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YEATS

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Labour Comment

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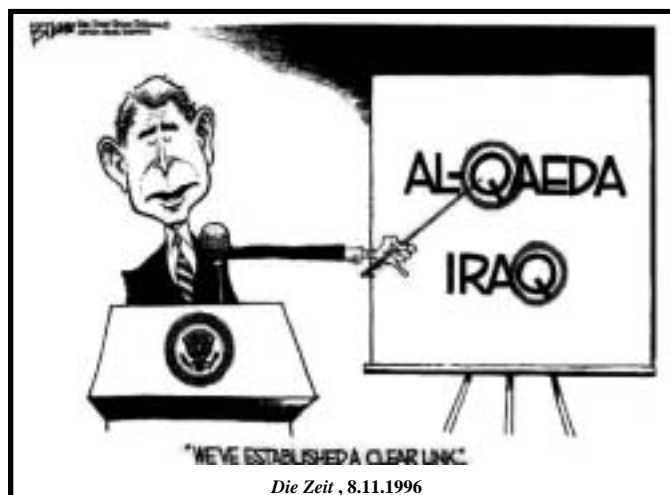
Misguided Democracy?

There was an election in Northern Ireland six weeks ago, but the elected representatives have still not met in assembly, and there is no prospect of their doing so. They cannot meet until a politician elected in another country to another assembly decides to call them. And he will not call them until the matters which it is supposedly the business of the Northern Ireland Assembly to decide have already been decided by him without reference to it.

An arrangement of this kind was established by General Ayub Khan in Pakistan about forty years ago. He called it "*guided democracy*". It was generally ridiculed in the West, and judged not to be democracy at all. But that is essentially what is called democracy in Northern Ireland—with the difference that General Ayub was a Pakistani, while Paul Murphy is a foreigner.

David Trimble has succeeded in the strategy he adopted in 1998. He signed the Agreement under duress for fear of something worse. He co-operated in implementing it to the extent of being elected First Minister under it in the Summer of 1998 and then concentrated on preventing the rest of it from being implemented. He delayed the start of devolved government for a year and a half, and then had it suspended for most of the next three-and-a-half years. And now he has brought the Democratic Unionist Party to dominance within the Unionist community.

Outright rejection of the Agreement would have been dangerous to the Unionist cause in 1998, when Tony Blair was overflowing with omnipotence. But now Blair is a beaten docket, having killed thousands of Iraqis in pursuit of a delusion and thrown away his charismatic control over his own Party, and having placed his fate in the hands of Lord



Hutton over the trivial issue of the suicide of a duplicitous civil servant. It is reckoned that he will not now do what he would probably have done in 1998—enhance the joint authority dimension of Direct Rule.

No doubt the Trimble ego is sad that it is no longer First Minister—but the

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Irish Budget 2004:

Another Holding Exercise

A couple of budgets ago Charlie McCreevey asked his critics to think of each budget as being a chapter in a book in which there was a consistent theme. Certainly, his previous five budgets were coherent. But the "book" was not started by McCreevey. The first pages were written at the beginning of the Celtic Tiger era.

The general policy of reducing the tax burden on the PAYE sector in exchange for wage moderation from the Trade Unions was initiated by another Charlie (Haughey) and another Mac (Ray McSharry) in the late 1980s. McCreevey can claim to have written interesting chapters. (He overcame Civil Service objections to Tax Credits and he introduced "individualisation"). But the overall policy was laid out for him long before he became Minister of Finance.

It is remarkable to think that, for all the different varieties of coalition government there have been in Ireland since 1987, there has only been one brief interlude in which there was a non-Fianna Fail Minister of Finance (Ruairi Quinn). Up until a couple of years ago there was a coherence and consistency of policy, but that all changed with the 2003 Budget. In that budget the nominal value of Personal Allowances/Tax Credits remained unchanged. Therefore the real value of these personal tax reliefs diminished, by the rate of inflation, for the first time since 1987. In this, the 2004 Budget, the Personal Tax Credits remained unchanged (i.e. the real value diminished by the rate of inflation) for the second year running.

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Wrong Bombers!

£100,000 it got from the Nobel institution for doing the thing which he then proceeded to undermine will be some consolation. But Trimble is also an idealist, as anyone who saw him as a militant in William Craig's fascist movement, or dancing the Orange jig with Paisley at Drumcree, must realise. And the idealist must feel satisfied in a job well done.

The DUP seems to be irretrievably committed to removing the Agreement and establishing a different system of devolution. What is called "*renegotiation*" is rejection. And the two Governments, while insisting that there can be no renegotiation, only 'review', have indicated a readiness to renegotiate so long as the word used is "*review*". They have said that the essentials must be preserved, but are vague about what the essentials are, suggesting that they amount to "*power-sharing*".

But the distinctive characteristics of this Agreement, the things which enabled it to be agreed, are the specific arrangements under which power is to be shared—and the distinctive characteristics of something are its essentials. The essentials are the two autonomous electorates whose parties must have representation in government as of right, the rule that Government Departments are independent of the Assembly, and the rule that measures adopted by the Assembly require a majority of the representatives of each of

the electorates to support it.

Between 1998 and 2002 these provisions might have been eroded under the pretext of a review, if the SDLP had been willing to collaborate. Seamus Mallon was willing during the Winter of 1998-99, but Trimble wouldn't play then—meaning in effect that, while the IRA was his ostensible reason for blocking the Agreement, the SDLP was unacceptable to him. And, when Trimble was ready to propose a power-sharing deal outside the terms of the Agreement, his obstructionism had undermined the position of the SDLP with the Catholic electorate.

Although John Hume masterminded the Agreement, the SDLP never accepted its political logic. The system was structured to give representation in government, as a matter of right, to two different communities. the pretence of 'the community' was dropped. The experience of three-quarters of a century had demonstrated the non-existence of 'the community'. If the Six Counties had been governed as part of the UK, through the medium of the political democracy of Britain, it is very likely that something like a community would have evolved in them. But the invention of the constitutional entity of Northern Ireland ensured that the political reality of two sharply delineated communities was reproduced, in aggravated form, in every generation.

And the Agreement was formally structured on that state of affairs.

British democracy operates through 'swings' between the parties-of-state. So does the American. There are two major parties which take it in turns to form the Government. Because the difference between them is slight a section of the electorate swings from one to the other, determining which is to govern. British commentators reported Northern Ireland elections in terms of 'swings' because they were trained on the democracy of the State. But there were no swings in Northern Ireland. The parties between which there could be swings did not exist, and the so-called "Northern Ireland state" was postulated on the permanent majority of one party, which was not really a political party at all but an organised community within which 'normal' political differences were co-ordinated into harmony. (The German term, *Gleichschaltung*, used by Dr Goebbels in the 1930s would be appropriate to describe the procedures of the Unionist Party/State within the Protestant community during the half-century of the old Stormont.)

There were no 'swings' and no centre ground in the old Stormont. Those figures of speech simply do not apply to political life in the 'Northern Ireland state'. And the new structures established in 1998 have removed the very notion of a centre-ground from the political agenda. Those who present themselves as a centre-ground—the Alliance Party and the Women's Coalition in 1998-2003—were shunted to the margins as "*Others*". Between the two organised communities on which the Agreement is based there are only 'Others'—strays in a No-Man's-Land. And, when the strays wanted to be players they had to re-classify themselves as Unionist. (Both the Alliance and the Women's Coalition—a.k.a. the Communist Party—did it.)

And yet the SDLP, the architect of this tightly structured communal system, refused to act according to its logic and went chasing the non-existent centre-ground by encouraging 'swing' voting between the communities.

What the logic of the system requires is that each *community* should maximise its representation in the Assembly, and form a voting alliance for that purpose. Sinn Fein, the most thoroughly pro-Agreement party, was willing to have a voting alliance with the SDLP. The SDLP refused. Sinn Fein urged their voters to give their transfers to the SDLP, but the

SDLP urged their voters to give their transfers to the Unionist Party (which did not reciprocate). It just made no political sense. And it had the effect of losing a nationalist seat to the Unionists, with the result that in a new government the nationalist community will probably be entitled to fewer Ministers.

(It is an inconsistency in the system that voting is by territorial constituencies which include voters of both communities. The system of registered voters used in the American primaries would be more appropriate to the general structure of the Agreement.)

What the DUP is demanding is the banning of Sinn Fein from office, regardless of its electoral support, and the establishment of Cabinet government responsible to the Assembly. The two Governments are mulling it over to see if they can find a way to concede these demands, which abrogate the Agreement, in the form of a 'review' of the Agreement. The DUP can cite the agreement of all other parties in the Republic that Sinn Fein must be banned from office there as a precedent for banning it in the North—although the Taoiseach has recently somewhat shifted ground with regard to the suitability of Sinn Fein as a partner in government. But the Governments have learned through painful experience that the nationalist electorate invariably increases its support for Sinn Fein when they try to isolate it.

(The nationalist electors know very well, even though the fact is never mentioned in the London or Dublin media, that the conditions under which IRA decommissioning was to happen over a period of two years under the Agreement were never implemented. The two years in question were to be years in which the devolved institutions and the cross-border institutions functioned and the police and justice reforms were implemented. Trimble's strategy from the very start was to prevent those conditions from being met, while taking the two-year decommissioning schedule to be unconditional.)

Cabinet Government, responsible to the Assembly with Sinn Fein banned from office, would be a complete abrogation of the Agreement, and a big step towards the re-introduction of the old Stormont system, even if a weighted majority were required in the first instance.

What the Agreement provides for is independent Ministries as party fiefdoms.

Remembrance Day: Celebrating Terrorists in Government

The soldiers of the Somme were sent into battle against Germany by a British government which included the Ulster Unionist Party. Shocking though it may seem to us now, before the Great War started the Ulster Unionist Party set up a private paramilitary force armed by Germany whose purpose was to use violence to overthrow law passed by the British Parliament.

And instead of being punished for this terrorist assault on the British Constitution, the godfather of the terror organisation, Sir Edward Carson, was actually rewarded by being made Attorney-General, or chief Government Law Officer, of the war-time British Government.

This armed revolt by the Ulster Unionist Party was initiated, not against some rival terror gang (there was none), but against the Constitutional Government of Great Britain, and against the Party of John Redmond, an Irish political leader who was so loyal to the British Empire that the present-day SDLP sound like staunch Republicans in comparison.

In fact there was no Republican political party in Ireland when the Ulster Unionist Party embarked on its policy of creating structures of political violence in order to terrorise Redmond's Party and in order to force the legitimate British Government to submit to its demands. The tiny Sinn Féin Party of that time, far from being Republican, actually subscribed to a policy called Dual Monarchy, according to which the King of England was also to be King of Ireland.

The British Government's surrender to the men of violence was no short-term expedient of the Great War.

On the contrary, the Ulster Unionist Party's terrorism was so successful that they continued to enjoy the fruits of violence by being permitted to maintain their position in government within the United Kingdom until 1971. And even to the present day they have never made a transparent act of completion, never decommissioned a bomb, bullet or gun, and never uttered so much as a word of remorse for their paramilitary activities.

Pat Muldowney, Foyle Labour Group, Derry

That is the basis on which the DUP held two Departments after 1998. Its Ministers were not responsible either to the Assembly or to the Executive. In fact, there wasn't any Government as such, only Ministries. The First Minister was not the head of a Cabinet. And, while the other Ministers sometimes met for discussions, the DUP Ministers kept themselves apart.

The DUP wants a restoration of the old Stormont system, with itself taking the place of the "*fur-coat brigade*". And that is what the Unionist community wants. It would agree to something less in the first instance, but would feel a sense of grievance when doing so. And, if there were such a thing as a Northern Ireland State, and it was to be governed as a

democracy, its case would be indisputable. But Northern Ireland has never been anything other than a systematically misgoverned outpost of the British State, excluded from the democratic politics of the state. And the reason for its existence was not that the British statesmen thought it was a way of providing good government for the Six Counties. It was constructed as a kind of No-man's-land between Britain and the new Irish State that Britain was obliged to concede after the failure of the Black-and-Tans, as a means of maintaining leverage on the 26 Counties.

Northern Ireland was developed as a means to the end of re-incorporating the rest of Ireland back into the British sphere.

Professor Bew, who has been Trimble's "*close adviser*" in recent years,

is one of those who have been re-writing the history of Ireland on British lines, with particular regard to 1916-22. *The Guardian* (November 29th) comments: “it is difficult to disagree with the sombre observation of Professor Paul Bew that the Good Friday agreement has not generated the dialectic of compromise that its authors hoped, but instead has generated a dialectic of antagonism that has not yet run its course”.

Professor Bew was once a Marxist of the most rigorous kind, but at a certain moment—could it be in 1990?—he discreetly became an ex-Marxist without announcing his conversion or revealing its intellectual or spiritual process. He was for some years an activist of the Official Republic movement which, after many strange peregrinations, found its way into a position of fundamentalist Unionism. He has expressed regret at having taken part in the Civil Rights movement around 1969, saying he would have been better advised to stay in bed. He has contributed to the publications of a fundamentalist Unionist think-tank called the Cadogan Group, whose first publication concluded that there was nothing much wrong with the old Stormont. For many years now he has been best thought of as a Government agent—as is the case with many of the strict Marxists of the 1970s. At a certain point he engaged in a literary collaboration with the celebrated murderer, Sean O’Callaghan, who is not a person one bumps into in the streets.

He supported the Agreement in 1998, when other members of the Cadogan Group—freer spirits—opposed it, and he became a media-apologist for Trimble. Now that Trimble has accomplished his destiny he wonders, in language which echoes the 1970s, about the “*dialectic*” of the Agreement. His conclusion is something that was evident from the outset—and might even be said to be its *raison d’être*. The “*dialectic of antagonism*” was inherent in the ‘Northern Ireland state’—an entity about which Professor Bew has written extensively. (This state was never anything but a subordinate authority put in place by the sovereign authority of the State and continuously beholden to it.) The Agreement gave formal structural expression to the inherent antagonism of Northern Ireland, and, barring miraculous intervention, could not have produced a “*dialectic of compromise*”.

Prof. Bew had an article in the *Sunday Times* on 30th November, entitled A

Pyrrhic Victory In The Polls: Direct Rule Tinged With Green, in which he says:

“Seamus Mallon acknowledged the damage done to unionist confidence by reports of IRA adventurism through the Florida arms case on to Columbia and the various alleged espionage scandals”.

It matters little what Seamus Mallon says now. Mallon’s moment came and went in the Winter of 1998-99. He made an offer to act with Trimble outside the structures of the Agreement if Trimble co-operated with him in getting the Agreement institutions going properly and the IRA failed to meet the two-year timetable—even though half a year of that period had already been wasted by Trimble. What did Prof. Bew advise in that situation?

With regard to the allegations that damaged Unionist confidence—they were Unionist allegations. The Unionists wanted very much to have their confidence damaged, and so they made damaging allegations—which are still no more than allegations (with the possible exception of the Florida incident, which rarely features in the Unionist recitation). And Prof. Bew said he had no problem about believing that the IRA strolled into Castlereagh high-security barracks without disguise in broad daylight, having arranged for the continuously-recording security cameras to be switched off for the occasion, and strolled out again with a batch of highly secret documents.

Prof. Bew continues:

“Some will say [within the Cadogan Group?] that an unnecessary complex and expensive form of government has gone and good riddance. It was always difficult to see how the assembly might function in the long term without a proper opposition. But there is reason to weep. Northern Ireland needs to displace its sectarian conflict into reasonably harmless disputes; this is for the most part what the institutions of the agreement did. Our politicians were never so happy [as] when they spent hours in Stormont’s myriad Byzantine committees. Some of the benign effects trickled down into society at large. Now there is no counterbalance to the working of mutual antagonism.”

If the assembly was having that effect of dissipating Republicanism, why did Trimble not let it run?

In fact the Assembly was another forum

for engaging in the antagonism of the communities, even while discussing gas and water (so to speak). You did not need to watch the televised proceedings for very long to see that. And, all the while, the antagonism on the ground outside grew sharper and more extensive. (Chapel going in Ballymena and going to school in Ardoyne had never been so exciting while the war was on.)

There was an atmosphere of make-believe about the Assembly. People had a point to make by the way they behaved in it. Everybody knew that it did not have the makings of a stable mode of government. The displacement of community conflict (“*sectarian*” is a misnomer) by “*reasonably harmless disputes*” is something which can occur in the party-politics of a state, given the appropriate party structure. It cannot occur in Northern Ireland. We did our utmost to bring the Six Counties into the party-structures of the British democracy. Prof. Bew was utterly opposed to that project. It was also opposed by the British Government, with its eyes in the South. At this juncture the project appears realisable only through the party-politics of the 26 Counties.

Meanwhile in the Republic the Britishising project has suffered a setback.

About twenty-five years ago Tony O’Reilly appeared on a BBC, Northern Ireland, variant of *Desert Island Discs*. He said he was proud of being Irish and never felt inferior in English company. So why say anything at all about the superiority of the English? He was obviously a man with an inferiority complex, needing to be recognised as an equal by his superiors. He got his wish recently when the Queen touched him on the shoulder as he knelt before her. And many others were lining up waiting to be admitted to the Order of the British Empire. And then along comes West Indian Benjamin Zephaniah and declares himself a free man without knavish yearnings. And this stimulated Yasmin Alibaj Brown, a Ugandan Asian, to withdraw from the Order of the British Empire, to which she was admitted some years ago. And a list of people of republican spirit who refused Royal and Imperial baubles was leaked, and the refuseniks suddenly became the people of honour.

Mary Robinson’s great object as President was to bring over the Queen. But what point would there be in it now? Bring over the West Indian peasant instead so that Dublin 4 can see what a free republican spirit looks like. ●

Another Holding Exercise

continued

Admittedly, he increased the PAYE tax credit by 30% from 800 euros to 1,040. This is substantial and will be of benefit to the low paid. It is also in line with McCreevey's "individualisation" policies because the PAYE credit is only available to individual workers in the PAYE sector. The effect of this, when combined with the zero percentage increase in the Personal Tax credits, is to increase the single person's tax credits by 10% and the single income married couple's by 6%.

I supported McCreevey's "individualisation" policies on the basis that the double allowances and tax bands introduced by Haughey were an ineffective means of supporting the family. The benefits were available to families whether they had children or not. It was more effective to give direct support to children through child benefit. However, the increase in child benefit in this budget amounted to a very modest 4% for the first two children and 5% for subsequent children. Levels of support for children remain way below those of Continental Europe.

Other miscellaneous tax reliefs available to a minority of the population were not increased at all.

In this budget McCreevey also refused to index-link the Standard Rate tax band, which will result in 50,000 more people entering the top rate band. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is an attempt to claw back some of the costs to the State of the benchmarking process, but it's too bad if you are unlucky enough to work in the private sector.

The budget also introduced PRSI charges on Benefits in Kind.

BROADENING THE TAX BASE

One of the reasons why budgets since 1987 have been able to reduce the tax burden on the low paid is that there has been a gradual erosion of tax reliefs which benefit the wealthy. In his Budget speech McCreevey made the following comments about such reliefs:

"Whatever one's stance on the merit of any particular relief, there are a number of inescapable facts about their impact.

"Firstly, they narrow the tax base and make it harder to pursue the goal of lower taxes for all. Secondly, they

raise issues of equity, since not everyone has the disposable income which is necessary to avail of them. Finally, tax reliefs reduce the tax bill of those in the higher income brackets. This is equally true whether the tax relief is granted for film relief, or for urban or rural renewal. Those who both simultaneously decry this fact and at the same time campaign loudly to retain certain reliefs, should recognise the inherent contradiction in their position".

I couldn't have put it better myself. The only problem is that McCreevey then proceeds to ignore his own advice. The Film Relief will be extended to the end of 2008 and the ceiling per film will be increased to 15 million euros. The Business Expansion and Seed Capital Schemes have been extended to 31st December 2006 and the amount per company has increased to 1 million Euros. The various property incentives that were due to terminate at the end of 2004 have been extended to 31st July 2006.

The relief that generated most discussion prior to this budget was the Film Relief. The retention of this relief was supported by the Labour Party. My own experience of this relief was an advertisement from Anglo Irish Bank early in 2003. The bank was prepared to guarantee 80% of the investors' investment and the wealthy investor would obtain a 100% tax write-off of his investment at the 42% rate of tax. So, in the worst possible scenario, the investor would save 420 euros in tax for every 1,000 euros invested and he would only lose 200 euros. As far as I remember he only had to keep his money with Anglo Irish for one year. This would give him a net return on his investment of 220 per 1,000 Euros invested or 22%. Not bad in this era of low interest rates.

Developing the Irish Film Industry is beneficial, but does the Labour Party seriously believe that subsidising the wealthy is the best means to do it?

PROPERTY TAXES AND INCENTIVES

A constant theme of the annual budget articles in this magazine is the narrow tax base. The absence of property taxes and the tax incentives encouraging property investment have fuelled the property boom

in this country. Also, it would appear that a significant proportion of profits generated during the Celtic Tiger era were diverted to the legal profession through the tribunals. This class has invested in property rather than industry.

Unfortunately, it will be difficult to dismantle the incentives without causing a shock to the system. There are many people on modest incomes that are up to their necks in debt. For such people a fall in property prices could result in negative equity. A few months ago RTE's *Prime Time* interviewed Peter Bacon, the person responsible for the Bacon report, the Government-commissioned report on House prices. On the programme Bacon let slip the following comment: "*Of course, nobody wants a fall in property prices*". What he meant was that those classes ranging from the people who have just managed to climb onto the property ladder to those Landlords with numerous properties don't want a fall in prices. It would appear that the couple from Sallynoggin on the programme who wanted to buy a house near their parents don't count.

There is a desperate need for a political party in Ireland to articulate the interests of the "*men of no property*". Such a party could start by tackling the problem at source. In 1988 Jackson Way, a company part-owned by Jim Kennedy with addresses in Switzerland and the Isle of Man, bought 100 acres of land for under a million euros. As a result of rezoning, 20% of the land had a value of 13 million euros in 2003 (Jackson Way originally claimed a price of 113 million from Dun Laoghaire Borough for the 20 acres required by it to build a motorway).

It would be interesting to know what proportion of the price each house buyer pays to the likes of Mr. Kennedy. In last year's budget article I estimated 42 thousand Euros per house for land in Lucan, but in Dun Laoghaire it must be much more. Can anyone seriously defend such massive re-distributions of wealth from the poor to the wealthy?

DE-CENTRALISATION

The 2004 Budget was so luck-lustre that McCreevey had to talk about something else other than taxation. The chosen theme for his homily was "*de-centralisation*".

Ten thousand civil servants will be moved from Dublin to other parts of the country. According to McCreevey: "*No*

longer will policy be made entirely in Dublin on the basis of a Dublin mindset”.

If there is a problem with Irish public services, it is that the people delivering the services are remote from the people receiving them. It is not that they have a “Dublin mindset”, but a “Civil Service” mindset. The policies which McCreevey outlined do not address this problem. Apparently the Department of the Marine is going to be located in land-locked Cavan.

McCreevey’s proposals are a substitute for real de-centralisation which would involve a strengthening of local government.

CONCLUSION

The last two Budgets convey the impression of a Government which has run out of ideas. The economy has grown and developed but the Government has no idea how to adapt its policies to the new situation. An example is the introduction in this budget of a tax credit for Research & Development expenditure. On the face of it, it would appear to be worthwhile to encourage such high value work. But the problem is that Irish Corporation Tax rates are so low already that the credit is of limited value. Most multi-nationals locate the R & D expenditure in countries with high Corporation Taxes so that they can minimise their liabilities.

Ireland is locked into the policies of a low wage and low tax economy. But it can no longer compete on this basis with other countries about to join the European Union. A “steady as she goes” approach is no longer appropriate. Some fresh thinking is needed.

John Martin

An Cor

Δ ὄροισι-ῥιοννι ὀννι ὀννι

Δ ὄροισι-ῥιοννι ὀννι ὀννι, Δ ῥιῶρ-σσοῦ νὰ μβό,
Cá ηῡαḃαννι cú san oíce 's cá mbíonn cú sa ló?
Ó bím-se ar na coillice 's mo buaḃail im coíḃair,
Δῡsus ὀ'ῥás sé síḃḃ mise Δῡs ilead ḃ na ḃḃeor.

Níl ῥeapann, níl ciḃeas Δῡsam, níl ῥiῶnca ná ceol,
Níl ῥlaḃa am' coimḃeacḃ, níl saoiḃe ná sló,
Δḃ Δῡs síḃḃ-ól an uisce ḡo mimic sa ló
Δῡsus beacḃ-uisce 's ῥiῶn Δῡs mo naimḃoib ar ḃḃḃḃ.

ḃá ḃῥaiḡinn-se cead aiḡnis nó raḃḃarc ar an ḡcoróin
Sasanaḡ ḃo leiḃḃῥinn mar ḃo leiḃḃῥinn seap-ḃrḃḡ
ḃrí ḃnocaiḃ, ḃrí aillice 's ḃrí ḡleanncḃa ḃuḃa ceo
Δῡsus síḃḃ mar Δ ḃῥeasῥainn-se an ḃroim-ῥiῶnνi ὀννι ḃḡ.

Letter To The Editor

Smoking: A Comment

Dear Editor

Angela Clifford’s article *Democracy And Prohibitionism* in your December, 2003, issue raises some important questions.

About two years ago we attended a meeting over here in London of a group with which we have much in common. However, some of them smoked in the course of the meeting.

We have never liked the smell of tobacco. We now believe that passive smoking does harm to non-smokers. On the other hand we have noticed that smokers tend to go to pieces or get extremely agitated without access to the calming cigarette. they do not welcome being told about the effect of smoking on health. It would be impertinent for us to point out to the group that we detest tobacco

smoke. The smokers would be just as miserable without the stuff as we are with it.

Very, very few political and other meetings over here permit smoking. Perhaps that is the reason we never see anyone from the group in question at anybody else’s meeting but their own.

That is the situation among progressives. Ordinary non-smokers are less tolerant. Offices in our vicinity have tobacco exiles standing outside, even in the coldest weather.

Yours sincerely,

Ivor & Florence Kenna

PS. Remaining on the subject of health, we note from the same issue that Dr. Deeny was elected to Stormont in West Tyrone “in support of keeping a local hospital open”. Was Sinn Fein Northern Ireland Minister of Health Bairbre de Brun in favour of closing the hospital down?

Smoking: An Independent View

EDITORIAL NOTE: One member of Dail Eireann has attempted to put a coherent case against Government *diktat* on the Smoking issue, Finian McGrath. He was elected in Dublin North Central on the *Independent Health Alliance ticket*—ousting Derek McDowell of the Labour Party. A Tuam man, former head of Scoil Mhuire in Dublin, McGrath’s independent line of

politics on a range of issues shows up where Irish Labour, under successive leaders, is failing. His speech on smoking, which was not generally reported, was made during the Second Reading on 12th December of a Bill to amend 2002 tobacco legislation.

Mr. F. McGrath: I welcome the debate on the Bill. I will put forward a different

view and back it up with facts from the international and medical fields. I will challenge some of the points raised by Deputies earlier in the debate. I will put forward a different view that may not be politically correct or popular in this day and age, but I will call it as I see it and it will be a straight and comprehensive view.

So far, we have not had a balanced discussion on this issue. The flow seems to be in one direction. We need to examine the facts clearly and see the reality. We also need to respect choice and reject the idea of a nanny state and health police trying to tell people over 18 what they should do in their personal lives. I represent

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Tuatail

My faithful fair-backed roan

My faithful fair-backed roan, most excellent of cows,
Where do you pass the night, where do you go by day?
“I am amongst the woods with my boy minding me,
But that one left me by myself weeping.

“I have no land, no household, no wines nor music,
No princes in my company, no poets nor warriors,
But drinking only water throughout the day,
While my enemies have whiskey and wine to drink.”

If only I could get leave to put this case to the king
I would smite the English as I would smite an old shoe,
Through mountains and cliffs and through dark foggy valleys
And that is how I would console the faithful fair-backed roan.

The author of this popular Jacobite poem is unknown. The cow is Éire, a spirit of the Tuatha De Danann who is identified with Ireland; the boy who has failed to look after her is the Stuart king in exile. A version in English (by Mangan?) has the memorable phrase “*O silk of the kine*” in the first line, which is a literal translation of “A shíoda na mbó”. The Irish version above has “fíor-scoth” (*the best*) instead of “síoda” (*silk*), found in other versions. While each of these works perfectly well in the poem, my guess is that poetic convention favours the former.

No adequate musical notation has yet been found to convey the singing of this kind of music. The phrasing and interpretation vary, so in a sense every performer invents their own version of the song. The notation given here makes no attempt to capture even the length of the individual notes, but may serve as a reminder to anyone who is acquainted with some version of the music.



Saving Yeats From Mr. Foster

On 27th November 2003 I went to hear Roy Foster speak at the Royal Festival Hall to promote his new book on Yeats. The event took the form of a talk by Mr. Foster and an interview afterwards by Tom Paulin.

I must say that I never heard such trite remarks about Yeats as those made by Mr. Foster. He said that he had attempted what he seemed to think were unique and revolutionary approaches to biography in that he believed life and art were related and he aimed to get behind the other biographies and autobiographies of Yeats. He also sought to clarify his public life, including his para-fascism. Foster was 'embedding' Yeats' poems in their context to show how he renegotiated his relationship with Ireland. Then we were told he was one of the founding fathers of the new State (which would, I believe, come as a big surprise to its actual founders). His political sense was keenly developed, we were told. Moreover, there was great entertainment to be had from 'the vituperation' of the Catholic Bulletin concerning Yeats. His stances were responses to the torrent of such vituperation.

Mr. Foster recounted an interview he'd had with Kathleen Raine when researching his book and here one suspected that she considered him an ignoramus about Yeats and ordered him to leave her house—but of course that was not the impression he sought to give in the account he gave of their meeting. I would agree with her after listening to Mr. Foster for a couple of hours. His whole approach was very disappointing and never rose above a gossipy, anecdotal approach that made his subject more and more meaningless and uninteresting.

For example, there was no attempt to put Yeats in the context of the poets and poetry of his era—Eliot, Pound etc.

Mr. Paulin tried to make the subject interesting. He began by asking Mr. Foster to give details of some of the revelations Yeats received from the many mediums he engaged. Mr. Foster was very reticent to reply to the question. He seemed to

realise that, if he did so in any detail, Yeats would come across as an eccentric, to say the least. Then Paulin wanted to talk about Yeats' views of Northern Irish Protestants: these he hated with a vengeance, adopting a total partitionist stance to ensure he never had anything to do with the 'horrid lot who would spoil our tempers'. Again, Foster would not engage, though Paulin repeatedly attempted to provoke him, for instance by saying that Yeats's visions often reminded him of Paisley's sermons. Furthermore, he reckoned some of Yeats work had 'the swagger of an Orange band'. Foster was non-plussed. Paulin was clearly interested in talking about the varieties of Protestants in Ireland and why they were so varied—and maybe how Catholic some of them were. After all, he reminded Foster, Yeats repeatedly referred to Purgatory and 'we don't believe in that, Roy, do we?' Foster could only explain that it was some pre-Celtic notion that Yeats had and he was not sure of the theology. It was obvious that it was not the theology Paulin was interested in. He wanted to discuss the relationships and beliefs of different Protestant tendencies in Ireland and how they related to each other and to Catholics. This could have been very interesting and a Yeatsian scholar should have jumped at the opportunity. But the subject died a death despite Paulin's best efforts. I think Mr. Foster's shallowness was cruelly exposed and he was quickly back to getting a cheap snigger or two from the audience at Yeats's expense. His sexual foibles seem to be a great old reliable in these circumstances and Foster made full use of them.

The overall impression was that Foster had reduced Yeats—with his mysticism, occultism, sexual fantasia, fascism, eugenics and many more weird and wonderful preoccupations—to a totally bizarre figure who could inspire no respect, either as a public or private figure. It seems to me that such a man would generate vituperation in any democratic society as naturally as he walked.

Yeats could not come to terms with the Democracy of the 20th century. This was vulgar and debasing and he did all he could to save himself from it and escape from it—hence his varied preoccupations.

The situation in any country in the Western world of his time would have engendered such attitudes in him, regardless of where he lived. This is the substance of him and to explain him it is necessary for any biographer to make a valid assessment of his attitude to Democracy. There is a valid critique of Democracy and, even if Yeats did not make it, it behoves a writer who is lauded as his definitive biographer to attempt to make it and so allow Yeats's behaviour to be properly assessed. It seemed to me that Foster does not try, or even seem to realise that such an approach is necessary. In the absence of this Yeats is a pathetic public figure and Mr. Foster's big book will only confirm this.

Essentially, Mr. Foster blames the democracy for making Yeats what he was and places the Catholic Bulletin at the cutting edge of this. As this journal therefore seems the most significant context for judging Yeats, according to Foster, I had a look at it. It comes across as a self-confident analytical expression of the new Irish democracy and was, for example, a consistently anti-fascist journal. No wonder there was vituperation between it and Yeats, but this publication was on the right side in this crucial issue of the day.

It seems not in the least surprising that Yeats, the Anglo-Irish and the Free Staters took to fascism. They were fascists before fascism was invented as far as the *Bulletin* was concerned and whatever political nastiness was about they could be relied on always to take to it like ducks to water.

It seems to me that Mr. Foster is engaged in a totally futile exercise in that he is seeking to have the democracy judged and condemned by the attitudes and norms of someone who lived in it but despised it. To succeed, the democracy would have had to come to hate itself. This is never likely to happen—though not impossible. Yeats certainly did not succeed in doing so with the Irish democracy of his day. Although from what I have come across he might be successful in Ireland today.

Yeats will, and should, be remembered for the poetry that the democracy he detested, liked, and I would suggest that the less said about what else went on in his head the better. As far as I can judge, several more large books could be filled with his nonsense. At the end of the day he will be remembered for nothing else but this poetry. I think this gets completely lost with Mr. Foster. Yeats should be saved from Mr. Foster.

Helen Hilton

The Storming Of The Winter Election

Sinn Féin's successful storming of last month's Winter Election was a glorious riot of good clean fun: high jinks, low farce, and the medium-rare roasting of New Labour's little elves, the SDLP.

Pre-election negotiations leading to the televised collapse (Tony Blair once again mistaking 'in camera' for 'on camera') of an hysterically hyped "Agreement". When have jinks been higher?

And talk about low farce! New Labour and the SDLP are, by the common consent of both of them, and them both consenting adults, sister parties. So what Blair did to the SDLP by holding pre-election negotiations from which its negotiators were excluded can really only be described as incest. Was ever low farce lower?

Such beginnings were deserving of no finer end than the rebuff the electorate delivered.

CRUNCH AND FRAGMENTATION

David Trimble, he who plunged in camera but on camera demurred, is lost. His Ulster Unionist Party increased its share of the vote by some 1.4% but in so doing fell behind the DUP, which grew only by gobbling up its minor allies. Such is the vigour of the DUP that Trimble's coming first in the Protestant election would not have been much of a victory for him: coming second is a disastrous and probably terminal defeat. Donaldson and two other Assembly members have left (most likely en route to the DUP). Trimble's party seems to be unravelling.

Like the Protestant election, the Catholic election was that most final of democratic contests: a crunch election. In the result, kerrunnchhh.....

The SDLP share of the Catholic vote dropped by just 5% and Sinn Féin's share rose by just about as much. Not so much at all in many more stable political situations where victory and defeat are not questions of life and death. But here, 5% of a drop and the mortician reaches for his formaldehyde and the cosmetic touchup tools of his trade. Here, 5% of a rise and there's a rainbow glowing in the light of the big pot of gold at the end of it. Such is politics in the volatility of this our stable.

Mark Durkan's party is not publicly fragmenting as Trimble's is, it is just very publicly talking about it. (Poor Mark Durkan, no sooner have people started remembering his name than his big sister incests him and the party of his life commences to meditating on first and last things. Poor Mark. In sympathy with his heart's pain I'll try to leave off reporting the SDLP's little local difficulties for a few paragraphs. Give the man some air. Or, more typically, not.)

DEAD MAN WALKING

In the course of a television postmortem of the televised collapse of our almost day of days (it being now almost entirely forgotten this was when, fresh elections having been previously and unreservedly announced, David Trimble failed to make his scheduled declaration that Sinn Féin would be welcome in government) some panellist or other (some McGimpsey or other, I think) remarked that the marginalisation of the SDLP which Mark Durkan had been whining about could never have happened under Seamus Mallon or John Hume.

A few weeks later Seamus Mallon himself was on the panel of a television postmortem of the by then unmistakable results of those very elections. He was asked if he agreed with that previous assessment and said of course he didn't. Absolutely not. He was then asked what he would have done in Mark Durkan's place and said he would have camped outside Downing Street clamouring to get in. Further he would have cornered Bertie Ahern by the throat and lobbied him vigorously. One way or another he would have got himself into those negotiations.

That was the point at which Mark Durkan's undistinguished leadership of the SDLP, if not the SDLP itself, came to an end. There are important organisational matters to be resolved, less important domestic matters to be tidied up and perhaps even some decencies to be observed. None of that makes any difference to Durkan's fate. Dead man walking.

Sinn Féin's victory in the Catholic Assembly election was helped by the exclusion of the SDLP from talks between

the major players—Sinn Féin, the Ulster Unionists and the two governments. Some wavering votes went the Shinners way when the SDLP was treated, and allowed itself to be treated, with a negligent, disregarding, contempt. But, at the heart of the contest, Sinn Féin won, and will go on winning, because it is a NATIONAL party. The SDLP lost, and—John Hume in Europe done, dusted and put in the trophy cabinet for future generations, all that to one side—will go on losing, because it is a local, partitionist, party.

For years John Hume countered Sinn Féin's national credentials with the line that real unity was not territorial but was a bringing together of people. Which sounded well and would have sounded better if the SDLP had gone into the highways and byways to do something about it. But they didn't and Sinn Féin did. Adams and McGuinness inherited the ramshackle remnants of the Second Dail and built them into a NATIONAL party that is bringing people together country-wide and in grand style. John Hume took himself into Europe and left his party parochial and partitionist (and postnationalist?). Then he left his party to Mark Durkan, which was not the act of a friend. Dead man walking

BERTIE AT BODENSTOWN, 2003

In the middle of the doomed negotiations outside of which the SDLP helped marginalise itself Bertie Ahern, leader of **Fianna Fáil, The Republican Party**, went to Wolfe Tone's grave in Bodenstown and made an extraordinary speech eulogising the Social Democratic and Labour marginalia of contemporary Irish politics as the onlie true heirs of the United Irish tradition.

"2003 brings to a close the bicentenary commemorations of the era of the United Irishmen, of Bantry Bay, 1798 and the Emmet Rebellion. They have stimulated enormous interest in this period of our history and its inspiring possibilities...

"Today, Irish history has returned full circle to the beginning, to the original constitutional and democratic spirit of the United Irishmen, at a time when this can now flourish without further obstacle. Europe is no longer divided into friends and enemies, and Ireland is no strategic threat to its larger neighbour...

"...The party in many ways closest to the ideals of the United Irishmen is the SDLP, without whom it would be difficult to conceive either the peace process or the Good Friday Agreement. The United Irishmen, which began as a constitutional movement, was forced underground, and became what has been described as violent democrats.

“Today, the Republican Movement must complete the journey back to the United Irishmen’s roots as a purely constitutional movement. And if we can achieve this in a way that commands widespread confidence, and can secure commitments on the stability of the institutions, then we can offer the people the prospect of the full and complete implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and delivery of all the commitments of the Joint Declaration of the two Governments.

... ..

“I look forward in the near future to resumed political progress, which will enable us to consolidate the Good Friday Agreement, and bring the peace process to a successful conclusion. We cannot hold everything in suspense forever. While the immediate result might be different from what Tone, Emmet and Russell or indeed more recent generations of patriots might have aspired to, the establishment of an agreed Ireland is more substantial progress than anyone up until now has been able to achieve.” (Delivered at Bodenstown on October 19, 2003 and published without any hint of an apology on Fianna Fail’s website.)

All that is almost too extraordinary for words, but let me try to find them. The leader of the one natural party of government in an Irish state which was established in a revolutionary war waged by heirs of the physical force tradition founded by Tone, Russell and Emmet stands by the founder’s graveside to rubbish and deny it all. And this really is the leader of de Valera’s Legion of the Rearguard, of Séan Lemass’s semi-constitutional party. Strange times when such things are said. Approaching interesting times when they go all but unremarked.

TONE’S CONSTITUTIONAL MOMENT

Ahern’s one matter of fact, that the Declaration which Tone wrote for the first United Irishmen in Belfast in 1791 did not advocate insurrection, is the stuff of trivial pursuit. Here, from that Declaration (as quoted by Pearse in *The Separatist Idea*) is the stuff of the United Irishmen’s “constitutional” period:—

“In the present great era of reform when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe; when religious persecution is compelled to abjure her tyranny over conscience; when the Rights of Man are ascertained in Theory and that Theory substantiated by Practice; when antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms against the common sense and common interests of mankind; when all government is acknowledged to originate from the people, and to be so far only obligatory as it protects their rights and promotes

their welfare; we think it our duty as Irishmen to come forward and state what we feel to be our heavy grievance, and what we know to be its effectual remedy.

“We have no National Government; we are ruled by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen, whose object is the interest of another country; whose instrument is corruption; whose strength is the weakness of Ireland; and these men have the whole of the power and patronage of the country as means to seduce and subdue the honesty and the spirit of her representatives in the legislature. Such an extrinsic power, acting with uniform force in a direction too frequently opposite to the true line of our obvious interests, can be resisted with effect solely by unanimity, decision, and spirit in the people, qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally, and efficaciously by that great measure essential to the prosperity and freedom of Ireland—an equal Representation of all the People in Parliament...” (*The Best Of Pearse*, Mercier Press, 1967, pp140-41).

The rather perfunctory nod to prudence that barely covers Tone’s forthright statement of revolutionary democratic principles was not a constitutionalism that was designed to last (not even as long as the English were disposed to endure it). Writing to Thomas Russell in 1792 Tone was frank about his Declaration being less so...

“The foregoing contains my true and sincere opinion of the state of this country, so far as in the present juncture it may be advisable to publish it. They certainly fall short of the truth, but truth itself must sometimes condescend to temporise. My unalterable opinion is that the bane of Irish prosperity is the influence of England: I believe that influence will ever be extended while the connection between the countries continues; nevertheless, as I know that opinion is, for the present, too hardy, though a very little time may establish it universally, I have not made it a part of the resolutions, I have only proposed to set up a reformed parliament, as a barrier against that mischief which every honest man that will open his eyes must see in every instance overbears the interest of Ireland: I have not said one word that looks like a wish for separation, though I give it to you and your friends as my most decided opinion that such an event would be a regeneration to this country” (quoted *ibid*, p143; I take it that the emphasis is Pearse’s though that is not stated in the text).

Perhaps Bertie meant to state that the SDLP are the true heirs of Tone’s momentary prudence, which may be true, albeit far from glorious. But really he seems to be expressing a wish that prudence had

been the substance of the United Irishmen, that 1798 and the physical force tradition rooted in 1798 which finally established the Irish state and **Fianna Fáil, The Republican Party** had never happened. It was a most extraordinary speech.

PEARSE AT BODENSTOWN, 1913

Bertie spoke at Bodenstown in 2003 for no other reason than that Patrick Pearse spoke there in 1913. The Irish state was founded in the revolutionary act of Pearse and Connolly. The substance of Fianna Fáil stems from 1916 and the War Of Independence. Had Convict 95 never been, with de Valera disabled by execution or prior prudence, his soldiers would have died undestined.

If Pearse had not spoken in 1913 at Wolfe Tone’s graveside, Bertie in 2003 would never have dreamed of it.

Pearse went to Bodenstown to establish Tone as the father of physical force republicanism. Bertie went to wish it were not so. Having suffered Ahern, here’s Pearse. Just revel in the contrast.

“We have come to the holiest place in Ireland; holier to us even than the place where Patrick sleeps in Down. Patrick brought us life, but this man died for us. And though many before him and some since have died in testimony of the truth of Ireland’s claim to nationhood. Wolfe Tone was the greatest of all that have made that testimony, the greatest of all that have died for Ireland whether in old time or in new. He was the greatest of Irish Nationalists; I believe he was the greatest of Irish men. And if I am right in this I am right in saying that we stand in the holiest place in Ireland, for it must be that the holiest sod of a nation’s soil is the sod where the greatest of her dead lies buried.

... ..

“We have come here not merely to salute this noble dust and to pay our homage to the noble spirit of Tone. We have come to renew our adhesion to the faith of Tone; to express once more our full acceptance of the gospel of Irish Nationalism which he was the first to formulate in worthy terms, giving clear definition and plenary meaning to all that had been thought and taught before him by Irish-speaking and English-speaking men; uttered half articulatedly by a Shane O’Neill in some defiance flung at the Englishry, expressed under some passionate metaphor by a Geoffrey Keating, hinted at by a Swift in some biting gibe, but clearly and greatly stated by Wolfe Tone, and not needing now ever to be stated anew for any new generation...

“This, then, is the first part of Wolfe Tone’s achievement—he made articulate

the dumb voices of the centuries, he gave Ireland a clear and precise and worthy concept of Nationality. But he did more than this: not only did he define Irish Nationalism, but he armed his generation in defence of it. Thinker and doer, dreamer of the immortal dream and doer of the immortal deed—we owe to this dead man more than we can ever repay him by making pilgrimages to his grave or by rearing to him the stateliest monument in the streets of his city. To his teaching we owe it that there is such a thing as Irish Nationalism, and to the memory of the deed he nerved his generation to do, the memory of '98, we owe it that there is any manhood left in Ireland" (from *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, *ibid* p126-127).

Without Wolfe Tone's commitment to armed struggle there would have been no 1798, no 1803, no Young Ireland and no 1848, or '49, no IRB, no Easter Rising, no War of Independence, and no **Fianna Fáil, The Republican Party**.

Without Wolfe Tone's commitment to armed struggle James Fintan Lalor could not have written as he did, which answers Ahern's *caveat* about the United Irishmen being driven underground:—

"As regards the use of none but legal means, any means and all means might be made illegal by Act of Parliament, and such pledge, therefore, is passive obedience. As to the pledge of abstaining from the use of any but moral force, I am quite willing to take such pledge, if, and provided, the English Government agree to take it also; but 'if not, not'. Let England pledge not to argue the question by the prison, the convict-ship, or the halter; and I will readily pledge not to argue it in any form of physical logic. But dogs tied and stones loose are no bargain. Let the stones be given up; or unmuzzle the wolf-dog..." (quoted by Pearse in *The Sovereign People*, *ibid* p175).

Without Wolfe Tone's commitment to armed struggle Bertie Ahern would most probably be digging a ditch today, free from time to reflect and self-loathing in it, and all the happier for that. But the world isn't wound to the happiness of an Ahern. And his cry from the heart of his self-loathing for Sinn Féin to be set aside and the SDLP to be set up was knocked back by the self-confidence of a rising people.

SOUTHERN AID FROM SOUTHERN COMFORT?

The national heritage to which **Fianna Fáil, The Republican Party** lays claim is wasted and withered in Bertie Ahern. That national heritage is still far from justified in a renascent Sinn Féin which has yet to

build a comfortable *modus vivendi* out of its developing *modus operandi*. But a national m.o. is the fundamental prerequisite of a national politics, and Sinn Féin has that. It is what it beat the SDLP over the head with in the Winter Election.

The result of the Catholic vote was barely known when Mark Durkan had to field questions about his party's lack of a national presence. Not so, he replied, the SDLP has good relations with all the largest parties in Dáil Éireann. Which is true enough. The SDLP has good relations with Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, the Irish Labour Party and, stretching 'largest' other than by way of 'bigheaded', the Progressive Democrats.

Former SDLP Minister in the first power-sharing executive to fail in this our failed political entity, Austin Currie, has been sucking at the Fine Gael tit these past twenty years or more. Despite which, or perhaps because of which, Fine Gael was the only one of those parties which didn't send aid in the shape of comforting advisers to help the SDLP rout Sinn Féin in the winter election. According to the *Irish Times*:—

"The SDLP has brought in two of the key strategists behind Fianna Fáil's election victory to advise it on aspects of its campaign for the forthcoming Assembly elections.

"Former Fianna Fáil general secretary, Mr Martin Mackin, and former adviser to the Taoiseach, Mr Peter MacDonagh, have been advising the SDLP for a number of months on vote management techniques and strategies.

"Both were seen as pivotal to Fianna Fáil's election success last year when the party took 49 per cent of the seats in the Dáil with less than 42 per cent of the votes.

"Their advice to the SDLP is to focus on how to use vote management techniques, such as splitting constituencies between candidates and targetting transfers from other parties" (1.11.03).

The *Irish News* was more informative about aid from Irish Labour, the PDs and the Brits:—

"The SDLP has recruited strategists from the British Labour Party and parties from the Republic for its assembly election campaign.

"Former agriculture minister Brid Rodgers has been appointed as the party's director of elections.

"As the party embarked on campaigning in the 18 constituencies across the north, it was confirmed that her former adviser Conall McDevitt has been drafted in to help.

"Belfast-born Adrian McMenamin

has also been recruited from the Labour Party in Britain.

"Jack Murray, a former adviser to Progressive Democrat junior minister Tom Parlon, and Ronan Farren of the Irish Labour Party, have also joined the SDLP's election team from Dublin to work alongside party press officer James Dillon" (28.10.03).

Mark Durkan could have been forgiven for claiming that the SDLP's was a 32 county campaign. It is a salutary reminder that national politics are not arrived at by simply adding 6 to 26. What that added up to on this occasion, and most always will, is zero.

PARTITIONIST HANDS ACROSS THE BORDER

It seems that Conall McDevitt, Ms Rodgers' former adviser, is also of the Irish Labour Party. At all events he has all of stickified Labour's hatred of the party Charlie Haughey once led.

Within days of the SDLP's winter whitewash (see above about 5% either way in Northern Ireland elections) the *Irish News* was full of articles and letters advocating a merger with Fianna Fáil. Conall McDevitt's first contribution to that debate (from an address in Skerries, Dublin) was a plea on behalf of positive thought and the miracles that positive thought can achieve.

"Rather than simply organising on a 32-county basis what is needed is political thinking that transcends the border.

"There is no such thinking at the moment. You only need to look at Sinn Féin's policies to see this" (5.12.03).

His second was a tirade against Bertie's political slum that was headlined *The SDLP Would Never Entertain Links With Neo-fascists*. It concluded:

"I said in my last letter that the SDLP is a much better party than Fianna Fáil.

"I stand over that claim.

"The future of the New Ireland will never be built by populists. They have none of the bravery or the vision required.

"It will be constructed by progressive visionaries, social democrats who think not just about themselves but about their children...and their children's children.

"That is the task of the SDLP and those who share its values. And that is our challenge" (11.12.03).

All in all an entirely vacuous plea on behalf of niceness (armoured in "*political thinking that transcends the border*") as against fascist bastards. But the SDLP could conceivably merge with the Irish Labour Party, or follow Austin into the

Blueshirts, or take its progressive vision Southwards for the children's children of the children of Skerries.

And there is nothing at all in McDevitt's letters to the Irish News which addresses the current appetite in the north for national politics pure and simple. Nothing at all. He transcended the border in a motor car and failed altogether to see beyond it.

The real point of interest in all this, and it is very interesting indeed, is that Conall McDevitt who loathes Fianna Fáil with a passion and who probably isn't all that enamoured of the Progressive Democrats, found it easy to merge with the architects of Bertie's last victory and PD Minister Parlon's adviser in the SDLP's winter election campaign. No problem there.

So why was there no problem there? How could agents of parties who, in between coalitions, hate each other profoundly, work happily together for the SDLP? There was a coalition working for the SDLP; of Fianna Fáil, the Progressive Democrats and the Irish Labour Party (and an irrelevant Belfast Blairite). So what is so attractive about the SDLP?

And put like that the answer is obvious. The SDLP is not Sinn Féin. That is the long and the short of it.

What gathered together in the kitchens of the SDLP's Imperial House headquarters was an all-Ireland coalition against Sinn Féin and the spectre it carries with it of national politics. It was a national political coalition against national politics. And as such it is the clearest possible statement of the one irrefutable argument for the ultimate, sooner rather than later, success of national politics in Ireland.

Sinn Féin is engaged in national politics. That is its *modus operandi* and what forces its opponents to engage nationally to oppose it. At which point they are every bit as damned if they do as they are damned if they don't. Which could maybe translate into a *modus vivendi* for the lot of us.

Sinn Féin stormed the Winter Election. The SDLP now has to learn to live with the storm. As does Fianna Fáil and the Irish Labour Party and the PDs. They made Sinn Féin's Assembly success a victory in national politics. Now it's a matter of them all learning to live with that, together in national politics.

Joe Keenan

The Assembly Election: *An Analysis*

There follows a comparison of the results of the Assembly Election of 26th November 2003 with the results in 1998. It concentrates on the changes between the three blocs, that is, the Unionist/Nationalist/Other designations which, under the Belfast Agreement, Assembly members are required to adopt on election.

I was prompted to make this comparison by the surprising discovery that the Unionist bloc had increased its seats from 58 to 59 (out of a total of 108) at the expense of the Other bloc, which fell from 8 to 7, while the Nationalist bloc remained constant at 42.

When I looked at how this came about, I discovered to my surprise that, in 7 out of the 18 constituencies, the seats won by the 3 blocs changed. For example, in East Antrim the sitting SDLP Assembly member lost his seat to a Unionist and the Unionist/Nationalist/Other balance changed from 4/1/1 to 5/0/1. Table I gives details of the movements in each of the 18 constituencies.

The overall gain of 1 by the Unionist bloc was the net result of these 7 changes. The Unionist bloc actually lost seats to the Nationalist bloc in 2 constituencies—North Antrim and North Belfast. These seem to be a consequence of demographic changes and are probably permanent. However, Unionists gained one in West Belfast where a vigorous campaign by the DUP—the candidate was Nigel Dodds' wife—stirred Protestants into voting. That seat will be hard to hold on to. As we have seen, they also gained one in East Antrim where the result was certainly affected by Catholics being driven out of places like Larne in recent years.

Two changes were a consequence of the collapse of the Womens' Coalition, which lost both its seats. Readers may recall that, in an attempt to save David Trimble in November 2001, the Standing Orders of the Assembly were amended to allow Womens' Coalition members to change their designation, whereupon their Catholic member, Monica McWilliams, redesignated herself as a Nationalist and

their Protestant member, Jane Morrice, redesignated herself as a Unionist. There is a certain justice in the fact that Monica McWilliams has now been replaced in South Belfast by a Nationalist and Jane Morrice has been replaced in North Down by a Unionist.

The 7th change was in the West Tyrone constituency where the SDLP lost a seat to an independent candidate who topped the poll, standing for the retention of an acute hospital in Omagh. This was rather unfair to the SDLP since it was Barbre de Brun of Sinn Féin who took the decision to downgrade the Omagh hospital when she was Minister of Health. Sinn Féin retained both its seats. So, had it not been for this special local issue, the Nationalist bloc would also have gained a seat overall at the expense of the Other bloc.

Table II attempts to compare the First Preference votes by party and by bloc with the 1998 election. The Other bloc lost out badly in terms of First Preference votes, its share falling from nearly 10% to under 7%. The Alliance Party's First Preference vote fell by over 50% (from 52,636 to 25,372) but remarkably it managed to hold on to all of its 6 seats.

The Unionist bloc's share of the First Preference vote was 52.54%, an increase of about 2% compared with 1998. The Nationalist bloc's share was 40.67%, an increase of about 1%.

The most important outcome of the election is the fact that the DUP has now got a majority of seats within the Unionist bloc (30 seats out of 59). Since the joint election of a First Minister and a Deputy First Minister requires the support of a majority of each of the Unionist and Nationalist blocs, the DUP is in a position to determine whether or not devolved institutions are re-established. The best efforts of the British Government to save David Trimble have failed—and the interminable wrangling within the Ulster Unionist Party has happily become an irrelevance. The DUP is in charge now.

Table I Seats by Bloc by Constituency 2003 & Change since 1998

Constituency	Unionist		Nationalist		Other
	DUP/U/O	Total	SF/SD	Total	Total
Antrim East	3/2	5 (+1)	0/0	0 (-1)	1
Antrim North	3/1	4 (-1)	1/12	(+1)	0
Antrim South	2/2	4	0/1	1	1
Belfast East	2/2/1	5	0/0	0	1
Belfast North	2/1	3 (-1)	2/13	(+1)	0
Belfast South	1/2	3	1/23	(+1)	0 (-1)
Belfast West	1/0	1 (+1)	4/15	(-1)	0
Down North	2/2/1	5 (+1)	0/0	0	1 (-1)
Down South	1/1	2	2/2	4	0
Fermanagh & S. Tyrone	1/2	3	2/1	3	0
Foyle	1/0	1	2/3	5	0
Lagan Valley	1/3	4	0/1	1	1
Londonderry East	2/2	4	1/1	2	0
Mid Ulster	1/1	2	3/1	4	0
Newry & Armagh	1/1	2	3/1	4	0
Strangford	3/2	5	0/0	0	1
Tyrone West	1/1	2	2/13	(-1)	1 (+1)
Upper Bann	2/2	4	1/1	2	0
Total	30/27/2	59 (+1)	24/18	42	7 (-1)

Notes:

- (a) Belfast East: other Unionist seat PUP (David Ervine)
- (b) Down North: other Unionist seat UKUP (Bob McCartney)
- (c) Other bloc seats are all Alliance Party, apart from Tyrone West, which was won by Independent Kieran Deeny.

Table II Votes and Seats by Party & Bloc 1998 & 2003

1998	1998			2003		
	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats
Unionist Bloc						
DUP	145917	18.01	20	177944	25.71	30
UUP	172225	21.25	28	156931	22.68	27
PUP	20634	2.55	2	8032	1.16	1
UKUP	36541	4.51	5	5700	0.82	1
NIUP				1350	0.20	
UDP	8651	1.07				
Con	1835	0.23		1604	0.23	
Ind Un	24339	3.00	3	12010	1.74	
Total	410142	50.62	58	363571	52.54	59
					(+1.92)	(+1)
Nationalist Bloc						
SF	142858	17.63	18	162758	23.52	24
SDLP	177963	21.96	24	117547	16.99	18
Ind Nat	528	0.07		1121	0.16	
Total	321349	39.66	42	281426	40.67	42
					(+1.01)	(+0)
Other Bloc						
All	52636	6.50	6	25372	3.67	6
NIWC	13019	1.61	2	5785	0.84	
Green Party	710	0.09		2688	0.39	
SEA				2394	0.35	
WP	1989		0.25	1407	0.20	
Soc	789		0.10	343	0.05	
Lab	2729		0.34			
Nat Law	832		0.10			
Ind Lab	121		0.01			
Energy 105	15		0.00			
Ind Other	5986		0.74	9042	1.31	1
Total	78826	9.73	8	47031	6.80	7
					(-2.93)	(-1)
Overall total	810317	100.01	108	692028	100.01	108

1998 Electorate	% Valid Poll	2003 Electorate	% Valid Poll
1178556	68.86	1097526	63.05

Smoking continued

the voices of working people over 18 who want a choice and would like to go to their local pub to have a pint and a cigarette. What is wrong with that? What is the big deal? The point was raised about vested interests. The only vested interests in this debate are people who want to go out and enjoy themselves in a social setting. Despite this, people want to remove it from them.

I respect non-smokers and people who work in the trade. We can protect them and I will put forward proposals to do so but, above all, we must face the reality. Smoking is bad for a person, but too much of anything is bad for a person. Drinking is very bad for a person, as is over-eating. We have a crisis in this country with obesity. These are the realities so let us bring some balance into the discussion.

Environmental tobacco smoke, or passive smoking as it is called, is classified as a human carcinogen by the World Health Organisation. The issue is not about the nature of a carcinogen but what it does. Almost everything we touch, eat and wash can be described as carcinogenic to some degree. I am sure that the Minister for State at the Department of Health and Children, Deputy Tim O'Malley, is aware of the number of carcinogens that are present in a cup of coffee, for example. Are we to ban coffee?

On the figures of the numbers of deaths in Ireland, this is a matter about which the Government must be open and honest. A figure of 7,000 deaths in Ireland each year is widely quoted and was widely quoted in the debate as being attributed to tobacco-related illnesses. There is no scientific foundation for such a statement. However, we have all been fed this so often that we have begun to believe it. The figure relates to the number of deaths from cancers in Ireland.

Let us study the figures. The National Cancer Registry of Ireland gives a figure of 7,500 deaths from cancer occurring every year. The most common cancers within this figure are skin, large bowel, lung, breasts in women and prostate in men. It does not indicate that these are due to smoking. These are the facts. The original assertion was a lie. A number of people have quoted this figure in recent months. However, like the figure of 7,000, it is lodged in the public mind and, unfortunately, many people believe it.

The Minister may not be aware that the American Environmental Protection Agency study, which gave rise to this type of figure, was found by the federal courts in the United States of America to have, "knowingly, wilfully, and aggressively, disseminated false

1998

Broadly speaking, for the 1998 election I have used the figures from Nicholas Whyte's website at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/fa98.htm>. In particular, I have used his figures for Independent Unionists (24,339) and Independent Nationalists (528). His votes column is 5,986 short, having a total of 804,331 rather than 810,317, which was the total valid poll in 1998. I have assigned these to the Independent Other category. I haven't checked this in detail against the raw election results, but it appears to be reasonably correct.

2003

For 2003, I have used the figures from the BBC website at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/vote2003/northern_ireland/html/vote.stm. The categories

Ind	19256
UUC	2705
VFYP	124
Ind	72
UTW	16
Total	22173

in the BBC table have been assigned to the three blocs as follows:

Unionist	12010
Nationalist	1121
Other	9042
Total	22173

by looking at the raw election results and assigning each candidate to one of the three blocs. The accuracy of these assignments cannot be guaranteed in all cases.

<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>"Party"</u>	<u>Un</u>	<u>Nat</u>	<u>Oth</u>
Antrim East	J McKee	Independent	1449		
	R Hutchinson	Independent	1011		
	R Mason	Independent	364		
	J Anderson	Independent			348
Antrim North	G Kane	Independent			623
Belfast East	J McBlain	Independent			72
	Rainbow George	VFYP			65
Belfast North	F Agnew	UUC	802		
	F McCoubrey	Independent	469		
	R McCord	Independent			218
	J Gallagher	VFYP			17
Belfast South	LM Steven	VFYP			42
Belfast West	J MacVicar	Independent	211		
	D Kerr	Independent	16		
North Down	B Wilson	Independent			1350
	A Chambers	Independent	1077		
	A Field	Independent	428		
	C Carter	Independent	109		
South Down	M Curran	Independent			162
	Foyle	A Courtney	Independent	802	
	D McBrearty	Independent			137
Lagan Valley	I Davis	Independent	2223		
L'derry East	B Douglas	UUC	1903		
Newry & ArmW	Fraser	Ind Unionist	632		
Strangford	D McCarthy	Ind Nationalist		319	
Tyrone West	K Deeny	Independent			6158
	Upper Bann	D Jones	Ind Unionist	585	
	S Anderson	Ind unionist	581		
Totals			12010	1121	9042

David Morrison

Smoking continued

information with far-reaching regulatory implications in the United States and worldwide". On account of this, the court ordered a summary judgment against the EPA and nullified the agency's environmental tobacco smoke, ETS, risk assessment.

If one closely examines the expert report

that was launched by two Ministers on the day the Minister for Health and Children announced his intention to introduce a ban, it was described by the Minister as being "unequivocal in its requirement for such a ban". Clearly the Minister should examine the report in more detail. The report is couched in numerous caveats, such as "maybe", "could be" and "might be". On one matter it is clear. In its conclusions, it recommends further research to assess the

dangers of environmental tobacco smoke, especially in the hospitality industry. The report states: "that such a report is unequivocal in demanding a ban on smoking in the workplace, is bending the truth to an outrageous degree". These are the facts.

We all support proper ventilation. It has been proved that it can be effective, even though listening to the debate in the Chamber and on radio and television, one would think ventilation was not an issue and that air supply could not be improved. The Minister's advisers have shied away from this claiming that outdated technology of one air change per house was ineffective. We moved on from that point years ago. We now have specifications in force for 12 air changes per house. There are pubs throughout the country certified by the health boards as a result of the six-year old, ongoing initiative for clean air in pubs. That is the reality. I accept that some pubs need to get their act together, but they should be targeted and put under pressure by the health boards. One should not blame the average working man or woman - the taxpayers of this country - for the inefficiencies of others.

New studies are emerging about the efficiency of ventilation equipment, for example, the research carried out by the University of Glamorgan. Its research shows that ventilation can be highly effective at protecting bar staff and customers from the adverse effect of environmental tobacco smoke. In the United States, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory of Tennessee's study of restaurant and tavern workers in 16 cities and more than 1,500 subjects concluded a well-known toxicological principle that the poison is in the dose, and it is clear that the ETS dose is quite low for most people. A study carried out on ETS levels in the Canadian restaurant-pub, the Black Dog, indicated that ETS component concentrations in the non-smoking section were not substantially different from those measured in similar facilities where smoking was prohibited. The WHO suppressed its own 1998 survey results, which questioned the perceived health risks of ETS.

On 16 May, the British Medical Journal published a major peer-reviewed study on the health impact of ETS in California. This major analysis, based on 118,000 California adult studies from 1959 to 1998, concluded that the results of the Californian CPS 1 cohort did not support a casual relation between exposure to ETS and tobacco-related mortality, although a small effect was not ruled out. Given the limitations of the underlying data on this and other studies of ETS, and the small size of the risk, it seems premature to conclude that ETS causes death from coronary heart disease or cancer.

The editor of the British Medical Journal decided it would be a form of scientific

misconduct not to publish this study. The research was initially commissioned by the American Cancer Society which then refused to publish it when it discovered the results. It was eventually published with funding from the tobacco industry. I accept that point. It is a fair comment. However, the Health and Safety Authority now claims that it was tobacco industry research, when it was first published in the British Medical Journal.

Let us be honest and open in this debate. I will take criticism directed at me on the question of smoking and health and I will accept the reality, but I also urge people to listen to the debate. The Government's position was taken on the basis of misleading, selective and cherry-picked scientific evidence with all contrary evidence being suppressed. That is my point in the debate. If we are claiming to be democrats, we must be open. If one is claiming to be a progressive democrat one must be twice as open.

Reliance is placed, even in the expert report, on experts who have lost credibility. One such expert, James Repace, was the individual who sought to prove that 150 bar workers died in Ireland every year from the effects of environmental tobacco smoke. He now recognises that this is a lie, so that figure should be disregarded.

As someone who likes a drink and a cigarette—I will be open and admit that I smoke—I mix regularly in public houses and talk to bar workers, some 60% of whom in this State smoke. Despite this, people who claim to represent them and lecture the nation on the issue have not even asked them for their views. I do not think it is a very democratic state of affairs. I would also criticise the ICTU in that regard, because it did not consult its members on the issue. There should be a broader debate on this matter.

The proposed ban is based on a selective reading of the report on the health effects of environmental tobacco smoke in the workplace. More research is needed into the level of exposure of Irish workers to such smoke. The health effects of environmental tobacco smoke are far from proven, according to many studies. Those who have come to the conclusion that a smoking ban is the only option have not engaged in a thorough examination of the alternative control measures that could be put in place, such as quality ventilation or smoking rooms. Some sensible suggestions have been put forward. Why should there not be designated areas where people can have a cigarette and a drink? There is no big problem in that regard. Such a measure would protect staff. Why are the ordinary people being hammered again? I refer to the working men and women who pay their taxes and want to have a break every now and then.

In arriving at the decision to ban smoking,

sufficient consideration has not been given to advances in technology which reduce environmental tobacco smoke levels by more than 90%. The report on the health effects of environmental tobacco smoke in the workplace, commissioned by the Health and Safety Authority and the Office of Tobacco Control, acknowledges that the number of studies with direct observation of occupational exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is limited.

The Minister for Health and Children should assess the economic impact of the proposed smoking ban. It is difficult to quantify this impact, but there are serious grounds for concern. I know from travelling in European countries like Italy and Spain that people from such countries will think twice about coming here after the ban has been introduced. They come to Ireland to enjoy particular dimensions of life in this country, such as music and social interaction. We do not have the sun - we have plenty of rain - but we have pubs, music and social interaction. When I spoke to people in Italy earlier this year, a common theme was the level of social interaction in Ireland. People from such countries like to go to Irish pubs to have a drink and a cigarette in peace, but the Minister is telling them that they will not be able to do so. I do not wish to engage in scare tactics, but I advise the Minister to pay attention to next year's tourist figures. Tour operators, particularly those bringing tourists from continental Europe and short break visitors from Britain, have expressed concerns that the proposed ban will substantially reduce the volume of their business in Ireland.

Although I am critical of the Government and taking a politically incorrect view, I am also putting forward suggestions that can bring some balance to the debate. At least 50% of each area of a hotel, for example, could be clearly designated as a non-smoking area. I accept that the bar and service counters, where there is a concentration of staff, should be strictly non-smoking areas and that effective air handling and ventilation systems should be in place to provide at least 12 air changes per hour. The performance and maintenance of air handling and ventilation systems should be subject to technical certification, similar to the present certification system for passenger lifts. Clear evidence of the proper maintenance of air handling equipment should be kept on record and made available to health and safety inspectors. Hotel bedroom literature should include leaflets outlining the harm which tobacco smoking could cause. Such sensible suggestions should be considered during this debate, but the Minister, Deputy Martin, the Minister of State, Deputy Tim O'Malley, and others who want to introduce a new nanny state will not take account of them.

I respect the rights of non-smokers such as Deputy Callanan, who spoke earlier about

his genuine health concerns. Just as non-smokers should always be facilitated, they should accept the rights of other people. I have said that I do not want to live in a nanny state. We should be able to accommodate each other. The State should be keen to accommodate difference, but the Government is not keen to accommodate the 35% of people who smoke. It will not surrender to those of us who are being hammered. This statement applies equally to other policy areas. There is plenty of room for compromise on this issue. I have urged the Government to carry out the research required from its own report and to consult fully with everybody.

The Government should talk to everybody rather than giving its opinions and lecturing the nation, as such an approach does not work. I have been surprised by the approach that has been adopted. The Minister thought that it was a trendy and popular issue to pursue, while distracting the public from the problems in our hospitals, such as waiting lists. He is engaging in the politics of distraction. I feel that a sensible and productive agreement can be reached which avoids the problems with the current proposal.

Science and truth have been manipulated and betrayed in pursuit of what the perpetrators believe is a legitimate cause—to discourage smoking. This is a clear case of the end justifying the means, regardless of the cost to society. I ask the public to listen to all the arguments that have been made before making an informed decision.

I support sections 4 to 18 of the Bill. Section 4 relates to the "*prohibition of advertising of tobacco products*" and section 8 provides for the "*prohibition of certain marketing practices*". I accept that people under the age of 18 have to be defended and that we have to be very careful. There is a need for legislation to deal with the retail sale of packets of less than 20 cigarettes and certain marketing practices.

As the title of the Bill suggests, this is a public health issue. We have a duty to promote public health, but we should not be distracted from certain issues by blaming those who enjoy a cigarette and a pint. There are between 35 and 40 people on trolleys in Beaumont Hospital, which is in my constituency. Why are such people on waiting lists? I do not want to be told that the people in question are smokers. Having visited the hospital and spoken to patients many times, I know that 99% of the illnesses for which patients on trolleys are being treated are not related to smoking. I ask the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues to get off the stage in that respect.

My understanding of public health relates to protecting society, defending patients and

improving the health services. Although the Government has been in power for almost seven years, over two terms, some people cannot even get a bed in a hospital. It is a disgrace. We should take a reality check when we discuss these issues.

We should wake up to the real problems, such as disability services. I am glad that the Minister of State, Deputy Tim O'Malley, is present because I have tormented him about this issue for the last six months. Such issues need to be dealt with. While I welcome the fact that last week's budget provided an additional €25 million, when one speaks to families and the almost 2,800 people who are on waiting lists, one is told that another €10 million is needed. The reality is that people with intellectual disabilities and their families were seeking €35 million, but they were given €25 million. The Government gave €15 million to PuncHESTOWN, which was absolutely over the top.

I would like to mention the serious and comprehensive Hanly report in this context. Although this is supposed to be a public health debate, nobody has mentioned the golden hour - the first hour after a person is injured, for example in a traffic accident. The Government proposes to move certain services from communities. Most GPs and medical personnel say that there is higher chance of saving a patient's life if he or she is treated in the first hour. This is a public health issue. The Government proposes to relocate services so that it will take people two or three hours to get to a hospital. It is not acceptable.

I will not take any lectures from the health police about the realities. If one speaks to ambulance drivers, nurses, doctors and people in rural areas, one will be told that the golden hour is very important. I am quite lucky because I live in an urban area which is within ten minutes of Beaumont Hospital or the Mater Hospital. People in other parts of the country have to drive for two hours to get to a hospital. The Government is walking away from these issues rather than discussing them. It will not even question them.

I mentioned earlier the rights of workers. As somebody who has been active in the trade union movement for 20 years, I respect the rights of workers. Most of the workers I have met have not been consulted about the proposed ban. Some 60% of workers have said that they will live with a compromise on the smoking issue. Some of them would love to see such a compromise. I know of many non-smokers who like to go to bars to have a pint and to enjoy the smell and atmosphere of smoke. One does not hear that mentioned very often. It seems that people are afraid to say it. I will not take any lectures on morality or health in this regard.

I hope that prisons and psychiatric

hospitals will be excluded from the proposed smoking ban. When I spoke to a psychiatric nurse recently, I was told that assaults on staff would increase by 50% if patients no longer had the right to sit down and have a smoke. Serious problems in prisons and hospitals have often been defused when a member of staff gave a cigarette to a person to help him or her to calm down for five minutes. Such problems were resolved in a peaceful manner. Nurses have expressed their concern to me that the Minister's proposals will aggravate matters.

I referred to old folk who have worked all their lives, many of whom are in their 90s. I do not accept that the Minister should decide they cannot have the right to enjoy a

drink or a cigarette, whether they be in old folk's homes or at home. The Minister's ideas are off the wall.

In the area of advertising we have a duty to protect citizens. They must be given the correct information. Children must also be protected as they have rights. Adults, however, have rights as citizens. They should always have the right to make decisions. We are supposed to live in a democratic society, though some of us would even question that. There are now people who tell us regularly what we can do in our private and social lives. We must broaden this debate and listen to the facts. I welcome the opportunity to debate the Bill and put the other side of the case. ●

The Rate Of Profit

Part 7 of a review of *Das Kapital*

The first eight chapters of Volume 3 develop the implications of the theories outlined in Volumes 1 and 2. Friedrich Engels wrote this volume from notes that Marx had left before he died. However, it is certainly the case that he was far more than a mere editor. He wrote one important chapter in its entirety without the benefit of any notes left by Marx.

As I have indicated earlier Engels had a better grasp of Maths than Marx. In the early chapters of Volume 3 he enlisted the help of a Cambridge mathematician, Samuel Moore, to derive formulas from the theories developed in the first two volumes.

CHANGES IN THE COMPONENTS OF VALUE

The volume begins with a discussion of the components of a commodity's value: constant capital, variable capital and surplus value. The example that is used is of a commodity with a value of 600. This value consists of 400 constant capital, 100 variable capital and 100 surplus value. If the value of the constant capital increases by 200 the value of the commodity will also increase by 200 from 600 to 800.

The components of the commodity's value have now changed to 600c, 100v and 100s. An increase in the value of the constant capital is caused by a decline in the productivity of the industry which produces that item of constant capital. For instance, if the constant capital was wheat, the value of that product might increase if there was unfavourable weather in wheat producing areas resulting in more labour

having been expended to produce a given quantity of that product. So the value of wheat will increase, but also those commodities which contain wheat, such as flour and bread, will increase in value.

However, a change in the value of variable capital will have no effect on the value of the commodity produced. This is because variable capital only represents what the capitalist pays for the commodity "labour power". While labour power is a cost to the capitalist, its value—unlike the value of constant capital—is not transferred to the commodity produced. The costs of labour power or the costs of the means of subsistence required to keep the worker in a fit condition to work and reproduce a family are irrelevant in determining the value of the product that he produces. They are only relevant in determining the capitalist's profits. It is only through the use of labour power that value is added to a commodity.

A change in the value of variable capital or labour power will only affect the proportions of value allocated between the capitalist and the worker.

So, what is the effect of a change in the value of variable capital on a commodity with a value of 800, consisting of constant capital of 600 and variable capital and surplus of 100 each? If the variable capital is reduced from 100 to 80, the surplus value is increased to 120. Therefore the total value remains at 800 consisting of 600 in constant capital, 80 in variable capital and 120 in surplus value.

As indicated in Volume 1 a change in the value of variable capital can be caused by changes in the productivity of industries in which subsistence commodities are manufactured.

RATE OF PROFIT AND SURPLUS VALUE

In chapter 3 there is an analysis of the relationship between the rate of surplus value and the rate of profit.

The rate of surplus value is defined as surplus value divided by variable capital or s/v . Given the fact that all value is created by the worker, the rate of surplus value is equal to that proportion of the value created by the worker which is appropriated by the capitalist divided by that proportion held on to by the worker. Marx also called the rate of surplus value “the rate of exploitation”.

The rate of profit is defined as surplus value divided by the sum of constant and variable capital or $= s/(c + v)$. This could be defined as the return on the capitalist’s costs.

The above formula indicates that, other things being equal, the greater the surplus value (s) the greater will be the rate of profit. On the other hand, if surplus value is held constant the greater the constant capital plus the variable capital figures, the less will be the rate of profit.

If we multiply the numerator and the denominator by “ v ” we are left with the following formula for the rate of profit:
 $(s/v).(v/(c + v))$

Notice that the first part of the formula (s/v) is equal to the rate of surplus value. The second part of the formula ($v/(c + v)$) is equal to that proportion of total capital which is accounted for by variable capital or living labour. Marx referred to this as “the value composition of capital”.

So the above formula indicates that the rate of profit is equal to the rate of surplus value multiplied by the value composition of capital. From this the following deductions can be made:

- 1) If the rate of surplus value is held constant, the percentage change in the value composition of capital will result in the same percentage change in the rate of profit.
- 2) If the value composition of capital remains constant, a change in the rate of surplus value will result in the same percentage change in the rate of profit.

The point of recasting the rate of profit in the above way is that Marx noticed two countervailing trends in the rate of profit as capitalism develops. On the one hand the proportion of living labour or variable capital in relation to total capital had a tendency to decline. This resulted in a declining rate of profit. On the other hand the countervailing tendency was for the rate of surplus value to increase, which would lead to an increase in the rate of profit.

Other deductions that can be made from the above formula are:

- 1) The rate of profit will rise or fall at a quicker rate than changes in the rate of surplus value if the value composition of capital changes in the same direction.

This is possible, but unlikely. It is more likely that the value composition of capital will move in the opposite direction to the rate of surplus value. The rate of surplus value usually increases as a result of increases in productivity, which usually involves a reduction in the value composition of capital (especially a greater use of constant capital). However, it is possible that a dramatic increase in productivity in the industries that produce the constant capital could reduce the value composition of capital despite a reduction in the value of variable capital.

- 2) The rate of profit rises or falls at a slower rate than the rate of surplus value if the value composition of capital changes in the opposite direction but at a slower rate.

This is quite probable. For instance, in an industry which does not increase its productivity, the rate of surplus value might rise as a result of an increase in the productivity of those industries which produce the means of subsistence of the workers.

To give an example, assume that in a given quantity of a product the surplus value is 50, the variable capital is 50 and the constant capital is 150. The rate of surplus value will be then equal to 100%. The value composition of capital will equal 25% ($50/(150 + 50)$) The rate of profit will therefore also equal 25%.

Now, if the variable capital drops by 20% to 40 the surplus value will increase to 60. The rate of surplus value will now equal 150% ($60/40$). The value composition of capital will drop to approximately

21% ($40/(150 + 40)$). The rate of profit will therefore increase to about 32% (150% by 21%). The increase in the rate of profit is about 28% ($7/25$) despite a 50% increase in the rate of surplus value.

- 3) The rate of profit rises or falls in the opposite direction to the rate of surplus value if the value composition of capital changes inversely at a faster rate.

This scenario is by no means unlikely. For example, it is quite probable that an increase in the rate of surplus value will result in a greater decline in the value composition of capital, which in turn will result in a decline in the rate of profit.

This is because an increase in the rate of surplus value is often associated with an increase in the productivity of labour. Such an increase usually involves each unit of labour using more inputs in a given time to produce more outputs. In other words the value of constant capital increases as a proportion of the total capital.

Let us return to some of the same figures used in part 2 above. But we will also assume that the constant capital element changes from 150 to 360. In this case the value composition of capital will be reduced to 10% ($40/(360 + 40)$). The rate of profit will decline from 25% to 15% (150% by 10%) despite an increase in the rate of surplus value of 50%.

- 4) The rate of profit will remain constant if the rate of surplus value changes and the value composition of capital changes inversely and in the same proportion.

This is a compromise between parts 2 and 3. Using the same figures as in part 2 above, if the constant capital increases from 150 to 200, the value composition of capital will be reduced to 16.67%. By multiplying the increased rate of surplus value (150%) by the reduced value composition of capital (16.67%) you arrive at the same rate of profit figure (25%) as you started with.

This is because the rate of surplus value figure has increased by 150% and the value composition figure has been reduced by 1/150%.

RATE OF PROFIT REVISITED

In the above calculations the un-stated assumption is that the number of turnovers of capital in a year is one. The other un-stated assumption is that the fixed capital

is zero. As I have indicated in previous instalments Marx was quite weak on the topics of turnover of capital and fixed capital. Chapter 4, which was completely written by Engels, sets out to look at the effects of more than one turnover of capital and of fixed capital not equal to zero.

Engels starts this important chapter by giving very straightforward examples of two capitals with different turnovers. Capital A is composed of $80c + 20v = 100$. It has two turnovers a year and a rate of surplus value equal to 100%. Its total product for the year is obtained by multiplying by 2 (the number of turnovers). So this amounts to $160c + 40v + 40s = 240$. Engels then makes the point that the rate of profit is **not** equal to 40 divided by the capital of the annual product (i.e. $160c + 40v = 200$). The rate of profit should be calculated on the advanced capital of 100 ($80 + 20$). This is because after one turnover of capital the capitalist receives his money back. So his maximum capital outlay at any one time is 100, which is reached at the point of time just before he receives his money for his product. Therefore the rate of profit is equal to 40%.

The other example he gives is of capital composed of $160c + 40v + 40s = 240$. But unlike the previous example the turnover of this capital is one. This means that it has to have a capital outlay of 200. Therefore, the rate of profit on this capital is indeed $40/200$ equalling 20%.

After giving these examples, Engels introduces examples of capital, which include fixed Capital. As I have indicated in the previous instalment, Marx tended to ignore this important element of production.

In the first example he gives, "Capital 1" consists of 10,000 in fixed capital with an annual depreciation of 10% or 1,000 per annum. The circulating constant capital is 500 and the variable capital is 500. The variable and constant capital turnover 10 times a year and the surplus value is equal to 100% of the variable capital.

Engels says that the product of one turnover is:

$$100c \text{ (depreciation)} + 500c + 500v + 500s = 1,600$$

This is correct. He then says that the product of one entire year, with ten turnovers is:

$$1,000c \text{ (depreciation)} + 5,000c + 5,000v + 5,000s = 16,000$$

Again, this is correct. He then says without explanation the following:

$$C = 11,000, s = 5,000 \text{ therefore the rate of profit} = 5,000/11,000 \text{ or } 45.5\%$$

Most people reading this would assume that the $C = 11,000$ is obtained by adding the $1000c$, $5000c$ and $5000v$ figures of total annual output. In fact it is a pure 'coincidence' that these figures happen to add up to 11,000. The "C" or capital outlay figure is, actually, obtained by adding the fixed capital figure (10,000) to the capital outlay figure of one turnover (i.e. $500c + 500v$). In general the figures will not be the same.

In his second example, the sum of the depreciation, constant capital and variable capital of annual output he gives again "just happen" to equal the capital outlay.

The third example has only one turnover in capital and no fixed capital.

It is almost as if Engels is trying to imply that the flaws in Marx's analysis regarding turnover of capital and fixed capital are of no account. Following these examples there is a longwinded analysis of variable capital and then he finishes the chapter by giving a final example.

In this example, the figures are presented in a slightly different way and Engels is much more explicit in how he arrives at the calculation of the rate of profit. The fixed capital figure is equal to 10,000. He then gives the circulating capital figure, which he says is 2,500. The value of the weekly product is:

$$20c \text{ (depreciation)} + 358c + 52v + 80s = 510$$

He then reasons that the weekly capital outlay is 410 ($358 + 52$). The depreciation element (20c) is not a cash cost and therefore is not part of the capital outlay.

The 358 in constant capital represents 87.3% of the total weekly capital outlay (410) and the variable capital of 52 represents the remaining 12.7%. Given that we know that the entire circulating capital outlay is 2,500, the proportion of this accounted for by constant capital is 2,182 (87.3% of 2,500) and 318 in variable capital.

Engels then calculates that the total annual expenditure of variable capital is 2,704. Since the variable capital proportion of the circulating capital outlay is 318, the number of times the capital turns over in a year is 8.5 times or 2,704 divided by 318.

The rate of surplus value is 153.8% or 80 divided by 52. Finally the capital outlay figure is arrived at by adding the fixed capital figure to the circulating capital figure.

We now have all the elements of the rate of profit calculation which is equal to:

$$(s/v).n.v/C$$

Where "s/v" is the rate of surplus value, "n" is the number of turnovers of capital in a year, "v" is the variable capital component in one turnover and "C" is the capital outlay required in a year. This differs from the previous formula of Marx by including "n" or the number of turnovers in a year. Also, the "C" element represents the capital outlay rather than the sum of constant capital and variable capital contained in the value of the commodity.

Putting the figures in the formula we obtain the following:

$$153.8\% \times 8.5 \times 318 / (12,500) = 33.3\%$$

But this formula is a rather longwinded way of arriving at the rate of profit. Presumably, Engels uses it to illustrate the relationship between the rate of surplus value and the rate of profit. As Engels himself indicates, a more straightforward method of arriving at the rate of profit is by calculating the annual profit which is 4,160 and dividing it by the capital outlay (12,500) giving the same answer of 33.3%.

Interestingly, unlike in the first three examples of the chapter, Engels does not calculate the components of the total product in the year. This can be done very easily by multiplying the components of the total weekly product by 52 weeks to arrive at the following annual figures:

$$1,040c \text{ (depreciation)} + 18,616c + 2,704v + 4,160s = 26,520$$

The total constant capital contained in the total product is equal to 19,656. When this is added to the variable capital of 2,704 a figure of 22,360 is arrived at for the $c + v$ part of Marx's formula. Obviously, this does not equal the capital outlay figure which Engels arrived at in his calculations for this example. The fact that the annual capital outlay figure equalled the $c + v$ figure for the annual product in the first two examples that Engels gave in chapter 4 was a pure 'coincidence'. The only time the $c + v$ figure always equals the capital outlay figure is when there is no fixed capital and the number of turnovers of capital in a year is equal to one.

Engels understood far better than Marx that capitalists are interested in not how much capital is contained in the value of a

product, but how much capital is tied up in production to generate a given level of profit. For example, a very small percentage, if indeed any, of the value of a factory building is transferred to the value of the products produced within the factory. Arguably the factory does not depreciate in value at all. But the value of the factory building might represent a huge capital commitment on behalf of the capitalist. In calculating his rate of profit from operating the factory he might well decide that he would obtain a greater return on his capital by closing the factory, selling it to a property developer and putting the money in the bank!

RETURN ON CAPITAL EMPLOYED

Engels's calculation is very similar to the "return on capital employed" calculation which is well known to modern accountants. However, Engels as he acknowledges, assumed that there were no credit transactions. A modern businessman would take account of the capital he has tied up in debtors or money that is owed to him by customers. The money he owes to creditors helps him finance his business and is deducted from his capital outlay. In some businesses the difference between the "debtors" figure in the balance sheet and the "creditors" figure may not be that large. In this instance, one figure offsets the other.

Engels's calculation of the outlay on circulating capital is not that dissimilar to the outlay that a businessman would calculate that he has made on "work in progress" stock. However, Engels assumed that the full amount of capital necessary to produce one cycle of production is tied up at all times. For example, if it takes four weeks to produce a product with a capital outlay of 10,000 Engels would say that the capital outlay is 10,000. But it is possible that this capital is not spent at the beginning of the production cycle. The expenditure could be spread equally throughout the period. So, after week one 2,500 is spent and after week two the amount is 5,000. It is only at the end of week four that the full 10,000 has been spent. Using this logic the average capital outlay on work in progress is half the total of 10,000, which is equal to 5,000.

To some extent this is pedantic. Even if the capitalist does not need the 10,000 immediately he will need to have short term access to this amount. This might be reflected by cash in the current or "short term" assets section of his balance sheet. Such cash is unlikely to earn much interest because it is needed on a short term basis.

Another minor criticism is that while Engels has rightly excluded depreciation from the capital outlay figure because it is not an extra cash cost and fixed capital is already included in the capital outlay figure, there is an argument that it should be added back to the profit figure. This argument is similar to the one about "work in progress" above. However, it is stronger because it may take many years for a machine to be replaced. The capitalist will therefore be able to use the value represented by the depreciation of the machine for other purposes. He may not even have to consider spending money on a new machine until the old machine is near to the end of its useful life.

It is now quite common to see in the financial statements of companies a figure for "EBITDA". This is known as Earnings (or Profits) Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation. It is felt that this gives a better understanding of the operations of a company and is more meaningful as the numerator in the "Return on Capital Employed" calculation than the "profits" figure.

STOCKS AND FLOWS

A slightly more serious criticism is that Engels did not consider the effects of stocks of finished goods or raw materials on the capital outlay. Marx and Engels were aware that not all finished goods were sold immediately and that raw materials which were bought by the capitalists were not immediately used in production. Their analysis in Volume 2 indicates that they understood that this represented a problem for capitalists, but they were unable to incorporate this in their calculations of capital outlay and rate of profit.

The problem with their analysis is that they did not appear to understand the difference between "stocks" and "flows" as applied to a business.

These concepts are often explained by an analogy. Water "flows" into a basin from a tap. The water going into the basin is an "inflow". The amount of water in the basin is a "stock". If the basin has a hole in it there will be an "outflow" of water. If the "outflow" exceeds the "inflow" the stock of water in the basin will diminish. On the other hand if the "inflow" exceeds the "outflow" the "stock" in the basin will rise.

In a business, expenditure on purchases of raw materials represents a "flow". The resulting build up of raw materials represents a "stock". The "stock" of raw materials is reduced by their transfer to the "flow" of production. The "flow" of

production increases the "stock" of finished goods and the "flow" of sales reduces the stock of finished goods.

In Volume 2 Marx indicated that the time between the completion of the finished goods and the purchase of new raw materials to begin a new production cycle was the "Circulation time". This period included:

- a) The length of time the goods were in the warehouse waiting to be sold.
- b) The time it took to transfer the goods to the market place.
- c) The time it took the customer to pay (if credit was offered).
- d) The time it took to buy the raw materials to start a new cycle.
- e) The time it took for the raw materials to be transferred to production.

He calls the time taken to produce the goods the "Production Time".

Marx was aware that the longer the "Production Time" and "Circulation Time" the lower the number of turnovers of capital. Engels was aware that "Production Time" was more important than "Circulation Time" in this calculation because production could continue and overlap "Circulation Time" (see part 5 of this series).

However, there was no analysis of the capital outlay which is required during the "Production Time" and "Circulation Time". The longer the "Production Time", the greater will be the stock of "work in progress". The longer it takes to sell the product, the greater will be the build up of "finished goods" stock. A requirement to guarantee continuity in production might necessitate large stocks of "raw materials". All of these stocks are part of the capital outlay or "working capital" requirements of a business.

If we assume credit transactions, the longer it takes customers to pay for the goods the greater will be the "debtors" figure in the balance sheet. If the business receives credit, the "creditors" figure can be deducted from the "debtors" figure in calculating capital outlay.

CONCLUSION

While there are limitations in the analysis of Engels in relation to capital outlay, he was able to grasp the essential point, which is that it represents capital that is tied up in the production of commodities. In a subsequent instalment we will examine the important role that profit divided by capital outlay or the "rate of profit" has in the functioning of the capitalist system.

John Martin

1974 continued

"It's obscene. The report has been a complete and utter waste of time and expense and my clients are severely disappointed" (Des Doherty, solicitor for the family of the late Edward O'Neill and John O'Brien).

JUSTICE FOR THE FORGOTTEN

The *Justice For The Forgotten* group, which represents the families of those killed and injured in the attacks, claims that only in a few instances did politicians visit the families or wounded.

There was no national day of mourning as there had been for Bloody Sunday.

There was no government initiative to set up a fund for the dependants of those murdered. There was no consultation with the families and no counselling was provided.

No progress reports on the investigation were given to the families. A memorial was built 17 years later.

Justice For The Forgotten says that, while the garda investigation appeared to be making good progress, it ground to a halt within a few weeks.

Although gardai had the names of 20 suspects, some on an evidential basis and others from intelligence sources, not one was ever questioned. No one was charged.

While the inquests in Monaghan were convened and concluded, the inquests into the deaths from the Dublin bombings were adjourned less than two weeks after the tragedy. All inquests have since been reopened but will not proceed until well into this year.

"The combination of incompetence and downright carelessness on the part of those charged with protecting the citizens of Ireland is absolutely damnable", stated Greg O'Neill, solicitor for Justice for the Forgotten.

"The time for private inquiries is over. It is no longer our burden. Damn-

able facts have been established, and it is now your responsibility.

"This campaign is calling on the Irish Government... to take up the responsibilities and to discharge them to the families, to the dead, to the survivors and to the people of Ireland.

"There are people who are available in this state who need to be put in the witness box and cross-examined. The time for private inquiries into these matters is over" concluded Mr. O'Neill.

FULL PUBLIC INQUIRY?

"But given what we have learned from that report, and how little extra we might learn from the full judicial inquiry that some seek, and given the time and cost involved in such a detailed inquiry, then a tribunal is not merited in this instance" (Sunday Independent, 14.12.2003).

"The fact it has taken so long to produce, and that people are not entirely sure where to take things from here is an indication of the political sensitivities that surrounded the issue then, and which still surround it today.

"Should the Government demand that London undertake an investigation into the allegations of collusion? Should there be a full-scale public inquiry into the event?"

"We must remember enormous progress has been made on the North since 1974. Although the peace process is stalled, it remains in place. There are fears that pushing this issue too hard might give rise to increased tensions between the British and Irish governments, and between the nationalist and unionist communities" (Irish Independent, 11.12.2003).

"The push to have a public inquiry into the Dublin Monaghan bombings is hardly likely to stop in the wake of Judge Barron's report. A similar campaign was mounted—also involving some of the same figures—for the setting up of the public inquiry into Bloody Sunday in Derry. That Inquiry

under Lord Saville is now in its fourth year of hearing evidence and the latest estimate at its cost is in the region of stg. £240 million or over 320 million Euros. Saville is, in effect, making vast amounts of money for lawyers but it has shed only some additional light on the events in Derry in January 1972.

"A public inquiry on this magnitude here would dwarf the costs of previous planning and corruption inquiries" (Jim Cusack, Sunday Independent, 14.12.2003).

What else but a hush-up can be expected from Sir Anthony's stable of papers? How else would he be permitted to become an international media mogul?

JUSTIN KEATING

On 29th December 2003, former Labour Party Minister Justin Keating, who served in the 1974 Cabinet, called for a Judicial Inquiry into Dublin/Monaghan.

Mr. Keating is firmly at odds with three former Cabinet colleagues, who all criticised and rejected the finds:

- * Dr. Garret FitzGerald, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, said Justice Barron reached incorrect conclusions.
- * Dr. Conor Cruise-O'Brien, then Minister for Post and Telegraphs, said Justice Barron had at times been naive.
- * Mr. Paddy Cooney, then Minister for Justice, said many of Justice Barron's findings were without substance.

Whilst such an Inquiry would face the same stubborn refusal of co-operation from the British Government, it should face no such restrictions in its quest for the truth as to the role of the Cosgrave Government and the Garda Síochána. That could only prove positive for the *body politic* of the State as a whole. The question is, given Dublin Government fears of the inevitable finding of British Government sponsorship of the biggest act of mass killing on the island in recent times, will there be one?

Editorial Note

Due to pressure of space, several items including the News Digest and Part Two of a report on the Casement Foundation Conference have been held over.

Seán Moylan: in his own words - his memoir of the Irish War of Independence

Will be launched by

Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D.

at 6pm on

**Friday, 30th January 2004 in the
Aubane Community Centre**

All welcome

1974 continued

witnesses who identified David Alexander Mulholland, described by the gardai as a member of the UVF with a history of involvement in car bomb blasts as being in the green Hillman car which contained the Parnell Street bomb” (Ir. Indep, 11.12.2003).

McDOWELL , PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRAT!

Justice Minister, Michael McDowell, said it was “*a matter of regret*” that the Barron report had drawn attention to inadequacies in the police investigation of the bombings.

But he welcomed the publication of the report and said it was now “*a matter for the people to draw their own conclusions*” about the document.

The Minister pointed out that since that time there had been “*profound changes*” in Garda structures, criminal justice legislation, available technology and co-operation between police forces.

Mr. McDowell also said that he was disturbed by what the report had to say about the absence of files in his department dealing with the bombings even though it was virtually certain that any significant information on any such files would have been provided.

After such a highly critical and damning report on his Garda Siochana, one would have thought that the Minister for Justice would have been a little contrite, but not Mr. McDowell: the ‘real’ enemy must be pursued, the quarry hounded down.

Sinn Fein ‘Morally Unclean’ And Funded By IRA Crime was the front page story in the *Irish Examiner* on 11TH December 2003, sharing the page with the aftermath accounts of the Barron Report.

McDowell claimed Sinn Fein’s political purse was directly funded by IRA criminal activities. It must have been Xmas joy to the Democratic Unionist Party and its anti-Agreement allies, who keep referring to the ‘hypocrisy’ of the Taoiseach in refusing to allow Sinn Fein into government in Dublin, while insisting that Unionist politicians work with it in Stormont.

With talk of the SDLP merging with Fianna Fail, perhaps the former Fine Gael member might now be contemplating a merger between the Progressive Democrats and the DUP.

What McDowell’s infantile antics contribute to the ‘cherished principles’ of

the Belfast Agreement just beggers belief!

“Drapier noted with respect the mature judgement of most senior journalists when the Barron Report was published.

This report deals with profound and heart-rending matters. Pursuit of justice and truth should not be allowed become the subject of spin”

(Irish Times—20.12.2003).

THE DUBLIN MEDIA

What ‘Drapier’ of the *Irish Times* means here, is that the Dublin media should continue as in 1974, “don’t let this get out of hand”, the only political beneficiaries will be forces inimical to the Dublin establishment. Truth, “*even if the heavens fall*”, my arse! The scurrilous British press could do no worse.

“The finds of the Barron Report into the Dublin/Monaghan massacre of 33 Irish citizens and an unborn child in 1974 indicted not only successive Irish Government for their lack of interest in finding the truth about who carried out the atrocity but also the southern media. At the time of the bombings, both the Irish Government and the southern media were consumed by their efforts to defeat the IRA as a force of resistance to British rule in Ireland and prevent Sinn Fein from becoming a political alternative to the SDLP in the north and a political threat to the establishment parties in the South.

“It didn’t matter that evidence existed of collusion between British Security services and the UVF perpetrators if the massacre could be used to defeat the growth of republicanism. But the Irish government and the Gardai were not alone in this deception. The media, with a few honourable exceptions, also played its part by not exposing the failure to carry out a proper investigation or pursue those responsible. Powerful elements of the Southern media willingly collaborate in the suppression of evidence of British Security Services involvement in murders of Irish citizens, not only in the 26 Counties but in the North also.

“For the Southern media to now attempt to wash its hands of any responsibility for the cover-up by heaping blame on successive Irish governments and the Gardai is nothing short of rank hypocrisy. The media had the power and the information that could have brought irresistible pressure on the Irish Government to mount a

properly constituted Public Inquiry with powers to subpoena witnesses and put international pressure on the British government to fully co-operate with it.

“It is incumbent on the Irish media to take its responsibilities to the people of Ireland seriously—stop collaborating in Britain’s propaganda war and assist in this expose” (Mitchel Mc Laughlin, *An Phoblacht*, 18.12.2003).

THE IRISH PRESS

“Ideologically, the climate was one in which Dr. O’Brien theorised about cleansing the culture of nationalist infections and a determined effort was made to extend the influence of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act into the print media.

“Dr. O’Brien is on record as having told Bud Nossiter of the *Washington Post* that he objected to the sort of letters which were appearing in the Irish Press and saw the Act as being used against its editor (myself)” (Tim Pat Coogan, Ir. Indep, 11.12.2003).

OIREACTHAS JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Barron Report will first be considered by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women’s Rights, partly in public.

Justice Committee chairman, Sean Ardagh, (FF), said they would have to decide whether to recommend that a further inquiry was either “*required or fruitful*”. He denied that the report was “*a damp squib*”, saying as far as the Committee was concerned, it was comprehensive. Deputy Ardagh, said he was not expecting to unearth new evidence, not can his Committee make findings.

The Committee will begin its hearings late this month. It will report its findings to the Dail and Seanad within three months.

“Four of the seven-person committee are Fianna Fail members—Deputies Sean Ardagh, Marie Hootor and Sean O Fearghail, as well as Senator Jim Walsh. Of the remainder, one is the strongly republican-minded Independent TD, Finian McGrath, and another is Joe Costello, T.D. one of the few republicans in the Labour Party, which may leave Fine Gael’s Paul McGrath feeling a little isolated.

“The spectacle of various Fianna Fail deputies cross-examining Sir Garret and the Cruiser, among others, about their alleged negligence in guarding the national interest and Irish citizens is something that ‘The Phoenix’ is looking forward to” (The Phoenix, 19.12.2003).

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now treated with contempt. The Garda detectives who investigated the Omagh bombing had also investigated White. There would be no sharing of intelligence or pooling of information” (p298, *ibid*).

The Nally investigation headed by Mr. Dermot Nally, a former Dublin Government Secretary has found that there was no foundation to allegations that the Garda failed to pass on information to the RUC that could have prevented the Omagh bombing.

“Mr. McDowell said he would not be publishing the report ‘for valid security reasons’” (I. Times, 17.12.2003).

“The Nally Report into the Omagh bombing has met with a cool response from the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman’s Office and an outraged reaction from the families of the 31 victims” (Irish Examiner, 18.12.2003).

“... *the whole direction of the security policy of the 26 Counties Government has been solely against republicans while British and pro-British agents enjoy total immunity to do their deadly work*” (Ruairi O Bradaigh, President Sinn Fein, Cork Examiner—May 18, 1974).

But, unless the Gardai answer solely to themselves—and surely Justice Minister McDowell would be the first to refute such an allegation—over the years and especially during the Northern War, one got the impression that the force recognised that the most assured method of placating their political masters was to promulgate and exercise an unrelenting war against the Republican Movement, by any and every means at the disposal of the force.

This was accommodated by some of the most draconian and heavy-handed legislation passed by the Dail, in questionable political circumstances at the time: Special Criminal Courts; Offences Against the State acts; Directing Terrorism legislation.

And the force was given a free hand to brutalise Republican suspects.

Conviction was all made easy for the Gardai and—provided it only impinged on the Republicans—the mealy-mouthed liberals didn’t give a damn.

Instead of pussy-footing around on so-called ‘peace missions’, the security services of the state should be organising

and streamlining our own resources on a much greater basis of independence and self-sufficiency.

FREE STATE UNDER SIEGE

The most fascinating reaction to the *Barron Report* was by Eoghan Harris, former chief ideologist of the Official Republican movement, which appeared in the *Sunday Independent* (14.12.2003).

He passed Barron by and launched into a tirade against RTE: “*Dublin was not the only city to suffer death by bombing... The people who died in Dublin were no different to the people in Belfast... in 1974 the Irish state was under siege, and... Paddy Cooney, the Minister for Justice held his nerve in 1974 [he did nothing, ED.], just as Kevin O’Higgins had held his nerve in 1922 and as Michael McDowell is holding his nerve right now.*”

Is the Free State still under siege? If it is, this arises from an anti-social, criminal element who had free rein to develop when all other security resources were pitched at the ‘awful’ Republicans. And the wee Celtic Tiggers were busy accumulating their property and wealth without giving a cuss to the growing social unrest in predominately working-class estates. Limerick is an example!

From 1923 on, what force—political or social—posed a threat to the Dublin Government or the “*institutions of the state*”? In the long-term, the Six-Counties had that potential, once the Catholics got off their knees. But Dublin didn’t want to know about the Northern statelet.

At its height in the mid-Seventies, the Provisional IRA had about 1,500 volunteers. At its most successful military height, the overthrow of the Dublin Government was the last thing on its mind!

Throughout its history, and especially since Britain partitioned the island, the Republican Movement in all its many hues, has held remarkably true and consistent to one single tenet in its Green Book: which strictly forbids any volunteer from attacking the Gardai or Irish Army personnel.

Would somebody, somewhere, ever ask Harris how many young lads does he think his words sent to the grave? The present writer was in the presence of Harris at ‘Official’ meetings in the early 70s, so were many young men who later died in conflict. Does he ever wonder that perhaps the right utterances and not some confused

babble about National Liberation Fronts could have made a difference between life and death for many of those young volunteers?

To paraphrase his own quote of Kevin O’Higgins in 1922: Harris is “*a mad man shouting through his arsehole*”.

Of course, ‘Clyde’ Harris was followed by his counterpart ‘Bonnie’ O’Hanlon in the same issue of the *Sunday Independent*, Eilis O’Hanlon put forward the proposition that “*...the South got off lightly from the Troubles*”. What is she saying? There should have been more bombings in the South? *The Sunday Independent* ditched the wee Anglophile, Mary Ellen Synon for a similar noxious remark on the disabled in 2000.

“TROJAN HORSE”

A British Army officer was taken off a B & I ferry by gardai at Dublin port on the evening of the 1974 Dublin bombings and weapons were found in his bag.

This astonishing information is contained in an Irish Army intelligence report examined by the Barron inquiry. But no reference to the arrest or the find appears in Garda records and no further developments were reported.

At lunchtime on the day of the bombings, a telephone caller told gardai he was worried that a white van with an English registration parked outside the Department of Posts and Telegraphs on Portland Row might contain a bomb.

Garda records show that details of the alleged registration were taken, but those numbers were shown later not to have been issued. At around 5.10 pm, the gardai received a second call from the witness and agreed to send a patrol to examine the van. When two gardai arrived at the scene they were met by the witness who told them a man had driven the van away towards Sheriff Street.

Shortly afterwards the bombs went off. The witness called gardai several times and at 6.30 p.m. he was taken by a garda car to the docks. The witness saw the same van in the deep sea area of the B & I ferry port, Gardai searched the van and found a British Army uniform.

“The Barron report shows that through allowing witnesses to examine photographs of suspected loyalists, the Dublin investigation team found three

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GARDA COLLUSION?

Were our own security forces involved in the bombings? Such questions are entitled to be asked, especially if the Irish Government doesn't come clean! Allegations regarding Garda collusion with the I.R.A. have been raised by the Canadian Judge, Peter Cory, in his investigations in the British jurisdiction, but the real collusion was the relationship of a number of Gardai with the RUC and MI5 and it is this aspect of his security responsibility that Justice Minister McDowell should concentrate on.

BRITISH SPIES

The *Phoenix* magazine, Dublin (19.12.2003), cuts to the chase:

"Barron doesn't spell it out, but it's clear that this was not a loss of files. RIC intelligence files going back to Fenian times are extant—and there are C3 and Justice Department records relating to matters before and after the event.

"So the disappearance of this large quantity of documents is not attributable to poor administration. All the signs are that this was a cull of records at four different locations (Dublin Castle, Stephen's Green, C3 at Garda HQ and Dundalk Special Branch offices) which ensured that there was no trail for Barron to follow.

"The implications of this are huge. The Irish Government—and Barron—have criticised Tony Blair's government for providing nothing but a 16-page letter from Northern Secretary, John Reid, which gave a synopsis of the British intelligence records sought by the Inquiry. The Faceless Ones in Whitehall must have laughed aloud when they heard that the Paddies had shredded all their relevant files.

"Or perhaps they already knew. Older readers will remember that self-confessed Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) agent, Detective Patrick Crinion, worked as a C3 record-keeper at Garda HQ until his arrest in 1972.

"HM spies would have been remiss if they had not sought to recruit one or more replacements in C3. More importantly, if Bertie, the Oireachtas Justice Committee, or families' lawyers at Strasbourg ever seek to force Tony Blair to open his intelligence files on the Dublin bombs they

will likely be told: if Bertie shows his, I'll show you mine."

"Remember those were very different days" (Mary Harney, Tanaiste, Irish Times, 13.12.2003), when referring to 1974 and the lack of British co-operation. Whatever about the Tiger, Mary—the Progressive Democrat Leopard—never changes its spots!

On 16th December 2003, the Sinn Fein TD for Kerry North, Martin Ferris, called for a public inquiry into the issues highlighted by the Barron Report.

Ferris also asked that such an inquiry would consider all allegations of British military and intelligence involvement in violent incidents within the state between 1969 and 1976. Such an investigation was vital as there was strong evidence of involvement by the British military and intelligence services.

"We have hints of this in the Report with references to British military personnel seen in Dublin at the time of the December, 1972 bombs, and immediately prior to the May, 1974 incidents. Another British officer was found in possession of weapons in Dublin on the very day of the bombings. [See below, LC] Such an Inquiry should take place in public so that we can have a full account of what took place.

"Another issue touched on is the role of agents within the Garda Special Branch. John McCoy, who was central to the Monaghan investigation, is mentioned and there have been strong allegations over the years regarding his connections with the British security forces. It would also appear that former Garda Commissioner Ned Garvey was well aware of whatever contacts were taking place."

GARDA EXTORTION AND FRAUD

Whatever about the order and discipline of the Garda Síochána 30 years ago, the ongoing exposure of corruption and graft amongst elements of the force in the North West Division—County Donegal—certainly leaves a wealth to be desired by way of authority, direction and reform of the Garda Síochána.

The infiltration of the Gardai and the shameful willingness of Ireland's security forces to collude and conspire with British security has been highlighted in recent episodes in County Donegal.

"Kevin Carty, the police Commander in charge of the North-West division of An Garda Síochána,...

uncovered a web of corruption and garda malpractice that rocked the very foundations of the police force. The people of County Donegal knew for a long time that elements of the gardai engaged in extortion, fraud and fitted up innocent suspects. But there was little anyone could do. The corruption was endemic. The list of officers that fell under suspicion was startling; Carty know some of them personally" (Mooney etc, *Black Operations*).

One of the accused was Detective Sergeant John White, who handled the Dublin gangster Paddy Dixon, in the role of conduit to the Real IRA. Dixon supplied the 'bomb' vehicles and it is alleged he supplied the Omagh vehicle, but rather than expose a key informant, the Garda remained silent on that day.

White was suspended from duty.

In 2002, he contacted the RUC and met them on two occasions in the Six Counties—that in itself was bad enough, but he was then taken to the UK, whilst still a member of the Garda Síochána, though suspended.

"The new PSNI, successors to the RUC, investigation team were intrigued by White's story. In the darkest of subterfuge, detectives assigned to the PSNI arranged to meet White to access his information for themselves. This was an unorthodox move. The PSNI flew White to a secret location in Britain where he was debriefed for three days. The operation was conducted on a need to know basis. Garda Headquarters were not to find out. The PSNI provided White with accommodation in a hotel where he was questioned at length about the black operations mounted by Crime and Security [the Gardai, LC] Elements of the PSNI concluded that White was lying while others believed his story" (*Black Operations*).

Within days, the Gardai learned of White's visit to the UK:

"The immediate effect of the news was to collapse the good relationship that existed between the two police forces. The detective branch at Monaghan Garda Station politely declined to entertain their counterparts from Omagh PSNI Station. The decision by the PSNI to question a serving member of the Garda, who was suspended for corruption, proved too much. Elements of the PSNI were

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were decided upon by the Government at an emergency two and a half hour session of the Cabinet on Saturday morning” (Cork Exam, 20.5.1974).

“The main measure announced after the meeting was a decision to recall from U.N. duty in the Middle East a contingent of 340 Irish troops.

“At their meetings, the Taoiseach and his Ministers had considered fuller and more up to date reports from the security forces on the bombings but the Minister for Justice said later that there were still no definite theories about who the perpetrators were and the Government were still completely ‘open-minded’ about whether any particular organisation was involved.”

“The possibility of making greater use of the F.C.A. for barrack duties to release the regular troops for Border patrols would be considered.”

“The Minister for Justice also revealed that co-operation between the Gardai and the R.U.C. was to be stepped-up. Fortunately, he said, they had got full co-operation from the R.U.C. following Friday’s attacks. They maintained an office open in Belfast on Friday night to give the Gardai all the help they could” (ibid).

“Parliament ‘four square behind law and order’”

“DUTY TO UPHOLD STATE’S INSTITUTIONS”

“Every Irish man and woman had a duty to uphold the institutions of the State, and never more so than at present, when subversives and violence threatened them, the Minister for Defence, Mr. Paddy Donegan, told the Dail yesterday” (Cork Exam, 17.5.1974, the day before the bombings).

“However, I was informed that the government had taken a view that it was unlikely to get any co-operation in following up the affair from the RUC and that the net effect of making noise about the bombings would be to give aid and comfort to the IRA, thus the matter was shelved” (Tim Pat Coogan, Irish Independent, 11.12.2003).

“If the new Ireland is served by a force which will uphold the best traditions of the Royal Irish Constabulary she will be fortunate, indeed”

The Irish Times, 18.8.1922.

GARDA FILES

Garda and Department of Justice files that were ‘missing’, combined with the repeated failure of the British Government to provide requested information, seriously hampered the ability of Justice Henry Barron to investigate the bombings. (A newspaper report by Jim Cuasck, *Secret Garda Files From 1970s Will Never Be Released* (Sunday Independent, 21.12.03), indicates deliberate official determination to suppress information on these matters in perpetuity.)

Describing the difficulties encountered in obtaining information from all sources, Barron concluded:

“Filing records were incomplete or in some cases non-existent documents had been lost or destroyed”.

The report also reveals that crucial files, which should have been retained at Garda headquarters, were missing, while relevant files in the Louth/Meath division had disappeared completely.

The Gardai keep annual files on the UVF/UDA. However, the annual files for the period surrounding the bombings—1974 and 1975—could not be found.

UVF files kept by the Special Detective Unit (SDU) were forwarded to Barron, but these would not have included information kept by Garda Security and Intelligence (C3) at Garda Headquarters, which were not seen by the Inquiry.

While the gardai were able to furnish the Inquiry with their Monaghan security file, the Dublin file vanished.

Also missing were the files on the Dublin bombings of 1st December 1972. These bombings led to the introduction of the amended *Offences Against The State Act*, and are strongly suspected of being been carried out by British Intelligence agents.

The Garda investigation made a number of critical mistakes and failed to probe all avenues of investigation.

Barron states: “the garda investigation failed to make full use of the information obtained. Certain lines of inquiry that could have been pursued further in this jurisdiction were not pursued”.

Further failures in the investigation included:

- * A delay of 11 days before forensic evidence was sent for testing to Belfast
- * The absence of any transport record for evidence, resulting in likely evidence contamination

* A decision not to investigate suspects in the North, despite R.U.C. invitations to do so

* The speedy completion of investigations within 12 weeks.

Criticising the investigation, Barron said its main weakness was the failure of gardai to act quickly.

“Whatever evidence there might have been as to the movements of suspects, if this information had been sought within a week or two of the bombings, it is quite clear that months later any such information was unlikely to be of value”, the report reads.

However, despite a failure to act quickly in gathering information on witness movements, gardai wrapped up their inquiries just weeks after the atrocities.

By 9th July 1974—less than eight weeks after the 17th May bombings—the Chief Superintendent in charge of the investigation had noted: “*The investigation unit... have returned to their stations*”.

The Monaghan investigation report was subsequently issued on 7th July 1974, while the Dublin report was finished on 9th August 1974.

Justice Barron also found the handling of forensic evidence was far from satisfactory. “*There is no doubt that the delay in delivering samples for forensic analysis fatally compromised the forensic investigation*”, he writes.

Even senior ballistics officers were unaware that reliable detection of volatile organic components could only be done within six hours of an explosion taking place, Barron found.

Of course, he cast no opinion about the wisdom of ever sending evidence for testing to Belfast or any part of the British jurisdiction in the first place.

The Chairman of the Inquiry, Mr. Justice Henry D. Barron, is a former Supreme Court judge with a strong academic record and a vast experience serving on the bench. A High Court judge since 1982, Mr. Justice Barron became the first member of the Jewish faith to be appointed to the Supreme Court in 1997. He retired from the court in May 2000, five months before taking up his appointment as sole member of the Commission of the Inquiry.

He specialised in family and marital law. Previously famous for having granted the State’s first divorce.

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authorities were very keen to open such lines of communication. *"In the circumstances, if contacts between Gardai and the British Army/Intelligence services were pursued informally, it could not be condoned, but it would be understandable"*.

"There is evidence which shows that the informal exchange of information between Gardai on the border and their RUC counterparts was extensive. There is some evidence to suggest that some Garda officers, unwittingly or otherwise, may have been giving information to members of the British Army or Intelligence Services."

The Report criticises the Garda investigation for failing *"to make full use of the information obtained"*. Certain lines of inquiry were not pursued and certain suspects were not questioned. *"The main failure of the Garda investigation team was not to act promptly"*, the Report states.

Other criticisms of the investigation were *"a failure to appreciate the extent of the information obtained"*, *"a too-ready acceptance of information supplied"* and the loss of *"potentially vital clues"*, such as information on whether the Dublin bombs were made from purely commercial explosives.

FINE GAEL/LABOUR COALITION

* **Dublin Government role:** The Report found *"no evidence"* to support the proposition that the Garda investigation was wound down as a result of political interference.

The suggestion is *"absolutely denied"* by former Government members with the Minister for Justice at the time, Mr. Paddy Cooney, pointing out that any such direction would have been *"grossly improper"*.

"However", the Report says, "it can be said that the Government of the day showed little interest in the bombings."

"When information was given to them suggesting that the British authorities had intelligence naming the bombers, this was not followed up. Any follow-up was limited to complaints by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that those involved had been released from internment."

* The Report found *"no explanation"* for the fact that Department of Justice files on the matter are *"missing in their*

entirety". Nor was it possible to indicate when they went missing. The former Minister for Justice, Ms. Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, told the inquiry that there was *"very little"* in the departmental files concerning the bombings.

* Bemoaning the lack of original documentation, the Report notes that correspondence with the Northern Ireland Office undoubtedly produced some useful information. *"But its value was reduced by the reluctance to make original documents available and the refusal to supply other information on security grounds. While the inquiry fully understands the position taken by the British government on these matters, it must be said that the scope of this report is limited as a result."*

In this issue, *Labour Comment* will largely confine its opinions to the internal issues involved: the role of the Dublin Government and the Garda Síochána.

THE OMAGH BLUNDER

The comparison with Omagh keeps coming up—yes, there's a statistical comparison, that's all. The fact remains: Omagh was an awful blunder. Dublin/Monaghan was a cold, calculated, politically planned attack to cause as much loss of human life as possible.

"Did he tell you they were used for planting a bomb in Omagh?"

"No, he didn't have to say it. He wouldn't talk about it. It was a disaster, nobody set out to kill anybody in Omagh, it was just a complete mess, a disaster." (Evidence presented to the Special Criminal Court in the trial of Colm Murphy, the first person to be tried and sentenced in connection with the Omagh explosion.)

Whereas the Omagh bomb was a propaganda gift to the Dublin and British Governments, enabling them to hard-sell the Belfast Agreement—Dublin/Monaghan was the wrong political choreography altogether, it drew attention away from the 'satanic' Provos.

The Dublin Government's sheer contempt for its own citizens and its subconscious attachment to Britain and all its trappings better explains the cowardly and treacherous regime of Cosgrave, Cruise-O'Brien and their Cabinet colleagues to face up to the responsibilities thrust on them in the biggest mass murder in the history of the state.

* The simple fact is that latter-day

Dublin Governments are simply afraid of the consequences of finding a British Government guilty of crimes against humanity.

These impeccable custodians of law and order, guardians of the institutions of the State, trample on the first duty of a democracy: the care and protection of its citizens. The blunt truth is that the 'wrong' bombers struck in 1974 and Cosgrave and Cruise-O'Brien violated the first duty of a democratic government, for fear the people might accord some succour to the Republican Movement.

It suits both Governments to hype up the Omagh blunder, and ignore all other bombings. Much like calling the Belfast Agreement the *Good Friday Agreement*, as if it embraced some spiritual or scriptural source: an infallible document.

"On September 1, 1998, the Government called a special session of the Oireachtas, the Irish Parliament, to pass the toughest security laws ever introduced in the history of the state" (Mooney & O'Toole, *Black Operations—The Secret War Against the Real IRA*, p184, 2003).

This was following Omagh.

Following May, 1974, they sat on their hands.

"The Minister for Justice, Mr. Cooney, told a press conference in Dublin last night that the Gardai had no theories as to who was responsible for the bombings" (Cork Examiner, 18.5.1974).

It gets worse!

"The Minister was asked if the I.R.A. documents seized by the British and shown to the Dublin Government on Monday last had given any indication of a bombing campaign in Dublin. Mr. Cooney said that there was nothing in the documents to indicate such a thing but he added: *'I don't deduce from the absence of a Dublin reference in those documents anything that would enable me to exculpate any particular group.'*

"I have a particularly open mind at the moment", he added." (ibid.)

As Chesterton used say: he's so open minded, his brains will fall out!

"Specific measures to tighten security and increase the strength of the security forces following Friday's bomb attacks in Dublin and Monaghan



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DUBLIN/MONAGHAN BOMBINGS

Wrong Bombers

** The truth is that the wrong bombers struck in Dublin and the Cosgrave Government acted politically dumb—the right bombers struck in Omagh and the Dublin Government, with political opportunism, acted as if that catastrophe struck at the heart of its own jurisdiction.*

** A full judicial Inquiry, with powers to subpoena witnesses and documents is the least people are entitled to following the greatest mass murder in the history of the state and the subsequent attempt at a cover-up.*

THE REPORT of Mr. Justice Henry Barron into the Dublin-Monaghan bombings of Friday, 17th May, 1974, which killed 33 people, was released on December 10, 2003. It contains 288 pages and cost 1.5 million Euros.

It brought to an end a four-year investigation that was delayed for over a year by what one legal source described as “*semi-detached co-operation*” from the British authorities, who refused to hand over some of the relevant documents.

The bombings, marking the worst single day in the Northern War, were investigated by former Supreme Court judge, Henry Barron and his predecessor, the late Justice Liam Hamilton for almost four years.

The Barron investigation was sanctioned by Bertie Ahern in 2000.

In August, 1999, the former Fianna Fail Tanaiste, John Wilson of the *Victims' Commission*, published a report recommending such a private Inquiry.

However, in truth, the impetus towards opening the files and eventually setting up the Barron Inquiry came not from Dublin, but from the Yorkshire Television documentary *Hidden Hand* broadcast in 1993.

“One source close to the Report said the findings would prove embarrassing for some, but would ‘give Sinn Fein a further lift in the polls’” (IrishInd, 10.12.2003).

BARRON

“The magnitude of this task should not be underestimated”, Justice Barron states in his introductory statement to the

Oireachtas Joint Committee. He stresses in his report that, as 30 years were allowed to pass and with the loss of vital documents, it is not easy to reach definitive conclusions.

“By Judge Barron’s own admission his report does not meet fully with the terms of reference” (Bruce Arnold, Irish Independent, 13.12.2003).

“It took Sir John Stevens 14 years and three inquiries (with greater powers and resources than Barron’s) to conclude earlier this year that there was collusion during the 1980s between loyalists and British security forces. He defined it as ‘the wilful failure to keep records, the absence of accountability, the with-holding of intelligence and evidence, and the extreme of agents being involved in murder’. He added that his inquiries had been obstructed. By this definition, Barron has revealed that collusion is

still being practised” (Sun. Trib, 14.12.03).

Justice Barron’s Report is divided into five main sections, covering background information, the Garda investigation into the bombings, assessment of the investigation conducted by the 1993 Yorkshire Television *Hidden Hand* television documentary on the bombings and “*perpetrators and possible collusion*”.

* The Commission says it is “*satisfied*” the persons principally responsible for carrying out the bombings were loyalist paramilitaries, most though, not all, members of the UVF.

* The bombings were primarily a reaction to the Sunningdale Agreement—in particular to the prospect of a greater role for the Irish Government in the administration of Northern Ireland: Council of Ireland, etc.

* On the question of British State Collusion, the Report makes clear that there are grounds for suspecting that the bombers may have had assistance from members of the security forces in the Six Counties.

* On the role of the Garda Síochána, the report says there have been no allegations that any agency in the Irish state played a “*deliberate part*” in the bombings. However, it said allegations were made that members of the Garda “*were actively co-operating with the security forces in Northern Ireland in ways that were not officially sanctioned*”.

The Report states it is clear the British
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