in the biography of Charlotte Brooke in the reprint of *Bolg an Tsolair*.)

Oaths meant everything to many Republics. They meant nothing to the governors of the British Empire. Britain was governed in 1921 by a Ministry Of All The Talents—the most experienced and competent and purposeful politicians of both parties. The assumption that they were obsessed by an Oath, which even our Maynooth lecturer regards as a meaningless symbol, must be regarded *prima facie* as absurd. If they made an issue of the Oath, and gave way on the substantial matter of fiscal autonomy in order to have the Oath in the Treaty, the only realistic assumption is that they insisted on the Oath because they saw it as a means of splitting the Sinn Fein enemy in the very act of conceding a substantial degree of power to it. The oldest skill of the English ruling class was the ability to manipulate to its advantage sincerely-held beliefs which it did not share. And the Oath was made an issue of in 1921-2 for the purpose of splitting Sinn Fein. The greatest defeat for Whitehall would have been the recognition of the Sinn Fein party of 1918-21 in legitimate office in Ireland.

Having chosen to ignore, or not having the conceptual apparatus to perceive, the bizarre structure of government put in place in the North along with Partition, Ferriter’s comments on the North are mere meanderings. The structure of the sub-government, and the sealing off from the politics of the state, made the political life of “*the Northern Ireland State*” the mere expression of communal (or “*sectarian*”) dominance and subjugation from the start, and it preserved and aggravated the communal antagonism through its functioning, until the point of explosion was reached.

He says not a word about the weird constitutional entity into which the people of the 6 Counties were bound in 1921-2. He remarks that, “there had been little coherence on the British government about partition and it was implemented with scant regard for the long-term consequences” (p277). Partition and the

mode of government which accompanied it are taken to be the same thing. But the long term consequences were not produced by Partition but by the mode of government.

“The idea of constructive opposition was a long way off” in 1921 (p275). It is still a long way off. It is not a practical possibility outside the politics of a state, and Northern Ireland was never a state. Craigavon understood that it was not a state, and that its effectiveness existed in direct proportion to its inactivity. When Lemass and O’Neill lured the Nationalist party into the farce of “constructive opposition”, the explosion followed.

British politicians knew very well that Northern Ireland was not a state, and that it was dysfunctional, but it served their purposes. And they were happy to blame the consequences of the pseudo-democracy on the “sectarianism” of the people who were subject to it. Ferriter quotes a British civil servant: “the real niggers in the woodpile over this stoking of ancient hates” were the teachers of the religious orders (p462), and apparently agrees.

But he displays a modicum of sympathy: “The bitter nationalist reaction to the state in the 1920s was inevitable given the brutality experienced by some of their population” (p283). But the bitterness accompanying Partition would have worn away if it had been open to the Northern Catholics, as it was to the Southern Protestants, to participate in the political life of the state, with a possibility of becoming Cabinet Ministers in Whitehall through activity in the Labour Party of the state. (They actually elected an MP to take the Labour Whip at Westminster and thus open the politics of the state to them, but he was refused the Whip.)

The explosion of “*the Northern Ireland state*” in mid-August 1969, which was the central cause of everything that has happened since, is not even mentioned by Ferriter.

Leaving aside the opening decade of the century, the Great War, the rising, the 1918 Election, the Treaty, and the North, Ferriter’s book is an interesting gossipy ramble through life in the Free State/Republic. The description of the Free State in the 1930s as displaying “an almost Stalinist antagonism to modernism” (a quotation from Terence Brown) is odd, given that Stalinism was pulverising everything that was traditional in Russia and shaping it into the material of a powerful modern state, but it doesn’t matter in the least. What matters is that Ferriter got the important things wrong, thus ensuring revisionist approval.

Brendan Clifford

THE BUSH VICTORY

The victory of George W. was a minor victory for the American over class. ‘Minor’ because it is unlikely that Kerry would have halted the plunder of Iraqi assets or restored its sovereignty.

It also might be a pyrrhic victory. At present the USA has a balance of payments deficit of 600 billion dollars a year. In plain language its level of consumption is way in excess of its production. Military dominance has enabled it to live off the rest of the world. But has the empire overreached itself?

Bush Junior, unlike Senior has plunged the country into the Iraqi mire. Who knows what other adventures he will launch? His politics, which are based on religious fundamentalism, allow him to be relatively autonomous of capitalist interests in the USA. There must be many in the American establishment who are wondering if George W’s conservative east coast opponent might have been a safer bet to preserve the long term material interests of the Empire.

CREDIT UNIONS: A MAD COMPETITION AUTHORITY PROSECUTION

If only the market was free of state interference, everything would be the best in the best of all possible worlds. Such is the thinking behind the Competition Authorities in Ireland and other EU states. Unfortunately the markets cannot be trusted to be free on their own. So the free market ideologues insist on ... state interference.

What evils has the State-financed Competition Authority protected the Irish people from in recent months? In its relentless struggle to protect the world for all right thinking people it has successfully sued the Irish League of Credit Unions.

The Irish League of Credit Unions! But surely there must be some mistake. The ILCU has been one of the most successful institutions in Irish life. It has allowed ordinary people in financial trouble to have access to cheap credit, credit that would not be available from the banks. Who knows how many people have been saved from the clutches of loan sharks as a result of the Credit Unions.

So what crime has the ILCU committed? Apparently it decided to expand and enter the life assurance market. In order to do this it required its members to subscribe to its new life assurance company. The subscriptions were marginally above the market rates, but in

exchange the members were benefiting from other services provided by the ILCU such as its Savings Protection Scheme. In short the members were being asked to pay a membership fee to help create an alternative to the commercial insurance companies.

Some Credit Union members wanted to use the cheaper commercial insurance companies, but nevertheless wished to continue availing of existing Credit Union services. It seems that there is an internal power struggle within the organisation as a result of some costly errors in the past such as a failed computer system. Anyway, in steps the Competition Authority and backs the dissident members. A case was brought to the High Court and the court confirmed the values of ‘individualism’ as represented by the Competition Authority. Legal Costs amounted to over half a million and at the time of writing it is unclear whether the Authority (i.e. the tax payer) or the Credit Union will foot the bill.

This case raises questions for other organisations with collective arrangements. Will collective insurance policies on behalf of Trade Unions and other organisations be banned on the grounds of not allowing choice to individual members?

Meanwhile, the Competition Authority boss John Fingleton was called before a Dail Committee to explain his activities. In the course of questioning, he complained that he received no cooperation from the commercial insurance companies. We wonder why. And yet he brings a case against the Credit Unions who were trying through their philosophy of self help to provide an alternative. Well done John!

Fingleton indicated that his organisation needed more staff. We have a better suggestion: Don’t increase its staff. Wind it up before it does any more damage!

KHRUSHCHEV AND THE IRISH TIMES

Just over 40 years ago in 1964 a momentous event occurred. Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union, was forced to resign. Power was transferred peacefully to a troika consisting of Brezhnev, Kosygin and Mikoyan. The Soviet Union was quite forthcoming as to the reasons. There was a long list of Khrushchev’s errors including a lack of “*modesty and conscience*” and “*subjectivism*”. This referred to initiatives he introduced without first consulting

Communist Party and State Institutions. In a reference to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 he was accused of “*adventurism*” and “*defeatism*”. He was also accused of “*harebrained schemes*”. His economic reforms were a disaster and he wanted to introduce bourgeois democracy by creating two Communist Parties: one for the Workers and one for the Peasants.

Khrushchev was a hero of one of his successors, Gorbachev, which prompts the thought that if Khrushchev had been allowed to continue as he was doing after 1964 the Soviet Union might have collapsed more than 20 years earlier than it actually did!

* * *

Ten years after the resignation of Khrushchev there was also a peaceful change in the power structure within *The Irish Times*. But d’Olier Street was far less forthcoming than the Kremlin. The most successful Editor of the newspaper ever, Douglas Gageby, apparently decided to retire from his position even though he was only in his mid fifties. He resigned as director a year later. Major Thomas Bleakley McDowell was accorded almost dictatorial powers, although this wasn’t clear at the time. Despite his British army background there was no evidence of military backing for this bloodless coup.

The British Foreign Office in a note to the British Ambassador five years before Gageby’s resignation indicated that:

“McDowell did not seek ammunition for use against his editor, but he did, as you forecast, mention rather apologetically that Editor’s excessive zeal”.

Official British sources have also alleged that McDowell denounced Gageby as a “*renegade or white nigger*” on Northern matters.

Irish Times historian Tony Gray, who died recently, was forced to abandon his official history of *The Irish Times* in 1982 because of “*sensitivities*” over the restructuring in 1974.

The world has seen a lot of changes in the last thirty years. The Soviet Union is no more. Germany is united. Mao Zedong and Tchang Kai-Chek died within two years of the “*restructuring*” of *The Irish Times*. Enver Hoxha of Albania is long gone.

However, *The Irish Times* monolith has moved slowly and ideological purity has been maintained. McDowell relinquished his position as Chief Executive for Life in 1997. He remained on as Chairman of The Irish Times Trust Limited (the politburo of the newspaper) until December 2001 and is still honorary President for Life of The Irish Times Group.

EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

A French comrade has sent us a **real** daily newspaper to read. Unlike the gibberish which passes for journalism in our country the French newspaper *l’Humanité* describes the world as it is. In particular it describes what decent people have to do to make a living. Yes! There is a world beyond the diet of spin, press releases and propaganda that is served up by our newspapers.

The edition we have to hand devotes two pages to the struggles of workers in the Peugeot car factories in Mulhouse. The Bosses have decided to wage a war against “*sick leave*”. The average amount of sick leave in Peugeot (also the owner of the Citroen brand) amounts to 53 hours or about 1.5 weeks per worker per year. The French employers’ organisation believes that an acceptable level is about 40 hours or just over a week per year.

The newspaper describes the campaign of intimidation that has been waged ranging from: threatening letters; withdrawal of holiday leave; no annual pay increases; right up to the sacking of ‘offenders’ for trivial and sometimes spurious reasons.

One worker in his early fifties, who has been a Peugeot employee for thirty years, described the changes in that time. In former paternalistic times if you were sick the foreman would visit you after work to find out how you were. Now the foreman rings you up and asks you when you will be back and if you don’t say the following day you can expect a lecture. No polite enquiries as to your well being because the foreman’s bonus depends on cutting sick leave rates in his team. Such is modern factory discipline.

The policy of the bosses assumes that sick leave is a choice by the workers. It also denies the possibility that some of the sick leave may be work-related. The physical nature of assembly work over many years has always resulted in back and joint problems. This has been exacerbated by the pressures of “*world class manufacturing*”. No slack is allowed. Also in former times older workers could expect to transfer to lighter tasks after a few years, but the new methods of production have eliminated these jobs. Even tasks like sweeping the factory floor have been subcontracted out to cut costs.

A grim situation then, but are there the same problems in Multinational companies in this country? You may be sure there are and worse. Manufacturing practices tend to be global. But don’t expect to read about them in Irish newspapers!

THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

l’Humanité suggests that a constitution is supposed to unite people around broad principles, therefore most constitutions are not detailed. The EU Constitution is very detailed. There are some points regarding a social Europe but these are vague. There are also points about a market economy and these are very detailed. In *l’Humanité’s* view the EU constitution will be one of the few constitution’s in the world that will incorporate capitalism as an economic model. Not even the US constitution goes this far.

Although the communists are united, the socialist party is split. The No 2 Lauren Fabius is opposed. It’s possible that he could be a presidential candidate, although like Michael Noonan in Ireland he has a dodgy record on Blood contamination. He also was a former Prime minister.

There will be a referendum on this issue within the Socialist Party in early December. This is going to be very significant. Unfortunately most of the Socialist leaders are for the Constitution including Francois Holland (the rather non descript leader), Lionel Jospin and Jacques Delors.

The annoying thing is that this Constitution was decided behind closed doors with very little consultation and if you oppose it you are anti-Europe, a reactionary and narrow minded nationalist. It’s like the Nice referendum all over again. Blackmail.

Urgent Irish Times Christmas Appeal

Dear Reader,

Christmas is a time for thinking of others less fortunate than ourselves. In this season of goodwill we appeal to our readers to give generously to a new and worthy charity.

In the past year you have had the opportunity to read some heartrending stories of journalistic ineptitude. Now is your chance to help! There is a desperate shortage of guide dogs and white canes in the offices of *The Irish Times* and only a small amount of money could remedy this appalling state of affairs.

Please send all contributions to:

Guide Dog Christmas Appeal,
The Stevie Wonder School
of Journalism,
D’Olier Street,
Dublin 2.

And remember: give a little, it’ll help a lot!

The Remembrance Festival

These days a weekend is given over by the UK Government to Remembrance (of the dead of all the wars fought by 'Britain' since 1914, including all the National Liberation struggles from that of Ireland to—well, {Northern} Ireland; and now, Iraq—the third, or is it fourth? change of 'regime', the UK has forced, or helped to force, on Baghdad). *The Times* (Saturday, November 13, 2004) had an article, *Television's Young Viewers Ensure That We Never Forget*. The reporter, Adam Sherwin, expressed surprise at the fact that the Cenotaph ceremony (in Whitehall), and the actual Festival of Remembrance (held in the Royal Albert Hall on the Saturday eve of Remembrance Sunday), are attracting very large and youthful television audiences. Part of this has to do with the fact that these are partially 'living history', but a great deal of it has to do with the fact that the Royal British Legion has been targeting schools and colleges for the past decade. The Legion is behind the re-introduction of the two minutes' silence at 11.00am on the actual date of the Armistice, November 11—which has been, at the least, an embarrassing interruption of most people's routine. Not every single citizen of the UK wants to commemorate the defeat of England's armed forces in Ireland, Cyprus, Kenya, South Yemen, or their scuttling away from India and 'Israel'. However, the ritual will, of course, and is probably designed to, impress captive audiences like school students.

Now that the UK is at war—again—this year's ceremonies were somewhat subdued, as was the wearing and (presumably) purchasing, of Poppies. The latter were not as universally in evidence as they have been for the past decade or so. The British public may not be campaigning on the streets against the war on—and now in—Iraq, but they are making plain their distaste for the involvement in Iraq of the UK State. The BBC still gave over two and a half hours prime time television to The Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance on Saturday 13th November. It was introduced by the newsreader, Huw Edwards (who is probably a major member of what is derisively known as the Taffia. This is the Welsh-language educated, Beeb-dominating, Cardiff-dwelling element in the Principality which is now attempting to conquer London. They've been pretty successful so far).

At one point in the proceedings he stated that the 'entertainment' part of the evening was over, and the serious section was about to begin. Presumably he meant what can only be described as the 'military-kitsch'

element of the Festival.

It has always been there, but I have not really noticed it until this year. The band of the Royal Marines forming itself into the shape of an anchor was what brought this element home to me. Young people were not as prominent as they have been in past years (presumably the people who choreograph this business do not want to leave images of—British—children involved in war in the minds of viewers: and this show is unambiguously designed for viewing). Towards the end of the event two teenagers were shown bringing some element to the 'drum-head' altar, which was going to serve for the Blessing by a Bishop from the Church of England by Law Established. (The Scottish regiments must be largely Presbyterian—the Established Church of Scotland—and Roman Catholic.) The youngsters, (the boy a 'Caucasian' as it is comically called in America, the girl an 'Asian',—meaning from the Indian subcontinent—though there are probably more soldiers of Afro-Caribbean origin in the Army than 'Asians'), walked through the massed ranks of service personnel who were all in 'dress uniform'. As serving regiments were not represented, it was not as colourful as it could have been. It is usually, with the fancy uniforms of the older regiments, a kitsch, even camp, element in the Festival. As the RIR (Royal Irish Regiment) is partially involved in Iraq, it did not get its usual warm welcome to the floor of the Hall. The Festival is not, despite what the Legion pretends, an event the politically radical might feel comfortable attending.

The slightly acerbic element in Edwards's commentary was totally missing, the next morning, from Fergal Keane's input to the description of the ceremony at the Cenotaph. This was on Radio 4UK, and Keane seemed to move himself, if nobody else, as is only fitting in someone who is changing himself from a Cork Republican into a fit recipient of whatever is next after a mere membership of the Order of the British Empire. To be fair to Keane—like the late Richard Dimbleby—he has to use a particular type of microphone, which makes him sound breathily reverential. But he was breathily reverential when he had to mention the Queen or other members of the Royal Family, who are usually out in force for this ceremony. (Who decided that the Duke of Kent was fit to be a field marshal? Did he not get all the way from Lieutenant to Captain in his fifteen years in actual service?)

Seán McGouran

(Next Month: French Remembrance)

The Week In Torment

John Prescott's favourite 'initiative', the setting up of regional parliaments in England was shot down in flames by the people of the North East of England. They—or at least the ones who bothered to go out and vote—rejected the offer of an Assembly for an area which included Northumbria and Durham, and some other bits of the the English North East.

A number of reasons have been put forward by the media for the rejection: the fact that it was essentially daft being pretty high on the list admittedly. There was also the fact that the proposed Assembly would simply replicate (and complicate) the work of the current Local Government set-up. It was seen as simply another tier of professional politicians with not an awful lot to do with their time. (Municipal government is, in effect, salaried work these days, and the public does not really relish this turn. Local Government was more effective and efficient when it was a voluntary offering of service by the Councillors backed up by a skeletal staff and covering small areas: *local*).

But there may be another reason for rejection, a folk-memory of something quite horrible, pushed into the farthest reaches of the Geordies' collective subconscious. Until 1967 the far North of England shared a radio wave-length with Northern Ireland. The rather plummy 'station announcer' in Belfast used, among other things, to read the weather forecast for "Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northumberland and Durham".

There was also some exchange of programmes, Northern Ireland got jolly folk-song shows, they got—among other things—*The Week in Stormont*, called, by the very few people who listened to it 'The Week in Torment'.

It was a quarter hour that justified, in itself, the consumption of large quantities of 'Newky Brown'. It also introduced the people of the far North of England to the horrors of 'regional government'—is it any wonder they rejected the offer? They had at least twenty-two years of the Week in Torment.

S McG

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WORK continued

However, it is remarkable that in the country that is the powerhouse of the world economy, the USA, Individualisation is not practised. There is Family Taxation. Globalising and homogenising are much more US policies for the rest of the world than for the US itself.

A consideration worth taking into account when we ponder on the reasons why Bush was re-elected, instead of prattling on about how stupid people in the US are! "*How Can 58,640,761 People be so Dumb?*" (The Mirror, 4.11.2004).

But what is so wrong about '*individualisation*'? After all, it makes so much sense from a utilitarian/market perspective.

And perhaps, its very economic rationality is a pointer as to the damage done. Individualisation of the tax code is an outward sign of inward changes in the social structures of the society. The crucial question, however, is whether society can be based on atomised individuals acting from monetary self-interest. Mebd Ruane posed this question in an extreme form: "*If the things we do for love don't count, then why bother to love at all?*" (Irish Times, 6.12.1999).

Following the 1980 *Murphy Case* in the Supreme Court, the Haughey Government responded by doubling the Tax-Free Allowance for married couples and doubling their Tax Bands. The liberal element which backed the Murphy case must have had mixed feelings about the outcome. Before the Murphy case, the tax system penalised married women who were working by eliminating their Personal Allowance and Tax Bands. Haughey's

response was to give an incentive for married women to remain outside the workforce by giving the married couple the benefit of two Tax-Free Allowances and Tax Bands whether the women was working or not.

Was Charles Haughey, once again, ahead of his time?

ICTU JIBS

The Trade Union movement had a unique opportunity twelve months later at the Bundoran Biennial Delegate Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in July, 2001, when a motion calling for the restoration of equal treatment for the 102,000 single income families was put on the agenda. But the 'libertarians' howled and wailed Motion

12 back to the ICTU Executive.

McCreevy himself, and others have argued that it wasn't so much the principle of Tax Individualisation itself but the manner in which it was being introduced. He argued:

"I used the phrase individualisation of the standard rate band and that got transformed into the phrase individualisation of the tax code. It brought up the concept of individualisation and conjured up images of Margaret Thatcher and all that type or thing", he said. (The Sunday Tribune, 5.11.2000).

Well, he had four years to correct the single greatest 'anomaly' of Individualisation—and what did he do?

STANDARD RATE TAX BAND

SINGLE PERSON	TWO-INCOME FAMILY	ONE-INCOME FAMILY
<u>2000</u> 21,585 euros	43,171 euros	35,552 euros
<u>2001</u> 25,394 euros	50,789 euros	36,822 euros
<u>2002</u> 28,000 euros	56,000 euros	37,000 euros
<u>2003</u> 28,000 euros	56,000 euros	37,000 euros
<u>2004</u> 28,000 euros	56,000 euros	37,000 euros

Four Budgets later McCreevy did nothing to alter the anti-Family stance he had taken in 1999!

Next Month: McCreevy's Agenda in Europe

Due to pressure of space several items, including a reply to a Northern Ireland reader, a report of the Brian Murphy meeting on British Propaganda, and a letter from Australia, have been held over to the January issue.

НЕЗАВИСИМЫЙ
ПРОФСОЮЗ
ТРУДЯЩИХСЯ

INDEPENDENT
WORKERS
UNION

Если вам, рабочему нужен совет о ваших правах на работе, и как их можете отстаивать относительно зарплаты, отпуска, сокращения рабочих мест, пенсии, незаконного увольнения, и т.д. обращаетесь в IWU в

55 North Main Street
Cork

Звоните по телефону: 021 4277151

Work continued

IRISH GOVERNMENT STUDY OF CHILDREN

The Government has commissioned a massive study of Irish children. It will take 10,000 children from birth, and 8,000 children from age nine, and track their progress through life for seven years. The technical name for this is a longitudinal study.

The Government has also set up an *All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution* to study the place of the Family in the Constitution:

“The All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution, which is charged with reviewing the Constitution in its entirety, is now examining these Articles to ascertain the extent to which they are serving the good of individuals and the community, with a view to deciding whether changes in them would bring about a greater balance between the two.”

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has issued a Report titled *Babies And Bosses*. The report deals with reconciling work and family life in Austria, Ireland and Japan.

“The cat is let out of the bag in the opening lines of the report, which say that the reconciliation of work and family life directly involves two goals that are important to individuals and to societies—the ability to participate fully in the labour market, and to provide the best for one’s children, giving them the care and nurturing they need.

“The report describes labour market participation as ‘the most important social activity of modern life’, so there is no doubt about which of the two aspirations is regarded as more important by the OECD” (Finola Kennedy, *Economist*, *The Sunday Business Post*, 21.11.2004).

Ms Kennedy reports that Ireland has a higher proportion of mothers of young children in the workforce than either Austria or Japan!

CHARLES MCCREEVY AND INDIVIDUALISATION

On July 21st, 2004, Charles McCreedy was appointed Ireland’s EU Commissioner.

The ideological landmark of McCreedy’s political career was the introduction of Tax Individualisation. However, the media made little or no comment on this in their eulogies of July 22, 2004.

The Star tabloid, in a piece of popular journalism in mid-Summer, listed *Charlie’s 10 Biggest-Cock-ups*.

In tenth place was “*McCreedy’s Individualisation*” for Income Tax:

“Individualisation means lesser taxes for families where both parents work.

“However, it penalises families where one spouse opts to stay at home.

“The move was criticised as being anti-family and an attempt to force parents who are caring for children into the workforce” (*Star*, 22.7.2004) Having difficulty finding a tenth “*Cock-Up*”, the ‘Individualisation’ issue was as good as any to fill up a space in the *Star*!

ANTI-FAMILY BUDGET

This was the background to the introduction of the 2000 Budget by Charles McCreedy and his attack on single-income families:

“The Budget crisis was taken advantage of with skillful opportunism by the Trade Union leadership, and SIPTU in particular. But it was not a crisis that was caused by discontent with the Budget by the Trade Unions. There would have been no Budget crisis, if it had been left to the Trade Unions. The crisis was caused by ‘backward’ elements concerned about the erosion of the family by the Thatcherite Individualisation brought in by McCreedy. SIPTU welcomed the Budget at first, not suspecting that the ‘backward’ elements were still strong enough to launch a serious assault against it. And then they hijacked the crisis and sought to divert it away from the issue that had caused it, because they were strongly in agreement with the Government on that issue” (*Irish Political Review*, January, 2000).

“Rosheen Callender, SIPTU’s Equality Officer, welcomed individualisation “in principle”, but said there were better ways to recognise the additional work-related costs that arose where two parents in a family were working” (4.12.1999, *Irish Times*). As the *Sunday Independent* reported, on the day after the Budget she “rubbished suggestions that the Budget was either anti-women or anti-family” (12.12.1999).

“...On Radio na Gaeltachta the afternoon of the Budget, SIPTU President Des Geraghty was asked if Minister McCreedy had been singing the trade unions’ song.

“It is very interesting that he is going very close to the proposals put

forward by the unions. Yes, it appears that he was listening to the trade unions. He is prepared to give the relief we were looking for. This is based on social partnership.

“People will want to study the detail and it will be discussed by the social partners but yes, he is going in the right direction” (*The Sunday Business Post*, 12.12.1999).

“But this urbane stance would no longer do when the revolt of backbench TDs in response to pressure from their constituents put the Budget in severe jeopardy. It was one thing to nod the Budget through before the backwoodsmen had made it politically problematical. SIPTU therefore joined the opposition, withdrew from the talks about a new wages agreement/partnership deal, but declared that the issue in the crisis was the position of the low-paid, and did its best to lose the issue of Individualisation” (ibid.)

Fianna Fail broke with its roots in the 2000 Budget. It adopted the economically liberal approach of the Progressive Democrats. The PDs had finally captured the social conscience of Fianna Fail.

The Globalist element of that McCreedy 2000 Budget lies mainly in its transfer of State focus from the Family to the Individual. Charles McCreedy’s idea was to give tax benefits to all at work (as well as to those in receipt of unearned income) and remove any preference for the Family.

Tax Individualisation was initiated in Britain by Margaret Thatcher and is being continued by New Labour, though it has now begun to get the wobbles with Tory announcements to help the Family. The Tax Individualisation perspective considers labour done for a wage to be the only useful form of activity for anyone who is not an employer of others or of himself. But in Britain it was implemented gradually.

McCreedy’s 2000 Budget was an attempt to introduce Thatcherisation at one fell swoop. Despite all the Europeanisation and the Celtic Tiger, ‘progress’ in Ireland still means following the British pattern. And there is the added incentive in that the abolition of the historical social category of “*housewife*” helped to drive women out to work and relieve the labour shortage, regardless of human or social cost.



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- * *Almost a third of workers pay more for childcare than for their mortgages!*
- * *More than half of all Irish mothers with children aged up to three, go out to work, with 26% in full time employment!*
- * *The decline in fertility that has occurred in Ireland has occurred within marriage. Births outside marriage have risen!*
- * *Almost one in four of those entering childbearing years is now deciding to remain childless!*

WORK AND MORE WORK!

Might we, for once, ape the social positives of mainland Europe and leave the Brits and their market and protestant social mores all to themselves and the 'Eastenders'.

A stable family life, increasingly being eroded in Ireland, is a virtue of French society. The full-time services of the mother or a parent in the home would greatly reduce the incidence of a mass of social evils, almost all of which cost the community money, as well as much social pain and suffering.

In Britain, the decline of traditional industries led to the destruction of long-established patterns of employment. In particular it saw manual, semi-skilled and skilled male workers in their middle years thrown out of the old jobs which gave them security and social prestige, while new jobs were increasingly taken up by the young and, especially, by women.

This brought about a huge cultural shift in the type of individual in employment with the resultant social changes.

That process, which has seen the traditional breadwinner lose out and families become more fragile, has been given retrospective justification by a belief in historic inevitability every bit as rigid as any Marxist doctrine. The economic forces which brought this social convulsion about are held by most commentators to be irresistible. But they

have been resisted! The French have sought deliberately to protect the social, cultural and economic position of the *paterfamilias**. Traditional French industries, from Dassault through Renault to Thomson, Elf and countless others, have enjoyed support in the past from an indulgent, paternalist State. French agriculture, and high culture, have been sheltered from the chilliest winds, reinforcing a sense of collective national endeavour and protecting the position of the breadwinner.

* *Paterfamilias: L. father of the family.*

In France, the protected position of the middle-aged, semi-skilled male worker makes him an attractive partner, worth retaining. He is more likely to have a steady income with which to provide for

his family, and more likely to be engaged in the type of labour that maintains his dignity. He is, to be blunt, less likely than his Ameranglian counterpart to be flipping hamburgers, wearing a security guard's uniform, or filling supermarket shelves.

The proportion of live births outside wedlock in the EU as a whole in 1998, was 26%, but 37.6% in the UK. Statistics on teenage mothers are even more striking—22.9% of new mothers in the UK are aged 15-19, compared with just 6.9% in France.

In 1987, the French Government headed by Chirac, introduced a Homemaker's Allowance. Any French parent, mother or father, staying at home to mind the children, even if the spouse had an outside job, received the Allowance. Over 185,000 French families benefitted.

The Allowance was subject to two conditions. There must be at least three children of school age in the family. The parent looking after them must have worked for at least two years.

The Homemaker's Allowance—wrongly called a "wage"—was paid in addition to Family Allowances which already provided for families with two or more children. "A mother, or indeed a father, should be able to have the choice of going out to work or staying at home to bring up her or his children", M. Chirac stated at the time.

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7 November, 1969.

I owe you a letter recording my meeting with McDowell on 30 October. I am sorry for the brief delay, but I have been away from the Department for most of this week.

2. McDowell 'phoned just after I had returned from Belfast. He had only a few hours to spare, but had I think arranged those few hours in the hope that he could meet someone from the Office. The short time available meant that I could not arrange for others to join us, but this was perhaps no bad thing at a first meeting.

3. We had a lengthy talk over lunch, ranging over many Irish matters, and the newspaper world especially, but if I had to sum up very briefly what McDowell really had to say I think it would be that he wants to help and is willing to be used as a link. (This does not exclude the point of guidance you recorded in your letter of 2 October, but it does go rather further). I do not think he has anything specific, or dramatic, in mind; the offer is rather the result of those feelings of duty and anxiety that many who are emotionally both British and Irish must now be experiencing. (I suppose Constantine Fitzgibbon is another current example.) McDowell himself said he had hitherto, for obvious newspaper reasons, tried to keep free of those constraints that follow if a newspaperman forms an honourable alliance with the official world, but the present situation was so serious and so different he thought he ought to offer his services. His qualifications are his contacts in both capitals, and his acceptability in Whitehall terms through his service in the Judge Advocate General's department.

4. I said we were grateful for this offer, and we would certainly bear it in mind. However, there was no attempt in Dublin to ostracise you or dramatise a conflict by cutting the obvious diplomatic links. But after years of relative quiet we were faced with a new situation, and in deciding how best to handle it obviously we were glad to learn of possible new resources. I promised to return his hospitality on his next visit, and he seemed content.

His Excellency
Sir Andrew Gilchrist, K.C.M.G.
British Embassy,
Dublin.

5. McDowell did not seek ammunition for use against his Editor, but he did, as you forecast, mention rather apologetically that Editor's excessive zeal. He also told me that he knew Sneddon, of the Belfast Telegraph, who is a contact of Oliver Wright's, and who was once briefly lent to the Irish Times by Lord Thompson to advise on the paper's finances.

6. At the moment I think it would be useful, so far as we in the Department are concerned, to keep in touch with McDowell, to keep him briefed in general terms, and to encourage him to forward the moderates' cause in his paper. This is very much what you had in mind. Beyond that I cannot see a go-between role for him, but that would be more a matter for you to suggest if you found doors closed to you.

7. I am sending a copy of this letter to Oliver Wright in Belfast.

(W.K.K. White)

c.c. Mr. John Peck
Mr. Allinson (PUSD)