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Northern Ireland

Movement From The Stalemate

Northern Ireland is in political stalemate. Stalemate is its natural condition. The net result of the Good Friday Agreement has been to bring out the fact that stalemate is the normal condition of political life within this strange creature of the British Constitution. Six years ago it offered the illusion of movement, but the effect of its working has been to dispel illusion, and to destroy the party which committed itself to illusion—the SDLP.

The slang of party-politics in a democracy was diligently applied to the political affairs of Northern Ireland by British and Irish politicians and commentators. Words like “middle ground”, “moderates” and “die-hard” were used. We have been pointing out for thirty years that “moderation” is not a policy—taken by itself it is an adjective in search of a noun, or an adverb in search of a verb—and that there is no middle ground. A middle-ground in politics is the ground between two parties seeking an electoral mandate to govern a state, and it is occupied by voters who fluctuate between the rival parties. The parties in Northern Ireland have never sought a mandate to govern the state in which they exist. And there has never been a body of voters which fluctuated between Unionism and Nationalism, sometimes giving the victory to one and sometimes to the other.

Political activity in Northern Ireland has always been communal, and given the structures set up in 1921 there was no possibility that it might be anything else. In a functional democracy, the individual can choose his political party. But the individual does not choose his community. He finds himself in it. And, when politics is a simple expression of communal existence, there is no effective choice for the individual.

The only element of political choice lies within each community. The interests of the

community might be pursued by different methods. But the pursuit of the interests of each community by methods which might be described as “moderate” does not bring about a convergence of interests between the “moderates” of the conflicting communities.

John Taylor (now Lord Somethingor-other), a Unionist

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A Just War— Or Just A War?

Radio Eireann had a reporter on the invasion beaches at Normandy on 6th June—sixty years after the event. Here is how it reported the invasion:

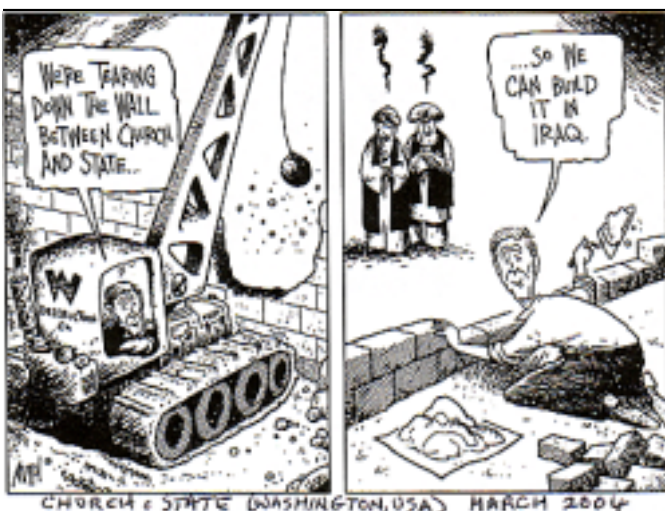
“From Normandy, our Europe reporter Tony Connolly: ‘Sixty years ago an invasion force of 150,000 men landed on the beaches of Normandy. Although the Allies had wrong-footed the Germans with their choice of Normandy, the German defences were formidable. There was no guarantee that Operation Overlord would be a success. But it was the sacrifice and courage of the soldiers who fought and died on the beaches in their thousands which turned the war against Hitler’.”
(1pm News.)

This was not a *news* report but a British propaganda statement. What was wrong with it was not that it was British, but that it was false.

The Normandy Invasion did not defeat Germany. Germany was already defeated in substance in June 1944 and the object of the Normandy Invasion was to engage an Ameranglian army in battle before Germany was rolled up by the Stalinist advance.

Martin Mansergh published an evasive comment on D-Day in the *Irish Times* on June 5th. Professor Geoffrey Roberts of Cork University took issue with his evasions in an *Irish Times* article, *Neutrality Left Ireland Isolated In A Just War* (24.6.04), accusing him of trying “to defuse the debate about Ireland’s neutrality by suggesting that it is all right to be both enthusiastic for the allied cause

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Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney**:

June Eleven Elections:

SF Double Vote:

Fianna Fail Lose 80 Seats

“moderate”, has invariably treated the SDLP and Sinn Fein as two of a kind, both being Republicans because both have the aim of incorporating the 6 Counties into the Republic. And Gerry Fitt (now Lord Fitt), before opting out of political reality for fantasy-land, ridiculed the term “moderate Unionist”, because a Unionist is a Unionist, and the adjective is absolutely governed by the noun. This was a perfectly reasonable and sensible view of the matter. In a political arena where conflict is exclusively between Unionism and Nationalism, and where each is the expression of communal existence, there can be no common middle ground, and in the last analysis every Unionist is die-hard. (Somebody on the British Left thirty years ago said that “*the lonely hour of the last analysis never arrives*”, but he had no experience of Northern Ireland, where nothing but the last analysis has ever existed. The ultimate question has always been the only question. First and last things are the same and there has never been an interval between them.)

That is the sense that the situation made to Gerry Fitt after a lifetime of socialist endeavour in the political vacuum called Northern Ireland, which has always been a political vacuum regardless of whether the Devolution fig-leaf was on or off. He opted out because the grinding attrition of the communities was not to his taste. He would have done a public service if he had stated this honestly, and had attributed blame where it rightly belonged

instead of hiring himself out to the blameworthy party and scapegoating people who stayed behind in Northern Ireland and did their best in an impossible situation.

The Good Friday Agreement was not a possible framework of settlement. But it could have been spun out a bit longer if Blair and John Reid had not aligned themselves with David Trimble to wreck it—and if Dublin had not helped them for reasons of domestic politics in the Republic.

Blair took time off from supervising the shambles he has brought about in Iraq to warn that, unless the Agreement which he has undermined is functioning again by September, he will do—— he didn't say what he will do, and he didn't exude conviction that his threats were weighty. The DUP seems content to wait and see what the outcome of the next British Election will be. And Sinn Fein, which gets stronger every time the two states try to damage it, appears to have got over the sense of desperation that was evident in Martin McGuinness's attitude when the operation of the Agreement was suspended. It now sees that there are other lines of development.

Northern Ireland is in stalemate, but things have happened. The main thing that has happened is that there is now, for the first time in 80 years, a functional all-Ireland political party.

A Just War Continued

and proud of Irish neutrality”. Professor Roberts holds that “*there remains an unfinished debate about the Irish State's neutrality during the war*”, and it is clear that he feels that the moral order of things will remain in a state of chassis until the debate is resolved by an Irish admission of guilt.

Roberts cites two defences of neutrality. Denis Johnston, who served as a BBC war correspondent, wrote in 1942 that he went to war in support of Ireland's right to be neutral—to give himself the right to say that it must stay neutral. And De Valera said that small states which enter major wars risk their existence without the possibility of gaining influence on either the course of the war or the ensuing peace. But:

“The problem with this defence of neutrality is threefold.

“First, the difficulties entailed by Irish participation in the war should not be allowed to obscure the moral and political issue confronting the country. Both national interest and morality demanded the defeat of Nazi barbarism. But the Irish state kept an equal distance from all the combatants. Even when the war was over, de Valera refrained from publicly endorsing the justice of the allied cause. The morality of Irish wartime neutrality was summed up by de Valera's infamous visit to the German Ambassador in 1945 to present his condolences on the death of Hitler...” [Robert Fisk is quoted at this point.]

“Second, while the case for maintaining Irish neutrality in the early years of the war was very strong, it made less sense as the war progressed. In 1941 the Soviet Union and the US entered the war. In 1942 the tide of the war began to turn in favour of the Allies. The military danger to Ireland was now minimal, and there were opportunities

The Catholic community in the North has protected Sinn Fein from every manoeuvre against it by increasing its representation, and has done so as a means of preventing itself from being rubbished. And now the electorate in the Republic, a moment when the very existence of the state is being vilified by British propaganda dominance in Irish academia and publishing, is re-asserting its historic authenticity by returning to Sinn Fein. ●

to participate in the allied struggle at relatively low risk, or at the very least to modify the neutrality policy towards the allies. This was the choice exercised by a number of neutral states during the war. Indeed, the great allied coalition of 1945 was largely made up of formerly neutral states... [He does not name these states. They include the masters of the post-war world, the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as Norway, Greece, Yugoslavia etc.]

“Third, wartime neutrality cost the country dearly in the post-war years. For North-South relations, neutrality was a disaster. Neutrality reinforced partition, strengthened unionist rule in Ulster, and ensured the post-war isolation of the northern Catholic community... The historical trajectory of North-South relations would have been completely different had de Valera accepted the British offer in June 1940 to work for Irish unity in exchange for a modification of Ireland’s neutrality policy. Some historians dismiss this offer as a desperate British gesture which had no practical reality given the Ulster Unionists’ implacable opposition to any dealings with Dublin. But, as Dennis Kennedy has argued, ‘in June 1940 the Unionist position was more vulnerable than at any time since 1921. Had de Valera taken up the British offer... then the Northerners would have come under irresistible pressure’”.

Let us consider the last point first—that Irish neutrality isolated the Catholic community in the North. This journal and its precursors have been dealing with the isolation of the Northern Catholic community for more than thirty years. That isolation has been the enduring subversive element in the entire Irish set-up since the end of the Treaty War in 1923. We spent more than twenty years doing our utmost to end that isolation within the structure of the British constitution, and we never got a word of support or encouragement from Dennis Kennedy, who is a narrowly-focussed, communal, Ulster Unionist. He is now a member of the fundamentalist Unionist Think Tank, the Cadogan Group, on the ultra-fundamentalist wing of the Group. He thinks up Unionist debating points and has never grappled with the basic flaw which made Partition dysfunctional—the isolation of the Catholic community in the Northern Ireland set-up, which deprived it of democratic outlets for its political energies. And we never noticed that Professor Roberts took any active interest in the isolation of the Northern Catholics before raising it as a debating point now. We are therefore willing to believe that he knows no better than he speaks, and that

he thinks the isolation of the Northern Catholics began in 1939 as a consequence of Irish neutrality. In fact that isolation was structured into the Northern Ireland set-up.

As to Churchill’s “offer” of June 1940: it was no offer at all. It was much less of an offer than was Asquith’s offer of 1914, when at least there was a Home Rule Act on the Statute Book and people at large did not appreciate that the contentious Home Rule Bill could be sidelined into an Act from which no action need follow.

De Valera ascertained that Churchill was offering nothing before he rejected the offer.

Churchill was offering all things to all men in June 1940, knowing that if Britain lost it would not be called on to deliver while, if it won, it had many able diplomats who—backed by the power of the victor—would explain away any promises it would not be possible, or even expedient, to redeem.

In the hope of persuading the French Government to continue the war by terrorist methods, he offered to enact a Union of Britain and France. If he had enacted a repeal of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, had made the Ulster Unionists consent to Irish unity in the cause of saving civilisation with the threat that if they did not do so voluntarily they would be compelled, and had lifted the prohibition on the formation of a strong Irish Army, and had come to De Valera with the proposal that these measures would instantly take effect, then it could be said that an offer of Irish unity in return for participation in the war was made. But all that was actually offered was pie-in-the-sky.

As to the Northern Catholics: they enlisted in large numbers for the 1914 War, and when they came home they were treated like dirt by the Unionist administration. Fewer enlisted in 1939 (as did fewer Protestants): they met with the same treatment on returning home after the war. And Catholic ex-servicemen from the British Army, responding to the kind of esteem in which they were held in Northern Ireland, played a crucial part in bringing about disintegration in August 1969.

Redmondites and Carsonites enlisted in great numbers in 1914. This fact was presented in the propaganda as an alliance against evil which augured well for the future in Ireland. In fact they enlisted for

mutually contradictory motives, aspiring to outdo each other in service to the Empire, each hoping that the Empire would reward it at the expense of the other. Their alliance was an entirely external thing, without even the common element of authentic hatred of Germany—the Ulster Unionists having declared a few months earlier that they would switch allegiance to the Kaiser, rather than come under a subordinate administration of the Crown in Ireland headed by John Redmond—and it never generated a political dimension, or even a sense of fellow-feeling except when they were thrown together on the battlefield.

Roberts charges De Valera both with failing to act in the national interest, and with acting in the national interest:

“[De Valera’s failure to countenance such course of action [shifting away from neutrality as the German position weakened] was informed more by party politics than the national interest. His main concern was the split in Fianna Fail that would occur if neutrality was abandoned. More importantly, de Valera’s priorities were domestic rather than international.”

When there was a possibility that a small, unarmed state might influence international affairs, De Valera availed of it. Britain brought his efforts in the League of Nations to nothing. The British priority was Imperial rather than international. It downgraded the League in favour of the Empire right at the start. When, after six years of supporting Nazi Germany, it suddenly decided to make war on it, it did not attempt to do so through the international organisation. It declared war in the old-fashioned way, as an independent Empire with entire freedom of action. De Valera concluded before 1939 that the existence of the League had exercised a delusory influence on international affairs by inhibiting independent action by states with the illusion of collective security. When Britain by-passed the League in going to war there was not even a semblance of an international forum in which he might have acted and he therefore decided to tend to the domestic affairs of his state.

Britain’s last action through the League was the expulsion of the Soviet Union from it in December 1939 for a crime against civilisation. (That was the message of a radio broadcast by Churchill in January 1940.)

The “great allied coalition” of 1945 had similarities with the Carsonite/

Redmondite alliance of 1914, in that it was composed of deadly enemies. The war, therefore, had not been brought to a conclusion that was in line with the purpose for which it had been launched. And the reason for this is that Britain brought about the 2nd World War of the 20th century without having the will to bear the main burden of fighting it.

Roberts gives Irish enlistment and casualty figures for the two wars. Irish enlistment in the 1939 War was half that in the 1914 War, “with, thankfully, only 5,000 fatalities, compared with the 30,000 who died in the trenches”. That is to say that while the 1939 enlistment was half of 1914, the fatal casualties of 1939 were only one-sixth of the 1914 figure, even though the 1939 War lasted a year longer. This is indicative of the fact that England entered the European War of 1914 with a will to fight, while it brought about the world war of 1939-45 without the will to fight. If it had fulfilled its Treaty obligations to Poland in September 1939, it is extremely unlikely that there would have been a world war. The reason there was a world war was that Britain, having incited the Poles to refuse the moderate German proposal for a border settlement by offering them the appearance of a powerful military alliance against Germany, reneged on the Treaty when the German/Polish conflict broke out, and then pursued its own separate war on Germany as a world war, i.e. a war which would entangle the world and which would be fought mainly by others.

As things turned out, the main burden of defeating Germany was borne by Britain’s major enemy in the world—Communist Russia. And D-Day, twice deferred by Churchill to allow for the possibility that Germany and Russia would reduce each other to a condition of exhaustion, had to be undertaken in 1944 to establish an Ameranglian military presence in Western Europe before the Russians got there.

Although Roberts is a Professor in Cork University, and he has been condemning Irish neutrality since moving to Cork, the roots of the matter for him have nothing to do with Ireland. They lie in the Communist Party of Great Britain and a disagreement about the character of the war in 1939-41 which arose there about 30 years ago.

The Soviet Union did not declare war on Germany when Britain did. It could not have joined the alliance to defend the

status quo in Poland because Poland (which had defeated it in 1920) absolutely refused to have it as an ally. And Britain was not eager for it as an ally either and dragged its heels in negotiations, and there were grounds for thinking that it was aiming to somehow bring about a war against Russia.

In the Summer of 1939 the Soviet Union, seeing that Britain was encouraging the Poles to intransigence on the Danzig issue without making serious preparations to fight in alliance with the Poles, made a non-aggression Treaty with Hitler. When the Polish state collapsed in September, the Soviet Union occupied the eastern part of Poland (which had been conquered in the war of 1920) up to a line which had been agreed.

The Soviet/German Treaty of late August upset whatever plan there was at the back of Chamberlain’s mind. And it included a secret agreement about occupation zones in the event of the collapse of the Polish state.

The Soviet/German Treaty was a counter to the British foreign policy departure launched in March 1939. If that Treaty had not been made, a Polish collapse in a German/Polish War, gaining for Germany territory which Poland had conquered from Russia in 1920, would have had the distinct possibility of bringing Germany and Russia into collision. And perhaps that was the object of the strange British foreign policy of 1939.

When the Communist Party of Great Britain came to discuss these matters thirty years ago, one tendency argued that the CPGB should have dissociated itself from Soviet foreign policy in 1939 and supported Chamberlain’s war policy, as the General Secretary of the time, Harry Pollitt, wanted to do. It held that the war declared by Chamberlain was from the start a People’s War, and not an Inter-Imperialist war. We do not recall whether it went as far as to condemn the Soviet neutrality of 1939-41 as “*morally unjustifiable*”. But there is no doubt that the Professor Roberts argument about Irish neutrality is only a displacement of that CPGB dispute of 30 years ago.

His second point makes strange reading in such a highly moral document as this. It is that Ireland might have made war on Germany with little risk to itself after 1942, when “*the tide of the war began to turn in favour of the Allies*”—and that the moral obligation to do so increased as the

need for Irish support against Germany diminished!!

Professor Roberts does not say why “*the case for maintaining Irish neutrality in the early years of the war was very strong*”. If the moral imperative to make war on Germany lay in the danger posed by “*Nazi barbarism*”, then surely the moral obligation was strongest when Nazi power was strongest, which was “*in the early years of the war*”—in the second year to be precise: from June 1940 (within the first year) to the Winter of 1941. After Stalingrad, at the end of 1942, Nazi barbarism was in severe difficulty. After the Battle of Kursk in July 1943 it was doomed. From 1942 to the Summer of 1944 the war consisted predominantly of the systematic advance of Stalinist power. If the moral obligation on the Irish state to make war increased as Nazi barbarism retreated, it can only have been as an obligation to help the Western Allies against the Ally which had actually overcome Nazi barbarism. Perhaps a case could be made on those lines, but it would be a pretty convoluted one—however that should not be something that would deter a CPGB intellectual from undertaking it.

A D-Day ceremony was held at the Great War memorial at Islandbridge in Dublin, and complaint was made that the state sent no representative to it. Since the Irish state was proclaimed in military action against Britain during the Great War, which those who founded the state saw as a war of Imperial aggrandisement and plunder, the Irish state could only take part in an Islandbridge ceremony by condemning itself. (If Michael MacDowell and Mary Harney had their way, it would probably come to that.)

Britain allows no official distinction to be made between its wars, and it is particularly insistent that both its World Wars in the 20th century should be swallowed in one gulp—with all its little wars blended in. Professor Roberts needs to address this practice.

If he applied his moral callipers to all British actions in the world since 1914, perhaps classifying British action in 1914 as a great evil which led to decades of evil consequences, and then claimed that Britain made some partial amends during its second World War for the evil it had done hitherto, though it soon reverted to its evil ways after 1945, he might deserve a hearing. Since he does not do that, what he requires of us is a submission on these lines:

“‘There was a nation in the world’, they said, ‘which at its own expense, with its own labour, and at its own risk, waged wars for the liberty of others. And this it performed not merely for contiguous states, or near neighbours, or for countries that made part of the same continent; but even crossed the seas for the purpose, that no unlawful power should subsist on the face of the whole earth; but that justice, right, and law, should everywhere have sovereign sway’...” (Livy, *History Of Rome*, Book 23 a speech elicited from the Greeks by Titus Quintilius).

The practice of praising the victor and jumping on board his bandwagon is moral only if one takes triumphant power to be the source of morality (a view for which a strong case can be made—a case which Britain makes when it is strong), or if one believes that Britain is the Special Agent of a transcendental Providence in this world. Otherwise it can only be seen as the morality of the jackal.

A whole raft of states declared war on Germany in the Autumn of 1918 at the demand of the United States. They did so out of the narrowest self-interest. What the victorious Allies got from it was the sanctification of their victory, and the absence of an influential body of world opinion critical of their post-war settlement. They gained the freedom of action which enabled them to make a catastrophic settlement.

De Valera’s refusal to act the part of a jackal in 1945 was wholly admirable. What is deplorable is the failure of Irish academia to develop the wartime neutrality into a critical history of the war.

*

A factor entirely ignored by Professor Roberts is that Ireland in 1939 did not have the means of making war. It had no Army. It had only a lightly armed Defence Force. It was not allowed to have an Army under the Treaty, and Britain prevented De Valera from acquiring armaments after he broke the Treaty.

Ireland remains unarmed. Maintenance of neutrality as a meaningful position in European and world affairs today requires a strong Army. The earnest neutrals of Europe, whose neutrality elicits the respect of others—the Swiss and the Swedes—are armed to the teeth.

Ireland Versus Civilisation

In *An Irishman’s Diary* (Irish Times, 30 April) Kevin Myers defends Elizabeth Bowen’s spying activities against the neutral Irish state during Britain’s second world war by arguing that she was an Irishwoman who knew better than Ireland. At the end of his piece he asks,

“Was Elizabeth Bowen less Irish because she would have seen this country occupied by the Allies in preference to a Nazi victory, with the concomitant ruin of Christian civilisation across the world? And is that what Irishness means: that the defence of national sovereignty in the darkest hour in world history must take precedence over the protection of all civilisation, even if such a defence ends both that civilisation and Irishness itself?”

Is it a pure coincidence that Britain is always on the side of civilisation in its wars (at least in the last hundred years or so, anyway)? Is it also just a coincidence that other powers in the world, which Britain deems at a particular time to be “*threatening*” it, always seem to be threatening civilisation itself? Could it be that England and civilisation are, indeed, one and the same thing—just as the comic book character, Clark Kent and Superman were one and the same person? And is it the case that the “*mild-mannered*” John Bull dons his costume for another fight for civilisation when evil threatens?

If that is the case, then surely when you oppose Britain you oppose civilisation itself. And the only way to stay on the side of England is to fight all its wars, with whomsoever it deems to be its enemy at any particular time.

Myers’ view of civilisation can only be held within the British view of the world and the English writing of history. A few years ago, when Ireland still had a mind of its own, Myers would have been dismissed as a gobshite. But the view of the world that he promotes has steadily gained ground in Ireland over the last few decades, even though the Irish state itself originated in the opposite view—Irish withdrawal from the British “*war for civilisation*” in 1916. The Easter Rising was fought on the side of anti-civilisation with “*our gallant allies in Europe*”. And one of the leaders, James Connolly, held that the “*uncivilised*” side in the war was the more progressive side when it came to economic and social affairs

and the living of life generally.

Kevin Myers is a product of an Ireland that has forgotten its history and lives in what Roy Foster might term, a “*post-modernist*” world—dominated by the British “*discourse*”. The British view of the second world war has prevailed because Britain managed to get on the winning side in 1945—mainly by enlisting Bolshevik Russia in defence of civilisation. Up until late 1941, when Hitler made the mistake of attacking the Soviet Union in conjunction with Finland, Stalin’s Russia had been the main threat to “*civilisation*”. And, even when Britain was supposedly at war with Germany during late 1939 and early 1940, it had been hoped that its “*phoney war*” against Nazi Germany could be somehow turned into a war against Soviet Russia instead through the Finnish/Soviet border conflict. But things did not work out like that. Hitler could not wait whilst Anglo-French armies accumulated on German’s border and his generals smashed them in a couple of weeks—necessitating a change in the British attitude to “*civilisation*”.

If Germany had won at Stalingrad and written the history of the war, it most probably would record the fact that National Socialism saved civilisation from the threat of the Bolshevik barbarians from the East. We can presume that because we know that Hitler was a great admirer of British ways of doing things—committing genocide against peoples and afterwards justifying it in the name of progress and the progressive act of civilising.

Here is a view of the situation in Europe from an Irishman at the time of the British evacuation from Dunkirk in June 1940:

“The writer is possessed of an invincible faith. In this war the cause of humanity itself is at stake. The Christian civilisation of the west is threatened with an overthrow in which all spiritual values will be extinguished and all cultural well-being submerged in a sewage flood of barbarian lusts of hate and greed and cruelty. He believes that there is enough moral force in the ranks of Christendom to resist and ultimately to overcome the danger: but only if they are rallied for the supreme test in complete self-devotion regardless of all minor

interests or anxieties. Is it too late for a reconsideration of Ireland's neutrality?" (*The Neutrality Of Ireland*, p5).

So here is a 1940 Kevin Myers. Only a much more substantial man—not a mere gobshite *Irish Times* journalist, but someone who had even fought in a previous war for civilisation: "*The author spent two of the happiest years of his life as a soldier on the western front fighting amongst Irish comrades for the defence of western civilisation*" (*Ulster And The British Empire*, p9).

There are not many men who fought in the Western Front during the Great War and called it "*two of the happiest years of my life*".

Captain Henry Harrison (1867-1954), OBE and holder of the Military Cross, was from Holywood, County Down. He had won a scholarship to Westminster School and then went on to Balliol College, Oxford, around 1889. He was offered a Liberal candidacy at the 1890 General Election, but instead, as an admirer of Parnell, left Balliol to become the Nationalist MP for Mid-Tipperary from 1890-92.

Harrison was a firm believer in John Redmond's scheme for a Home Rule Imperial Ireland. He joined an Irish regiment of the British Army in 1915. In 1920-1 he became Secretary of the Irish Dominion League and supported the Treaty as the realisation of his objective. From 1924-7 he edited a Dublin weekly newspaper, *Irish Truth*, and was Irish correspondent of the *Economist*. Harrison wrote a number of books on Parnell and some very interesting works on Ireland and the British Empire in the 1930s including: *The Partition Of Ireland; Ireland And The British Empire*, 1937; *Ulster And The British Empire*, 1939; and *The Neutrality Of Ireland*. His objective in these books, he wrote in 1938, was to promote an understanding between Britain and Ireland that might "*concentrate their attention upon the vastly greater interests which are in issue in the world arena*" and "*commit them to close alliance for concerted action in external affairs*".

Harrison was not a Home Ruler who became disillusioned with Britain after Ireland's experiences in the Great War. He was a firm believer in the Liberal project of creating an "*emancipated*" Imperial Ireland—even after that project had been wrecked by the English and Ulster Unionists during the Great War. In 1942 Harrison, the Dominion Home Ruler,

founded the Commonwealth Irish Association with General Sir Hubert Gough—the Unionist Curragh mutineer.

Harrison was a post-Redmond Redmondite and a kind of pre-revisionist revisionist. If Myers and the current crop of Irish revisionist writers are correct in their belief that another Irish war effort for civilisation/Britain was a practical possibility in 1939-40 Harrison should have been the man to have advocated it. But, writing in June 1940, in Britain's darkest hour, he concluded: "*The Irish Government, constituted as it is under free institutions, does not fail in its function to reflect the national feeling. Nor does it fail in its duty to execute the national will. No other policy was possible for Ireland. Neutrality it had to be*" (*The Neutrality Of Ireland*, p185-6).

It seems, then, that Elizabeth Bowen did not know Ireland as well as De Valera and the Irish people after all. She did not know it as well as Henry Harrison anyway—who after all had fought a war for civilisation previously and could be relied upon to recognise another one when it came along. So she was just a spy for a threatening alien power.

Harrison was an English Liberal and an Irish Nationalist. His explanation why Ireland did not become another South Africa and his attempt to help England's sort out the mess it had made of Ireland, so that the Irish could be enlisted in another war on Germany in 1939, were not things that exercised many Irish minds. But Harrison acted as a remnant of Imperial Ireland trying to explain to the Empire's ruling class why the Irish substance had sloughed it off and why the Irish would not be volunteering as they had done in the first British "*war for civilisation*" in 1914:

"The tragic figure of John Redmond stands as a warning for all. The two great parties in the Irish Free State today are twin branches of Sinn Fein, and they do not forget. Sinn Fein rode to power on the great wave of popular resentment which followed John Redmond's magnificent gesture of uncalculating generosity in 1914 and the betrayal of it so many had foreseen. John Redmond and his movement perished swiftly and utterly. Even the help that he brought to Britain was coldly ignored. The fruits of the sacrifice which he had bade Ireland make were omitted from the records. The lesson was learnt in grief and passion. It will not be forgotten" (*Ireland And The British Empire*, 1937, p17).

Here is Harrison again in *The Neutrality Of Ireland*:

"The Anglo Irish economic war ceased on the very threshold of the great European war. It seems probable that it was only the obvious imminence of the greater struggle that led to its discontinuing. Appeasement had become the catchword of current politics in London. But as an application of the policy of appeasement the discontinuance of economic war fell woefully short of a comprehensive pacification" (p180).

It was Harrison's view that the period between the Treaty in 1921 and the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1938 had seen Britain attempt to curtail the development of Dominion status with regard to Ireland. Harrison was a firm believer in Ireland becoming a Dominion of the British Empire—with the same status as Canada, Australia or South Africa. Harrison hoped that, if Britain allowed Ireland to develop in the same way as the white colonies, a friendship would grow between the two countries which would have been of mutual benefit to Ireland and the Empire. Ireland, as John Redmond had previously hoped, would become an enthusiastic Imperial component within the Empire and would be of service to it in times of military need.

But the Tory-dominated coalition governments of the 1920s and 30s had instead tried to keep a tight leash on Ireland. There had been various legal casuistries to stifle Ireland's development as a Dominion under the Treaty, during the period of the Cumann na Gaedheal governments, and then when Fianna Fail had taken power in 1932 an economic war had been declared by Britain to bring Ireland to heel.

The economic war had only been called off by Britain when she realised that the European war was in the offing—and Ireland might be needed to play a part in another war for civilisation as in 1914.

Harrison also noted that it was impossible to expect Ireland to suddenly become an enthusiastic participant in a new war for civilisation when there was a great deal of ambivalence in the ruling circles of Britain about whether Nazi Germany was really a friend or foe:

"In short, the counter-revolutionary factions in the civilised west were still regarding the Nazi movement as an appropriate instrument or ally for keeping revolution at bay... The virus of Nazism had thus penetrated some of the nerve centres of London and Paris with paralysing effect. Therefore the future in the international arena was obscure... It was in this environment of world happenings that Ireland had to choose

her policy” (p187).

And finally it was all about history that was fresh in the Irish memory:

“Vivid in her memory were the pictures of her idealistic enthusiasm for war in 1914/18, of her sacrifices then in the common cause and of her scurvy treatment that had won for her. And after that a whole generation of struggle which, first in a physical contest and next in an economic contest, had tested her strength and endurance to the uttermost—a struggle to secure that which by right was hers in 1914. The war of 1914 was for the protection of the small nationalities and to uphold the sanctity of treaties. But the victory of 1918 had not helped her. She had had to fight for our own Treaty, and she then had had to fight again for six long years of an economic war to keep what our own Treaty gave her, and even then she emerged with her country partitioned. The struggle had left her polity racked and impoverished. Bitterness of spirit was her portion, and disillusionment gave a cynical turn to her appreciation of the fine phrases of commonwealth ideology. For a whole decade her two principal parties would quarrel over its values—for the ensuing six years she had endured economic war to prevent herself being robbed of its essence. The national independence which was hers in virtue of the Treaty postulated the right to declare neutrality if the commonwealth was at war. Most of her rights in this regard had been but recently challenged by Britain, and the challenge had ended in little more than a negative acknowledgement of them. Here was an appropriate opportunity for a demonstrative assertion of a right to remain neutral. Comradeship or cordiality in association with Britain was unthinkable whilst partition was there in full view, deploying its unending griefs. The national feeling demanded an attitude of protest and reserve. Neutrality it had to be” (p188).

The revisionist writers of history today mindlessly assert that Ireland should have lent herself to England’s second war for civilisation in a couple of decades. But they are not so keen to produce someone from the time who advocated it—when history was fresh in the memory.

But then history is their weakness. The only way in which they can propagate their viewpoint is in the suppression or distortion of it as the memory in Ireland fades of the British Empire and its wars.

May Ireland always remember and be against the wars for “civilisation”. There may be another one along soon.

Pat Walsh

Our Very Own Hero From Zero

Another referendum looms with ‘agreement’ reached on the Constitution for the European Union. As our own Great Helmsman achieved it during the Irish Presidency it will be considered almost traitorous to oppose it. How did Bertie Ahern achieve this? What is this man’s secret weapon that is now praised by friend and foe alike across the world? It’s his old trick of giving everyone what he or she wants. Why does nobody else make such a success of this simple technique?

The basic fact about the EU today is that there are two EUs—two Europes—the British EU and the Franco-German one. Everything is now predicated on and decided by the balance of these two forces. But these two Europes are a bit like ‘the two nations theory’ here—in practice everyone works on the basis of their existence but everyone is determined not to acknowledge it and this is deemed a virtue.

Blair got all his ‘red lines’—which effectively means the *status quo* and no more integration for Britain and its allies. Chirac is delighted that he has the British off his back (for now) and can get on with “*enhanced co-operation*”, more integration with Germany and others—“*to act without Great Britain but with others*” as he so explicitly put it. So all are happy—until the next time. Meantime the divide deepens. And this is sold as a great achievement for Europe!

It bears a remarkable similarity to the Good Friday Agreement, another achievement of Bertie’s, we are told. There also both sides feel, and are, more entrenched afterwards than before and all is fine between the non-stop crises. And in both cases the crises are inevitable because the lack of open acknowledgment of the essential facts ensures some side is always being conned or feeling conned or both. There is a permanent air of unreality in all the negotiations but reality keeps breaking in and all bemoan this.

It will make no difference whatever to the EU itself if this Constitution is ever agreed or not. If it’s agreed everyone will go on as they wish and if it falls the same will happen. The whole Constitution notion was a fudge from beginning to end

in an attempt not to face up to ‘the two Europes’ crisis in the EU which Europhiles dare not speak the name of and which is therefore never acknowledged or defined. ‘Hear no such evil, speak no such evil and therefore no such evil will exist’ appears to be their motto.

This Constitution is the totally wrong instrument for the current task. Policies are what are needed: trying to use a Constitution in place of a policy is bound to fail. Constitutions are put in place when all fundamentals are agreed on and when these need to be formally sanctioned. In fact, this Constitution has already failed in that it only confirms the divide in Europe. Nobody takes it very seriously. That is why it was abandoned with relief a few months ago and was only brought back thanks to Al Qaeda changing the Spanish Government (who had helpfully obstructed agreement) and thereby putting it back on the agenda. So Bertie has to share the honours of his success with Osama Bin Laden. Success always has many parents and even the black sheep of the family have to be given credit on occasions like this.

Bertie is the personification of the zero concept in politics. He always stands between minus and plus, the positive and the negative, with equal forces on either side. And, if one moves, he will lead them to the new zero position. The man even looks like the figure zero. This is probably also the perfect democratic attitude to have. Whoever pushes you hardest gets results. You do no pushing yourself because that means taking sides and that means you cannot be all possible things to all possible people. After all, Bertie was for and against the invasion of Iraq. In any case he realises that democracy becomes a meaningless concept in relations between nations. That is proven every day of the week in increasingly varied parts of the world. This is the New World Order—which of course should be called the exact opposite if we were concerned with describing realities but why bother and spoil the story!

Bertie’s uniqueness is best seen when compared with one of his predecessors, De Valera. The source of his being was within himself and when he wanted to

know what to do he “looked into his own heart”. That was his opinion poll and he used whatever means possible to do what he believed to be right and there was no more successful politician in Irish history. By Bertie’s standards De Valera’s attitude would be the maddest form of megalomania. By contrast, Bertie’s source of being is ‘blowing in the wind’ and whichever wind blows hardest is it—and he perfectly reflects mainstream Irish political opinion today.

He has not been made President of the Commission this time. If he had, it would have been clearly and shamelessly given

to him as the lowest common denominator. All the higher common factors have already been resolutely vetoed by one or other of the two Europes using whatever excuses came to mind. The standing of the Commission and the Presidency have already been neutered, another victim of the two Europes conflict, and it will slowly but surely be reduced to a zero role and Bertie’s day may yet come—after all, cometh the hour, cometh the man. All that will be left then for Bertie to do is to quote Robert Emmet on that occasion and he will reach a new high, or low, in the cringe factor stakes.

Jack Lane

because he had handled the departure of the Financial Controller, Richard Gee, which had only been concluded earlier that month.

The *Irish Times* report of 3rd October 2001 on that legal case was less than candid. It said:

“...the Supreme Court was due to deliver a judgement yesterday on an appeal by Mr Gee on a discovery matter. But before the court delivered its judgement Mr Michael Howard, for the newspaper, said the action between the parties had been resolved.”

But there was no indication in the report of what the “*discovery matter*” was. The *Phoenix* magazine of 9th November 2001 filled in the gaps:

“Gee sought discovery of settlement details secured by other executives—such as the deal that saw former deputy md Karen Erwin—Major Tom McDowell’s daughter—”leave” the paper only to return as a private consultant for the IT.”

The *Phoenix* went on to comment that Chapman:

“...knows what price the paper will pay to avoid unnecessary disclosure of its internal workings. He also knows that calling on executives like commercial director Maevie Donovan, human resources director Michael Austen, and editor Conor Brady, to explain just who made what decisions in the last two years or more, is certain to prove unpalatable to the paper.”

So that was October 2001. The Financial Controller and the Managing Director departed in acrimonious circumstances. But what about the previous Management Director, Louis O’Neill, who succeeded Major McDowell as Chief Executive in 1997. Surely that was a happy occasion? Well, not exactly.

The *Sunday Business Post* of 20th June 1999 reported:

“A bitter internal civil war in the boardroom of *The Irish Times*, which has been simmering for the past five years, erupted last week when retiring chief executive and group managing director Louis O’Neill refused to accept a presentation from the board of the company to mark his retirement.”

O’Neill wrote a letter to the Board of Directors explaining his decision. The SBP revealed the following extracts from the letter:

“...for 42 years, I have dedicated my life to the development of *The Irish Times*...the past five years have been a

The *Irish Times*:

Its Prurience and Double Standards

There has been much coverage of the behaviour of our two largest banks: Bank of Ireland and AIB.

The Bank of Ireland “scandal” was quite straight forward. The Chief Executive, Michael Soden, was found to have been accessing a porn site on the company’s premises. The Chairman of the company, Laurence Crowley, quite properly asked him to resign. Soden acceded to the request. No laws had been broken but undoubtedly there had been a breach of trust. The Governors of the Bank of Ireland decided that the standards expected of ordinary employees should also apply to its chief executive.

Having forced the Chief Executive to resign, the Governors felt that they owed their customers and shareholders an explanation. This must have been a difficult decision since they were adding humiliation to the indignity of the job loss. Also, by publicising the reason for the dismissal they were exposing the company to ridicule.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of openness and transparency, both Laurence Crowley and the dismissed Chief Executive made a public statement on the matter. In my view the manner in which the Bank of Ireland dealt with this issue was a model example of corporate governance.

The news broke on May the 30th and was covered extensively in the Sunday papers. But *The Irish Times* felt the story merited front page treatment on the

following Monday. A large picture of the chief executive was headed by a quote from him: “*It was a case of curiosity killed the cat*”. The report included prurient speculation on what site he had visited.

Page 21 of *The Irish Times* devoted another three quarters of a page to the “story”, although nothing new of substance was added. Most of the remainder of the page was taken up by a comment piece from Cliff Taylor, the Economics Editor, headed *Banks Must Restore Credibility To Survive*. In this piece Taylor attempted to link the AIB and the Bank of Ireland difficulties to suggest a general malaise in the Irish Banking sector. But of course there is no connection between the two.

Contrast this to the departure of Nicholas Chapman the Managing Director of *The Irish Times* from July 1999 to October 2001. Reports of his departure first filtered out in *The Irish Independent* of 25th October 2001. This report indicated that he was leaving the company, but *Irish Times* staff had been told he had gone “*on leave*”, and would “*not be returning*”. *The Irish Times* had no reports of this that week. A spokesman for the Chairman, Don Reid, was quoted as saying that he had “*no comment to make on anything*”.

In fairness to *The Irish Times* it appears that Chapman had tied them up in legal knots so that they were unable to report fully on the matter at the time. But there was a reason why he could do this. He knew the weak points of *The Irish Times*

period of great personal difficulty for me since the unexpected appointment, in 1994, by Major TB McDowell of his daughter Karen Erwin to senior office in the company...day after day I had to face the difficulty of reconciling the relentless pursuit for the advancement of Karen with... what I consider to be the best interests of *The Irish Times*...all attempts at objective assessment have been rejected out of hand...I have been snubbed by the Chairman of the Trust (McDowell) as though I was some sort of reprehensible person..."

Oh Dear!

But none of this appeared in *The Irish*

Times. *Au contraire*. There was a picture of a smiling O' Neill with a caption indicating that there was a presentation "*in the newsroom to mark his retirement*" (*The Irish Times* 26.6.99). No mention of who gave or who didn't give the presentation.

The last place you will learn about *The Irish Times* is in its own pages. You will never see a headline like "*The Irish Times must restore its credibility to survive*". *The Irish Times* reserves that type of headline for native Irish Capitalists. It has one set of standards for itself and an entirely different set of standards for others.

John Martin

Faith And Identity

The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh took part in the lecture series *Faith And Identity*, in St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace on Wednesday, 26 May. His talk was entitled *Faith and Identity in Crisis*, but I could not divine any sign of his addressing this topic, which is a bit vague. What faith? (Anglicanism, in particular, or Christianity in general?) which particular identity? (Unionism/ 'wee Ulster'—ism? Irishness (very important in a communion that straddles the border) or Britishness? There is also the question raised by the word "crisis"—is it a particular crisis, one thrown up by, as an example, the Drumcree stand-off, or the crisis of the part thirty-odd years?

Listening to Lord Eames, a man with a sheaf of degrees in law and theology, and who was being spoken of as a credible leader of the whole Anglican communion only a matter of months ago, was an odd sensation. It was like being dunked in hot sweet tea; the cosiness was overwhelming. But, despite the flannel, Eames made a number of points. He made it clear that he thought that a Truth Commission was a non-starter. With a great many detours to folksy bits of stage-Irishry, he gave good reasons why it was foolish to contemplate such a thing. It was mostly to do with the fact that, while the shooting war is over, the 'ideological' war is not. He mentioned the fact that "both sides" were engaging in widespread criminal activities. We, the audience were given to understand that the Republican movement was a prime mover in this criminality, which is inaccurate. If Archbishop Eames actually believes it, it means that his ability to analyse what is going on in the North (a phrase he used a few times, rather oddly) is at fault—indeed, entirely useless.

He sounded like an Alliance Party publicist for quite lengthy parts of his lecture. I made the assumption that he felt that he could not, or should not, tax the understanding of his audience. It wasn't as if he was telling direct untruths: outside of the IRA and possibly 'Continuity' IRA, the other 'Republican' groups are up to their oxters in all kinds of criminal activity. And so are all of the Loyalist groups.

Dr. Eames made a great deal of the fact that Unionists feel themselves in a difficult position, and feel that they are treated as a side issue by the governments involved in the Peace Process. This has been objected to by some people, but it is the case that Unionists do feel that they are not well-regarded by their 'own' government in particular, and that the Republicans are getting their way on all fronts. Dr. Eames, who is an eminent figure in the British Establishment is just the person to raise such matters in an eminently respectable forum like St Ethelburga's (which is in the heart of the City of London).

The problem with his putting of these problems before the public, a public which rarely hears the feelings of the Unionist community articulated, is that he simply stated them. Unlike Dr. Brady some weeks prior to this, there was not even a hint of how this problem could be dealt with, other than to imply that Republicans / Nationalists ought not to be listened to. He may not be the most political of men (but he managed to get to very near the top of a pole as greasy as that for the leadership of the UK's government), but he must realise that this is a recipe for—if not re-igniting the war—making it even more difficult to solve the Northern Ireland problem.

He nowhere mentioned the Unionist political leadership. The Unionist (political) community is represented by scores, if not hundreds of people who are either unable or unwilling to put a simple case to the British public in straightforward language. They do not attend Westminster, or attend it very rarely, but collect their salaries. They are either genuinely inarticulate, (a fatal flaw in a politician in most other parts of the world), or dare not articulate what they think about their neighbours. Their attitude to the Taigs is essentially racist (at least in the sense that they think themselves superior, and put down the fact that the 'other sort' are getting ahead of them—despite a fair number of obstacles to chicanery).

Some time ago, Steven King a 'Trimbleista', who has a weekly column in the *Belfast Telegraph*, rather gingerly brought up the fact that many Unionists / Loyalists actually hate the English more than even the Taigs. This was borne out by a UDA West Belfast Brigade C-Company (Johnny Adair's own) 'exile' in Bolton telling the local paper: "*We hate the English!*". He then wondered why the local Council was in no hurry to house him and about thirty other tattooed heavies! They had to be re-housed because the house Adair's wife was living in was shot up by persons unknown. (They might have been UDA from Northern Ireland, from Merseyside—where it is heavily 'British Nationalist'—or have been the drug pushers they were involved with within hours of moving to the town.)

Eames is not in the same sort of position as Seán Brady (whom he archly described as "Archbishop Seán"—one did wonder if Dr. Brady returned the compliment), and he had to make his points in an even more oblique fashion than his Roman Catholic opposite number. He may have been trying to indicate to the public representatives of the Unionist people that they could put a bit more effort into making the position (or, more to the point, the perceived position) of their voters clear to their fellow-citizens. (Archbishop Eames used the words 'perceive' and 'perception' on a fair number of occasions in the course of his lecture. He was not taking a raw Unionist position. Though it might not have been a bad thing if he had. The Establishment needs to be told that the fact they are not being bombed does not mean the complete peace has broken out. And that, no matter what they want to think, the Unionists—just like the IRA—have not gone away.)

Seán McGouran

An Cor Tuatail

Pléaróca na Ruarcóe

Pléaróca na Ruarcóe do éuals saé tuine
Dá tóimic a's dá tóioctraó a's dá maireann tuah beo
Uí seadé b'féid muc, marc agus caora
Uí scasgairc don fásraio saé don Lé.

Uí na páil uisge beada an a's na meadraó dá líoná,
Ais éirge túinn air maoin, is a'gann bí an spóire:
"Uriseadó mo ríoba-sa", "Slaiseadó mo róca-sa",
"Laiseadó mo bríste-sa", "Soiseadó mo élóca-sa".

"Cáill mé mo bairéa, m'faluinn agus m'filéa,
Ó u'innis na sairéio (?) mo saéic mbeannáic leac
Seinn suas na pléaróca, seinn spreac ar an sclársaic
An buca sin, 'áine agus sgalós ré n-ól.

Cá luóe leannáin na Ruarcóe a' craisó a scleiteac,
Cra éuals saó corann a's crom-pléac an ceoil,
Saé don acu ar maoin ais éirge san áisreacain.
Scradaile a' scuid ban 'na n'iaio msa ríó.

Náe láioin an seasáin don calaín bí rúca,
San pléasó ré soara agus glus ins saé bróic
"Do saógal agus do sláinte, a Malachócluin Uí Éannaigáin,
Uair mo láin, is veas a úairisigéas tú, a Marsaill Ní Reineadám."

"Súo orca a mácair", "So raib maic agus dáoraic",
Cait éusa an scála sin suas in do sgois,
Craic túinn an tsráibeóis sin, sgar orca an áiseóis sin,
Duaíl kick insa nól agus práib insa n-ór."

Seinn suas na pléaróca, seinn spreac ar an sclársaic
An buca sin, 'áine agus sgalós ré n-ól.

A Rí na ngrácaí dá breicá-sa a fásraio,
Líoná a' scraicne agus a' lasaó ré póic,
Uí cnáin rígeadó bacairc air fao in saé s'ginn acu
A' pollaó, a' zbarraó so leór, leór, leór.

"Cus tú éiceac, a' bócaic", sé m'ácair a' cuir Mamiscir na Dúille suas,
Sligeac a's fúillín agus Caradó Úrom' Rúsca rós,
Iarla Cill Dara agus Diaócaí Cluain-Éilce,
D'ail agus d'alcróm mé, agus fúoraic de Múir."

Seinn suas na pléaróca, seinn spreac ar an sclársaic
An buca sin, 'áine agus sgalós ré n-ól.

A Rí na ngrácaí so é cóis an pléaróca so,
Ais a n-easlaic ais éirge 's a' bacairc so móir,
Ní hí an spreigéas caisreaca bí as saé don acu
Aóc bacá móir enapac, bog-lán uorn.

Cra sí saó na caibhíonáí do casgairc a's do éforaó,
Fásó an saigac 'na mheall casta fán mbort,
D'éicic na bráicne a' cárcáil na brúicne,
Fásó an c-ácair fúoraic air a' éarr insa ngrócaic.

Ó bí mé i' gCionn eSáile ná i' n-Innis Cluain M'gh
Ná 'glacaó na ngrácaí an b'pá sa Róm,
Fúorb iao na Seven wise Masters bí air a' érac an,
'S íce na potácaí Láin ris an c'g móir.

The Revels of the O'Rourke

The revels of the O'Rourke are known to everyone
Who was, who will be or who is alive today
There were seven twenties of pigs, bullocks and sheep
Being slaughtered every day for the lads.

There were buckets of whiskey and measures being filled,
When we got up in the morning we had high jinks:
"My pipe is broken", My pocket was picked",
"My britches were scorched", "My cloak was stolen".

I lost my hat, my mantle and my fillet (=handkerchief),
Since I lost my smalls - seven blessings go with them!
Strike up the revels, play a tune on the harp
(Get?) that box, Anne, and a bowl to drink!

The followers of the O'Rourke are shaking their feathers
Since they heard the thunder and blast of the music,
Everyone of them getting up in the morning without
(so much as) blessing (themselves)
Dragging their women behind them on the way.

How strongly they trod the ground beneath them
At a relentless gallop (?) and a gurgle in every shoe
"Your life and health, Malachy Hannigan!"
"My hand on it, you dance well, Marcella Redington!"

"Here's to you, mother!", "Thank you, Patrick!"
Throw that bowl (of liquor) down your throat
Shake out that settle-bed for us, put that mat on it,
Put a kick in the drink and a dab (?) in the gold.

Strike up the revels, play a tune on the harp
(Get?) that box, Anne, and a bowl to drink!

O King of grace! if you saw the lads
Filling their bellies and aflame with drink
Each knife was the length of a forearm
Carving (meat) and cutting again and again and again.

"You lied, you villain! it was my father who built (the town of) Boyle,
Sligo and Galway and Rooskey too
The Earl of Kildare and the Squire of Moynalty (Co. Meath)
Reared and fostered me - just ask MÚr!"

Strike up the revels, play a tune on the harp
(Get?) that box, Anne, and a bowl to drink!

"O King of grace! who started these ructions?"
Said the clergy, alarmed and threatening
It was not the consecrated aspergillus that was in each of their hands
But a big knobbly stick the size of your fist.

Though they thought they could hammer and thresh the cavaliers
The priest was left in a twisted heap under the table
The monks came to their rescue in the struggle
(But) Father Gardin was laid out on his arse in the cinders.

? Since I was in Kinsale or in the Isle of Cluain M'gh
Or receiving papal honours in Rome
? It was the Seven wise Masters who were there then
Eating potatoes beside the big house (??)

Aodh Mac Shamhradh-in (Hugh McGouran, 17th-18th century, of Glengoole, Co. Leitrim) is the composer, though the blind harper **Toirdhealbhaic " Cearbhall-in** (Turlough O'Carolan, 1670-1738, born near Nobber, Co. Meath) is more commonly associated with the piece because he composed the air to which it is sung. Thanks to Katarzyna Gmerek of Poznan for providing Edward Bunting's arrangement of the music, also a Polish title for the poem: *Balanga u O'Rourke* (*balanga* is Polish for "the crack"). No doubt this piece was a highlight of the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival. These days there is nothing unusual about mixing Irish traditional with other styles of music; for instance, Se-n " Riada and jazz. Carolan was influenced by the Italian baroque music of Geminiani, Corelli and Vivaldi. In some ways Carolan's music is not so much Irish, as baroque with an Irish traditional flavour. **Dean Jonathan Swift** composed an English version of the poem which starts:

*"O'Rourke's noble feast will ne'er be forgot
By those who were there and by those who were not"*

There is a hint of condescension here. Put a wig and black gown on a rotund figure, and think of Ian Smith (last white leader of Rhodesia) or David Frost reciting:

*"O'Ro'ke's nouble feast will ne'ah be fo'gut
By those who w' the'ah and by those who w' nut"*

OK, OK - for its racist lapse this column will do penance by restricting itself to a strict diet of rigorous d'n dlreach for the next six months. (But whose party would you rather go to - Swift's or O'Rourke's?). The O'Rourkes were the traditional chieftains of Breifne (Leitrim-Cavan). Though their bards, the McGourans, could be said to have left more of a mark, the O'Rourkes also surface in the pages of history. Captain Francisco de Cuellar and a few of his companions from the wreck of the Spanish Armada took refuge with the O'Rourkes for a while in the winter of 1587-88. ("... although this man is a savage, he is a very good Christian and an enemy of heretics, always carrying on war with them. He is called Senor de Ruerque." - A Story of the Spanish Armada, Athol Books 1988). In the winter of 1602-3, O'Sullivan Beare and 1000 of his people made their historic retreat from Glengariffe and the Beare Peninsula in West Cork to O'Rourke's household at the other end of the country after the defeat of the Irish-Spanish forces in Kinsale. When Tighearnan " Ruairc's wife Dearbhorgail (Dervla) eloped with the Leinster chief Diarmuid Mac Murchadha in the 12th century, the latter was attacked by High King Rory O'Connor, of whose Connacht-Ulster power-base O'Rourke was part; resulting in Mac Murchadha's military alliance with the Norman Strongbow and the first English invasion of Ireland. The fact that the Irish Parliament now sits in Leinster House can be traced directly to these events. Because if Mac Murchadha had not consented to the marriage of his daughter Aoife to Strongbow in Waterford, the Normans would have been regarded as mere brigands, the invasion would have failed for lack of Irish legitimacy, the great Leinster Geraldine dynasty would not have formed, and Leinster House would never have been built. It is curious that only one of these families - Mac Murchadha, now McMurrough-Kavanagh - still exists in its historic location in Leinster. Though, as regular readers of this magazine will be aware, a couple of years ago the Ormond Butlers, who arrived with Strongbow, tried to re-establish their credentials in their historic seat of Kilkenny Castle with the help of the Irish Times, but were seen off by the forces of the Aubane Historical Society.

PLEIDH RACA NA RUARCACH. — O ROURKE'S FEAST.

ANDANTE SPIRITO

Rourke's noble feast will ne'er be forgot By those who were there or those who were not His revels to keep we
sup and we dine On seven score sheep fat bullocks and swine Usquebaugh to our feast in pails is brought up a
hundred at least and a madder our cup Come harper strike up hit first by your favor Boy give us a cup Ah!
this has some savor O Rourke's jolly boys ne'er dreamt of the matter Till rous'd by the noise and musical clatter They
dance in a round cutting capers and ramping A mercy the ground did not burst with their stamping

Eamonn O'Kane: An Appreciation

Eamon O'Kane died of cancer on 22nd May at the age of 58. He was associated with this publication and its precursors since 1970. At the time of his death he was General Secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers.

Eamon was born into a Republican family in Co. Derry and his sense of the clan ancestry of the O'Kanes in that region remained strong. He knew who he was—and what he was. The fashion of “*inventing Ireland*” set by disrupted intellectuals in Dublin 4 passed him by. He was an intellectual without an identity problem. In his activity in the world he was not searching for himself. He was what he was. He was an O'Kane from Derry. And, from the basis of that secure and unquestioned sense of what he was, he felt capable of taking on the world.

In his personal life he experienced the reverse of the seven year itch. He sowed his wild oats plentifully during his twenties and thirties, even though he was a married man. Then, when he seemed destined to become an ageing Don Juan, he eloped and settled down and married again, in that order. And Daphne, whom he settled down with, was a member of ‘the other community’, being as unmistakably a Protestant as he was a Fenian. To those who knew them it was a remarkable event which demonstrated the infinite potential of human nature.

In his political life Eamon was bred to be a Fenian, and that is what he remained.

His family moved to Belfast (Whiterock Road). In his youth he was acquainted with all the Belfast Republican families through house-to-house selling of the football pools which raised money for the Republican movement. He could name them all, because in those days there were very few of them. Until August 1969 the faithful few were very few indeed.

(The O'Kane family were friendly with Charlie Haughey's family, which also came from South Derry. When the Haughey family were on their uppers in the 20s and 30s they were ‘taken in’ by an uncle of Eamon's in Swords, Dublin.

Charlie attended Eamon's father's funeral in the 80s when he was Taoiseach.)

Under the Butler Education Act—which is how he always referred to it, the Stormont facsimile being never mentioned—he got a secondary education at St. Malachy's College (the Diocesan Seminary and secondary school) and then, after getting a degree at Queen's, moved to Cardiff University, where he became friendly with Neil Kinnock, who was a great disappointment to him in later years.

Back in Belfast as a teacher, he joined the Newtownabbey Branch of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and he took some part in the People's Democracy upheaval of 1968-9. The events of August 1969—the Unionist attack on West Belfast combined with the inflammatory speech delivered on television by Taoiseach Jack Lynch—put an end to all routine activities and all received ideas in Northern Ireland. The period from August 1969 to Easter 1970 was one of intense activity of a kind which can only be called constitutional. The future was thrown open and each individual had to decide what it should be and how it should be achieved.

At the end of that long and fertile winter Eamon aligned himself with the “two nations” approach of the B&ICO, which proposed that the Ulster Protestant community should be recognised by nationalist Ireland as a distinct nationality with the object of bringing about some kind of federal arrangement between the two. He confronted Jack Lynch's narrowly blinkered nationalism by chaining himself to the railings of the Foreign Affairs Department in Dublin—and spent a night in Mountjoy Jail, along with David Morrison, Tommy Dwyer and five others..

When the Dublin establishment refused to adopt the indirect approach—Garret FitzGerald and Conor Cruise O'Brien ruling it out, no less than Jack Lynch and Demond O'Malley—Eamon adopted the alternative course of action of establishing a common ground of political action for Protestants and Catholics through the democratic party politics of the British state. He was founding President of the Campaign for Labour Representation, which in the course of the late 1970s and the 1980s brought very considerable pressure to bear on the British Labour Party to extend its activities to the Northern Ireland region of the state, and he supported the Campaign for Equal Citizenship, which brought similar pressure to bear on the Tory Party after the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. Both projects were abandoned in 1990 when eminent Unionists who had joined them and accepted leading positions in them reverted to the shibboleths of communal Unionism.

In his Trade Union activity Eamon developed the NAS in Northern Ireland as a cross-community union. When it became clear that the CLR project would not succeed, he concentrated on union affairs, becoming General Secretary of the merged NAS/UWT shortly before he was disabled by cancer. His purpose in becoming General Secretary was to bring about one great teachers' union, such as Ernest Bevin had brought about amongst the general workers.

His orientation in British Trade Union affairs centred on Bevin, the Trade Union boss who devised the strategy which made possible the one great social reform enacted by the British Labour Party, and who laid the foundations of it as Minister of Labour (and domestic Prime Minister

WEB-SITE

A web-site has been established for Eamonn O'Kane: it will feature documents and commentaries relating to Eamonn's political and trade union work and it is hoped that it will eventually host a discussion forum for some of the industrial objectives for which Eamonn worked.

The site will also feature the obituaries which have appeared in the press, as well as speeches given at the Memorial Service.

You can add your tribute to Eamonn, or perhaps recall a story about him, and read what others have had to say.

The site is under construction: details of how to get to it can be found on

www.atholbooks.org

in all but name) between 1940 and 1945.

Bevin has been erased from British Labour history, and the art of the possible has been replaced by the art of the plausible. It would have been interesting to see what impression Eamon's Bevinite approach could have made on the politics of Blairite Britain.

In all that he did in the CLR, CEC and Trade Unionism, Eamon never ceased to be a Fenian. He was a two-nationist because he saw the reality of the other nation and sought an alternative to the attritional conflict of the two communities. By the same token he never denounced the new Republicanism that was generated out of that conflict in the aftermath of August 1969. He recognised in Provisional Republicanism the authentic, and only,

alternative course of action for a community which could no longer crawl along in the old way after August 1969.

Obituary notices on Eamon were published in the *Times*, *Guardian*, and *Telegraph* in London, in the *Sunday Independent* in Dublin, and a report of his Memorial Service was carried in the *Irish News* in Belfast. Only the *Irish Times* decided not to notice him. It has its agenda into which he did not fit. He would have appreciated this sign that, even in death, he is not a spent force.

REMEMBRANCE

People who knew Eamon are invited to send in a recollection or appreciation, however short, to this magazine. Alternatively, they may prefer to go to his web-site, see page 12.

The Irish Times And The British State

Is *The Irish Times* an agent of the British State in Ireland? If it is not, was it ever an agent of the British State?

Before January 2003 the mere asking of such questions would have been outrageous. Of course, anything is possible in the general scheme of things, but an institution like an individual cannot be expected to deal with every crackpot theory or allegation that is levelled against it. The normal reaction in such circumstances is one of lofty indignation. "I will not dignify such a question with a response" is the standard reply.

But the "Irishness" of *The Irish Times* ceased to be a matter of merely malicious conjecture when Jack Lane of the Aubane Historical Society discovered the notorious "Gilchrist Letter". As readers of this magazine will know, this letter of October 1969 indicated that McDowell, then one of the five owners of "The Irish Times", made contact with 10 Downing Street with a view to ensuring that "The Irish Times" was "helpful" to Britain in that crucial period in Irish history. Andrew Gilchrist, the British Ambassador, assured his correspondent, Kelvin White of the British Foreign Office, that: "we will do what we can to exploit this opening".

In my view the letter provides conclusive evidence that McDowell wished to place "The Irish Times" under the influence of the British State. It also shows a willingness on behalf of the British Ambassador to provide that influence. That influence cannot be dismissed as negligible since McDowell was not only a substantial shareholder, but was Chief Executive as well. Also, Gilchrist says in his letter that McDowell's approach might be acceptable to one or two of the latter's friends on the Board. So, the impression given was that McDowell could count on at least one other director.

Whether that influence was exercised for only a brief, or an extended, period is a matter of conjecture. In this article I have tried to compare the financial, ownership and legal structures in the years before the "Gilchrist letter" (i.e. the end of 1969) with those in the years following the letter (i.e. 1970 to 1974).

As it happens, there were many changes in The Irish Times Ltd in the second period. Some of those changes can be explained by normal commercial considerations, others cannot. Readers will have to make up their own minds whether the non commercial changes can be explained by an outside influence.

FINANCIAL SITUATION

In the early 1960s the Irish Times Ltd was struggling. However, it would be wrong to say that it was in a deep financial crisis. It was not in a position to pay its Preference Shareholders let alone its Ordinary Shareholders. But it was breaking even rather than losing money.

By the late sixties its finances improved slightly and the company was able to pay the arrears it owed to its Preference Shareholders and in one year it was able to pay a dividend to its Ordinary Shareholders for the first time since 1960.

It made a dramatic financial breakthrough in 1972, showing profits of 242,000 pounds which was then a substantial figure. In the previous four years it was averaging less than 50,000 pounds a year.

The increase in profits does not appear to have been the result of an increase in capital, although in the middle of 1972 there was an increase in the Ordinary Share capital of 50,000 pounds. But in my view this injection of capital was a consequence rather than a cause of increased profitability. In general bad companies don't become good companies overnight. My impression from reading the Directors' Reports and finances in the mid 1960s onwards is that the Irish Times was a well run company open to new ideas. The good results in the early 70s were as a result of many years of good practice. An example of its foresight was that it set up a keyboard training company because it thought that computers would become an important part of modern life. The Irish Times is still involved in this activity.

Its newspaper sales from the mid 1960s onwards were growing steadily and as a result its turnover had more than doubled from 1968 to 1972.

The balance sheet of The Irish Times was also very healthy at the end of 1972. The overdraft of 181,000 pounds from the previous year had been wiped out and cash assets had increased by 73,000 pounds.

If the newspaper came under British influence in 1970 that influence does not explain its success. In my view the seeds of success were sown well before 1970. The credit must go to Gageby and McDowell as editor and chief executive respectively.

SHAREHOLDING

The Irish Times was incorporated in 1900. The seven original shareholders were John Arnott, David Arnott, William

Guest Lane, Robert Stokes, John Simmington, Albert Hall(!) and John Carlyle.

The Arnotts were from the well known retailing family. Robert Stokes was listed as a chartered accountant. He was possibly one of the founders of the accountancy firm which eventually, after many mergers, became Stokes Kennedy Crowley (now KPMG's branch in Ireland). That accountancy firm were the auditors of *The Irish Times* for many years.

In 1965 a John Arnott (presumably a relation of the original Arnott shareholders) owned nearly a quarter of the Ordinary Shares in the *Irish Times*. There were two other shareholders in 1965 with names corresponding to the founding members: Clare Simmington and Charles J. Lane.

But Simmington and Lane were insignificant shareholders in 1965. The largest Ordinary Shareholders in that year were the Walker family with about 35%. Ralph Walker was the chairman of the company from 1956 to 1973.

Another significant Ordinary Shareholder was George Hetherington. Although he only owned 2% of the Ordinary Shares in his own name, it appears that the "National Bank (Irish Office nominees)", which owned over 16% of the company, was his vehicle. Hetherington was a joint Managing Director of *The Irish Times* with Douglas Gageby in the early 1960s.

Gageby himself owned 18% of *The Irish Times* Ordinary Shares in 1965, about the same as Hetherington.

Howard Waterhouse Robinson owned just under 3% of the Ordinary Shares. He was also a Director.

In 1965 Major McDowell was a joint shareholder with Ralph Walker of about 1.5% of the Ordinary Shares. Although he was a small shareholder, his connection with the Walker family was a significant fact. Also, he had been chief executive since 1962.

There was nothing particularly surprising about the shareowners in 1965. The Walker family seemed to have been involved in a number of companies. The most well known was the Hely Group, which I assume is the stationery suppliers. The family also seems to have been involved in property and insurance. George Hetherington was also a Director of the Hely Group.

Howard Robinson had directorships

in a number of property companies. He was also a Director of Brown Thomas Group Ltd. I notice that one of the companies he was a Director of was called "The Hall School Ltd." It is possible that this Director had a family or business connection with the memorably named "Albert Hall", one of the original shareholders in the *Irish Times*.

Major McDowell was a Director of a half a dozen companies, none of which ring a bell. These companies were Management Directors Ltd, Graphic Films Ltd, Associated Tailors, Pim Brothers, Drogheda Ironworks Co Ltd, and Dowell Ltd.

By June 1972 there had been a significant change in the ownership of the Ordinary Shares. The shares gradually ceased to be owned by individuals and instead tended to be owned by corporate entities. I assume that the high income taxes in this period made this form of ownership more tax efficient.

Major McDowell and his company Dowell Ltd owned 20% of the Ordinary Shareholding. Gageby and his company Fetcher owned 20%. The National Bank (Irish Nominees), which may have been George Hetherington's vehicle, also owned 20%. An entity called Ulster Bank nominees owned the remaining 40%. It is likely that the beneficial owners of this entity were Ralph and Phillip Walker.

So, the big changes since 1965 were a significant increase in McDowell's holding from practically nothing to 20%; the withdrawal of John Arnott (the largest single shareholder) and the phasing out of the small shareholders. There was no increase in the overall number of shares so the shares of Arnott and the small shareholders were bought by the existing Directors, but mainly by McDowell.

The reason why I am assuming Arnott sold his Ordinary Shares was that I don't see evidence of his active involvement in the company in the 1960s, whereas Ralph Walker was the chairman immediately preceding the appointment of McDowell in March 1973. Also, Ralph Walker indicated in 1970 that the Board owned all the Ordinary Stock. So, given that the Board in the early 1970s consisted of the two Walkers, Hetherington, Gageby and McDowell, I can be reasonably confident that each of these was a 20% owner of the Ordinary Stock of *The Irish Times*.

The rise of McDowell from no shares to 20% could be viewed as suspicious. However, there is a reasonable explanation as to how he increased his shareholding. It

would not be unusual for a chief executive in a private company to be given encouragement by allowing him buy up shares. This was how Gageby became a substantial shareholder. Secondly, as I will explain later, the Articles of Association of the company were such as to enable directors to buy out other shareholders at cheap prices. Thirdly, the Gilchrist letter refers to McDowell as one of five owners of the *Irish Times* in 1969. This could be interpreted as meaning that the five owners were of equal status at that time.

As indicated above, 1972 was the year that *The Irish Times* became a highly profitable venture as distinct from a "worthy cause". For the first time in many years there was a new issue of capital amounting to 50,000 pounds. The new shares were allocated "pari passu" or in proportion to the existing shareholding so the five Directors retained their 20% shares in the company.

As I have indicated above, the balance sheet of *The Irish Times* was in a very healthy state in 1972. So there was no obvious financial reason for injecting new capital into the company. It is likely that the increase in share capital was a means of increasing the power of the Directors in relation to the other shareholders. Although the Directors already owned 100% of the Ordinary Share capital they did not own all the preference shares. This would normally not have been a problem, but *The Irish Times* preference shares had votes and therefore such shareholders could have disrupted any planned restructuring of the company.

The new Ordinary Shares, allocated to the Directors, were issued at "par" or the nominal value of the share. This was way below their real value.

According to John Horgan's book *Irish Media—A Critical History Since 1922* three of the Directors (I assume the two Walkers and Hetherington) wished to retire. This represented a novel situation for *The Irish Times*. Up until then the small shareholders were quite happy to be bought out by the Directors at low prices because it wasn't obvious that the shares were worth anything. But now three Directors representing a total of 60% of the company wanted to cash in their chips. They would have been very aware of the current financial position of the company and its potential for growth. Horgan indicates that Roy Thompson of the Thompson Group, who was already the owner of the *Belfast Telegraph*, had expressed an interest.

The three Directors may have experienced a dilemma. On the one hand they must have felt that at last they would be handsomely rewarded for sticking it out over the many lean years. On the other hand they may have felt some loyalty towards the remaining two Directors and the ethos of *The Irish Times*.

The other two Directors, Gageby and McDowell, would have experienced different emotions. As the last two Directors standing through the twists and turns of the 60s and early 70s each of them may have thought that they had the possibility of controlling the paper. But in a sense they were victims of their own success. By increasing the value of the company they had made it difficult, if not impossible, for themselves to buy out the other Directors.

If it was twenty years later they could have gone to a venture capital company, but in those times a loan from the bank was probably the only option. Assuming neither person was independently wealthy, they would want to have been very brave men to borrow the two million pounds less their own 20% (an enormous sum in 1974) required to buy out the other Directors. It would also have been a brave bank that would have lent such an amount to one individual.

So how did McDowell rather than Gageby become the controlling interest in *The Irish Times*. The answer can only be: the former received outside support and the latter did not. I can be reasonably confident in this assertion. If the money had been McDowell's, or was borrowed from a bank by McDowell alone, it would have been totally unnecessary to change the Articles of the company in the way that they were changed. I have analysed the 1974 Articles of Association below. The only sense I can make of this extraordinary document is that its intention was to give McDowell control of the company without giving him ownership rights. If McDowell left the company, all his power and influence would cease. Apparently he had no means of cashing in his capital if he left the company, because he had no capital worth talking about to cash in after the change in 1974. I would guess that McDowell received his 20% of the 2 million pounds like the other Directors, but from whom? If McDowell had absolute power within *the Irish Times* it would appear that he was a 'kept dictator'. But who was keeping him? Who provided the financial backing for this operation?

The official line is that an entity called the Irish Times Trust Ltd financed the purchase by borrowing the 2 million from the Bank of Ireland. So effectively, after 1974, the company was completely financed by Bank capital. But the shareholder value of the company was around 800,000 pounds at the end of 1972. Allowing for substantial profits in 1973 its balance sheet might have improved, but the net assets would still have been less than half of the 2 million pounds borrowed and shared between the five Directors. A bank would only agree (in my opinion) to such a loan if it had guarantors, and those guarantors must have been individuals or entities of considerable financial substance. So we are back to the original question: who provided the financial backing for the restructuring in 1974? Who or what institution decided to give McDowell such power?

I doubt very much that it was wealthy Protestant businessmen. After 1974 the Irish Times certainly was not organised on capitalist lines. The Articles of Association read much more like a political, than a commercial, document.

There is a possibility that the guarantors were the Walkers or the Walkers and Hetherington. Perhaps they felt very strongly that McDowell rather than Gageby should have the power after they left. I would be sceptical of this. Firstly, unless they were super rich (and I doubt this) they would not have wanted to have had a substantial loan hanging over them when they retired. Secondly, given the nature of the 1974 Articles they would have wanted to have had an extraordinary emotional attachment and trust of McDowell to have given him such powers. Thirdly, why the secrecy? To have been guarantors of such an institution as the Irish Times would have been something to be proud of for a Protestant businessman.

The Articles of Association in 1974 would support suspicions of, if not British involvement, at least the involvement of some institution or individual which wanted to remain anonymous.

THE 1969 ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

The Articles of Association of "The Irish Times Ltd.", dated the 6th of January 1969, was an unremarkable document. However, the position of the Director within the company was particularly powerful.

The most interesting part relates to the transfer of Ordinary Shares. Article 27a

says:

"No Ordinary Share shall be transferred to a person who is not an Ordinary Shareholder while any Ordinary Shareholder or any person selected by the Directors as one whom it is desirable in the interests of the Company to register as the holder thereof is willing to purchase the same."

The effect of this clause was to restrict the market for *The Irish Times Ltd.* shares to existing shareholders and nominees of the Directors.

If the existing shareholder did not know who other existing shareholders were or didn't know who among them wished to buy shares, which was probably in most cases, he would have to apply to the Company (i.e. the Board of Directors) in order to sell them. Article 27b says that the transfer notice shall:

"...constitute the Company his agent for the sale of the Ordinary share to any Ordinary Shareholder of the Company or person selected as aforesaid at the price so fixed or at the fair value to be fixed by the Auditor of the Company in accordance with this Article."

So the Board of Directors would become the agent for the sale of the share even if members of the Board were also buyers.

I imagine an auditor would value the share at its net asset value. This is a conservative valuation method. So the Directors would have had an opportunity to buy up shares at low prices.

Shares would also have been made available for purchase by the Directors on the death of shareholders. Article 35 says:

"All the limitations, restrictions and provisions of these Articles relating to the right to transfer and the registration of transfers of shares shall be applicable to any such notice or transfer as aforesaid as if the death or bankruptcy of the member had not occurred and the notice or transfer signed by that member."

So a person who inherited an Irish Times share would have to apply to the Directors to have the share registered in his own name. The Directors would be well within their rights to force the new owner to sell at the 'fair value' as decided by the auditor.

These rules would have facilitated the consolidation of shares in the hands of the Directors which is what in fact happened. While *The Irish Times* was considered a 'worthy cause' as distinct from a profitable venture this would not have been controversial but, towards the end of the

1960s and certainly by the early 1970s, these rules became very significant.

It is likely that John Arnott's substantial holding (almost 25%) would have been sold in the late 1960s. The sale could have been triggered by his death. It is possible that his family might have been aggrieved at the money they received at the time and might have been even more annoyed if they had known what the Directors received in 1974.

Whatever about the late 1960s, by 1973 the value of the shares as measured by an auditor could have been less than a half of the market value of the shares. I don't think it is any coincidence that three Directors decided to retire at the same time in 1973. Three Directors, as distinct from one or two, would have constituted a majority of the Board of Directors and, as such, they could ensure that the price they received for their shares would be the market value rather than the value decided by an auditor. Hetherington and the Walkers may have been old-fashioned Protestant businessmen, but they were no fools!

The other interesting thing about the 1969 Articles was the voting rights of the shareholders.

The total nominal capital of the company amounted to 450,000 pounds. This was divided into 275,000 pounds in 5.5% Cumulative Preference Stock; 105,000 pounds in 6.5% Cumulative Preference Stock; and 70,000 pounds in Ordinary Stock.

It is unusual for Preference Stock holders to have voting rights, but it turns out that in *The Irish Times* they did. For every 25 pounds of Preference Stock a shareholder held he was entitled to one vote and for every 5 pounds of Ordinary Stock he was entitled to one vote. So the total vote amounted to 15,200 for the Preference Stock holders and 14,000 for the Ordinary Stock holders. Also, it appears that just before the restructuring in 1974 the Preference Stock was converted into Ordinary Shares. So the Preference Stock was more significant than would normally be the case.

As indicated above, the five Directors before the restructuring owned 100% of the Ordinary Stock. They may have owned the vast bulk of the Preference Stock but not 100%. This explains why there was an issue of 50,000 in Ordinary Stock in 1972, giving an extra 10,000 votes to the Directors.

THE RESTRUCTURING

As I have indicated, the intention of the three Directors to 'cash in' meant that there would be big changes in *The Irish Times*. I suspect that this event had been anticipated well before 1973. The reason I say this is that there was the general policy of consolidation of stock in the hands of the Directors and the 1969 Articles gave the Directors flexibility to alter all existing stock to Ordinary Shares. I would guess that, since the mid 1960s, there was a policy by the Directors to 'tidy up' the capital ownership structure of *The Irish Times*.

There is also evidence of some 'tidying up' of the balance sheet. In the 1972 accounts the "Goodwill" and other "intangible" elements of the fixed assets amounting to 308,000 pounds were written off against a capital reserve. The leasehold on the premises was re-valued upwards by a massive 437,000 pounds (The total net value of the leasehold at the end of 1971 was only 117,000.) Of the 437,000 pound revaluation surplus, 317,000 was set off against the intangible assets in the capital reserve and the remaining 120,000 was credited to Revenue Reserves.

It's as if the Directors of *The Irish Times* were not interested in showing the true value of the company's assets while they were buying up the other shareholders at cheap prices. However, when it came to a situation where they themselves might want to sell, the true value of the company was revealed. If that is the case, the Auditors—Stokes Kennedy Crowley—don't emerge from this story with much credit either.

Some of the resolutions to alter the capital structure of the company that I have seen appear to be contradictory. I suspect there were a number of clerical errors. However, judging by how things ended up it would appear that all of the Preference and Ordinary Stock was transferred into new 1 pound Ordinary Shares. So, following the restructuring there was 500,000 pounds of Ordinary Shares. This was owned by an unlimited company called "The Irish Times Holdings". There was a new issue of 1 pound preference shares totalling 100 pounds. 92 of these shares were owned by "The Irish Times Trust Ltd". The remaining 8 were owned by various individuals: all resident in the island of Ireland. Only one of the Preference Shareholders is a familiar name. This was Donal Nevin, the well known trade unionist.

The surprising thing is that the entity that owned *The Irish Times* was "The Irish Times Holdings" and not "The Irish Times Trust Ltd" as recent articles in the newspapers have indicated. "The Irish Times Trust Ltd" was only a Preference Shareholder. However, it is possible that "The Irish Times Trust Ltd" owned "The Irish Times Holdings" or that, at some stage after 1974, ownership was transferred to "The Irish Times Trust Ltd".

THE 1974 ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

The 1974 Articles of Association was a very unusual document. The mind which conceived it must have put a lot of thought into it. But there is some evidence of sloppiness on the part of the legal mind who wrote it up!

Many of the Articles are a rehash of the 1969 Articles of Association but there are also many Articles that are original and unique to the 1974 document.

According to the 1974 document, the Preference Shareholders were only entitled to a dividend of 5% per annum. So, the 8 individual shareholders would have been entitled to 5 pence per annum and *The Irish Times Trust Ltd* would have been entitled to a dividend of the princely sum of 4 pounds 60 pence. Article 4 b specifically states that the Preference Shareholders:

"shall not be entitled to any rights in the profits or assets of the company".

There is nothing surprising about this part. It would normally be the Ordinary Shareholders that would be entitled to the profits.

But article 25 says:

"No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business. Save as herein otherwise provided, two members present in person or by proxy, not being less than two individuals holding between them not less than 90% of the issued Preference shares shall be a quorum."

So effectively a General Meeting could not take place without "The Irish Times Trust Ltd" representative (representing 92% of Preference Shareholders) and one other shareholder. Also, since McDowell was also an individual Preference Shareholder, a General Meeting could take place with only the attendance of McDowell and a representative of "The Irish Times Trust Ltd". In fact, if McDowell held the proxy for the Irish Times Ltd Trust, it was possible for McDowell to hold a perfectly valid General meeting of the "The Irish Times Ltd" all by himself! He wouldn't have had to elect a chairman since he was already the chairman of "The Irish Times Ltd".

Leaving aside the novel idea of a legally-valid General Meeting being held by one person, it is also very unusual for the Ordinary Shareholders not to be considered in forming a quorum.

On the question of actual votes at a General Meeting Article 34 (ii) says:

“On a poll every holder of Preference Shares present in person or by proxy shall have one vote for every Preference Share of which he is the holder.”

Article 35 says:

“The ordinary shares shall not confer on holders thereof any right to receive notice of or to attend or vote at any General Meeting of the Company.”

So the Preference Shareholders were given all the votes but none of the profits (or to be precise 5 pounds of the profits each year), while the Ordinary Shareholders were given the right to all the profits (Article 84) but none of the votes.

I have not had sight of the Articles of Association of “The Irish Times Trust Ltd” but Fintan O’Toole’s article of 29th November 2001 indicates that McDowell’s dominance of the so called “trust” was similar to his dominance of the company.

It was as if whoever conceived the 1974 document wanted to give absolute control to McDowell without any ownership rights. To say the least this is extremely unusual. But it indicates to me that whoever was the guarantor of the loan, it was not McDowell himself. If the ultimate financial backer was McDowell there would have been no possible reason to have this division between ownership and control.

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

The 1974 document indicated two ways that Directors could be appointed to the Board of The Irish Times Ltd:

- a) By “The Irish Times Trust Ltd”;
- and
- b) by Major McDowell.

Assuming that McDowell controlled the so called “trust”, therefore McDowell could control the appointment of Directors.

The original 1974 document allows for a maximum of fourteen directors: nine to be appointed by the trust. Of the remaining five, one was to be Major McDowell himself, one was to be the editor of “*The Irish Times*” and the remaining three were to be appointed by McDowell.

Article 46 says:

“The Irish Times Trust Limited shall have power from time to time and at any time to appoint any Governor of “The Irish Times Trust Limited as a Director either as an additional Director or to fill any vacancy (but so that the total number of Directors shall not at any time exceed

the number fixed by these Articles) and to remove from office any Director so appointed. Any such appointment or removal shall be effected by a resolution duly passed at a meeting of the Board of Governors of The Irish Times Trust Limited held in accordance with the Articles thereof and shall take effect upon a copy of such resolution signed by the Chairman and Secretary of such meeting being delivered at the registered office of the Company.”

So “The Irish Times Trust Ltd” could hire and fire these directors. The directors appointed under the above article were called “nominated directors”.

Article 49 describes the composition of the remaining directors:

“(1) Thomas Bleakley McDowell, so long as he shall be Governor of The Irish Times Trust Ltd, shall be a Director of the Company.

(2) Any person holding the office of Editor of The Irish Times shall ipso facto become a Director of the Company. Any person so becoming a Director shall on ceasing to hold the office of Editor ipso facto cease to be a Director.

(3) So long as Thomas Bleakley McDowell shall be Chairman he may from time to time and at any time by writing under his hand delivered to the Secretary appoint as a Director any person qualified under these Articles to be a Director and may by like writing remove any Director so appointed but so that not more than three Directors shall hold office by virtue of such appointment at any time.”

So aside from McDowell himself the only director not directly appointed by McDowell was the editor. However, article 81 indicates that he is appointed by the directors and:

“...he shall have been previously approved in writing by the Chairman” (i.e. McDowell).

Article 51 deals with the resignation of Directors. Clause g of this article indicates that a director shall vacate his office:

“if he (not being Thomas Bleakley McDowell) be required in writing by all his co-Directors, not being less than six in number, to resign”.

Article 78 says that:

“The Chief Executive at the date of the adoption of these Articles is Thomas Bleakley McDowell and he shall continue to be Chief Executive on terms as to remuneration and otherwise no less favourable to him than at present and he shall continue as Chief Executive until he shall resign from that office...”

Article 79 says that:

“The powers entrusted to and conferred on the said Thomas Bleakley McDowell whether as Chairman or as

Chief Executive by or at the time of the adoption of these Articles shall not without his consent be revoked, withdrawn, altered or varied in any way so long as he shall continue to hold that office.”

Although the 1974 document gives McDowell extraordinary powers it would appear from Fintan O’ Toole’s article of 29/11/01 that subsequent Articles of Association gave him even more powers.

In later versions of the 1974 document McDowell found it necessary to give the Nominated directors five votes per person to make sure that the so called “Trust” appointees would always be in a majority. Also his status was increased to an “A member”. One suspects all was not sweetness and light between McDowell and Gageby in the early 1970s!

O’Toole claims that successive editors have testified to the editorial independence afforded to them. But Article 80 says:

“The editorial policy to be followed by *The Irish Times* shall be as decided by the Directors from time to time and they shall ensure that it is in conformity with the objects of the Company.”

And Article 81 says:

“The Editor shall be solely responsible to the Directors for ensuring that the editorial content of *The Irish Times* is consistent in every way with the editorial policy of the *The Irish Times* as hereinbefore provided.”

It goes on to say:

“Subject to the foregoing, the Editor shall be responsible to the Chief Executive for carrying out such duties commensurate with his office as the Chief Executive may from time to time prescribe.”

The Chief Executive of course was McDowell. From this it would appear that if the other Directors allowed the Editor to be “independent” they would have been derelict in their duties and McDowell had the right to decide what the Editor’s duties were.

OATHS

But the most extraordinary feature of the 1974 document relates to the swearing of oaths. Article 50 says:

“Every Director shall, within 21 days of appointment and at each Annual General Meeting or within 21 days before or after such meeting in the presence of at least the Chairman, or another Director nominated by the Chairman, and one other Director declare before a Commissioner for Oaths or other person authorised to administer oaths a Statutory Declaration within the meaning of the Statutory Declarations Act 1938 in the following form: ...”

The oath amounts to three pages and

includes such fine phrases as “the right of the individual to liberty”, “the duty of society to search for truth”, “constitutional democracy”, “social justice”, “peace and tolerance”, “reasonable representation of minority interests and divergent views” etc.

But the last part of the oath is interesting. The director has to swear that:

a) I am not and have not been a minister of religion and I do not hold and have not held any similar position;

b) I am not and have not within the last five years been an elected member of any national or regional parliament or similar body;

c) I do not represent and have not represented within the last five years in national politics a political party or group or some national political aim;

d) I have no connection of such a nature as to be capable of causing the belief that I am more than a mere member of a political party or group...”

It is almost as if the directors of The Irish Times had to be independent of the society. The original document would have prevented Geraldine Kennedy from being eligible for a directorship and therefore the job of editor if she had continued to be a Progressive Democrat representative or even “more than a mere member”. I would say that in the spirit of that document the fact that she was ever “more than a mere member” of the Progressive Democrats would have counted against her in her application for the job as editor, although one suspects that membership of that Party would count as a “venial sin”.

But pity the former Sinn Fein activist. I imagine it would take a lifetime of purity and abstinence before he could reach the state of grace required of an Irish Times director. And even then, salvation might not be at hand!

Towards the end of the oath the director had to swear the following:

“I will observe a strict secrecy respecting all transactions of the Company, all opinions given at meetings of the Directors and all matters which may come to my knowledge in the discharge of my duties except when required so to do by the Directors or by any meeting or by a Court of Law and that I will never disclose any such matters by hint, innuendo or otherwise save as aforesaid.”

Isn't it a sad reflection on humanity that although *the Irish Times* Directors were working so hard on its behalf, humanity couldn't be entrusted with their secrets?!

On a more serious note, the above is constructed quite sloppily. The phrase “*or by any meeting*” would allow a director

to be released from his obligations to secrecy. However this phrase was deleted in a subsequent special resolution.

A number of other thoughts strike me. I seem to remember *The Irish Times* was very keen on lifting the concept of Irish government cabinet confidentiality. Geraldine Kennedy made her name by being able to use leaks from the cabinet. It is unlikely that anyone would be able to have similar access to *the Irish Times*.

Fintan O Toole wrote about editors testifying to their independence. But if there was interference from the directors, how could this fact become public?

But my overall question is: What had *The Irish Times* to hide?

At the end of Article 50 there is the following clause in relation to the oaths:

“Any Director who shall fail to make such declaration within such period as aforesaid shall, on the expiry of such period, cease to be a Director and shall not be eligible for re-appointment unless and until he shall have delivered to the Directors a signed undertaking to complete such declaration immediately if re-appointed as a Director, but shall again cease to be a Director if he shall fail to make such declaration within fourteen days of such re-appointment.”

Readers might be relieved to know that despite the emphasis on secrecy there is no mention of funny handshakes or bizarre rituals! However, to put it mildly, the 1974 Articles of Association of the Company has a very strange feel to it and I haven't seen the Articles of Association of the Irish Times Trust Ltd. yet.

CONCLUSION

As I indicated at the beginning of this article there were many changes in The Irish Times Ltd in the period immediately following the “*Gilchrist letter*”. Many of those changes can be explained by commercial considerations as well as the Directors desire to increase their power.

Although it was inevitable that there would be changes in The Irish Times in the early 1970s, some of the changes that did occur are extremely difficult to explain. In articles by both *Irish Times* journalists and other journalists on the so called “Trust”, the extraordinary powers given to Major McDowell are hinted at but no explanation is given as to why. “The Irish Times Trust Ltd” was born in 1974, but it is almost as if its conception was “immaculate”.

But of course, this was not so. The restructuring of *The Irish Times* in 1974 was constructed by a flesh and blood human being or group of human beings. But who were these people? Why did they give such extraordinary powers to one Director

(McDowell) who owned 20% of the Ordinary Shares before the restructuring, and no increased powers to another Director (Gageby) who also owned 20%? Did the bank have a guarantor or guarantors for the loan of 2 million pounds and if so who? Why was it found necessary for all directors to swear an oath of secrecy?

If Jack Lane had not discovered the “*Gilchrist letter*” the above questions would have been worthy of public discussion. But the “*Gilchrist letter*” shows that the man who became the most powerful person in *The Irish Times* in 1974 was eager to submit that newspaper to British influence in 1969. The time for striking a pose of “*lofty indignation*” is long past. Explanations are required.

John Martin

D-Day's Excluded Nationality

Editorial Note: The following letter failed to find publication in the *Irish Times*

Kevin Myers complains of an absence of generosity that for one reason or another refuses to acknowledge all the nationalities that participated in the liberation of France (June 15). None have been treated more shabbily than the Spanish Anti-Fascist refugees who were involved. In the Spring of 1939 the French Republic itself had imprisoned half a million such refugees in nine concentration camps, under whose harsh conditions at least 5,000 of them died. Nevertheless, upon the outbreak of the War in September, 60,000 of these Spanish refugees went on to volunteer for the French Army, only to be handed over to the Nazis a year later by Petain's collaborationist Government. The result was that 20,000 Spaniards were consumed by Hitler's Holocaust.

In February 1940 a group of 250 Spanish Republican prisoners in France had also been recruited by the British Army, their official armbands proclaiming their status as “Allies of the British Expeditionary Armed Forces”. But with the fall of France and the evacuation from Dunkirk in June 1940, the British Government's categorical instructions were that they were to be left behind to await their fate.

Fifteen of those Spaniards avoided becoming Holocaust victims by stealing British Army uniforms to get aboard ship for England. Upon being discovered, the British Army first threatened them with execution for such a “crime”, but since their numbers were so few, elementary humanity finally prevailed. In December 1940 nine of them agreed to constitute the nucleus of the British Army's “Number One Spanish Company”, and on June 8, 1944 they joined the invasion of Normandy.

Also participating in that invasion were several hundred more Spanish Anti-Fascists serving in the Second French Armoured Division of General Leclerc. In fact they constituted as much a fifth of the men in that Division, with its ninth company being wholly Spanish. Among the first tanks to liberate Paris in August 1944 were those bearing the names of Madrid, Guadalajara and Guernica, reminders that the war against fascism had commenced on Spanish soil in 1936.

How was it, then, that “El Pais” found an 88-year old Spanish D-Day veteran in tears because the organisers of the sixtieth anniversary celebrations had chosen to forget the contributions of both himself and his brave Spanish colleagues? The new Spanish Government did in fact make an attempt to participate in those D-Day ceremonies, in order to honour the role of its own citizens in a liberation of Europe from fascism that had, however, stopped short at the Franco-Spanish border. But Madrid was rebuffed by the organisers, on the grounds that “Spain was not a belligerent country in the Second World War”. And so the D-Day victors punished Spanish veterans for having been, to quote the official wartime language used by US and UK authorities, “premature anti-fascists”. *Manus O'Riordan* (17th June 2004)

Martin Mansergh And The Two Nations

The Irish Times Polemic continued

Editorial Note: The present compilation continues the story started in the June issue and encompasses new ground with a further pronouncement from Mr. Mansergh in the Letters Page, to which all but one reply was suppressed.

29th May 2004 UNPUBLISHED LETTER

Mr. Mansergh And The Referendum

David Adams writes (28/5/04) writes about Martin Mansergh's "...Irish credentials being subjected to a certain amount of critical inspection in recent times..." in his Opinion Article on the citizenship amendment which he rightly says sends a message of there not being "a welcome on the doormat for the poor immigrant." I am not aware of any such inspection of Mr. Mansergh's Irish credentials but I am aware of some inspection of his political views including those on the proposed amendment. See, for example, Mr. O'Rourke's letter of 6 May asking if Mr. Mansergh will be voting against the proposed changes in view of the significance he gives, with some passion, to Elizabeth Bowen's birth here in assessing her identity and Irishness. He has not replied but Mr. Mansergh is indeed in favour of the change and is helping to get rid of a long-standing, generous aspect of Irish law that has been included in the two Irish Constitutions. He is thereby sanctioning the stealing of something as precious as an identity from a newborn child. If such a right to identity is important for Elizabeth Bowen, in his opinion, why is it to be denied to any 'poor immigrant'?

Like the other mean spirited supporters of this amendment he should hang his head in shame. [Jack Lane]

The Irish Times Foreign Editor was included in the circulation list of the above letter and the following correspondence ensued:

Dear Mr Lane, Would you please get a life and cease sending me unsolicited [sic] and unwanted emails. *Peter Murtagh*

Dear Mr Murtagh, I find your anger reassuring as it indicates you have noted the point of my letter. You have obvious qualifications to be the Letters Editor of The Irish Times. *Jack Lane*

What I actually note, Mr Lane, is the poison and nastiness [sic] that underpins your missives which, to repeat, I do not want to receive. I resent your arrogant [sic] intrusions which I have never sought. Please cease sending me emails. *Peter Murtagh*

1st June 2004 'Two Nations' Theory
And Exclusive Ideas Of Irish Identity

I thank David Alvey (April 28th and May 10th) for clarifying the ideological premiss of the arguments he has been

defending, viz. the "two nations" theory and the campaign to separate church and state.

It is one thing to argue, and to accept as the Good Friday Agreement does, that it is wrong to attempt to impose an Irish identity on those members of a distinct community in Northern Ireland who repudiate it. It is quite another thing, and quite objectionable, to try to take away the entitlement to an Irish identity of people who valued and were proud of their Irishness. Irish nationality is and should be inclusive, and not subject to special political or social exclusions for older minorities. It is not clear why we are still having such debates now, when we are in the process of welcoming a variety of new cultural influences and have given constitutional recognition to our diaspora.

After all the unkind things written about Elizabeth Bowen, it is a pleasure to recall Robert Fisk's tribute to her "gentle, sensitive dispatches from Eire, which are still a delight to read, a pen portrait of a nation and its people desperate to avoid involvement in a war that was not of their making" (In Time of War, p. 411). Frank Pakenham briefly wrote similar reports for the Ministry of Information and was attacked for Irish propaganda by the Unionist representative in London. He was subsequently chosen by Eamon de Valera to co-author his biography.

My father, a professional historian at all times, whose mother was from north Cork and whose contribution over six decades was appreciated by many Irish political leaders, was in a similar mould. It does not seem to have occurred to the Aubane Historical Society that it was an asset to have a number of Irish writers sympathetic to the land of their birth and to its aspirations in the Ministry of Information during the war, instead of tarring them with the more aggressive Churchillian approach vis-à-vis Ireland, which they manifestly did not share.

Elizabeth Bowen may, however, have been picked on to provide a plausible bridge-head for a wider ideological argument. David Alvey advances the follow-up proposition that we should regard Swift, Berkeley, Sheridan, Goldsmith and even Shaw and Wilde (all Protestant) as English writers, because they "debase the idea of an Irish national literature". They debase nothing, as Fintan O'Toole eloquently demonstrated (Opinion, May 25th). All have been honoured as Irish by this independent State, whether on banknote, stamp, by statue, by taoisigh, or by regular Abbey Theatre productions.

The function of the selected exclusions is less to protect Irish culture than to plug the gaping hole in the intellectual credibility of the "two nations" theory. It can provide no place or satisfactory explanation for even such meritorious examples of the Irish Protestant and Anglo-Irish traditions, writers who were neither straightforwardly unionist nor, except Swift, easily assimilated to a more assertive nationalism. They moved freely in intellectual terms between these islands and contributed to the cultures of

both.

An Irish national literature should not be confused with a nationalist one (see Yeats on Davis), nor need it exclude those who preceded its conscious creation (c. 1900), or whose opus, before or since, only partially fits into it.

The "two nations" theory, under a thin veneer of secularism, allows its practitioners to pillory un-Irish or "West British" people and activities of their choice, and remove from any legitimate place in this country's history and traditions whole classes of people they do not like, and all belonging to them past and present. For example, the Dublin-born Archbishop Chenevix-Trench, co-founder of Alexandra College, provokes this blanket dismissal by Jack Lane: "Could it be that there are people around these days who think those colonial Archbishops of Dublin were Irish?" (Elizabeth Bowen, Notes on Eire, p. 129.) Instead of respect for difference, there is too often just contempt for it.

In the course of this correspondence, excited suspicions were expressed over the post-1969 editorial policy and national character of The Irish Times, coming on top of the opposite accusation of having gone "native". I received two weeks ago the following tribute to a former editor from a greatly respected writer in the North: "Nobody has ever adequately acknowledged the contribution of Douglas Gageby throughout the entire civil rights and troubles. His support was invaluable." That contribution made The Irish Times the living antithesis of a "two nations" Ireland. [Martin Mansergh, Seanad Éireann]

3rd June 2004 UNPUBLISHED LETTER

I have a modest suggestion for Martin Mansergh and those who would have Elizabeth Bowen counted as an Irish writer: they should prove it. They should demonstrate through detailed reference to her life and work the strength of their case; and they should do so in a way that would be understood by a non-academic Irish audience.

Presenting her as an Irish writer will not be easy. It is clear in her creative writings and in her wartime reports for the British Ministry of Information that London and the Home Counties were the center of her universe. Her place in English literature has been described by the literary critic, Victoria Glendinning, as the link between Virginia Wolfe and Iris Murdoch and Muriel Spark.

Her standing in contemporary Ireland is anomalous. On the one hand she is fervently defended by a grouping of intellectuals that includes: Martin Mansergh, David Adams, Kevin Myers, Gabriel Rosenstock, and Roy Foster, to name only those who are well known. While on the other, very few Irish people have heard of her, let alone read her work. Is it not time that Elizabeth Bowen was properly introduced whether by pamphlet, book, radio or television programme to the Irish reading public?

I would only ask of the author of such a work that he or she should refrain from wasting time by misrepresenting those of us on the other side of the argument. Nobody in either Athol Books or the Aubane Historical Society would disagree with Senator Mansergh (letters June 1st) when he states that Irish nationality is and should be inclusive.

In Athol Books we have done our share in exposing nationalist exclusiveness over the years and the current edition of our journal, the Irish Political Review, carries a leading article denouncing the Government proposal in the Citizenship referendum because it will bring race into the definition of Irish nationality in the Constitution. (Copies can be obtained from Books Upstairs in Dublin or from www.atholbooks.org.) Similarly the publishing work of the Aubane Historical Society is clearly based on the Thomas Davis tradition of inclusive nationalism. We do not wish to exclude anyone from Irish nationality, only to prevent Irish literature from being restored to the status of a regional British literature.

It seems to be necessary to Senator Mansergh's case to portray me as some class of intellectual bigot. He attributes to me the proposition that we should regard Swift, Berkeley, Sheridan, Goldsmith and Shaw and Wilde (all Protestant) as English writers, because they 'debase the idea of an Irish national literature'. But that is not what I said. What I wrote in a letter published on April 28 was:

'A clear headed literary critic, Ernest Augustus Boyd, author of Ireland's Literary Renaissance, maintained that to designate Anglicised writers like Swift, Berkeley, Sheridan, Goldsmith and even Shaw and Wilde as Irish was to debase the idea of an Irish national literature'.

Ernest Boyd (himself a Protestant) was engaged in the cultivation of a national literature in Ireland. Following his advice leads to a more thoughtful appreciation of literature whether English or Irish. He was the opposite of a bigot as I am.

Martin Mansergh's letter concludes with a ringing defence of the record of the Irish Times. But the point that has been raised in this correspondence is that The Irish Times has a case to answer in relation to connections between its long-term controller, Major T.B McDowell, and the British Government. Until that matter has been investigated in the ruthless inquisitorial manner that The Irish Times itself has brought to bear on others for its own purposes, an element of doubt must remain about its record. [David Alvey, Publisher, Irish Political Review]

4th June 2004 *The Anglo-Irish And The 'Two Nations' Theory*

Martin Mansergh claims to expose the "gaping hole in the intellectual credibility of the 'two nations' theory. It can provide no place or satisfactory explanation for even. . . meritorious examples of the Irish Protestant

and Anglo-Irish traditions" (June 1st).

I beg to differ. The "two nations theory" deals with nations. The Anglo-Irish never formed or led a nation. They were given every opportunity to do so. The island of Ireland was at their feet, or at their mercy, for centuries and they were too inept to lead it anywhere, certainly not to nationhood. Some heroic individuals tried, to their great credit, to do so. Some paid the ultimate price and nobody can deny them their merits and their heroism.

Their American cousins did create a nation of their island continent and as a result there was no Anglo-America hanging around afterwards finding, like a political cuckoo, a nest in a house built by someone else.

The Ulster Protestants did try to form a separate nation state with the United Irishmen movement and were put down. They created a definite continuous social and political development that became politically unionist a century later and they demonstrated all the characteristics of a nation in the process. They asserted their rights by force in the Home Rule conflict. The other Irish nation copied them and likewise asserted their national rights of separation by force.

Both therefore passed the ultimate test of nationhood and Anglo-Ireland was left high and dry. One may like or dislike one nation or the other - or both of them - but that does not change the reality that these are the forces that matter in determining politics on this island.

The great intellectual credibility gap does not lie with the "two nationists" but with Martin Mansergh and the many others who have accorded national rights to the Ulster Unionists by dropping Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution; but at the same time denied them national status. The one-nationists are intellectually consistent and honest in objecting to the granting of such rights to what is classified as "a tradition", a "culture", a "religion", a "tribe" and everything and anything else but a nation.

If one is concerned with "intellectual credibility" the choice is between the one-nationists and the two-nationists and all else is waffle. [Jack Lane]

4th June 2004 *UNPUBLISHED LETTER*

Anglo-Irish Choices

In his exposition of the two nationalist principles of self-determination which provide the only coherent rationale for the Irish peace process, and with which I agree, Jack Lane (June 4) refers to the Anglo-Irish being "left high and dry". This raises further questions, since independence meant that the Anglo-Irish could no longer make that hyphen the basis of their future. From Elizabeth Bowen to her cousin Hubert Butler the Anglo-Irish have been self-defined and described as a superior race. As Bowen herself put it, "to speak with a brogue, in my childhood, was to be underbred". But now choices had to be made. Bowen opted to

function as a British Empire loyalist, while Butler developed as an Irish Protestant Republican.

John Betjeman, who would be a confederate of Bowen's when they both engaged in British intelligence activities in wartime Ireland, had rather gushingly written to her in October 1938 that "the Anglo-Irish are the greatest race of western civilisation". In his 1950 essay "The Invader Wore Slippers" Hubert Butler, notwithstanding his own subsequent inconsistencies regarding supposed racial superiority, was to be less sanguine as to the implications of such a master race mentality had there been a Nazi German invasion of Ireland. He wrote:

"I think when the success of the invasion had been assured, it would have emerged that the respectable Anglo-Irish Herrenvolk of Ulster and the Dublin suburbs would prove the more satisfactory accomplices (than Celtic Nationalists) in establishing the German hegemony. The Jersey treatment would have been applied. It is probable that at Greystones and Newtownards, as at St. Helier and at Peterport, Divine Service with prayers for the King and the British Empire would continue to be permitted in the Protestant churches. Certainly the inevitable bias of German correctness would have been towards the Anglo-Saxon, towards bridge and foxhunting, and away from the Irish, from ceilidhes and hurley (sic) matches and language festivals, more in keeping with Herrenvolk philosophy ... (For the British Naziphiles) Irish separation would have been incompatible with their Kiplingesque ideal of a merry, beer-drinking 'old' England, allied with Germany, grasping once more in her strong right hand the reins of Empire and dealing out firm justice to the lesser breeds".

Bowen herself shared with Churchill a type of British patriotism so fundamentally anti-German that she herself would not have gone down any such Anglo-Irish road of Nazi collaboration. But British patriotism is what it was, just as it was Butler's own Irish patriotism that made him recoil at the vehemence with which Bowen declared at their very last meeting: "I hate Ireland!". They had indeed made their separate choices on either side of the hyphen. [Manus O'Riordan]

8th June 2004 *UNPUBLISHED LETTER*

I have just seen Senator Mansergh's comments on the "two nations theory", of which I am the originator. One must suppose that an adviser to Taoisaigh is well informed and that his misrepresentations are therefore wilful. Senator Mansergh's depiction of that 'theory' bears little resemblance to the view which I published in September 1969, a couple of weeks after helping with the defence of West Belfast against the Unionist pogrom, and which I developed in a wide range of publications in the early seventies. The 'theory', put forward while the Northern situation was still fluid and capable of taking

different directions, said that the Ulster Protestants would behave under pressure from nationalist Ireland as a distinct nationalist community. The prevailing view amongst political leaders of all tendencies in the Republic was that they were a feudal remnant without an inherent power of resistance, and that they would crumble under pressure.

The matter was put to the test of practice, and it was not the two-nations view that was falsified by events.

I urged in 1969 that the assertion of national sovereignty (Articles 2 & 3) should be repealed as a preliminary step towards initiating a rapprochement between the two national communities on the island. Such a measure would have caught the attention of the Ulster Protestants. But the proposal was rejected by all parties in the Republic then - and no publicity could be got for it in the *Irish Times*, whose British bias did not predispose it in favour of Protestant Ulster. When it was implemented 30 years later, its influence on the Protestant community was negligible because it came after intense pressure of all kinds had been tried and failed.

The two nations view was amply explained at the time, and it cannot be reasonably inferred from anything that was published that Protestants in the Republic were designated as being of a different nationality to other citizens.

The Belfast Agreement implied an incoherent two-nations position, as did Senator Mansergh's long criticism of Rory O'Bradaigh's biography of General Maguire in the *Times Literary Supplement* some years ago. Because of this incoherence, the Agreement, though more Partitionist in form than the proposal I made at the outset of the conflict, has had the effect of alienating the Ulster Protestant community at grass roots level, more than any previous measure since 1922.

The decline of national political culture in the Republic in recent decades is directly traceable to the failure to take rational political account of the national division 35 years ago. The "two nationalists", having taken account of that division then, have not been subject to this moral collapse and the repudiation of a century and a half of national development to which it has led. Senator Mansergh is therefore able to make the self-contradictory criticism of us as deniers of Irish nationality, on the one hand, because we did not assert that the Ulster Protestants were part of the nation which they rejected, and as "narrow nationalists" on the other hand, because we do not engage in the new fashion of disparaging the national culture which produced us - the culture of what Senator Mansergh calls "*De Valera's Ireland*". [Brendan Clifford]

Editorial Note: A further sequence of published and unpublished letters in a dispute started by Robin Bury will appear in the Summer issue of *Church & State*

Two Nations Once Again!

"*'Sufficient for the day is the newspaper thereof'* observes the editor in *James Joyce's Ulysses...*" writes Martin Mansergh on his first day as an *Irish Times* propagandist (20 Sept 03), and the newspaper which is sufficient for the day is the *Irish Times*: "*For 50 years, The Irish Times has been both monitor and catalyst of a changing Ireland*". Although I read *Ulysses*, in a copy rented from a dirty bookshop in London around 1958, I read it without being carried away by it and it didn't become part of my mind. I do not recall this tag, but I know that Hegel said much the same thing a century earlier.

One would expect a newspaper which is sufficient unto the day to be a recognisable product of the society for which it is sufficient, but the *Irish Times* is not that. It began as the paper of the English colony. It maintained a diehard colonial opposition to the independence movement until the bitter end—until after the state was established—after which it became for a generation or two the supercilious ghost of the colony hovering above the uncouth natives. And then it certainly did become "*both monitor and catalyst of a changing Ireland*". The ambitious attempt to destroy Fianna Fail was almost entirely its work.

What was behind it that made it so influential? Not any of the parties or classes constituting the social mainstream of the state.

I thought over the decades that it would be interesting to ferret out its secrets, but I made no attempt to do so until a few years ago, when the *Irish Times* suddenly went on the offensive against an obscure local history group on the back of Musherá with which I was associated. Senator Mansergh has now joined it in that offensive. They seem to find it intolerable that an articulate remnant of what Mansergh calls "*De Valera's Ireland*" should survive anywhere in the country.

I have always assumed that Freemasonry was behind the *Irish Times*, or was at least heavily involved with it. It came to my knowledge about twenty years ago that a promising young Catholic from the provinces, who became an eminent contributor, was brought into the paper by a local Freemason. I received this bit of information matter-of-factly, as being in

accordance with the nature of the world. I never shared the liberal conception of things which sees society as an atomised meritocracy. It actually functions through a congeries of conspiracies. I was once shown all the Masons in a particular area of North London by somebody who was intent on exposing them. I could not doubt his facts, but it seemed to me that what they were was an authoritarian conspiracy operating behind the liberal facade and keeping it functional. They did not merely put money in each other's pockets while indulging in childish rituals. There was a social purpose in the institution—refounded in the early 18th century in the service of the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Because I could not believe that atomised meritocracy was a possible form of social existence, I could not get excited about the Masonic conspiracy, or the counter-conspiracy of Knights of Columbanus, or any of the multitude of influential coteries through which complex societies are enabled to exist. The trouble in Ireland now seems to be that the Masonic conspiracy—which is necessarily a British conspiracy—has disintegrated all the others while strengthening itself, and that the chief agency of this conspiracy, the *Irish Times*, is conducted by an Oath-bound Directory which controls the nominal Editor. It was mysteriously financed a generation ago, and is run by a Politburo which is not connected with any of the forces through which an Irish State was brought into being. The Masonic conspiracy, which helped to keep Britain functional under the potentially destabilising ideology of the Glorious Revolution, is a destructive force in Ireland. Its one period of constructive activity was in the 1790s, at which time, interestingly enough, it split on a kind of "two-nations" basis. Which brings me back to Senator Mansergh.

TWO NATIONS

I happened to be visiting Michael O'Connor of Clondrohid, who admires Martin Mansergh, on the day that Mansergh published his second Denunciation of me in the *Irish Times*. Neither of us had seen it. I don't think Michael is an avid reader of the *Irish Times* any more than I am. He had seen a milder Denunciation

published by Mansergh some time earlier and regretted it, and he could not understand why Mansergh was doing it. I suggested that, whatever the reason, Mansergh was trivialising himself, demeaning himself, by doing it. Michael agreed. The only explanation he could offer was that Mansergh took it badly when *Aubane* refused to classify Elizabeth Bowen as a North Cork writer, or even an Irish writer, because Bowen was one of his people. I did not gather that Michael himself had any strong opinions about Bowen. All that concerned him was that our treatment of her in the *North Cork Anthology* had upset Mansergh.

It so happened that we then discussed the “two nations theory” for a while. Michael brought it up. I was surprised to find myself discussing this question thirty-five years after the event, but did my best to remember what it had all been about.

I put in a letter to the *Irish Times* replying to Mansergh’s Denunciation, thinking that the particular conjunction of circumstances then existing—the fact that an eminent British journalist was watching it—might cause the *Irish Times* to break the practice of a third of a century and publish it. It did. Mansergh did not respond with a rebuttal. But on June 1st he published a long letter on *Two Nations’ Theory And Exclusive Ideas Of Irish Identity*.

As the originator of the “two nations theory” in the live conflict in the North I wrote a reply to Mansergh and sent it in. If it had been published, I would have had to give serious consideration to the possibility that the *Irish Times* had ended the censorial practice of a third of a century. It was not published, therefore I can again consider myself free of any obligation to communicate with the *Irish Times* with regard to mistakes it publishes on matters for which I have any responsibility. They are not mistakes. They are policy.

Castro likes to play handball, and he likes to win, and so he plays handball with people who let him win. I have seen this foible criticised as a serious character flaw. But what does Martin Mansergh do? He engages in controversy in a newspaper which guarantees him against rebuttal, and therefore he feels free to indulge in malicious misrepresentation. (It is either malicious or ignorant and it would be defamatory to attribute ignorance to such a qualified intellectual.) And, since I cannot reply to him in his own publication, I must do it here.

The reply from which the *Irish Times* Directorate protected Mansergh is given on page 20. Some amplifications are given below.

The two-nations view as set out by me in the heat of the conflict in the North in 1969 had nothing whatever to do with Swift or Berkeley or Shaw or Wilde or Professor Mansergh or Elizabeth Bowen or the *Irish Times*. In short, it had nothing to do with the Anglo-Irish. The Anglo-Irish had lost the religious, economic and political monopolies which had sustained them for centuries. They were displaced in all those spheres by a nationalist movement which had arisen beyond those monopolies and subverted them. Confronted by the nationalist upheaval, some of the Anglo-Irish retreated from Ireland along with the State on which they had been dependant, some broke loose from their origins and became Irish nationalists, and some hung on, reserving their position and keeping their options open. But, whatever they were, they had nothing to do with the impending crisis in the North. I cannot recall that I took any heed of them in formulating the two-nations view, first as a bare formula and later as history.

I am going by memory. I am not a diligent reader of myself. If Senator Mansergh can show that the two-nations position included the Anglo-Irish in the second nation, let him show it, either in his monopoly publication or in this journal. Otherwise let him accept that in this matter he is a mere political trickster—a charlatan.

In 1969-70 I was convinced that the intense nationalism of the Republic in its response to the blow-up in the North demonstrated a brittleness which was likely to lead to a collapse. I remember saying something to that effect in *Hidden Ulster Explored*, a reply to Pádraig Ó Snodaigh’s contention that the two-nations view was contradicted by an underlay of Gaelic culture in the Plantation of Ulster—a contention which I saw as indicative of the self-deception of the 26 County middle class on Northern issues.

The collapse occurred in the late 1970s and the 1980s, when I was taking little account of developments in the Republic. And, when I did look South again in the 1990s, I found that many of those who had denounced me most vigorously in 1969-70 for betraying the nation had become West British Imperialists: and that the premier historian was describing the War of Independence in 1920 Dublin Castle terms as a murder campaign.

*

Mansergh writes:

“It is wrong to attempt to impose an Irish identity on those members of a distinct community in Northern Ireland who repudiate it. It is quite another thing, and quite objectionable, to try to take away the entitlement to an Irish identity of people who valued and were proud of their Irishness. Irish nationality is and should be inclusive, and not subject to special political or social exclusions for older minorities. It is not clear why we are still having such debates now.”

Well, we’re not actually have a *debate* Martin, are we? You are indulging in a protected monologue. And the reason the two nations is being discussed is that, for reasons best known to yourself, you chose to bring it up, in distorted form, in an argument to which in its authentic form it has no relevance.

The assertion that the two-nations position *denied* Irish nationality to anybody who asserted it is groundless. What it said was that the Ulster Protestant community, which declared that it was not part of nationalist Ireland, actually was not part of it, and that, if pressed on the issue, it would respond as a hostile nationality, which it did.

I think I drafted the 1969 statement clearly enough to rule out reasonable misunderstandings, but I was not surprised when, in the heat of those times, things were read into it which were not there. I amplified the position in a series of publications which took up those understandable, though not reasonable, misrepresentations. But where does the heat come from which causes Senator Mansergh to do in 2004 what some People’s Democrats did in Belfast in the chaos of 1969?

It was said then that I constituted *Northern Ireland* into a nation, thereby denying the nationality of the Six-County minority which declared itself to be part of the Irish nation. I did no such thing.

What I said then was in substance what Mansergh says now in the statement, “*it is wrong to attempt to impose*” etc., except that I did not phrase it morally. I have usually been suspicious of morality when it is invoked in Constitutional reasoning. I read Aristotle when I was young in what Mansergh refers to dismissively as “*De Valera’s Ireland*”, and therefore I have taken it that the sphere of morality is *within* States, and has little place in relations *between* States, and none at all in the *formation* of States. The meaning of “*Man is a political animal*” is that the

character of the individual is determined by the Constitution of the State, i.e., the actual structure of the State, as distinct from what the EU is now engaged in.

I argued essentially that it would be *futile* to act on the assertion that the Ulster Protestant community was part of the “*historic Irish nation*”, and that a great deal of damage was likely to be done in the course of discovering that it was futile. That is the case that I put in argument with members of the People’s Democracy, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, the SDLP, the Irish Labour Party, the ‘Official Republican movement’ which is now the leading element in the Irish Labour Party, and Fine Gael. I put it at numerous meetings in Belfast and around the Republic in 1969 and the early 1970s, as well as in publications.

In later years, when the 1970 approach of the Social Democratic and Labour Party had been demonstrated in practice to be counter-productive, I heard Seamus Mallon declare that it would have been wrong to subject the million Ulster Protestants to Irish government. That is the kind of thing that was said by people who had damaged their heads by butting them against a brick wall in the first instance. And it is nonsense.

Mallon was arguing that it would have been essentially incompatible with the principles of democracy. And yet the American Civil War is usually listed amongst the great events in the history of democracy. In that Civil War much more than a million people were forced against their will to submit to a state which they rejected. Their loyalty was compelled by force, at the cost of a million lives.

I have taken it that the world is a place for living in, rather than a place for passing judgements on from a transcendental viewpoint. I have shunned transcendental moralities as either fashionable illusions or sanctifications of vested interests. And I have used the word ‘democracy’ in Northern Ireland affairs in accordance with the actual practices of the functional states which are called democracies, rather than as a Platonic Ideal. (I use the term loosely, since Plato of course was not a democrat.)

Ireland would have been the framework of democratic decision if the British State had put the Home Rule Act into effect, and I cannot see that the moral fabric of the Universe would have been ripped if Protestant Ulster had been compelled to submit to Imperial Home

Rule. But the Home Rule Act was not put into effect.

The situation that existed in 1969 was a consequence of the decision of the British State not to implement its own Home Rule Act; to break all precedent by deciding not to treat the island as a single constitutional entity; to concede to the 26 Counties a measure of autonomy which removed it from the UK Parliament; and to retain the 6 Counties as an integral part of the United Kingdom State with representation in the Westminster Parliament but with a devolved administration outside the political life of the state.

There was chatter about a ‘Northern Ireland Constitution’, and there was a strong opinion within the Unionist Party that it amounted to Dominion status. But the ‘Constitution’ was only paper. There was no actual structure of political life which could realistically be called a Constitution. And what was called politics was a routine exercise of authority by a community of about 60% over a community of about 40%.

This was the arrangement made by Britain in 1921. But Irish nationalists and Marxists described it as “*the Northern Ireland state*”. But there was not in 1969, and there never had been, a Northern Ireland state. What existed was the British state in Northern Ireland. Britain gave its state in the Six Counties a different structure from England, Scotland and Wales—a structure of largely informal communal dominance.

National differences existed in various parts of what Unionists called “*the mainland*”, but political life in Britain was not based on national difference. The state was governed through a system of party politics that was unrelated to national difference. If it had been attempted to govern it in a political medium of national conflict with moral exhortations to be moderate (as Northern Ireland was governed), I doubt that the British State would have survived for very long.

The political system of Northern Ireland—if it can be called a system—was as if designed to perpetuate and aggravate the conflict of nationalities on which it was based.

I suggested that Northern Ireland was inherently undemocratic because its politics were disconnected from the business of governing the state. I know of only two attempts to rebut the case I made.

One was by a forgotten Tory Minister, Nicholas Scott—well, largely forgotten, but admirably remembered by Professor Brendan O’Leary, so I may refer to him later. The other was by Lord Alderdice when he was plain ‘John’ and leader of the Alliance Party, which was an instrument of the Northern Ireland Office. He said (at a meeting of the Campaign for Labour Representation, of which there is a tape recording) that it could not be the case that the system of party politics was essential to representative government in the British state, because the state existed before its politics. That argument interested me as a measure of the political ignorance of Ulster Unionism at its most intelligent. (In historical fact, the party politics of the British state, generated out of sixty years of constitutional conflict and civil war in England and Scotland, preceded the existence of the state, and it seems unlikely that the state could have existed if its politics had not preceded it. Whigs and Tories constructed the state of which they then became the political parties.)

The centrality of the two-party system in the life of the British state quickly becomes a fact of experience for anybody who takes part in British politics. It is also a fact of knowledge in the major Constitutional writings which have influenced the development of the British state—Burke, Bagehot, Erskine May.

By 1969 I had experienced political life in two states—the Republic and Britain—and therefore I experienced the absence of an essential element in the political life of Northern Ireland. On the strength of first impressions I described politics there as a spectator sport. Socialists and Conservatives participated vicariously in British elections, avidly following the fortunes of their own side but unable to participate. Voting in the Six Counties was disconnected from the election of a Government for the State, which is the primary business of a democracy, and the business which throughout Britain has the effect of over-riding a whole range of local or sectarian feuds.

I looked in the histories and the sociological manuals for a democratic defence of the decision to exclude the Six Counties from the political life of the British state when they were being cut off from the rest of Ireland and retained within the British state as Northern Ireland. I did not even find in a single one of them a mention of the fact of exclusion.

At a certain point in the mid-seventies

the “Official Republicans” (the “Stickies”, the precursors of the present leadership of the Irish Labour Party) were greatly irritated by the case I had made that Northern Ireland was essentially undemocratic. Although I was advocating as a remedy that the Six Counties should be incorporated into the political system of the state, they saw me as a kind of devious fellow-traveller of the Provos because of my argument that the Northern Ireland set-up was essentially, and irredeemably, undemocratic. I was not a fellow-traveller. The attempt to bring Northern Ireland within the democracy of the state was conducted with great energy and ability by a large number of people (Catholics and Protestants in roughly equal numbers) and came to the brink of success. But I always acknowledged that what the Provos were aiming for was the only coherent alternative to what I was attempting. (In the mid 1980s I was asked by a Tory group if I would speak against one of the leading Provos in a debate at one of the London Universities. I said I would be happy to, but I hoped they understood that there was an extensive area of agreement between my position and that of the Provos, and that I would not conceal it. They thought better of having me speak for them.)

The Stickies came up with the argument that Devolution was incompatible with state-wide political organisation. I said that, if Devolved governments were established in Scotland and Wales, it was a certainty that the Labour and Tory Parties would not withdraw to England, but would, on the contrary, intensify their activities in Scotland and Wales as the condition of preserving the state. And so it has turned out.

I pointed out that the Union of England and Scotland was not maintained by Unionist parties, but was a product (in a sense, a by-product) of participation in the party-politics of the state. During generations of intense class conflict the Clydeside and the Welsh coalfields would have been alienated by Unionism—by the politics of Union as displayed in Northern Ireland—but they participated on a class basis in the party-politics of the state. And, if Liverpool had been cut out of the party-politics of the state, as Belfast was, I thought it would have turned out much like Belfast.

This matter is much clearer now than it was in 1970. There are devolved Governments in Scotland and Wales. The fact of Scottish and Welsh nationality is not disputed. And there are national movements of long standing in both regions.

But the withdrawal of the Tory and Labour Parties to England was never seen as a necessary, or even a sensible, accompaniment of the establishment of national devolved government there. It is well understood that the break-up of the party system of the state would be likely to lead to the “break-up of Britain” that was dreamed about by New Left Marxist Tom Nairn thirty years ago. Devolution has therefore been conducted in Scotland and Wales within the party-politics of the state.

Why was this not done in Northern Ireland?

There was no historic entity called Northern Ireland. There was no Ulsterish nationality. There was no Ulsterish nationalist movement, although Tom Nairn tried to create one in the 1970s. What there was was a sharp conflict of nationalities running through the fragment of a province that was constituted into Northern Ireland in 1921. One of those nationalities had been the most active part of the Irish nationalist movement during the preceding generation, while the other had raised a large illegal army for the purpose of thwarting the minimalist measure of Irish devolution provided for by the Third Home Rule Bill.

Britain was governed from 1919 to 1922 by a Coalition made up of the outstanding statesmen of the age, which had gained a landslide victory in the 1918 Election. It decided to set up a subordinate government in Northern Ireland, within the British state but outside its politics, under which the community which had raised a large army to defeat Home Rule was placed in control of the large and active segment of the Irish nationalist movement which was retained within the British state when the rest of nationalist Ireland took off on a separate course of state construction.

A third of the population of Northern Ireland was at a stroke cut off from the political life of its nation-state and also from the political life of the British state in which it was retained. Nothing like it was ever done on Earth before or since as far as I know.

If that dissenting third had been some kind of backward residue left over from a bygone era, the arrangement might have passed muster. But it was in fact the most politically active part of the population. It was eager to display its abilities in practical political affairs. And now it was required to endure ritual humiliation under the communal administration of the other community which had been placed in

authority over it. And, with every democratic outlet closed to it, it was expected to submit in the name of democracy.

This explosive situation was prevented from exploding by two Unionist statesmen, Craigavon and Brookeborough, who understood that nothing resembling normal political life was possible in Northern Ireland. They operated the system because that was the condition under which the Unionist community could remain in the UK, but they minimised political activity within it. Then Capt. O’Neill came along, expressed contempt for the backwardness of his predecessors, set about conducting affairs as if Northern Ireland was a democratic state when it was neither, and the system blew up.

After a phase of initial enthusiasm for the explosion, ‘respectable’ elements in the Republic drew back, and one began to hear it said that the Provos were in no sense the heirs of the authentic IRA of 1919-21. (That was before the ‘discovery’ that the 1919-21 IRA consisted of serial murderers.)

For my part, although I gave no encouragement whatever to the military turn of events in 1969-70, and did my best to encourage a radically different course of action, I thought the contrast between the Provos and the Old IRA should have been the other way around. The position of nationalist Ireland in 1919 was in no way comparable to that of the Northern nationalist community under the perverse combination of Partition and the Northern Ireland ‘constitution’. At the end of the Great War Southern Ireland was more prosperous than it had been for centuries, there was no longer an Ascendancy lording it over the people, and self-government of some kind was an immediate prospect. The war of 1919-21 was fought over an issue which appears pretty abstract in comparison with the humiliating condition of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland.

Nicholas Mansergh published a book on *The Government Of Northern Ireland* in 1936. It includes quite a long chapter on Political Parties. I turned to it, expecting that it would at least describe the relationship of what are called political parties in Northern Ireland with the State. It doesn’t.

I do not find it imaginable that he did not see the anomalous political condition of Northern Ireland within the British state, and that he did not realise that it was a form of political perversity which must have far-reaching consequences. But it

was his destiny to become a senior British academic/civil servant, and Britain had a purpose for the perverse form of government which it established in Northern Ireland. Therefore he did not see what it was not prudent for him to see. The tortuous means by which he avoided seeing what was obvious will be described in a future article.

Senator Mansergh ends his Two-Nations letter with the ringing statement that *The Irish Times* is “the living antithesis of ‘two nations’ Ireland”. If he means that it had a rigorous ban on the “two nations theory” and the policies connected with it, that is perfectly true. The outstanding evidence of this is Wee Frankie Millar, a former Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Party who was associated with the two-

nations/party organisation approach in the North in the 1980s, and who discarded all of that when taken on board the *Irish Times* when he lost out in an internal dispute in the Ulster Unionist Council.

I concluded, after much contact with British politicians, that Whitehall saw Northern Ireland—and the trouble it was bound to cause—as a means of exerting influence on the politics and culture of the Republic. (I was pleased to find that the *Catholic Bulletin* reached the same conclusion seventy years ago.) And that is why the *Irish Times* is “the living antithesis of ‘two nations’ Ireland”.

The time has come for a review of the progress of “one-nationism” during the past 35 years.

Brendan Clifford

The Election In Northern Ireland

The long-suffering people of Northern Ireland only had one election to deal with in mid-June 2004. The one to the Parliament of the European Union. The turn-out was nearly one third down on 1999. This was partly to do with the fact that Ian Paisley and John Hume were not standing and partly to the shredding of the electoral register in a vain attempt to stop Sinn Féin’s electoral advance. Paisley always had a very large personal vote, but Hume was always the SDLP’s ‘ace in the hole’. The somewhat colourless SDLP candidate Martin Morgan’s total was less than half, (45%) of Hume’s vote. Morgan is not Hume, and the turnout in 1999 was particularly high, even by Ulster’s ‘vote early and vote often’ standards—but this can only be described as a collapse of the ‘moderate Nationalist’ vote. The DUP’s Jim Allister, who is even more colourless than Martin Morgan (one of the younger faces in his own party) and something of a ‘yesterday’s man’, received 91% of Ian Paisley’s 1999 vote. The UUP’s hardly perennial Jim Nicholson, got 91,164 votes—a drop of more than twenty eight thousand on 1999—the percentage dropped by 4%, (from 20.64% to 16.60).

The ‘big story’ of the election was the fact that Sinn Féin won the ‘Taig’ seat (Northern Ireland, in terms of population, as a part of the UK’s complement of European Parliament seats, is entitled to somewhere between a third and a half of a seat. The whole region ought to be an

extension of a Euro-constituency in the north of England or the south of Scotland. This over-representation might seem big-hearted on the part of the UK authorities, but the three seats are designed to keep Northern Ireland out of any sort of participation in UK politics—even on the comparatively glancing level of the ‘European’ election. After all, NI voters might help to elect a member of a ‘real’ political party (one in contention for the ruling of the UK state). So the voters go out to elect persons with Orange or Green genes—they may be good, bad, indifferent representatives—but it is their genetic heritage that matters.

Despite all that, in 1999 there was an outburst of something like politics in the Euro-election in Northern Ireland. Tens of thousands of people (who seem to have stayed at home this time round) voted for the Progressive Unionist Party. Standing-in in the Catholic part of the electorate for the Workers’ Party of Ireland—which did not put up a candidate of its own, the PUP was unambiguously ‘Old Labour’ in political orientation. It was clearly attracting people from the NILP to its ranks five years ago. There was also the UK Unionist / Robert McCartney Party (which was regarded by the UK Independence Party as something of a ‘sister party’), and the Alliance Party of NI. The latter claimed that it was practically an extension of the LibDems, and all three got votes in five figures. The PUP (despite being in cahoots

with the Stickies) managed to get 22,494 votes. Even Natural Law got a quite respectable 998 votes—this is not a joke, in Northern Ireland the NLP can appear comparatively rational.

This time Sinn Féin bucked the trend by increasing its vote by nearly twenty seven thousand (26, 898 to be precise). It had 20.32% of the vote in 1999 and 26.31% in June 2004. This rise can’t really be a simple result of the SDLP’s vote collapsing, though it can be explained to some extent by the fact that a huge proportion of the potential electorate (possibly as much as a full third) stayed at home. Sinn Féin’s extra votes and greater percentage of the votes cast (over a quarter) are probably down to their own efforts.

A great many political activists in Northern Ireland (including some within the orbit of the *Irish Political Review* (alias *Northern Star*) worked for Éamonn McCann. He stood under the banner Socialist Environmental Alliance, despite which the Green Party (formerly so huffy about other people not allying with them) stood on its own ticket. The SEA got an unembarrassing 9,172 votes (1.67%) despite its Election Communication reading like an SWP handout. It was full of big notions and contained not one solid promise. Admittedly, neither did Sinn Féin’s: it promised to ‘Defend the Agreement’, ‘Combat Poverty’, and other good things—on the other hand, Sinn Féin is a known quantity. So is the UUP, which issued an essay which claimed that “*Jim Nicholson has a detailed agenda for the next 5 years in the European Parliament*”. But did not tell the reader what his “*detailed agenda*” consisted of. Nor was there any indication that one could learn more about this “*detailed agenda*” elsewhere, a website, for example.

The DUP issued a booklet, which featured a large number of photographs of Jim Allister (not a particularly exciting prospect—there was the traditional family photo with his wife and three children, much enhanced by an extremely handsome, eager-looking Labrador). The politics of the booklet was the usual DUP mixture of opposition to the EU while attempting to screw as much out of it as can be managed. “*The recent addition of 10 states to the EU will adversely impact on Northern Ireland ... [t]he effect will be to put your pound in eastern Europe’s pocket...*”. This is just mean-minded: apart from anything else, Northern Ireland has been soused in cash from Europe—‘money from America’ wouldn’t be in it.

The DUP will, apparently “...battle to maintain National Sovereignty and our National Currency” and “Oppose a Superstate” on the grounds that “the new constitution subverts the autonomy and supremacy of the nation state”—a curious criticism from a party which became quite unhinged when the campaign to get the parties of [the UK] State to do their duty by the people of Northern Ireland seemed to be going places at the turn of the 1980s.

If the DUP knows how the British State functions, it clearly disapproves of it. It loves its wee Orange Bantustan. In fact, it wants it back, under the slogan *Devolution Now*, meaning ‘majority rule’.

The Green Party (which garnered a respectable 4,810 votes) issued a fairly good Communication, and bits of it were quite well argued, basically saying that ‘Europe’ was here to stay and there should be a positive attitude towards it. Unfortunately it also demanded: “*Restore our democratic institutions now!*”, meaning the Assembly at Stormont, with its sectarian stitch-up. It also proposed an “*All-Island Environmental Protection and Enforcement Agency*”, which is fantasy-island stuff. Dublin is not going to allow anybody from the North to interfere in how it processes its laws on anything. Particularly not the environment which is dictated by the big farmers and the EU.

Speaking of the big farmers, we come to the *ne plus ultra* of ‘politics’ in Northern Ireland, the Independent candidate *John Gilliland*, who campaigned on the slogan, “*No Politics, Just Action*”. He was, apparently, the farmers’ candidate, and his handout went ‘big’ on the fact that, though he was the “*Youngest ever President of the Ulster Farmers’ Union, he played a leading role in managing the Foot and Mouth Crisis*”. There was lots more in this vein, and he also thinks Northern Ireland can screw more out of the Union. There is a sub-heading in his Election Communication, *Pro-European*, but the text describes him as being “*by no means uncritical*” of the EU.

He was backed by “*an impressive body of support ... including the Alliance Party, the Workers’ Party, the Hospital campaigner Dr Kieran Deeny, and local Labour, Liberals and Conservatives*”. Leaving aside the apolitical Dr. Deeny, this is a collection of people who have effectively given up on politics. Thirty years ago, Alliance and the Stickies saw themselves as the Tory and Socialist Parties of Northern Ireland. It was a

fantasy, but if the Workers’ Party-to-be, in particular, had been honest (with itself, apart from any other consideration), it might have had a substantial impact on politics. The WPI is a political sect which has spent thirty years fighting to escape the embrace of a mass movement. Presumably it did not back McCann for ‘ideological’ reasons.

Alliance has consistently played at being something other than what it is, a collection of middle class do-gooders, well out of their depth. Many of its younger members are also card-carrying LibDems, and that is what the Party has been about for most of its history. They think people in Northern Ireland should behave as if they were living somewhere else, preferably the Home Counties. Unfortunately, the people of Northern Ireland know that they are living in a disputed bit of a province, and act accordingly—they elected some Alliance people because they were decent and useful public representatives. Not because of their fantasy-politics.

The “*local Labour*” people mentioned as supporters in *the Globe* (the title of a section in Gilliland’s election handout), do not include Cllr. Mark Langhammer, and it is noticeable that none of the Labour, Liberal or Conservative people supporting Mr Gilliland are named. So they may include the nocturnal and shy *South Belfast Constituency Labour Party (properly constituted)*. (One of the founder members of SBCLP (properly constituted)—Jeffrey Dudgeon—was simultaneously helping to found the UK Unionist Party. Another founder member Erskine Holmes is a big noise in the NI Co-operative Society. When an innocent-minded member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party’s Stranmillis / Malone branch suggested inviting the SBCLP (properly constituted) to come to debate with them, members positively foamed at the mouth and denounced Holmes as a notorious slumlandlord! .)

The Liberals are probably Tommy Owens, the last Gladstonian Liberal in captivity—the Liberal ‘refuseniks’ who refused to join the LibDems are a very small political tendency even in the Liberal heartlands of Scotland, Wales and the West of England. And there is only Tommy in Northern Ireland. There may be some Conservatives left in Northern Ireland, they gloated in the late 1980s when they ‘got in’ to Thatcher’s Party—but they got well and truly shafted by the

Party,. And here they are, attempting to make themselves relevant by backing a proudly and consciously apolitical maverick.

Seán McGouran

ELECTIONS, continued

Government.

“What I want is for the Government to refocus its policies towards those who are struggling, towards core Fianna Fail principles. And I feel all of the Cabinet supports that—yes, even the PD members of Cabinet.”

However, the President of the PDs and Justice Minister, Michael McDowell—

“pointed out that those who were struggling had benefitted most from the policies of the present Government.

“...there had been a lot of ‘mealy-mouthed criticism’ from people who would be better off ‘getting stuck in and going head-to-head with Sinn Fein activists in their constituencies.’”

“This would be better than staring at the Sinn Fein vote going up and being mesmerised by Gerry Adams talking about an Ireland of equals,” Mr. McDowell stated.

“In his speech last night, Communications Minister Ahern said: ‘Government taking a back seat and allowing unbridled market forces shape society was not an option—in either our economic or social policy.’

“Let’s be clear then—we chose neither Berlin or Boston. We reject these models for very simple reasons—both alienate the poor. Neither can support a sustainable, caring social policy,” Fianna Fail’s Mr. Dermot Ahern stated.

But last month, the President of the PDs, Mr. McDowell said that an economy such as Ireland’s “demands flexibility and inequality in some respects to function”. It was such inequality “which provides incentives,” Mr. McDowell said.

But Mr. Ahern retorted:

“Fianna Fail rejects the classic neo-liberal stance on inequality. We reject the ‘winner takes all’ approach. We reject the policies which place all emphasis on ‘equality of opportunity’ whilst providing only a modicum of social protections. At their worst, these policies are active drivers of alienation, higher crime-rates and education drop-out. At their worst, these policies corrode social cohesion.”

So already Sinn Fein have compelled Fianna Fail to adopt the “Third Way”?

European PD candidate in Leinster.

The party won 20 council seat, in 1995 they won 25.

Despite having a Dail Deputy and Junior Minister, Tim O'Malley, the PDs failed to win a single seat on Limerick City Council, home of their founder and leader, Des O'Malley. However, in the County they took three County Council seats. At one stage they did have a TD in the county, Peadar Clohessy.

"...disappointment for the party as it remained virtually static" (Sean Donnelly, Irish Times, 14.6.2004).

WATERFORD

Waterford City and County proved to be Fianna Fail's 'Waterloo' after they were left with just a single City Council seat and lost four of their Co. Council seats.

Sinn Fein was a big winner in Waterford, they won two City seats and Brendan Mansfield took a seat in the County and a seat on Dungarvan Town Council, the first occasion for Sinn Fein since Pax Whelan in the 1920s. Mansfield's late grandfather, Mick Mansfield was a renowned figure in the War of Independence.

The Workers' Party which always retained a strong presence in the city were reduced from three seats to two on Waterford City Council.

Cllr. David Cullinane (S.F.) confirmed that Sinn Fein "*were open to forming a voting alliance with others, in particular with the Workers' Party on issues they agreed on*".

A notable point in the Dungarvan Town Council area: the Labour vote was down by 11% on five years ago, and Mansfield took 9% of the vote for Sinn Fein.

On Waterford Co. Council, Labour advanced from three to four seats for the first time.

Ward One in the city produced one of the big upsets when Fianna Fail's Sean Downer, an adviser to Environmental Minister and Fianna Director of the Local Election campaign, Martin Cullen, lost his seat to Joe Kelly of Sinn Fein.

In Ward Two, former PD mayor, Oliver Clery, crashed out at the end of the second count. In the city where Martin Cullen

served as a P.D. TD, the P.D.s have not a single public representative and none in the County Waterford, either! "*...they've now been rendered a non-entity as a party*" (Waterford News & Star, 18.6.2004).

LIMERICK

The Fianna Fail Mayor of Limerick, Dick Sadlier, failed to get elected. The party's vote in the city dropped from 28% in the last Local Elections to just 12% this time around. Out of 17 seats, Fianna Fail have only two Councillors in Limerick City.

Sinn Fein's only candidate failed to get elected. Republican Sinn Fein fielded two runners and though not elected, they polled a respectable vote, both exceeding the vote of the Sinn Fein candidate in Limerick No. Two Ward.

DONEGAL

"Imagine, if you will, Sinn Fein now holding eight council seats in the county : four on the County Council and four more on town councils in Buncrana; Ballyshannon and Letterkenny. Without putting a tooth in it, this is some big achievement" (Tirconaill Tribune, 18.6.2004).

The Sinn Fein Euro candidate, Pearse Doherty polled a stunning 65,000 first preference votes in the North-West Euro constituency, 13,000 ahead of Fianna Fail junior minister, James McDaid, TD, who must be a relieved man that Doherty is domiciled in S.W. Donegal and not in Doctor McDaid's N.E. constituency.

Paddy 'The Cope' Gallagher, TD came back from Brussels to dethrone Independent T.D. Tommy Gildea in 2002—who can Fianna Fail bring back to stop Sinn Fein's onward march for a Dail seat in South West Donegal?

Independent Fianna Fail, founded by the late Neil T. Blaney, suffered the loss of two seats on Donegal County Council along with the loss of a town council seat in Ballyshannon.

"I.F.F. faced a real tough struggle for survival and it would not surprise me at all if going back to Fianna Fail is now an option that is far more attractive than six months ago" (Tirconaill Tribune, 18.6.2004).

Labour fared badly in Donegal, obtaining 135 votes of a quota of 2,051 in Letterkenny Co. Council area. In the town election, they polled 70 votes, the Socialist Party polled 65—the Green Party took a

seat with 276.

In the Glenties Co. Council area, trade unionist, Seamus Rogers polled 682 for Labour and was eliminated on the eighth count. He was a former Democratic Left councillor.

'MEALY-MOUTH' AHERN

And how have New Fianna Fail responded to their electoral crisis? They have panicked even further!

If ever an individual sums up the double-speak of Fianna Fail, its the Louth TD, Communications Minister, Dermot Ahern, who in civil life happens to be a solicitor.

On May 31, 2004, a fortnight before the elections, he was lecturing the people about economic rationalism and the benefits of globalisation—no PD politician could put it as stark.

"Government policies are now more radical than those of the Opposition," said Mr. Ahern. "They need to be", he said, "our jobs and our global competitiveness depend on it. The policies of Opposition have become conservative and reactionary"...

"Back in 1985, the State threw more and more of its dwindling reserves at every problem area." These policies, he said, required high taxes and borrowings.

"State spending as a percentage of GNP was amongst the highest of any country outside the Soviet Block", he said. This according to Mr. Ahern, led to 40,000 people emigrating that year.

"Those who stayed", he said, "had the highest debt per head in the world, and 250,000 were left jobless."

"High tax, high-spend policies were abandoned shortly after that, he said.

"We harnessed the world economy and through its ups and downs have maintained a degree of prosperity previously undreamed of. Our model works." (Irish Independent, 1.6.2004).

But a fortnight later, after a massive electoral drubbing, the mini-'Friedman' adopts the mantle of Frederic Ozanam.

"In an address, which was approved by the Taoiseach's department, Mr. Ahern implicitly criticised Ms. Harney and Mr. McDowell by underlining what he said were Fianna Fail's core social and economic principles." (Sunday Independent, 20.6.2004).

"Later Mr. Ahern told the Sunday Independent that his speech had contained certain 'implicit criticisms' of the PDs, but he said he was not calling for the PDs to be thrown out of

ELECTIONS, continued

Limerick criminal, the late Michael Kelly, who topped the poll in Kemmy's Ward Three. Michael Kelly died on the day of the count, Sunday, June 13, 2004.

Despite this gain of a seat, the Labour vote was down 4.12% on 1999, at 14%. In 1999, it was 18.1% and in 1991, 22.9%, at the height of the Jim Kemmy era.

On Cork County Council, Labour gained a seat taking their tally to five. They received 10% of the first preference vote.

In Sligo, the party exceeded the 10% mark and took three County Council seats. They took two on Sligo Town Council with Declan Bree elected the new Mayor.

In Galway city, Labour took four seats becoming the largest party in the city. Catherine Connolly became the first Labour Mayor since Michael D. Higgins.

In Westmeath County Council, the party took a resounding 25% of the vote and won six seats.

Miriam McGillicuddy, the estranged wife of child pornographic case Judge, Brian Curtin was re-elected to Tralee's Urban District Council for Labour.

Labour expected to take 100 local authority seats in this election and achieved its goal, reaching 101.

"It improved considerably on the 83 seat won in 1999. Labour more than held its own in most areas despite the surge in support for Sinn Fein, and it had gains in Limerick city, Sligo, Westmeath and Waterford City and County" (Sean Donnelly, Irish Times, 14.6.2004)

FINE GAEL

"Realistically, however, Fine Gael cannot indulge in too much self-congratulation as Fianna Fail were on 'self-destruct' with their draconian policies of a window dressing overkill and every party, including Fine Gael was bound to benefit from the inevitable protest vote" (SouthernStar, 19.6.2004).

Fine Gael gained 14 Local Government seats, whilst their percentage vote dropped fractionally from 1999. Their most impressive performance was in the Euro Election, where five seats were won. They now have MEPs in all four Euro constituencies. Their single success story was in the Euro East constituency were

they took a stunning two seats. It looks as if the ranchers are back in support.

A feature here was the outright partisan media support for Mairead McGuinness (FG) who was the Editor of the weekly *Irish Independent* agricultural supplement and featured as a host on RTE programmes.

Fine Gael couldn't believe their luck when Tom Parlon, the PD TD and former IFA leader, didn't stand.

"...Fine Gael are the biggest winners in the elections, much bigger winners than Sinn Fein... Fianna Fail's sharp fall and Fine Gael's soaring rise..." (James Downey, Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

The *Irish Independent* called it "*Fine Gael's sparkling victory*" (14.6.2004). Let's get sober here, Fine Gael stanchd its electoral haemorrhage, from its General election outing in 2002. In the last Local Elections, 1999, the party received 28.0%, on this occasion, it was less: 27.4% but through the vagaries of Proportional Representation, they increased their seats from 277 to 290.

THE GREEN PARTY

The Green Party won 4% of the vote, up from 2.5% in the 1999 Local elections, hence a doubling of its local authority seats, though it had hoped to treble its seats. It lost its two Euro MPs and also lost both its Dublin City councillors.

It gained its first local government seat in Donegal, Letterkenny Town Council, when Neil Clarke, dramatically and historically 'defeated' Jimmy Kavanagh of Fine Gael.

"The big battle of the weekend without any shadow of a doubt was between Neil Clarke and Jimmy Kavanagh. Trailing by just one vote at the end of the 16th and final count, Clarke not surprisingly called for a recheck guaranteeing a further three hours of tension for the two camps which ended with an even more sensational result at 11.30 on Saturday night.

"One invalid ballot left Kavanagh and the Green candidate on the same number of votes with Clarke elected by virtue of his superior first preference of 276 to the 269 recorded by his close rival..." (Tirconaill Tribune, 18.6.2004).

Two more rechecks took place but at teatime on Monday, Neil Clarke was elected to the ninth and final seat giving Letterkenny and Donegal its first ever Green Party councillor.

The party took four seats in Dun

Laoghaire-Rathdown with 10.2% first preferences and three seats in Fingal with 8.2%. New seats were gained in Clare, Kilkenny. The party failed to increase its representation on Cork City council, despite having a TD in the city's South Central constituency.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY

Clare Daly, who was jailed during the bin tax protests, topped the poll for the Socialist Party in the Fingal County Council elections.

Another Socialist Party Councillor, Ruth Coppinger, held her seat after polling 2,000 first preferences in Mulhuddart.

Mick Barry, topped the poll in Cork North-Central to give the Socialist Party their first seat outside Dublin, an outstanding performance.

The party leader, Joe Higgins polled 23,218 in the Dublin Euro seat, another great effort!

THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS

Whilst the PD vote rose by one per cent on its 1999 Local election performance to 3.8%, similar to its 2002 General Election, they had little to celebrate. They dropped from 25 Local government seats in 1999 to 18 on June 11.

In Co. Cork, the party polled 1.3%. In 1991, they had 5.5%. Senator Minahane lost his Cork City Council seat. The party now has only one seat in Cork City, this is held by former PD TD, Maureen Quill. At one stage the party had two TDs in Cork.

The party of total political correctness couldn't even secure a single candidate for Europe: their chief barker, Barrister McDowell would not risk his reputation in the Dublin seat. His Dublin S.E. constituency produced only a single PD on Dublin City Council.

They won 28% of the vote in Galway city and took three seats, though the Labour Party took a record four.

Tom Parlon ran eight PDs in his native Laois and nine in Offaly. He garnered 14% himself in the General Election in this constituency in 2002, but this time the PD vote dropped to 10% in Laois and 7% in Offaly winning three Co. Council seats in all. A 'sixth sense' must have warned Parlon not to go for the farm vote as a

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ELECTIONS, continued

On Donegal County Council, Sinn Fein are seeking an arrangement on the lines of the De Hondt principles in the Belfast Agreement, whereby no member or party is excluded. This is the arrangement obtaining in the Stormont Assembly, when it sits, and it appears Sinn Fein is unlikely to deviate from that stand.

Sinn Fein are also pursuing a course that under local government legislation, a situation can arise where individual councillors can unite to create a technical group and thereby demand the right of representation on committees.

The first meeting of the new Donegal County Council on June 25, 2004 was adjourned over this point, when Sinn Fein supported by Fine Gael, sought legal clarification.

The party gained their first seat on Cork County Council with a first preference vote of 6.13%.

In Cork City, they gained a seat with a total poll of 10.4%, electing two Councillors and one in Galway City after gaining 8.4% of the poll.

The party trebled its representation on Cavan County Council.

A gain of three seats was recorded in Wexford, with a 4.35% increase up to 9%. Labour has now just a single seat and lost 4.16% of their 1999 vote.

In total, Sinn Fein have 54 City and County Council seats.

“And that is where Sinn Fein comes in. They have tried to explain their electoral triumph in the South by silly claims like that of Gerry Adams who said that Irish people are ‘instinctively Republican’ or by suggestions that policies were the key to their success, despite the fact that many who voted for them at European and local level voted against them on a policy issue, the referendum on citizenship. Sinn Fein has been elected on the same grounds that Dick Spring was in the mid 1990s, the belief that he would change a society in which corruption among the rich appears to be fairly routine and largely unpunished. When one considers what happened to Dick Spring and the Labour party, is there any reason to believe that Gerry Adams will be more successful?” (Ciaran McCullagh is a Lecturer in Sociology in University College, Cork, Inside Cork, 17.6.2004).

Sinn Fein is more than just a political party—it’s a political movement. The party that shocked the political establishment in Dublin on June the Eleventh is not for going away. Neither media polls or editorials will much influence the direction of Sinn Fein. It has already worked out its course.

The party has been born and steered in battle. The men who took up the Armalite were serious, they never faltered—the ballot box is a smooth ride after the armed struggle.

And it is an All Ireland party!

Sinn Fein is compelling the Irish people to seek their inner selves, seek out our positives, we sometimes underestimate what we have and overestimate what we have not!

Another little irony, if the Dublin government had been a little more incisive in its demand for fulfilment of the 1998 Belfast Agreement, especially the Stormont Assembly obligations, the ‘devil’ might not have found so many idle Republican hands or minds to concentrate on the lucrative political potential in the 26 Counties.

THE LABOUR PARTY

Pat Rabbitte will be happy with the Labour performance in the large urban areas but the party support is still very patchy nationally. While they haven’t made any spectacular gains, Labour will be happy with their performance.

“The party won its best local vote since the early 1970s, and had its best European elections since 1979” (Michael Marsh, Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

In 1979, Labour took four Euro seats.

Bruce Arnold, OBE, writing in the Irish Independent (14.6.2004), states that the Labour Party: “... has suffered a result where support is unbalanced and where too much party dependence is on urban electoral support in Dublin... Despite his Mayo origins, Pat Rabbitte does not echo the same resonances...” in response to this problem as did Dick Spring. Bruce maintains that turning the Labour Party into a serious national party “was one of the very welcome assets brought to Labour by Dick Spring” (Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

That proposition is highly exaggerated. In the end, Dick didn’t even succeed in

holding his own organisation together in his native Kerry.

“The wind seems to be at Fine Gael’s back. More importantly, Labour’s fortunes have taken a serious dive as evidenced by its poor showing in both the Killarney and Kilorglin electoral areas and Deputy Breda Moynihan-Cronin, could be under severe pressure next time” (The Kingdom, Killarney, 15.6.2004).

Labour now has only two councillors on Kerry Co. Council: Pat Leahy, Listowel Electoral Area and Terry O’Brien in Tralee Electoral Area. Sinn Fein has two and total councillors are 27.

Just in passing, on the Kerry Co. Council: “*Fine Gael has already indicated that it would be willing to negotiate a pact with Sinn Fein and that could result in a Rainbow coalition involving Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Fein and two others*” (The Kingdom, 15.6.2004).

The great name of Spring no longer appears in the political administration of County Kerry!

Labour achieved its best ever result in Dublin City—winning 14 seats to become the largest party. Michael Conaghan, a former DSP candidate in the days of Jimmy Kemmy, was elected Labour Lord Mayor of Dublin.

The party will be pleased with its three extra Councillors in Carlow/Kilkenny, but disappointed with its failure to win any Co. Council seat in Meath, where Sinn Fein won two and the Green Party one.

The narrow failure of Peter Cassells to break through in Europe should ensure that the party pulls all stops out in time for the General Election in his native Meath constituency.

In Mayo, the printer, Johnny Mee held on to the seat he earlier seemed to have lost to Independent candidate, Mr. Michael Kilcoyne, who is Chairman of the Consumers’ Association of Ireland and Secretary of Galway No. One branch of SIPTU, he recently resigned from the Labour party.

Labour’s sole success on Limerick County Council was the election of Deirdre Ni Chinneide in the Bruff electoral area, bordering on the city.

In Limerick city, the party win four seats, a gain of one seat after the disaster of 1999, when they lost Jim Kemmy’s seat plus his running mate, to the former

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ELECTIONS, continued

The Government-backed referendum on 'Citizenship' was carried by four to one. Yes: 79.17%; No: 20.3%.

Results varied little across the country, with the vast majority of the 34 electoral areas producing Yes votes of between 77% and 82%. The highest was recorded in Longford where 84% were in favour and only Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown bucked the trend to any degree, turning in a Yes result of 71%.

There was no significant urban-rural divide in voting patterns but there was a greater disparity in turnout, with voting in Dublin city and South Dublin as low as 53% compared with a high of 75% in Leitrim, and turnout lower in all five cities compared with the rest of the country.

FIANNA FAIL

"The savaging experienced by Fianna Fail on first preference count, a low of 31.7 per cent was the worst outcome since the general election of 1923, when the party notched up only 27.6 per cent, well behind Cumann na nGaedheal on just 39 per cent" (Southern Star, Skibbereen, 19.6.2004).

Eamon O Cuiv was one of the only positive aspects of these elections for Fianna Fail. He backed Sean O Neachtain, the party incumbent for Euro North-West from day one, saw off the 'suits' from party headquarters and steered O Neachtain and the grassroots to a famous victory over Minister Jim McDaid, one of Bertie's boys.

Doctor McDaid failed to even win a majority of votes in his native Donegal. McDaid's brother, Hugh, was also defeated in his first-time bid for a seat on Donegal County Council.

O Cuiv's potential for leadership will be noted by the Fianna Fail backbenchers, especially his ability to relate to Sinn Fein and the Republicans.

Environment Minister, Martin Cullen, the ex-PD renegade was Fianna Fail Director of the Local Elections.

Minister for Sport, John O'Donoghue, was Director of the European Election for Fianna Fail.

The Fianna Fail of today is no longer 'the Republican party', it is now 'the Corporate party'—that's the reality!

It is still incredible that a leader with 81 seats, three votes short of an overall

majority would go into government with the PD renegades who tried to split Fianna Fail, this despite the fact that you had half a dozen Independent TDs with a good strong rural Fianna Fail background.

Fianna Fail has slowly destroyed its old republican roots, it is starting to look more and more like the Redmondites in 1918.

Royston Brady, the Dublin Fianna Fail Euro candidate was singled out by the media, when it looked as if he was going to upstage one of the old Fianna Fail elite. Listening to Eoin Ryan following his Euro win, the man sounds as if he would have a heart seizure had he to make a single serious political decision—pathetic he is!

The Fianna Fail collapse was worse than even the most pessimistic expected . . . the real winners have been Sinn Fein. A big worry for Fianna Fail must be that many of the Sinn Fein successes have been at their expense. It had been thought that it would be Labour who would suffer the most.

Could it be Labour's turn to suffer in the General Election?

"That Sinn Fein took votes mainly from Fianna Fail is a pointer to the innate relationship between the two organisations, historically and in terms of the mixed symbols about where our nationalism should be going" (Bruce Arnold, OBE, Irish Indep, 14.6.2004.).

On Dublin City Council, Fianna Fail lost 13% of its vote and on Limerick City Council, the party lost four seats and are now left with only two councillors. They also lost two County Council seats in Limerick, a county they once dominated.

On the nine-seat Fermoy Town Council (Ned O'Keeffe country), there is not a single Fianna Fail councillor. In 1999 they had three representatives.

"And so it was on a summer's night 2004 that history was made. The people of Fermoy said goodbye to Fianna Fail and hello to a new political dynasty of which five Independents, a Sinn Feiner and Progressive Democrat now holds the majority share" (The Corkman, 17.6.2004).

Bruce Arnold writes that Fianna Fail "remains a powerful, professional organisation". Its setbacks are not "the end of the political world. Shrewd minds will assess what this means and will set in place the electoral remedies" (Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

If the 'shrewd minds' of Fianna Fail don't, we know who will—Sir Anthony O'Reilly! We got a taste of it in *The Irish*

Independent's sister paper, the *Evening Herald* on June 18, 2004, a full front page picture and banner headlines reading:

"THE SMOOTH AND DANGEROUS FACE OF NEW SINN FEIN"

"Herald Investigates"

"Mary Lou McDonald and her Party's Unanswered Questions"

You remember the daily paper whose editorial on the eve of the 1997 General Election told us that it was "*Pay Back Time*" for the Rainbow Government, then in 2003 told us "*More Of The Same*", more Fianna Fail but especially more PDs—well, that was the *Irish Independent*, a paper that masquerades as Ireland's leading national daily.

Only in Sligo did the Fianna Fail vote increase, by 2% and they gained a seat!

SINN FEIN

"Sinn Fein, which increased its first preference share from 3.5 per cent in 1999 to 8.00 per cent this time, is the one which gained most dramatically and the general feeling is that while, in Dublin particularly, this party drew out many new voters, Fianna Fail played into their hands with continual rantings from Justice Minister McDowell. If the Sinn Fein increase came at the expense of Fianna Fail, rather than Labour, there will be future implication for strategists of all parties . . ." (The Southern Star, 19.6.2004).

In Dublin city, there are now just three wards where Sinn Fein does not hold a council seat. The party topped the poll in Artane, Ballyfermot, Cabra/Glasnevin, Donaghmede, Finglas and North Inner city. Lar O'Toole won over one and a half quotas in Artane but with no running mate to transfer to, Labour garnered his surplus to great effect.

The party have become the largest party on Monaghan Co. Council. It now has 23 local reps compared to 20 for Fianna Fail and 16 for Fine Gael. "*Every second person you meet on the streets of Monaghan is a Sinn Fein voter*", said poll topping SF Co. Councillor, Shane Conlon.

A son of the Dail Ceann Comhairle, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon, lost his Monaghan seat, he had been tipped to succeed his Daddy in the Dail.

An interesting aspect of Sinn Fein local government policy is the refusal of the party to enter political pacts which exclude any other party or elected members. "*The arrival of Sinn Fein in Lifford has finally put an end to power-sharing : political exclusion is alive in Donegal*", quipped a party spokesperson. continued on page 29

ELECTIONS, continued

have brought out some who would not have otherwise voted but this is unlikely to be significant”, wrote Election Analyst Sean Donnelly. (Irish Times, 14.6.2004).

The present writer was strongly of the opinion that the ‘Citizenship’ referendum spurred a substantial number of apathetic citizens to vote. In the areas around Cork city, with large immigrant numbers, there was a surprisingly steady turnout of voters.

However, considering that each voter entitled to vote in the Referendum, also had a European vote—on this basis those solely dedicated to the Referendum vote should have outpolled the Euro voters, but not so.

1,841,335 voted in the European and 1,823,434 choosed to vote in the Referendum, i.e. 17,901 choosed to vote in the European Election but never bothered to exercise their entitlement in the ‘Citizenship’ Referendum.

In the European poll, there was 60,567 Invalid or Spoiled votes and in the Referendum there was 20,219 Spoiled votes.

In all, about 328,000 more people than in 1999 went to the polls.

The ending of the dual mandate affected Fianna Fail more than any other party, as they had more high profile deputies and senators—52 in total—elected to councils in 1999 who could not run on this occasion, but then again, this was a significant problem for Fine Gael and Labour too!

“The building up of a damaged or depleted organisation to which both leaders, Enda Kenny and Pat Rabbitte, have been giving great attention since the general election, has yielded respectable but not outstanding results” (Bruce Arnold, OBE, Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

LOCAL ELECTIONS: City and County (23rd Local Government Elections)

	1999 (Local)	2002 (General Elect.)	2004 (Local)
<i>Fianna Fail</i>	38.9%	41.5%	31.9%
<i>Fine Gael</i>	28.0%	22.5%	27.4%
<i>Labour</i>	10.8%	10.8%	11.3%
<i>Sinn Fein</i>	3.5%	6.5%	8.0%
<i>PD</i>	2.9%	4.0%	3.8%
<i>Green Party</i>	2.5%	3.9%	3.7%
<i>Independents</i>	13.4%	10.9%	13.9%

TURNOUT (2004): 59.1% 1999: 49.5%

EUROPEAN ELECTION

In Dublin, Mitchell (FG), Ryan (FF), De Rossa (Lab.) and McDonald (S.F.) were elected.

In North-West (Ulster/Connacht): O Neachtain (FF), Harkin (Ind.) and Higgins (FG) were elected.

In East (Leinster): McGuinness (FG); Aylward (FF) and Doyle (FG) were elected.

In South (Munster): Crowley (FF); Coveney (FG) and Sinnott (Independent) were elected.

In the Six-Counties: Allister (DUP); De Brun (SF) and Nicholson (UUP) were elected.

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

	1999	2004
<i>Fianna Fail</i>	38.6%	29.5%
<i>Fine Gael</i>	24.6%	27.8%
<i>Labour</i>	8.7%	10.6%
<i>Sinn Fein</i>	6.3%	11.1%
<i>Green Party</i>	6.7%	4.3%
<i>Independents</i>	15.0%	16.8%

In 1979, Liam Kavanagh took a seat for Labour in the Leinster Euro constituency, he resigned in 1981, then Seamus Pattison replaced him, in 1984, Pattison resigned and Justin Keating took over—‘mighty crack’ indeed!

In 1984, Keating failed to hold the seat. In 1989, Michael Bell polled 49,766 and was defeated for the last seat by 125 votes. Bell ran again in 1994 but fared poorly. In 1999, he lost the Labour nomination to Sean Butler of Kilkenny who polled 38,112 first preferences—16,000 more than Bell received in 1994 but not good enough for election.

Peter Cassells polled 59,158 and was really in contention for a seat, but to be denied by one of the ‘Horsey’ Beltons was really gut-wrenching.

Meanwhile, poor Michael Bell was lying on a hospital trolley after losing his bid for the Drogheda East Co. Council seat in Louth.

Good old bourgeois ‘East’ of Ireland constituency, the new ‘Home Counties’ of the Pale, they sure know their politics, from the Old Pale to the New Pale. They don’t let their own down in the New Pale, Barbeques, Pajeros and wonderful RTE accents.

In Munster, David Cullinane of Sinn Fein polled 32,643 first preferences compared to Labour’s Senator Brendan Ryan on 20,086, Chris O’Leary of the Green Party received 10,896.

The three Munster MEPs are all Cork-based.

The umbrella group to which Fine Gael belong, the EPP, will be the largest in the new European Parliament. It will give the EPP a crucial role in deciding the next Commission President. However, with 269 out of 732 seats, it will be well short of a majority.

The Socialists, which are represented in Ireland by the Labour Party, are set to be the second largest party, with around 200 seats.

The UEN, the small right-wing party to which Fianna Fail belong, fared badly, with just 26 seats.

Where is the EU heading? Imagine attempting to place the last Governor General of Hong Kong in the post of EU President, and being supported by the Dublin Government.

Then on Sunday 13.6.2004, after the abysmal turn-outs in the new entrant states, the success of the UK Independence Party, the hammering of Schroeder, Chirac and Berlusconi, the BBC Westminster Hour introduces Pat Cox, as the Irish Liberal leader and President of the European Parliament—what a charade, and how long more do we have to take it? Britain is in Europe, but it will never be part of Europe! Gerry Adams at the Dublin Euro Election Count mentioned about getting Britain out of Ireland, he should have gone further, get them out of Europe, as well, and the sooner, the better!

Where would all this leave Dublin? When Britain goes—do we stay? There’s one for McDowell! Wonder what Senator Mansergh would suggest?

CITIZENSHIP REFERENDUM

(27th Amendment)

	YES	NO
<i>Do you approve of the proposal to amend the Constitution contained in undermentioned Bill.</i>	79.2%	20.8%
	(1,427,520)	(375,695)
<i>Twenty-seventh Amendment of the Constitution Bill, 2004?</i>		
Majority: 1,051,825		

It was the highest voter participation in a referendum since the Divorce ballot in 1995. Just over one per cent spoiled their vote, proportionately lower than in any vote since 1995.

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LABOUR

Comment

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JUNE ELEVEN ELECTIONS:

SF DOUBLE VOTE: FIANNA FAIL LOSE 80 SEATS

9/11 WAS TO BECOME A NIGHTMARE FOR GEORGE W. BUSH, IT SEEMS THAT 6/11 MIGHT HAVE THE MAKINGS OF ANOTHER NIGHTMARE FOR BERTIE AHERN AND FIANNA FAIL!

Fianna Fail have lost 80 seats, 7% of their national vote: Its lowest ever vote in Local elections. On Dublin City Council the party lost 13% of its 1999 vote! For the first time in 70 years, they have lost control of Clare County Council, Eamon de Valera's old baliwick.

They lost two Euro seats, their vote dropped from 38.6% to 29.5%.

"Not since 1927, just a year after the party was founded, did Fianna Fail perform so badly, in a national election" (Irish Examiner, 14.6.2004).

"The party finished on 30%—down from 39% in the 1999 Local elections—and lost up to 80 City and County Council seats, bringing it close to the psychological watermark of 300 seats" (ibid.).

The electoral success of Sinn Fein in working class areas and the emergence of class politics at a time when you might least expect it, a period of full employment and apparently widespread affluence, flummoxed the pundits.

Sinn Fein more than doubled its votes and seats since 1999. Dublin city proved a rich harvest, up 10% and topping the poll in most areas north of the Liffey. Waterford provided a breakthrough for the party, as it took two seats in the city and one in the county.

Sinn Fein got its First seat in Galway, First seat in Europe, and First Euro seat in the Six Counties, despite the most malicious efforts of the PDs and Sir Tony O'Reilly's *Independent Media Group*: the more these people ranted on, the more Sinn Fein support soared.

The Labour Party is the largest party on Dublin City Council. The party

marginally increased their national vote on the 1999 Local elections and their 2002 General Election performance but succeeded with an increase in seats.

Fine Gael stopped the disastrous slide from 2002 General Election by just holding its support steady at 1999 levels.

The Green Party doubled their Local Government seats, even though this was from a low base, their percentage vote increased from 2.5% to 4.0%.

The Progressive Democrats (PDs) share of the vote rose from 2.9% to 3.8%, but lost seven seats, down from 25 to 18 Local government seats: a demoralising result.

"If the local election results were repeated in the next General Election, Fianna Fail would lose up to 20 of its 81 seats, and Sinn Fein would have 16 T.D.s. Fianna Fail's ground was predominately lost to Sinn Fein,

especially in Dublin, as the Republican Party doubled its seats to around 40" (Irish Examiner, 14.6.2004).

Fianna Fail's severest set backs were predominately in the Urban areas, the party vote held up at County Council level. In Cork, the party lost three seats and are now down to 16. Fine Gael have 24 and are one short of an overall majority. Clare, Mayo, Limerick, Galway and Westmeath saw Fianna Fail predominance disappear.

"Completely unexpected were the signs of a growing interest in politics as turnout rose after many years of steady decline" (Michael Marsh, Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

"Those who saw this decline as inevitable have been proved wrong but identifying what went right for a change is more difficult. Sinn Fein have been credited with getting more people to the polls by reaching into those corners of society which other parties apparently cannot reach but not all increases can be so explained.

"Even in some councils where Sinn Fein won only a small vote turnout rose dramatically—up almost 15pc in Fingal for instance. It could be that the registers are inaccurate and that young non-voters are not registered, but again, more people voted in 2004 than 1999. It could be that the referendum brought out a new section of the electorate and it could be that voters decided not just to get mad, but to get even" (Michael Marsh, Irish Independent, 14.6.2004).

The Chief Political Correspondent of *The Irish Times* bravely stated: "*The Referendum may have been a factor*" (sic).

"The citizenship referendum may
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