

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

December 2005

French Riots
Dennis Kennedy & Ethnic Cleansing
Hart/Coogan on Collins

Irish Ferries: Sinking?
(Back page: Labour Comment)

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What Is Northern Ireland?

"The IRA needs to take further risks to consolidate peace": that is the theme of an article by Sean Donlon, former Ambassador to USA and former Secretary to Foreign Affairs Department (Irish Times 17 Oct). The risk it must take is to abolish itself. It is not enough for it to disarm and declare that its war is over. It must disband, and then there will be *"lasting peace on the island"*. Donlon claims that John Hume supported this view in *"a recent, under-reported speech"*. And Hume has not repudiated him.

It follows from this that, if the Provisional IRA had not been formed 35 years ago there would never have been anything but peace in the North. And yet we recall that there were some slight disturbances before the Provos were ever thought of, and that John Hume added to the disturbance by not staying quietly at home, and that he made a resounding declaration that it was United Ireland or nothing, and that the good Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, egged him on.

When your customary mode of discourse is about sugar and spice and everything nice, the description of other things become problematical. But Hume, despite the cultivated Humespeak, did play his part in other things, though his speech was necessarily incoherent with regard to them. He gave an amazing performance of verbal juggling for a quarter of a century. But, when he had helped to bring about a situation that accorded with his ideal, and *"constitutional nationalism"* was called upon to take the alternative way forward by means of constructive action in what it was agreed to pretend was

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Henry Jackson Society =

A *Henry Jackson Society* has been established for the purpose of enacting a world revolution by force. Its principles are:

"that liberal democracy should be spread across the world; that as the world's most powerful democracies, the United States and the European Union—under British leadership—must shape the world more actively by intervention and example; that such leadership requires political will. a commitment to universal human rights and the maintenance of a strong military with global expeditionary reach; and that too few of our leaders in Britain and the rest of Europe today are ready to play a role in the world that matches our strength."

That is from documents issued in connection with a launch in the House of Commons on 22nd November. It is a programme for a Third World War.
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World War Two Veteran *Jack Harte* and Spanish War Veteran *Jack Jones* at the grave of Kevin Barry, before participating in a commemoration of Irish Republican and International Brigade Leader, *Frank Ryan*.

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The WTO: Dead But Won't Lie Down

On 11th November Peter Mandelson said of the forthcoming World Trade Organisation Conference to be held at Hong Kong:

"The plain fact is that the situation with the round is very difficult but not impossible... The realistic level of ambition for Hong Kong at this stage will be to consolidate the progress that has been made, build on the July Framework and leave most of the main decisions on the figures to somewhat later, hopefully in the first quarter of next year. I resisted this putting off, but have had to bow the inevitable."

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democracy, he retired and handed over to Seamus Mallon, who was known to be opposed to what Donlon calls "*the Hume-Adams dialogue*". And then constitutional nationalism, in its chosen forum, was given the run-around by Trimble for four years, with Durkan proving as ineffectual as Mallon.

Why did Hume retire at the critical moment? Because he did not know what to do next? Because he had a strong sense of reality within all the froth of Humespeak and he sensed that what had been enacted was a kind of confidence trick that would soon be found out, and that if anything worthwhile was to come of it, the constitutional nationalists must make way for the ones who are only slightly constitutional?

Donlon represented a regime which, while continuing to assert sovereignty over the North, would neither take responsibility for its affairs nor let it go its own way. That approach led to trickery. And the trickery continues. For many years Sinn Fein and the IRA were both damned. Voters were told that, if they voted for Sinn Fein they would be voting for terrorism. When the voters ignored this exhortation not to vote for Sinn Fein, the tune changed and it was denied that the IRA had been given a mandate. The next thing was that Sinn Fein should repudiate the IRA in order to become fully democratic. It was acknowledged *sotto voce* that this was the

last thing those who demanded it actually wanted. But, because they never faced up to the reality of what Northern Ireland actually was, they did not have it in them to do anything but harass Sinn Fein over its connection with the IRA. The only thing they were capable of being was two-faced hypocrites. They wanted Sinn Fein to be intimately connected with the IRA for the purpose of persuading it to disarm, and at the same time to be free to denounce it for being so connected. This duplicity used to be on display every evening on the Vincent Browne show on Radio Eireann. And, now that the IRA has disarmed and called off the war, the demand is that it should disband. If it disbanded, the demand would be that Sinn Fein should go away—because it is a certainty that lasting peace and harmony would not set in with the absence of the IRA. (And, if Sinn Fein went away, further progress would remain to be achieved in the form of the abolition of the other body thrown up by the 1969 disturbances, the SDLP. And then we could start all over again.)

That is the policy of the Dublin regime as stated. It is the only policy it is capable of stating. But what it really *wants* is that Sinn Fein/IRA should contain the Northern situation by remaining the dominant purposeful force in the Catholic community while being self-righteously denounced for doing so.

The SDLP became a spent force by paying too much heed to the exhortations

of external authority in Dublin and London, instead of dealing realistically with the internal realities of the North. Sinn Fein/IRA would likewise reduce itself to a spent force, leaving the field free for others to take its place, if it heeded the exhortation of those authorities—who know very well that this would be the case, and therefore do not want their pious exhortations to be heeded. But, like the scorpion in Aesop's fable, they cannot help themselves. Nature will out. And they cannot even match the self-restraint of the scorpion, who let the frog carry him across the river before stinging him.

Was the Provisional IRA a legitimate part of the Northern situation? Who determined legitimacy in that situation?

Two states claimed sovereignty, but the North was not part of the democracy of either of them.

It's a truism of modern times that legitimate authority is connected with democracy. If that is accepted, there was no legitimate overall authority in the North even before the breakdown of August 1969, not to mention after it. And the reality as we experienced it was entirely in accordance with that theoretical deduction. The North was thrown into a state of nature in 1969, and the elements of a new system of order were generated out of the anarchy.

We did our best to bring the North within the democratic order of the British state—and were condemned for doing so by John Hume and an array of Dublin politicians, and the Unionist Party and the British authorities would have nothing to do with it. And Dublin, after making some gestures in the direction of involving itself in developments within the North, backed away and washed its hands of the matter following an intervention by the British Ambassador in the Spring of 1970.

During the Winter of 1969-70 we discussed with some people who were in process of forming the Provos what should be done. It was a reasonable discussion, such as it was impossible to have with ideologues of the Dublin parties or with 'constitutional nationalism'. They rejected our project on the ground that the nature of Unionism made it unrealistic. So we went our separate ways, without great moral denunciations either way. And we proved them right over the next twenty years. The attempt at democratisation within the political order of the state was made impossible by the nature of the Unionism which was always declaring it to be British.

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Henry Jackson Society

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World War Three

The over-riding issue in the world today is whether differing forms of human existence are to be tolerated, or the human race is to be made uniform whether it likes it or not and is to be made to like it.

The Henry Jackson Society has powerful backers. It expresses the world-view of the White House and Whitehall, where many of its most ardent advocates are refugees from the collapse of Communism seeking another instrument for their world-dominating aspirations. They are committed to establishing a total uniformity of the human race in a global market dominated by US/UK/EU. They are unlikely to succeed but they are capable of causing catastrophe in the course of failing.

The invasion of Iraq and the wholesale destruction of the existing mode of life there is the first step. The main article in the propaganda material for the London launch discusses how Iran can be got at next, in the light of the difficulties being experienced in Iraq. But the destruction of Iran would only bring liberal democracy to the threshold of Asia. (We are told every day that what exists in Iraq now is very much better than what existed three years ago, or twenty. There is certainly no authoritative state structure of civil order now. So why not call the chaos the formative stage of liberal democracy? That seems to be how the White House regards it.)

But, beyond Iran, the expansion of liberal democracy will certainly come up against the deterrence of nuclear weapons. And then, unless the West becomes untrue to itself and frees itself from its absolute commitment to global uniformity, the globe is likely to be very greatly disturbed.

The Irish contribution to the Henry Jackson material comes from Anthony McIntyre, who resigned from the Provos because they signed the Good Friday Agreement, declared that they had sold out the cause, demanded that they should concede defeat and surrender instead of pretending that they had gained something, denounced them as liars and cheats, and devoted himself to the cause of peace—in

STILL DEMONISING SINN FÉIN

Sinn Féin is the only major political group with an unapologetic attitude to Ireland's own political (and thereby, cultural) traditions. The rank and file of Fianna Fáil shares this attitude. If Bertie Ahern keeps paying more attention to the rump-PDs, that rank and file may go over bodily to Sinn Féin. Such an eventuality would be much less strange than the setting-up of the Thatcherite 'Progressive Democrats' by FF dissenters.

A show about 'criminality' was broadcast on (the UK) Channel Five: (Donal MacIntyre's *Toughest Towns* (12.10.05) was about UK cities, ranging from football hooliganism to drug racketeering, from relatively small Portsmouth to megalopolitan Manchester. Belfast was the first town to be dealt with, concentrating on 'paramilitary' crime.

It was not about drug dealing and other anti-social activity (largely by Loyalists), but on attempts at policing in Ardoyne. It was slanted to imply that the dire consequences of some 'policing' could be placed in the PIRA's debit column, including the driving of two sixteen year old men to suicide. (That was the work of the INLA, quite strong in Ardoyne, the area having been 'Sticky' in the '70s). The mother of the victim claimed that those who handed out his mediæval punishments were selling drugs in the same premises from which they acted as judge, jury and executioner.

As the INLA (Irish National Liberation Army), has rotted to an even greater extent than the 'Official' IRA, the accusation is probably well founded. A man in his thirties, claiming to have indulged in mere 'mischief', showed the results of knee-capping and other forms of brutal policing. He did not say who had inflicted the injuries. In the early '80s the Government stopped paying automatic compensation to such men. (It was almost entirely men, a shot of the 'tarring and feathering' of a young woman was shown, but such things have not happened since 1973. The Internees, as much as other elements in the society, thought it a barbarous practice.) The use of the shot was dubious in the context of what was claimed to be an investigation of current problems.

A wall mural featuring Johnny Adair was shown, but no comment was made on it, or the UDA's genuine and widespread criminality. The only political figure interviewed was David Ervine of the PUP (Progressive Unionist Party). His membership of the PUP, and its connection to the UVF, was left unsaid. What he did say was sensible: it had to do with the collapse of faith in the system on the part of the Unionist working class. Most viewers probably assumed he was a respectable person talking about the PIRA as a criminal conspiracy. This was deception by the UK propaganda machine to which he was not party.

Donal MacIntyre must have been party to the deception, though admittedly the show had all the attributes of being edited to shreds. Do Belfast's specialised problems belong in this sensationalist series? This section was a hatchet job on one of the few agencies trying to impose some sort of order in the increasing chaos of working class Belfast. The IRA (and elements of the UVF) have phased out violent punishment and brought in an element of 'restorative justice'.

ROMANCING THE HEIST

Kevin Toolis did an 'investigation' about the Northern Bank robbery in the *Dispatches* series. (*The Big Heist*, Channel 4, Sunday, September 22, 2004. The use of this term is presumably meant to conjure-up images of Mafia movies — it certainly isn't street language in Belfast or elsewhere in Ireland.) Toolis has produced books and television programmes on [Northern] Ireland, which placed him in a '*Mise Éire*' mould, somebody who might lean towards Republican Sinn Féin. As Ruairí Ó Bradaigh, in *The Village* magazine essentially felon-set Gerry Adams (implying that he had been IRA Chief of Staff), possibly there was an element of connivance between an RSF sympathiser, the Stickies and the RUC / PSNI Special Branch in the making of this programme. It did not suffer any scruples about evidence or reasonable doubt. It was simply taken for granted that the 'heist' had been done by the Provisional IRA but, as the show progressed, it became increasingly evident that there was little to back this up. We were treated to the opinions of various members of the RUC / PSNI Special Branch. (The major part of their 'evidence' was — in essence — that nobody else in the alphabet soup of paramilitaries was competent enough to do the job.)

That may well be true, but if the Provis are (were) competent enough to actually do
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The state of nature continued in society, underneath an official apparatus of state which consisted mainly of police and dole offices. And we would say that, if the official law were somehow applied, and all the facts were somehow known to it, there would be very few people left out of jail. In the state of nature the individual has to act as his own state.

‘Constitutional nationalism’ was shown as early as the Summer of 1971 to have no will of its own, and this was borne out conclusively by its conduct in the crisis of May 1974. And when, after a long rest, it got a third chance in 1998, it still did not know what to do.

So, what does it mean to say that the Provisional IRA, as the most purposeful force that merged from the chaos, was not legitimate?

In the hinterland of the Fianna Fail party these things are understood, but the leadership dares not express them.

The current position of the leadership is to treat Sinn Fein/IRA as legitimate *de facto* while officially reprehending it as criminal and indicting Adams and McGuinness for the Northern Bank robbery though not acting on the indictment, and remaining silent about the orientation of those who have been arrested in connection with the robbery. With this two-faced attitude, it stops short of repudiating Sinn Fein/IRA while encouraging opposition to it both amongst Unionists and amongst Republicans who are uneasy about the transitional compromise of the Good Friday Agreement.

The Fianna Fail intellectual, Senator Mansergh, who appears to act for the Taoiseach though no longer his adviser, recently went on the ideological offensive against Republicans who do not support the Good Friday Agreement, presumably for the purpose of defending the Provos. He has provoked an extensive exchange of letters in the Belfast *Irish News* with Liam O Comain of Derry. What the exchange brings out is that the essentially duplicitous position of the Fianna Fail leadership is unsuitable for development in polemical dispute. Academic paper will bear anything that is written on it. And selected audiences of respectable people will listen politely to whatever is said to them by somebody who is understood to represent a power in the state. But in polemics conducted in a live situation where minds are not made passive by an authoritative power of state, the truth and soundness of intellectual constructions are

tested as nowhere else.

O Comain writes: *Martin is living the myth that Ireland (or a part of it) is free. De Valera did not accept that myth—he fought a civil war against it*” (27 Oct). And what can Martin say in reply to that? Nothing. He can only ignore it. But the fact that he ignores it is not ignored.

Mansergh is committed to manipulating history in the service of current policy—something which used to be declared the falsification of history when practised in Eastern Europe before the collapse of the Soviet regime. Therefore he cannot deal with matters thrown up in a polemical dispute which he himself instigated.

He maintains that a democratic state was established in the 26 Counties in 1922. Why then did the founder of his party support a war against it? And did Dev in the mid 1920s succumb to the democracy of the Free State, or did he enter the undemocratic Free State for the purpose of gaining power within it and democratising it? Dev certainly thought he was doing the latter. But that would be a dangerous admission for the ideologue of the governing party in Dublin to make today to “*dissident*” (Irregular?) Republicans in the North. But, of course, the ‘dissidents’ know it very well. They do not need an admission by Mansergh in order to know it. But his evasion of a fact which is indisputably true has the effect of confirming that he is a tricky politician who invents truth in the service of policy.

The truth of how an Irish state came into existence and was made independent may be a thing of no importance to the 26 County Republic—to judge by the way it has handed control of history over to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge—but that is not the case in the North, where ignorant routine within an accepted *status quo* is neither a reality nor even a reasonable possibility.

If Mansergh said:

Yes, we in the South had to struggle against an arrangement purporting to be a national democracy, and a point was reached when it became possible and desirable to move from military methods to other methods in the establishment of national democracy. We do not deny the military phase of the struggle nor hold it to have been unnecessary. And, when we succeeded in taking office and holding power in 1932, and in proceeding to break the Treaty, we were enabled to do so peacefully by the backing of the IRA.

We acknowledge that no legitimate state authority has ever existed in Northern Ireland, though we accommodated ourselves to the *de facto* power of the Unionist apparatus. And now, having revoked the formal claim to sovereignty which we inserted in our Constitution in 1937, and therefore having no grounds for regarding as a usurpation of our authority anything that is done in Northern Ireland, we recognise Provisional Sinn Fein/IRA as a legitimate body thrown up by the disorderly arrangements that Britain made for the North after Partitioning Ireland.

If Mansergh said something like that he would certainly get a hearing. Since he dare not say anything like that—and possibly does not see that the truth is something like that, because it differs so much from his father’s pronouncements—he would have been better advised not to indulge in polemics with people who have to live in the North.

He refers to the “*32 County Sovereignty Committee’s eccentric and deeply flawed DIY understanding of international law*” and “*Ruairi O Bradaigh’s contrived “apostolic succession” from the Second Dail*”, describing them as “*drivel which would not stand up to a moment’s serious debate or objective scrutiny*”—without mentioning where they might be subjected to objective scrutiny. “*International law*” is all DIY, existing only in the forum of the United Nations where the major powers in the world are both formally and substantially exempt from it. The distinction between Power and Law has little going for it today. Iraq was invaded and its structure of state destroyed without UN authority (and Fianna Fail facilitated the invasion), but the invaders did not break the law because they are officially above the law.

And when did “*the drivel of the apostolic succession*” become drivel to Fianna Fail? Not with the 1922 election, or the 1923 one. When it did what was necessary to enter the Free State Dail for the purpose of subverting its subordination to the Crown, it did so with a mental reservation that devalued the Oath. And, when it gained power with the assistance of false Oaths, it did not only abolish the Oath to the Crown, but abolished Oaths altogether as a condition of sitting in the Dail. Was that not a kind of acknowledgement that what it was sworn to do under the mandate of 1918 remained to be done? Is not the absence of a Dail Oath something of a kind with Emmet’s epitaph?

Such things may be described as

superstitious drivel, but they have been an integral part of human conduct from time immemorial.

O Comain replied:

“We contend that both northern and Southern statelets are illegal as they were established by a British act of parliament against the will of the Irish people expressed democratically in the 1918 election. There is no authentic democracy in Ireland...”

It is indisputably the case that both set-ups were authorised by British legislation and were therefore not authentic products of Irish democracy. A Dail majority, under duress, voted to accept a Treaty whose terms were dictated by Whitehall, and a war was fought at British instigation and with British arms to enforce it. It was subsequently amended in various ways by those who were defeated in the Treaty war, and one might say that it is something that will do for the time being. On the other hand, it is a poor thing in many ways, bearing traces of its origin in British legislation backed by war. And its academic institutions, all of which are fundamentally hostile to the Northern Republicans, seem to be intent on delegitimising the non-British element in its origins: the Easter Rising, the 1918 Election, and War of 1919-21. They accord legitimacy only to the Treaty, the Treaty War, and the regime based on victory in the Treaty War.

Mansergh:

“Once a democratic path is opened up, it is indefensible for a republican not to be a democrat. The theoretical justifications for continued armed struggle are divorced from any attainable military or political gain... Yes, partition was wrong; the exclusion of nationalists from participation in an independent Ireland was wrong; and the Boundary Commission was a scandal. Some progress has been made in undoing these and many other injustices. Further remedy is only to be found in democratic politics, not paramilitary elitism acting on a much diminished scale” (25 Oct. Is there a suggestion in the last clause that the scale of the paramilitarism is the important thing?).

To which O Comain replied that—

“the Belfast Agreement... has institutionalised the disease of sectarianism which has been used by the British over the decades in their own interests” (Oct 27).

If the communal division in the North is described as a sectarian division, that statement is indisputable. Mansergh does not dispute it. He ignores it, and

comments:

“De Valera moved on from a sterile position: Sinn Fein and the IRA have moved on as well. It is time for all dissident ‘revolutionary’ republicans to do so too... What constitutes valid self-determination in Irish circumstances has already been decided overwhelmingly by the people north and south in 1998 and is not in practice reversible” (29 Oct).

And what are the dissident republicans to do if they move on? Engage in the routines of institutionalised sectarianism, which is what the GFA provides for?

Mansergh further elaborated his position (and presumably Fianna Fail’s) on 4th November:

“Ireland is a sovereign and democratic state in international law... National self-determination was exercised twice in Ireland—in 1918-21 and in 1998—and may well be exercised again in the future. In 1919-21 the principle, through promulgated by President Wilson, was not yet international law. The provisions of the treaty in relation to the north were not in dispute between the pro and anti-treaty sides...”

“The Boundary Commission fiasco pulled the rug from under the legitimacy of Northern Ireland as far as republicans were concerned but the Free State government incorporated in international law the 1925 Boundary Agreement accepting partition and no subsequent international legal challenge to it would have succeeded.

“After 80 years of partition, a single all-Ireland vote would be undemocratic as it would mean the more populous part of the country could override the less populous. National self-determination in a partitioned country can only be exercised concurrently...”

“In international law... unity in a partitioned country requires the consent in both parts, as in the Good Friday Agreement. As Dr. Garret FitzGerald reminds in his new book *Ireland in the World: Further Reflections*, de Valera recognised all this back in 1947: ‘In order to end [partition] you will have to get concurrence of wills between three parties—we here...; those who represent the majority in the separated part...; and the will of those who are the majority for the time being in the British parliament’.

“The demand for a single all-Ireland vote has no democratic, legal or political validity, and is unattainable because it would be a breach of commitments entered into by both governments and endorsed by the electorates north and south as well as contrary to international law. There is consequently no moral right to use armed struggle based on a fundamental misunderstanding

of national self-determination in contemporary international law. It is long past time for dissident paramilitary organisations to set aside their arms and let democratic political parties try to create more favourable conditions for unity.”

Mansergh appears to say that his view of the matter is implicit in “*the teachings of Wolfe Tone*” which O Comain “*still fails to grasp*”. And he illustrates his principle with reference to Germany, Cyprus and Korea, saying “*Ireland is no different from Germany, Cyprus or Korea*”.

But it is, you know. It has to be, because those three instances are not themselves similar. The Partition of Cyprus—which (as far as we recall) is held to be illegal under “*international law*”—is a social reality based on the profound antipathy of the peoples which inhabit the island. Cypriot nationality is a fiction of power politics.

The island was conceded to Britain by the Turkish state without reference to the will of its populace. When a national independence movement developed amongst the Greeks in the 1950s, Britain dealt with it in the Black-and-Tan manner. When it decided to grant a semblance of independence it was on the pretext that there was a Cypriot nation, separate from the Greek nationality, and with the proviso that the Greek majority did not have the right to vote itself part of Greece. It did not have that right because the Imperial Power decreed it so.

Cyprus became a notional nation-state, but the Turkish minority, which had supported Britain in the war against the Greeks, refused to act as part of a Cypriot nation. When Greece declared Cyprus to be part of the Greek state, Turkey moved in to support the Turkish minority and the social division of the island was consolidated as a military division.

The Partition of Cyprus is more in accordance with the will of the people than most Partitions are. The two nationalities were separated from each other without the kinds of atrocities that marked the Jewish partitioning of Palestine or the British partitioning of India, and the only actual form of national oppression that exists is that the Greek will to govern the entire island is thwarted.

A rational settlement in accordance with social realities would be to take the internal division as a frontier between Greece and Turkey. But ‘international law’ will not allow that. And so the antagonism of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot goes

on within the fiction of Cypriot nationality maintained by the UN and the EU.

The Partition of Germany was a by-product of the war that Britain declared on Germany in 1939 but lacked the will to fight. Britain relied on the French to fight the war for it. But France, remembering how Britain had prevented it making a secure settlement in 1919, after it had borne the main human cost of the *Entente* war, restricted its commitment to the war in line with what Britain was doing, and made a settlement when Britain took its army home in June 1940. Britain, secure behind its naval dominance of the world, refused a settlement in the hope of finding another powerful ally to defeat Germany for it, but did little fighting itself. The ally appeared in 1941 in the form of Soviet Russia. Soviet Communism was much less acceptable to Britain than Nazism (with whom it had friendly and supportive relations for many years) and so Britain, under the appearance of alliance with Russia, dawdled for three years, hoping that Germany and Russia would tear the guts out of each other. Eventually the USA forced Britain to launch the Second Front in order to occupy Western Europe. It was evident by 1944 that Russia had not only held the German advance, but was capable of defeating Germany and occupying central Europe, and perhaps western, if there was further delay. And that was the cause of the Partition of Germany. It was the dividing line between the invading Powers. The western Powers constructed their parts of Germany into a separate state, in breach of wartime agreements, and then Russia did likewise.

The Partition of Germany did not arise out of German social conditions. It was a line of division between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And we cannot recall that NATO ever undertook, in the event of the Cold War becoming hot, to maintain East Germany as a separate state.

Although a “*two German nations*” theory was propagated at one time, and was supported by some of those who denied the “*two Irish nations*” view, there was never any substantial doubt that all the inhabitants of the two Cold War German states remained Germans. Just as there is no substantial doubt today that the Cypriots are Greeks and Turks.

The Partitions of Germany and Cyprus were so different from each other that the Partition of Ireland must be different from one of them, if not both. We would have thought it obvious that the great difference is with Germany, and that

there are some obvious similarities with Cyprus. But Mansergh in the *Irish Times* has denounced us over the ‘two nations theory’ and asserted that there is one general nationality throughout Ireland, which would make it similar to Germany. However the arguments he deploys in the North are two-nationist in substance, and he sees the project of unification in Cypriot rather than German terms. That is to say, he sees little prospect of achieving it.

But the internal situation in the North is utterly unlike what exists in either part of Cyprus, and nothing like it ever existed in Germany.

What is the minority, approaching half, to do until it becomes 51%? Why would an all-Ireland majority be undemocratic today if it was democratic in 1918? Why did Britain have to wait for President Wilson’s principles to be made international law in 1919, when it had itself proclaimed those

principles when Irish cannonfodder was needed in 1914? Why were votes held in the two parts of Ireland separately in 1998 an act of self-determination superseding the vote in 1918, if separate elections held during the intervening 70 years were invalid in that respect? Does the 26 County Government still see itself as a legitimate authority for determining legitimacy in the North, or did it relinquish that authority when it revoked the sovereignty claim? And, if not, who determines what is legitimate in this region where democratic authority does not operate?

We will return to these interesting questions thrown up by Senator Mansergh’s polemics outside the jurisdiction both *de facto* and *de jure*.

The WTO: Dead But Won't Lie Down continued

“Reducing expectations for Hong Kong, if carefully handled, will allow us to avoid an acrimonious breakdown of the sort we witnessed in Seattle and Cancun. This would weaken the multilateral trading system as well as global economic confidence...But if we scale back in Hong Kong, we should not scale back for the Round as a whole. It is too important.”

This convoluted language was signalling a retreat, and admitting that the next Ministerial Meeting of the WTO later this month to progress the Doha Round will be a failure following on the failure of all previous Ministerial Meetings of the WTO.

In fact, this is the end of the WTO. Naturally, this will not be acknowledged and we may have ‘successes’ declared, such as an Agreement on what is grandiosely called ‘Trade Facilitation’, but which actually means cutting back on unnecessary Customs red tape—big deal! An Agreement to get rid of waste paper! But no ‘progress’ on the real issues—lower tariffs, more unfettered access for goods, services, etc. to developing markets. And the admittance of Saudi Arabia will be praised—that Arab tiger with its hitherto undiscovered love affair with the free market.

It will be the seal of Mandelson’s total failure as a Commissioner. He made success at this meeting one of his

major “*challenges*”. He began his tenure by lecturing the Americans about their agricultural subsidies: they should be cut and then the EU would do the same. He took to slamming down the phone on his American counterpoint to make his point. He was a Big Boy and bestrode the world like the proverbial colossus. The Americans had a think, bided their time, and then proposed huge and totally unexpected cuts in their agricultural subsidies in October—on condition that the EU would follow suit. But Mandy could not deliver this side of the deal. His bluff and blather and bluster were called, and he looked a big-mouthed fool—which is exactly what he is. There was no use blaming the French. He had acted without them and he and the whole world knew their position.

But more ridicule was to follow. He was back and forth to China like a yo-yo, telling them about the wondrous WTO that they had just joined. The Chinese said in effect—you want free trade mate, we’ll give you free trade—and soon Mandy was imploring them to stop sending any more textiles to Europe. His Chinese counterpart, a patient man, agreed to save Mandy’s bacon and his blushes and openly laughed at his predicament. The great Free Trader pleading to stop trade!

Mandy thought that he could ‘spin’ world powers like he span Labour Party

branches and conferences and a supine British media—but this is big boy territory where they take themselves seriously and Mandy simply could not cut the mustard in it.

There are oceans of spin and jargon and coded gobbledegook associated with the WTO, but the basics are simple—as simple as the mind of any businessman, out to make a buck by the quickest and easiest means possible. Get into new markets, clean up, and come back if they recover and do the same again. But nation-states develop memories, and now the biggest and most powerful are those with the longest memories, i.e. China and India. This is no coincidence. Knowledge is power but memory plus knowledge is even more powerful: it is unbeatable. That is the secret weapon of China and India. Does Mandelson remember what he did yesterday?

The Chinese development will necessitate the re-writing of all the text books. The most successful capitalist country (ever?) emerges via an unreformed Communist Party. We are constantly presented with the twee little theory that capitalism can only thrive with the Protestant work ethic, appropriate theology, etc., and what do we find? China, India, Brazil (not forgetting the Celtic Ant) are booming as capitalist countries with no end in sight and no sign of a Reformation in any of them. Do these success stories not know that what they are doing will never work in theory?

The WTO is now a straightjacket on them and, if it survives, the world's black economy, officially speaking,—that is to say, international trade outside WTO parameters—will grow and grow and will be the source of the real economy especially in these growing markets.

The prospect for the new century suddenly looks good if these countries keep growing and come to dominate the world. We can be fairly certain that these emergent powers will not cause constant wars—and certainly not two world wars.

How odd—they seem to make progress without massive wars, colonies, slavery or the other props which fuelled the rise to Great Power status of Britain and then America. They simply provide good products: at the moment mainly goods from China and services from India. And they have a moral sense that they seem to believe in and take seriously but don't lecture the world about it. Very odd people indeed.

Will the 20th century be looked back on as the crazy century where the world allowed itself to fall under the influences of the WASPs, and anarchy reigned? The US Muslim leader, Farrakhan, in a desperate effort to explain and to understand the behaviour of the white race he encountered in the world concluded that they were a laboratory experiment by God that went wrong and escaped from his control. Before you laugh your head off, consider how as reasonable is this fable, compared to dozens of stories in the Bible which have been (and are) regarded as the 'gospel truth' by billions for millennia here in the Enlightened West?

But it's near Xmas and we should spare a thought for the losers in this new world,

especially Peter Sutherland. The death of an offspring is always sad—especially coming up to Xmas—and this is what the WTO was to Peter. We will no doubt have some huffing and puffing from this mover and shaker. But this time hopefully without the smug self-satisfied smirk. Let's hope that in his many global peregrinations Peter has not forgotten that great local Gaelic tradition, or art, of turning a wake into an occasion of great pleasure. That is one of Gaelic Ireland's great, but unsung, contributions to civilisation and let's hope that it can be of some consolation to Peter at what must be a sad time for him.

Jack Lane

Censorship on Sinking Of *RMS Leinster*

Editorial Note: the following letter was submitted to the *Irish Times* on 31st August, but was not published

Kevin Myers (An Irishman's Diary, 25 August) complains that the sinking of *RMS Leinster* on 10 October 1918 in the Irish Sea by the German U boat (UB 123) has been "banished from Irish historical memory". He places the responsibility for this silence about the *Leinster* upon Irish republican nationalists. Contemporary historical evidence tells a completely different story. A few points may be made:

Firstly, Lord Decies, the British Press Censor, commenting upon the news coverage about the sinking of the *Leinster* at the end of October 1918 remarked that "vigilant censorship has been imposed in order to prevent the publication of the fact that a large number of soldiers were on board the *Leinster*, and so far no mention of it has appeared in any Irish paper". This information is to be found in the British National Archives at Kew, file CO 904/167.

Secondly, Kevin Myers, while accepting that the *Leinster* "carried soldiers", fails to give an accurate picture of the military and naval presence in relation to civilian passengers. The figures are as follows: the military presence was 492, 67 officers and 425 other ranks; the naval presence was 102; the civilians numbered 180. Of those killed, 328 were soldiers; 60 were naval staff; and 115 were civilians. This information is to be found in the fine book by Roy Stokes, *Death in the Irish Sea. The Sinking off the RMS Leinster* (Cork, 1998). In reality the mail boat for civilian passengers was, in effect, doubling as a troop ship and this, contrary to the assertion of Kevin Myers, was known to German U boat commanders.

Thirdly, the British authorities at the time, prevented the circulation of a Sinn Fein leaflet, *The Leinster outrage*, which attempted to make known the number of soldiers on board.

Fourthly, Bill Sweeney, Assistant Purser on the *Leinster*, whose memory Kevin Myers rightly asks us to respect, recorded that there was cowardly behaviour by both crew and soldiers in their efforts to escape the sinking ship. Furthermore, British ships, in the vicinity of the stricken *Leinster*, were forbidden by Admiralty regulations from going immediately to the assistance of the passengers.

In conclusion one cannot but agree with Kevin Myers that it is time for a torch to shine in "history's darkness" and to reveal all that British censorship has concealed about the *RMS Leinster* for far too long.

Dr Brian P. Murphy *osb*

[The British censorship about the *Leinster* continues still, with the suppression of this pertinent letter! Editor]

Shorts

from

the *Long Fellow*

PD TIMES

There is no law against a newspaper supporting a political party, but it would be nice if *The Irish Times* stopped pretending to be independent. Recently the newspaper heralded the Progressive Democrats' childcare policy. *PDs Back Childminders' Tax Break* was the gushing headline (The Irish Times, 1.10.05).

Apparently, Michael Dowell told a PD conference in hushed tones that the PD policy "was being favourably considered in the corridors of Merrion Street" (as distinct from meeting rooms, offices etc). The report went on to reveal breathlessly that "a cabinet sub-committee on childcare, of which both PD Ministers are members, is considering a range of inputs and proposals..." The report assures us that "Ms Harney said that the 'care issue', including care for the elderly, was very much part of the Government's agenda for the autumn" etc. etc.

The nineteen paragraphs of PD propaganda written by Martin Wall were followed by a six paragraph report by Mark Brennock describing the childcare policies of the six main political parties (i.e. one paragraph each for Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Labour, Green Party, Sinn Fein and ... the PDs again!).

The PDs are in favour of a tax exemption on the first 8,000 euros of child minders' income, which is remarkably similar to the Labour party's policy announced many months earlier. But that fact isn't mentioned in Wall's report. It also says that the PDs are in favour of "relaxing standards—while seeking to maintain quality" (i.e. less government regulation).

But the best bit is the description of Fianna Fail's policy. Brennock informs us that Fianna Fail's "position" is "the same as that of the Government"!

A disturbing picture accompanies the report showing Mary Harney playing with children in a playground. Neither the children nor Harney look very happy. There is no sign of the parents.

HEALTH SERVICE SHAMBLES

While Harney was playing in children's playgrounds, the Private sector has been plundering the resources of the Health Service. The estimated cost of its new

Payroll software amounts to 150 million euros. Despite (or because of) the numerous private consultants the software does not work. About a year ago Junior Health Minister Tim O' Malley (PD) welcomed the new software and declared it to be a "fundamental tool" for the health services (The Irish Times, 5.10.05). It was only when the Department of Finance computer experts took an interest in the subject that the full extent of the shambles became known.

No one has been held accountable for the fiasco and Harney promises it won't happen again.

THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

A recent article by prolific right-wing *Irish Times* journalist Marc Coleman advocated more private sector involvement in the Civil Service! Like the Bourbons he remembers everything and learns nothing. The article would not be worth mentioning if he didn't try to claim that this was somehow "socialist". Apparently, greater private sector involvement would "serve the people". He must think the "people" are all fat-cat consultants.

The recent examples of waste show that there is too much private sector involvement. Private sector incentives and rewards have been imported into the service where they are clearly inappropriate. As a result a relatively simple task such as computerising the payroll of the Health service has become rocket science.

The Marxist Leninist position in relation to the State was that in the transformation from Capitalism to Communism it should be cheap and efficient. Systems of accounting and control should be simplified so that any literate and numerate person would have no difficulty performing such tasks. Hierarchies would be abolished. All State employees would be paid a working wage. And under no circumstances should positions in the State sector be used as a springboard for employment in the private sector.

Too radical, perhaps?! On the other hand, discussion on benchmarking would be superfluous and a basic cheap payroll software package could be used for the whole of the State sector.

WOMEN IN THE STATE

A table cited by *The Irish Times* (1.10.05) from the Central Statistics Office reveals that there are nearly 1.7 million women in the State. It doesn't give the number of men, but given that the population of the state is about 4

million, this leaves 2.3 million men: quite a significant difference.

MORIARTY TRIBUNAL

The Moriarty Tribunal investigating the possibility of unfair influence in the awarding to Esat Digifone of a mobile phone licence is descending into farce. The Civil Servants responsible for making the decision have stated that no influence was exerted on them. The Tribunal is now reduced to investigating the possibility that the influence was exerted on the Civil Servants without them knowing it!

SYRIA AND LEBANON

A United Nations investigation has linked various Syrian officials with the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in March of this year. How reliable such an investigation is, is a moot point. The US decided that Syria was guilty long before any official investigation.

In deciding who perpetrated the crime, the question of who benefited must be asked. Syria certainly did not benefit; it suffered a diminution of its influence in the region and had to withdraw its troops from the Lebanon despite the support of the Hezbollah.

The US administration has been trying to destabilise Iran and its ally Syria which is supported by the Hezbollah in the Lebanon. The US has been hinting darkly at sanctions against Syria and has made military incursions into that country on the pretext that Syria is used as a base for foreign fighters against the US occupation of Iraq. The facts of the matter are that most estimates put the percentage of foreign resistance fighters in Iraq at about 5%. The amount of Syrian fighters is negligible.

It is clear that US policy in the Middle East as a whole—not just in Iraq—is a destabilising factor.

THE FRENCH RIOT

It has not been a good year for Nicholas Sarkozy, the neo-liberal potential Presidential candidate in 2007. Not long after his family appeared in *Paris Match* (beautiful wife, adoring son etc.) his beautiful wife left him.

The appointment of Dominique de Villepin as Prime Minister has made the former Foreign Minister a credible alternative to Sarkozy if Chirac does not run again.

Sarkozy has been on the Presidential campaign trail for well over a year now. He never tires of giving his vague free market prescriptions for France and some of the French media are more than willing to oblige. But recently Dominique Strauss

Kahn, a senior Socialist Party leader, pointed out that Sarkozy as Minister for the Interior is the third most powerful political leader in France and that it was about time that he took responsibility for Government policy.

And then there was that incident in Clichy-Sous-Bois. Three youngsters, fleeing from the police, hid in an electricity transformer station. They were electrocuted and two of them died. Such is the terror that the French police inspire, that the youngsters were prepared to risk their lives rather than be captured by the police. It turns out that they were innocent of all wrong doing. A riot followed the incident and then Sarkozy poured oil on the fire by stating that the “riff raff had to be got rid of”. This provoked riots in other Parisian suburbs and in other cities.

Sarkozy, realising his mistake (although not admitting it), requested a meeting with the bereaved families. They refused on the grounds that he was “incompetent”. The families agreed to meet Prime Minister Villepin. Sarkozy was present at the meeting but had to remain uncharacteristically silent.

REPUBLICAN VALUES

Of course, the significance of the French riots goes far beyond the fate of one individual politician. The Aljazeera television station summed up the problem by saying that the riots represented a failure of France’s policy of integration.

The French urban ghettos are no worse than places in Britain, the United States, or even Ireland. Indeed, they may even be far better. But the French believe that everyone must be a citizen of the Republic. The successful policy of banning religious insignia in French public schools represented a triumph of republican values. The ideology of “multi-culturalism” or “pluralism” is anathema to French values. The French believe in social unity.

The neglect of the ghettos represents a failure of the French State to live up to its republican ideals. In other countries if a Government Minister referred to the “riff raff” in a poor area the comment would hardly be noticed. But in France the “orphans” of the republic have rebelled.

The French Government has not given up. As the competent Minister for Employment and Social Cohesion, Jean Louis Borloo, has stated, the law of the Republic must be applied with firmness, but also a hand must be extended to these communities.

Vive la République!

Riots: A Thoroughly French Affair

Extract from an interview with the
French Historian Emmanuel Todd
(*Le Monde* 13.11.05)

Le Monde: Is there a conflict between the young of immigrant background who have been burning cars and the other classes in France?

Todd: It is very worrying to see cars, buses and nursery schools burning. And things can get worse. But despite all, I tend towards a quite optimistic interpretation of what is happening. I am not speaking of the situation in the suburbs which in some places is disastrous with 35% unemployment among the heads of families and ethnic discrimination in recruitment.

But I see nothing in the events themselves which separates radically the children of the immigrants from the rest of French society. I see in them exactly the opposite. I see in the events a rejection of marginalisation. All of this would not have happened if the children of immigrants had not absorbed some of the fundamental values of French society such as Liberty and Equality. On the other side, regarding the police led by the government, the local authorities, the non immigrant population I saw exasperation, perhaps, but not a rejection en bloc.

Le Monde: Do you mean that the young revolted because they have integrated the republican model and feel that it doesn’t work?

Todd: Exactly. I read in their revolt an aspiration for equality. French society is under pressure from the rise of socially divisive values, which have affected the whole of the developed world. Quite openly admitted in the US, where the sole political effect is the success of the neo-conservatism, the socially divisive thrust in the world has not been received well in France. It clashes with anthropological egalitarian values which were at the heart of the peasant family structure in the Paris basin. This substratum which rose in 17th century or earlier is not found among the English peasantry among which the transfer of land was unequal.

When you are at the top level of society you can adapt to the rise in inequality, even if it is against your principles. It is not uncomfortable. On the other hand the working classes or the middle classes experience it badly. The vote of the Front

National has an egalitarian component with the capacity to say shit to the elites and a divisive component which looks lower down the social scale to immigrant scapegoats.

But the kids in the suburbs of African or North African origin are not at all in the same situation as the Pakistanis in England or the Turks in Germany. In our country the rate of mixed marriages since the beginning of the 1990s is around 25% for the daughters of Algerians, while it was 1% for Turks (in Germany presumably—JM) and the same for Pakistanis (in England—JM). The ethnic mix of these young groups in France is impossible to imagine in Anglo-Saxon countries...

Le Monde: What do you think of the reaction of the Republic to the riots?

Todd: I am not against the curfews for the violence which is very worrying. But in general I think the reaction of the Police and the Government has been very moderate. In May 1968 we cried foolishly: “CRS: SS” (the CRS is the State Police in France—JM). But the forces of order showed exceptional control. At that time in left-wing circles it was said that the police did not shoot because the bourgeoisie did not wish to shoot their own children.

But in the suburbs we saw that the Republic did not shoot the children of immigrants either. Anyway, these were not the only ones concerned. The events affected all young people even in the most remote French province. The first deaths surrounding the events caused an immediate decrease in the violence. The foreign press which sniggers at France should consider this example.

Nicholas Sarkozy showed his stupidity by insisting on the foreign character of the youth involved in the violence. On the contrary, I am convinced this phenomenon is typical of French society. The young of mixed ethnic origin of Seine-Saint-Denis [Parisian Suburb in which most of the violence has occurred—JM] are enrolling in a tradition of social uprising which marks the history of France. Their violence is also a reflection of the disintegration of the African family in the face of French egalitarian values, in particular the equality of women. However, despite the inevitable somersaults, the second and third generation of the sons of immigrants have integrated well among the French working classes and some of them have joined the middle and upper classes.

However, I am not optimistic on the economic front: I think that globalisation is going to weigh more and more heavily on employment and salaries. I am optimistic

regarding political values. In terms of the result of two weeks of riots what do we see? These marginalised people appearing on the periphery of society have succeeded, by a movement which has taken a National dimension, in intervening in the central political debate. They have achieved changes in the policies of the right wing government (by re-establishing subsidies to the associations in the poor areas). And all that in reaction to verbal provocation from the Minister for the Interior [Sarkozy said he would get rid of the “riff raff” (*racaille*) in the suburbs—JM]. We are, without doubt, going to see that they will break Sarkozy’s career. We can be more marginal! [i.e., Sarkozy should be marginalised—JM]

John Martin (translator)

Social Dialogue: French Style

(Or how I missed the Revolution)

Most of the riots in France have been confined to the suburbs, but on Saturday, November 12th the ‘suburbanites’ decided to pay a visit to Place Bellecour in the centre of Lyon. The Police laid on a very elaborate reception. There were hundreds of them on the Rue de la République side of the main square with at least four ‘armoured buses’ ready to welcome any overexcited members of the suburban travellers.

At about 3.30 pm about a hundred youths congregated in the main square hurling abuse at the police across the road. Occasionally, an empty can was flung harmlessly in the direction of the forces of law and order. I mingled for a while with the youths. Many of them might have been of North African origin, but I find it difficult to say. (For example Zinedine Zidane is of North African origin but is quite fair-skinned). On the other hand many French with no connection with Africa can be quite dark-skinned). There were very few Black Africans. All the youths that I could hear were speaking French. They seemed to be hatching plans by mobile phones. Practically all of them were wearing tracksuits of various colours, runners and baseball caps. While they didn’t look like athletes they seemed tough and very healthy. France has one of the most repressive anti-drug laws in Europe and I could see the results before me.

The police were fearsome-looking and much better-armed and protected. Most of them had riot shields and truncheons. Some of them were armed with guns. So while I was with the youths, I had my escape plan worked out very meticulously.

Nothing much was happening. Occasionally some youths would disappear into the metro below Place Bellecour. I heard that the trains weren’t stopping at that metro station. I decided to saunter down Rue Edouard Heriot off Place Bellecour towards Place des Jacobins. This is a smaller square but there were another dozen riot police there. I could see a number of youths walking quickly up and down the street. They weren’t shopping.

There was an atmosphere of menace about the place. But there were still people shopping. I noticed in one shop there were women trying on cosmetics. They

seemed to be completely absorbed with what they were doing. No matter what the circumstances, one must at all times be beautiful!

I went back to Place Bellecour. The police were still there but the youths seemed to have dispersed. I lingered for a while. It started to rain. The City authorities had ordered the cessation of buses and trains after 6.00pm since the previous Wednesday because of the unrest. So I decided to make my way home.

Later that evening I switched on the radio. Apparently, about half an hour after I had left Bellecour, the youths returned armed with rubbish bins, bangers and fireworks which they hurled at the police. The police responded with teargas.

Not exactly a revolution. Social Dialogue: French style.

John Martin

Protestant Working Class:

Time to stop digging, and start thinking

This article by Mark Langhammer was originally submitted for publication to the Shankill Mirror, but declined on grounds of “lack of space” It was published subsequently in the *North Belfast News* and in *Daily Ireland* and is available on the Labour Party website at www.labour.ie/northernireland

My grandfather, a cawker in the shipyard, came from the Hammer district. He played under Ernie Ruddock in the Agnes Street Silver Band. My mother was brought up in Montreal Street in the Woodvale. And I worked for a short period in the Hammer Community Complex in Agnes Street. I have spent over twenty years working in a voluntary capacity in Rathcoole, variously as a Welfare Rights advisor, youth worker, political representative, and elected councillor, and still retain a small role in education there. Seeing a community that I know to be imbued with a generous instinct for solidarity—exuding wit, humour and earthiness, display itself as sullen, mean, defeatist and marginal is painful and unhealthy.

A lot has been said in the past weeks about the malaise, hopelessness and despair within urban Protestant working class areas. In advance of the **Love Ulster** rally in Belfast, I hope this article stimulates thinking and debate—because the response after the Whiterock parade served no one well.

POLITICAL CAUSES

The immediate political cause of the trouble is that the DUP has been by-passed and made irrelevant. Many Protestants voted DUP to “stick up” for them, to put the brakes on “*the process*”. The DUP duly dug in, and rejected last December’s deal. For all the talk of wanting “*photographs*”, the text of the December deal was highly ambiguous anyway and could’ve been read to suit either side.

After “*sackcloth and ashes*”, Republicans had no option but to deal directly with Blair. And Blair, with his legacy in mind, saw the prize of demilitarising the IRA as simply too big to miss. Blair has stretched the British state to accommodate. Witness the raid on Jonathon Powell’s, with computer discs and information removed. Few think that anyone other than MI5 would have been involved in that.

The price of decommissioning was a deal—involving ‘On the Runs’, the end of the Royal Irish Regiment, the removal of military watchtowers and

de-militarisation, speaking rights in the Oireachtas (at committee level) with some sort of deal allowing former combatants to join the community police layer currently mooted. On top of that, Republicans stretched everyone's patience by landing, as a "*fait accompli*", the Three Amigos back from Columbia.

The point is, the Protestants voted DUP to 'put on the brakes', and all of this happened on the DUP's watch as it stood by, impotent.

Urban Protestant working class areas have faced a long term malaise. In some senses, it's a similar dilemma as faced by other inner city areas across the UK. As redevelopment occurs, as people become more prosperous and move on and out, the inner cities communities, usually aged, poorer and stripped of their most articulate elements, become ghettoized.

May Blood was right when she talked recently about the loss of manufacturing and access to the apprenticeship system having not been replaced by a thirst for education, but it wasn't the only side effect.

A generation ago every street in Newtownards Road, Tigers Bay, Sandy Row, the Shankill, or Rathcoole would have had a convenor, or shop steward, or Health and Safety representative as a result of mass participation in the great, unionized, manufacturing enterprises of shipbuilding, aircraft, engineering and textiles. That meant that every community had people with capacity for leadership, organisation and negotiation, learnt through the Trade Union movement. No longer! Today, with no manufacturing to speak of, that capacity for leadership, organisation and negotiation has been stripped out.

Equally, most real, self sustaining, voluntary work in Protestant areas (outside of that propped up by state or European funding) happens within the sphere of influence of the Churches—such as Boys Brigades, Girl Guides, seniors tea dances, thrift shops, meals on wheels, youth clubs, even Churches League amateur football. With the Churches in decline, there are more holes in the social infrastructure.

The most common complaint expressed, however, boils down to "*The Republicans are getting everything, they're winning, we're bate etc etc*" I don't believe that resources are being distributed unequally.

And need is as great, maybe greater, in working class Catholic districts—but Republicans are winning the political battles. And Unionism has nobody to blame but itself.

UNIONISTS CLOSE THE BRITISH ROAD

Twenty years ago, I was part of the Campaign for Equal Citizenship. I stood as a Labour Representation candidate in the 1989 European election making that case. That campaign sought to give people in Northern Ireland, all people, access to governmental politics—to be able to join and vote for Labour, or Conservative. That campaign was serious, but failed, but valuable lessons were learned. One lesson burned deep into my political consciousness as a result.

Unionists (the entirety of the Unionist family from effete UUP-ers to paramilitaries) rejected, quite consciously, the concept of Equal Citizenship. Unionism rejected Labour Vs Conservative politics—rejected the extension to Northern Ireland of the British constitution. The Unionist family chose the 'comfort zone' of "*Prods versus Taigs*" over the outward-looking, evolutionary UK development. **The Unionists, in a real sense, closed the British road.** And I haven't heard a genuine argument for the Union from a Protestant politician for twenty years.

The point is that, when Unionism closed the British road, they closed the only outward looking, or aspirational avenue of development within the UK. Having rejected British political development, Unionists cannot, with any shred of justification, argue against the ongoing, incremental island-wide political development that is currently fraying Protestant nerves. And the expression of Unionism can only be negative: about stopping things, about slowing things down, about blocking things. It's this politics of hopelessness, the politics of the *cul-de-sac* that starts to explain the long term malaise within working class Protestant Belfast. Without aspiration, political avenues, hope, idealism, or winning arguments, the future for a resentful Protestant working class is to be hemmed in and policed in ever decreasing circles!

WORKING CLASS PROTESTANTS UNREPRESENTED

There is a big disconnect between political Protestantism and the urban working class. With respect to the

Fred Cobains, Bob Stokers and Chris McGimpseys, the middle class orientated UUP not only doesn't connect, it doesn't exist in many urban Protestant heartlands. The DUP, currently in vogue, also 'jars' with the working class. Imbued with the spirit of 1859 revivalism, its "good living", temperance ethos doesn't connect either with an earthy, quick-witted, urban electorate, with a Labour-ist ethic. So politics aren't working for Protestants.

Into this political vacuum, and the vacuum in community and church leadership, steps the paramilitary groupings. They occupy the space, but where do they stand? From what I can see, nowhere! Take the UDA. It rejected British politics, it rejects Irish politics, it rejected the Ulster Independence once promulgated by Glenn Barr, it rejected Sunningdale-style power sharing in 1974, and has rejected the power sharing of the recent 'confessional' agreement signed on Good Friday 1998. It dumped its political arm and set up a research group that doesn't appear to have researched anything. What is it for? From what I can see, it 'does' two things—sectarianism and 'running areas'—and, maybe thankfully, the running of criminally-orientated fiefdoms seems the more important at present. And the UVF? Despite a brave, post-ceasefire, effort by the Progressive Unionist Party to move its constituency to more positive ground, the UVF in places like North Belfast and Ballyclare looks like an adjunct of Special Branch no less than the drug dealers in the LVF that it seeks to put out of business. It's very hard to argue now that paramilitarism is anything but a predominantly a criminal enterprise with no politics, no ideology, and no world view.

That leaves the Protestant urban working class in a very big, deep, hole—up a creek without a paddle. And it strikes me that following incoherent Orangemen, like lemmings, can only end up with another generation of young people filling the jails, and a generation of mothers on the visiting runs. It's time for a long, hard, think.

Mark Langhammer is on the National Executive of the Labour Party and chairs its Northern Ireland branch, the Labour Forum www.labour.ie/northernireland

A Bounder And A CADo- gan?

The *Irish Times* is really great at pithy summings up of the learned historians and political commentators whose outpourings decorate its columns (much as those of various pigeons once decorated Nelson's). Its columnist Dennis Kennedy, it says, is "a writer and member of the Cadogan Group". Himself a great admirer of Nelson's column, Mr. Kennedy in his own little edifice describes the Cadogan Group as a "non-party think-tank". Rather modest perhaps for the group at least some of whose members advised former Nobel prize winning Unionist leader David Trimble. But then they did advise him into a spectacularly non-party position. Well done the Cadogan Group!

In 1988, before the coming together of Cadogan, while as yet a solitary saint atop his own lonely little pillar, Mr. Kennedy wrote an interesting work of political history: *The Widening Gulf: Northern Attitudes To The Independent Irish State, 1919-49* (published by Blackstaff Press). This, rather than his recent call on Irish nationalism to disband its pomp and circumstance or his Nelson nostalgia, is our text of the moment. And a grand little text it is too.

The Widening Gulf is about attitudes and attitudes are moments of perception which exist solely in the understanding of the body which has set itself to the task of perceiving. Thus Mr. Kennedy sees his business as being entirely bound up with the organs of Unionist perception, its daily and weekly papers. This is how he explains his purpose and method in the **Introduction** to his work:

"More interesting is to seek the extent to which, and the ways in which, this Unionism remained basically a reaction to Irish nationalism, and to what extent it continued to draw strength and cohesion from widely held perceptions of the nature and characteristics of that nationalism as it became embodied in the new Irish state. Unionist statements and speeches of 1919-49 indicate how the political leaders of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland remained obsessed by the threat of nationalism and their distaste for it. Such speeches were, naturally, widely reported in the newspapers of the time. As well as being a prime source for the opinions of influential and representative men, and for accounts of the actions of Government and political organisations, the three daily Unionist papers published

in Belfast, and to a lesser extent the array of weekly papers published throughout Northern Ireland, offered frequent editorial comments on the Southern state and events within it. These newspapers were also the windows through which the vast majority of Northern Unionists viewed the nationalist struggle from 1919 onwards. For most they were the only sources of information. Thus a reading of these papers, particularly for the vital early years immediately after the end of the First World War, gives a good picture of the events in Ireland as Unionists perceived them...

"As sources for a factual history of the period these newspapers have clear limitations. But as aids to understanding Unionists' perceptions of both what was happening to them and what was going on in the island, they are invaluable" (page 6).

If Mr. Kennedy had stuck to the procedures outlined in his Introduction he would have produced a worthy Unionist tract: edifying to the body of the faithful, entirely useless to all others. But Mr. Kennedy was led not those quiet waters by. He strayed and in consequence produced an oddly informative and interesting book.

In Part One, Chapter One, *Looking Over The Fence*, Mr. Kennedy begins badly for his cause by examining the unreliability of the organs of Unionist perception of its enemy:

"...there was no doubt co-operation between the News-Letter and the Government too. In January 1935 all the Belfast Unionist papers carried reports of appeals for help from Loyalists in the Free State to the Northern authorities, and for their transfer to the North. A cutting of one such article from the News-Letter, in Cabinet papers held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, has attached a note from Wilson Hungerford, secretary of the Ulster Unionist Council, to Craig, which makes it clear that Craig had seen a draft of the article before publication, that Hungerford had helped in its preparation, and that McKee, the editor of the News-Letter 'had promised a two-column spread'" (page 18).

There were three Unionist papers published in Belfast at that time. The other two were the *Northern Whig* and the *Belfast Telegraph*. According to Mr. Kennedy:

"The attitude of these Belfast papers in terms of journalistic organisation towards the rest of Ireland was somewhat strange. In the period up to the Second World War none of the three appointed staff correspondents in Dublin. This was despite the fact that in the early 1920s, and particularly from the advent of Eamon de Valera to power in 1932 up to the war, Dublin generated a vast amount of news adjudged to be of interest to Northern readers. All three relied almost entirely on stringers, working out of either the Irish Independent office, or that of the Irish Times..." (page 19).

A major element in Unionist reportage of the Fenian slough was the plight of Southern Loyalists. But...

"Even this last was generally reported on the basis of statements and debates in London, mainly in the House of Lords with Lord Carson foremost, rather than on any direct investigation in the Free State itself" (page 19).

So, the main thing one learns from Mr. Kennedy about Northern attitudes to the independent Irish state is that these were grounded in ill-informed propaganda. Oh dear!

Mr. Kennedy almost redeems himself for Unionism in succeeding chapters which simply follow Northern newspaper accounts of the war of secession as part of a world-wide conspiracy mounted by the Catholic Church against the British Empire. (Not straying into the matter of the Church in Ireland's hysterical condemnations of the IRA is crucial to making a go of this one). He makes a good job of simply reporting the propagandist coverage and ignoring the facts of anti-Protestant outrages in Cork. But then, once again, he allows reality a look in. Northern Protestants knew well enough that their Southern brethren were being persecuted but the oppressed themselves were unaware of it...

"The churches were understandably reluctant to cry religious war, for they stood to lose in such a situation. The outgoing Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. H.P. Glenn, told the Presbyterian gathering in Belfast in June 1921 that wherever he had gone in the south and west, he had heard his people say that as yet there was no trace of a religious war manifesting itself. Another minister, the Revd. B. Young from Galway, said his district covered half a county, but he had never seen an armed Sinn Féiner, nor a trenched road, nor met with the slightest discourtesy in the course of his work. He believed that any interference that took place was not for religious reasons. There might be those who occupied farms coveted by

their neighbours, or those who, because they were Loyalists, came under the ban of the IRA.

“Northern Presbyterians had no such doubts. Hugh M. Pollock, just elected to the Belfast parliament, and to be a member of the new Northern Government, told the General Assembly there was ‘...overwhelming evidence that there had been many cases of persecution of Protestants in the South. It is well known that this is going on and that one of the objects of the rebels is to drive the Protestants from their districts’” (page 55).

Hugh Pollock is quoted there from the *News-Letter* of 11th June 1921.

Mr. Kennedy did manage to find one prominent clergyman who spoke in support of the Unionist perception of itself as threatened and oppressed. This was the Most Reverend Dr. Fogarty, Roman Catholic Bishop of Killaloe, who regretted having to say that “...*Protestant fellow-countrymen had been persecuted and dealt with in a cruel and coarse manner*” (from the *Irish Times*, 8 May 1923, quoted on page 114). That is telling evidence, but hardly evidence of a concerted Catholic campaign to “*drive the Protestants from their districts*”.

Now that Fine Gael has rediscovered its republican roots in the last year of the life of Michael Collins it might care to comment on the war which Collins and the Provisional Government launched in that year against the Unionists of the border areas. In the course of Collins’ border campaign in the Spring and early Summer of 1922 the IRA and Free State troops crossed the line, blowing up and burning Big Houses, kidnapping prominent Unionists, and invading Belleek and Pettigo. Grand days Enda, just waiting to be memorialised by you! Go on Enda, away to Beal na mBlath and speechify about all that. Dare you. Double dare you!

Anyway, during Collins’ war along the border, Unionist perception of the war of secession as an anti-Protestant jacquerie was at its height.

At the end of the year of Collins’ border war, in December 1922, James Cooper told the Belfast Parliament:

“...in the County of Fermanagh you have at the present time a very large number of people indeed—hundreds upon hundreds of families who have crossed the Border from the Free State during the last twelve months. Every day I see four or five, sometimes six or seven, and sometimes more families coming from the County of Leitrim, the County of Longford, the County of Donegal and

every county around the Border, and some of them have come to Fermanagh from Kerry” (quoted page 126).

The Unionist press had a field day:

“A *News-Letter* report of 29 May conveys the intensity with which the news of these events was presented to Northern readers. Under the headings ‘Donegal Huns’ and ‘Persecution Campaign Against Protestants And Loyalists’ it said:

“ ‘The plight of Protestants and Loyalists in Co. Donegal grows worse and worse every day. The rebels on the run from Northern Ireland are intensifying the campaign of persecution, and life has become unendurable for the abandoned Loyalists. Thousands have fled to Londonderry, Belfast and other places in Northern Ireland, leaving their belongings behind. They state that a reign of terror has been instituted. The Republican and Free State forces are now joined in the work of murder, robbery and incendiarism.’

“On 2 June the Whig reported ‘a considerable number of refugees’, mainly from Castlefin in Co. Donegal, arriving in Castleberg, Co. Tyrone” (pp. 120-121).

Now then, such a flood of refugees must surely have given rise to a considerable relief effort. Government committees pouring money on the problem as such committees are wont to do. Charitable foundations springing up all over the place. Clothes being donated, soup kitchens and shelters organised. All that kind of thing. Well, no, not exactly.

In May 1922, after 50 Southern Unionist refugees lobbied the House of Commons at Westminster, an Irish Distress Committee was set up under Sir Samuel Hoare with £10,000 to spend on relieving such victims of said Irish Distress who fled into Britain:

“In its first interim report in November 1922, the Hoare Committee said that in the period from 12 May to 14 October it had dealt with 3,349 applicants, many of them married men with large families. Not all of these were in need of immediate assistance, but of the 1,873 cases approved for emergency relief, about 600 were Protestant, and just over 1,000 Catholic. (Fewer than 100 of these cases were from Northern Ireland.)” (page 125).

So, it would appear that a majority of those fleeing to Britain from the anti-Protestant pogroms which disfigured the birth of the Irish Free State were Catholics. Strange that, but there you go.

So what about those refugees who fled to their co-religionists in the North? Well that’s a bit difficult. You see the Northern

government made no arrangements at all for relieving the distress of those fleeing the Donegal Huns. Not a sausage.

“A private committee was set up under the Chief Whip in Craig’s Government...There is no accurate record of the numbers who actually did flee North. In September 1922 Craig wrote to Churchill mentioning ‘some three hundred and sixty [refugees] now being maintained by private generosity in Ulster’. The money spent by the Dixon Committee was limited; in October 1923 Dixon sent a certificate of money expended to date, for £495.0s.6d., to the Home Office, seeking a reimbursement” (page 126).

Mr. Kennedy comments:

“There is an apparent discrepancy between this small amount of money spent by the Dixon Committee, and the frequent eye-witness accounts of hundreds, or even thousands, of Southern Loyalists arriving as refugees in the North” (page 126).

Indeed so. Mr. Kennedy concludes that “*What is clear is that there is no evidence of any large-scale transfer of population across the border at this period*”.

The Unionist perception itself was rather confused on this matter. At one moment Unionists saw Protestant refugees flooding into the six counties. In just a sliver of the same moment they saw hordes of Catholics infiltrating themselves into God’s Little Acre to create the ‘artificial’ nationalist majorities in Tyrone and Fermanagh. One can forgive Mr. Kennedy for running to the real world in despair at such attitudes. If only he could have remained there.

The Widening Gulf was published 17 years ago and since then Mr. Kennedy has fallen among Cadogans and been introduced to historiography. His occasional instinct to search among perceived attitudes for the facts of the matter has been drummed out of him. Now he is writing for the *Irish Times* and attitudes are all.

The current set of attitudes (in the *Irish Times* 31 October 2005) amount quite simply to declarations that the Belfast Agreement failed “*because it was undermined by the IRA’s tardiness in disarming*” and also because the IRA’s disarming was a trick to destroy evidence which could have been used to convict the murdering scum. Now the only thing for it is a major nationalist rethink that will unthink its aspiration to unity. Sad really that the man who discovered most of the victims of an anti-Protestant pogrom to be Catholics should have fallen to that.

Very sad.

Then there is his strange lament (in the *Irish Times* on 8 November) that Nelson is not on his column to provide a focal point for Irish participation in English celebrations of his victory at Trafalgar (the English are working their way slowly but surely back to the Boyne). I hope someone else can bring themselves to comment on that. I can't. Its just too sad.

Joe Keenan

Hart And Coogan On Collins

Peter Hart, a product of Professor David Fitzpatrick's 'History Workshop' in Trinity College, wrote a book about the War of Independence and 'Civil War' in Cork, in which he treated the 1918 Election as a thing of no democratic consequence, and presented the War of Independence as a murder campaign consisting largely of pre-national feuding between families. The greatest military event in that conflict, the battle at Kilmichael, was presented not only as a murderous act, but as a particularly reprehensible form of murder in which the British force was allowed to surrender to Tom Barry's column and was then shot out of hand. He dismissed Barry's account (that the British force had indicated an intention to surrender but then started shooting when the Irish were taken off guard) as an invention. During Barry's lifetime, his account was supported by other Irish survivors of the battle, and was accepted by the commander of the Auxiliaries, General Crozier. But Hart revealed that Barry's account was contradicted by a couple of members of his column who he interviewed after Barry was dead—and after they themselves were dead too!!

He has, understandably, not revealed how he was able to interview the dead. It is not the kind of secret one would be inclined to give away.

That farrago of nonsense was published in 1998 by the Oxford University Press, which takes the name of Lord Clarendon in vain. It was hailed as a classic by Roy Foster in the *Irish Times*, for whom conducting interviews with the dead appears to be an acceptable academic method. And it received nothing but praise from Irish academia and the Irish media—or, to be more accurate, from academia in Ireland.

Hart has now published another book, a biography of Michael Collins. It is not published by the Clarendon Press, possibly because it is not based on interviews with the dead and does not describe the War of Independence and 'Civil War' as a murder campaign, motivated by the ethnic cleansing of Protestants insofar as it had a motive beyond family funding.

as if he was "*headed off at the pass*" (as they used to say in Westerns) by the Aubane Historical Society, Meda Ryan, and Brian Murphy, and has regrouped. But this new book is receiving the treatment which the first book should have been given but wasn't.

It was dealt with on RTE 1 by Theo Dorgan—the boy from Blackpool (Cork) who made good among the Dublin *literati*, where fashion reigns supreme, and who is therefore a straw that shows which way the wind is blowing:

"Do you want to know what I think of this book? I'll tell you what I think. I'm very disappointed—very disappointed... It's very badly written. I think its prose style is awful. There's a constant belittling, sneering tone going through it which I think cuts against the thrust of what he purports to be saying... Hart cannot rise to the notion that somebody might give his life to his country...—and if you don't get that, I think you don't get Collins, you don't get Markievicz, you don't get Connolly. You don't get any of them. Indeed you don't get Sheehy Skeffington. The bizarre thing is that he talks about Collins's "political career". Collins was dead by 32. It was a "career" only in the old fashioned sense, which I don't think he means, that you career downhill at top speed when you're almost out of control. This was a man who gave a life of passion and intelligence to a venture, think of it what you will. But he wasn't making a "career". He surrounded himself... with people he knew he could rely on. This becomes "building a cabal"... It's a fundamental misconception. It's a looking backwards from a mentality that we have now. But the real problem is that... a living person does not in any meaningful sense come out of here. It's flawed by the sheer volume of undoubted hard work that he put into it. He accumulated an enormous amount of information and he's far too credulous. He'll quote Collins in his diary notes and say: "*The truth of what*

happened is in the Longford Leader". Here's an academic historian of repute who says the truth is to be found on newspapers!... The other thing that I found extraordinary is to write about a colonial war as if it was an argy bargy outside a golf club...—no sense of the pitiable terror that stalked the country, with killing on all sides going on... It's like as if somebody had tried to construct the *Iliad* from a list of ship's stores, rather than give us a sense of the warrior prince bestriding the world..."

Who was the warrior prince bestriding the world? Achilles? Agamemnon? Odysseus? And which is Collins?

It can hardly be Achilles, the bovver-boy with his squad of Antmen who spent most of the *Iliad* sulking in his tent because he had lost his girl to Agamemnon. So it's between Agamemnon and Odysseus.

Agamemnon, the leader of the expeditionary force, was for giving up and going home when the Trojans breached the Greek defences.

"...That our army bends,
That Troy triumphant our high fleet ascends,
And that the rampart, late our surest trust
And best defence, lies smoking in the dust;
All this from Jove's afflictive hand we bear,
Who, far from Argos, wills our ruin here...
Cease we at length to waste our blood in vain,
And launch what ships lie nearest to the main;
Leave these at anchor, till the coming night:
Then, if impetuous Troy forbear the fight,
Bring all to sea, and hoist each sail for flight.
Better from evils, well foreseen, to run,
Than perish in the danger we may shun."

Thus he. The sage Odysseus thus replied,
While anger flashed from his disdainful eye:
"What shameful words (unkingly as thou art)
Fall from that trembling tongue and timorous heart?
Oh were thy sway the curse of meaner powers,
And thou the shame of any host but ours!...
Lives there a man so dead to fame, who dares
To think such meanness, or the thought declares?
And comes it even from him whose sovereign sway
The bonded legions of all Greece obey?
Is this a general's voice that calls to flight,

While war hangs doubtful, while his soldiers fight?...”
(This is from Book 14 in Pope’s translation.)

Agamemnon pulls himself together under this tongue-lashing from Odysseus, the least heroic of the heroes, the compromiser who knows when not to compromise, the prudent and resourceful contriver who will find a way around a difficulty if there is one but will stand his ground at whatever cost if there isn’t.

So take your pick. This is the Treaty Debate.

(I should explain that Pope calls Odysseus “Ulysses”. The English preferred his Roman name. And Joyce followed the English fashion in naming his banal anti-epic of suburban lower-middle class life in “*a modern European metropolis*”, as the American judge put it when allowing it to be sold.)

Tim Pat Coogan makes a different comparison, describing Collins and De Valera as “*our Irish Danton and his Robespierre*” (*Michael Collins* p40). I assume that by Robespierre he means the one who started the killing within the revolution. That is not accurate even for France. And in Ireland it was indisputably Collins who started the killing.

I attended a talk given by Hart about Collins at the Queen’s University Festival in Belfast on 24th October. The event was advertised in *Daily Ireland* with a whole-page interview with Hart and was well-attended, but the audience was not impressive when it came to asking questions. The talk was worthwhile, as these things go in Ireland today. I would have commended the speaker on it, but the Chairman somehow failed to notice that my hand was up—possibly because it was thought I had something else in mind.

Hart was introduced by Richard English, a hack Professor of the West British project, who referred to Collins as “*the revolutionary giant*” of the revolutionary period of 1916-21; asked “*why was the revolutionary period so violent?*”; and mentioned the Republican ethnic cleansing in West Cork related in Hart’s first book.

I had read most of the Collins book and noticed that there was nothing in it about serial murder, ethnic cleansing, or murderous feuding under camouflage of Republican ideology which were Hart’s themes in his book about Cork. It was as if the two books had been written by different

people holding diametrically opposed views. Was Hart schizophrenic or was he an opportunist producing a modified product in response to a perceived change in market demand? In either case one might expect some retrogression towards his earlier position in the atmosphere of Queen’s University, which was in some degree his home ground. And Professor English had nudged him in that direction. But he ignored the hint and made what seemed to me to be a well-informed and honest attempt to assess Collins in his time and place, accepting the legitimacy of the context in which he acted.

The basic assessment was that Collins had by nature the qualities of a good Staff Officer, without a natural aptitude for leadership. In games he was never the captain or the best player, but was always the most energetic hustler. And so it was in the war. He gained his position by hard work. He attended all the committee meetings, handled the accounts, and made sure that he knew everybody. The idea of him as the Lost Leader who would have made everything different if he had survived was a projection onto him of popular fantasy rather than something grounded in the reality of his life. Until the latter part of 1921 he acted within the political context set by De Valera. He was not an intelligent or original thinker. His *Path To Freedom* was ghost written and its purpose was to seal the Treaty and win the 1922 Election.

He is often thought of as being essentially a soldier with soldierly qualities. But he never fired a shot in anger until a couple of minutes before his death. He was a staff officer, not a man of action. He claimed to have taken part in ambushes but there is no evidence of it. He never held a military command, though he is said to have been the Napoleon of the revolution who invented guerilla warfare. He didn’t invent it. And he didn’t form the Squad or lead it. That was McKee and Mulcahy.

Nobody led the IRA. It led itself by battalions. It was the British propaganda that named Collins as commander.

Bloody Sunday, often seen as a master-stroke, was planned to coincide with a series of attacks in England with the object of inducing Britain to negotiate. Its purpose was political but it backfired with the outcome that peace talks were delayed for six months.

Collins was always an IRB man, which was not very soldierly. He achieved the fusion of the IRB with the Volunteers. He was the most successful politician in Irish history, perhaps in all Irish history. He was the Machiavelli of the revolution. De Valera learned politics from him. He would never willingly share power with colleagues. He undermined Mellows

at every turn, and he put Cosgrave in charge of the Army though he was one of the weakest people in the Army. He was skilled in the arts of deniability and networking.

He outmanoeuvred De Valera in 1922. He made an alliance but then turned around and broke it, and launched the civil war. He spun the 1922 election, telling the people to vote for peace, and then when the election was won, telling them they had voted for law and order. He dictated how he was seen then, and is still doing so now.

That is the gist of Hart’s talk according to my memory and the notes I made in the half dark.

It is not a coherent picture, but as far as I know there is no picture of Collins which is coherent as well as realistic and well-informed. And the particular form of Hart’s incoherence is understandable—much more so than Tim Pat Coogan’s, which is really the only comparison.

It consists of two incompatible parts: Collins the diligent staff officer, and Collins the master politician who outwitted Dev during the critical six months after the Treaty.

I went through those six months in detail from the newspapers 40 years ago, and my first impression was much like Hart’s: Collins as the skilled and purposeful politician of the Treaty, disabling the opposition by a series of arrangements until he felt strong enough to strike, and then striking. Then I saw that there could be an altogether different explanation: that Collins became rudderless when he signed the Treaty, and that his direction thereafter was determined by the forces acting on him (Whitehall and the Irish Army) and that his attempt to steer his own course came to nothing.

I was unable to go back over the period with that in mind because the North went into flux just then. I never got back to it. But my opinion is that at the end Collins was little more than flotsam. His position crumbled when he agreed to go to war with British artillery under pressure of a British ultimatum. At the end he was floundering. His purpose had been to construct a sustainable middle through the way he handled both ends, but that purpose lost its purchase on the substance of things.

*

What I would say about Hart’s book is that it is no worse than Coogan’s. Both of them share the same basic fault of dealing with a false subject, which leads them to describe the war to enforce the Treaty as a civil war. Coogan presents more interest-

ing material along the way, but his prime purpose seems to be to depict De Valera as an egomaniac—for which he cites T. Ryle Dwyer as an authority. And Hart's book has at least the merit that it does not do this. It tries to locate the conflict between Collins and Dev in the political ground on which it occurred, and engages in no psychological theorising.

As I write, the *Irish Times* carries an article by its scientific correspondent William Reville about a book by a Trinity professor of child and adolescent psychiatry suggesting that Dev was autistic:

"Professor Fitzgerald describes Eamon de Valera as a gifted mathematician and a loner who had almost no personal relationships. He was very good in crowds, but couldn't relate to Michael Collins, who was a much more 'human individual'. Prof. Fitzgerald goes on to speculate on the relationship between De Valera's mentality and the Civil War and also Irish neutrality. However, I think the underlying evidence here is far too flimsy to underpin and firm up conclusions" (10 Nov. Reville is Professor of Biochemistry, and Public Awareness of Science Officer at University College, Cork).

But it isn't really a question of evidence. The thing is that the evidence doesn't relate to the subject, and therefore it isn't evidence at all.

Einstein, Newton and Yeats are listed as other autistic personalities whose lonely obsessions, and disconnection from their surroundings, enabled them to do what they did. That may be. Mathematics and poetry are fantasy worlds. It is somehow the case that the elaborate tautological constructions of mathematics grasp the physical world although apparently spun out of the mind. And a fantasy life lived in poetry is sometimes adopted by those who live actual lives and is interwoven with the reality of personal life, though for the most part it isn't so. But mathematics does not grasp the reality of human life, whether at a personal or social level. And the poetry of feeling, whether romanticised or raw (and Yeats progressed from the former to the latter), cannot grasp the social level of human life, which in this democratic era is the state. Democracy is the most contrived, the most artificial, form of the state, and therefore the most difficult to bring out of chaos. Yeats as a politician was a Fascist. He was not the only artist of his time who, in applying art to politics, became a Fascist. If Eliot was not a Fascist, he was thereabouts. I do not know of any democratic poets. There were democratic ideologists who wrote

verse but I could never see that verse as authentic poetry.

Autistic and authentic are two words made from the same root, which means "self". Autism is used to describe a personality which is absorbed in itself and which acts out of a grossly unbalanced or distorted picture of the world. Another Professor held (in *Books Ireland*) that I had engaged in personal abuse when I described as autistic the concern expressed for the handful of casualties of the Easter Rising by somebody who was at ease with recruiting for the British Army, which suffered 50,000 casualties in one day at the Battle of the Somme a couple of months later.

Authentic (a word which, as far as I know, comes from the existentialist development of Kant's philosophy) describes the self-interacting with the world in a way that grasps the realities of the world, but does so out of its own insight, and not in accordance with conventional routine. And this is the word that applies to De Valera.

Politics is the most objective form of activity in human affairs. It is utterly unlike mathematics. Effective political activity in a disrupted situation requires a unique combination of engagement and detachment. It is a rare combination. Dev had it and Collins did not.

Engagement, in this matter, does not mean a hail-fellow-well-met attitude. Collins had that in plenty. He exuded personality. He deluged people with it. And, if his entourage is not accurately described as a Cabal, he had at any rate an extensive entourage and he used it as a political instrument. Dev's mode of action was entirely different. He did not cultivate a personal following. After the Treaty split he had only, as Coogan contemptuously puts it, "*the women and Childers party*" (p300).

Collins, according to Hart, attracted the superior talents:

"savvy journalists and propagandists, lawyers, war heroes and the majority of the Cabinet... De Valera had no such coherent group, as many of those opposed to the Treaty were guerillas who didn't know him very well, didn't agree with his preferred solutions, and would not follow his lead in parliament or in the making of public statements" (p328).

"No one ever said, 'If it's good enough for Dev, it's good enough for

me'" (p421).

And yet, though Dev had no following of any consequence, Coogan says that he took "*the first open step... in the direction of civil war*" by issuing a statement, when he read in a newspaper that a Treaty had been signed, that he had called a Cabinet meeting to discuss it! (Coogan p295).

But Collins signed the Treaty, knowing that Dev would oppose it:

"As Dr. T. Ryle Dwyer has observed, 'He had realised that de Valera would oppose the agreement, if only on selfish grounds'. It was a compromise, but it was not de Valera's compromise" (Coogan p295).

How could it be that this alienated, autistic individual, who was out of touch with the people, and who lost the votes in the Cabinet and the Dail, and lost the election six months later, and who was obsessed with a groundless sense of his own importance, divided the country and brought about a civil war? And how was it that "*the man who won the war*" found himself six months later making war on the Army that had won it for him?

Coogan records that Collins suspected the British of trying to undermine him: "*Collins was convinced that there was collusion between elements on the British side and his opponents*" (p314), but he does not dwell on this possibility. It does not seem to occur to him that the purpose of British policy during the year after the signing of the Treaty was to bring about a war within the Republican forces in the course of establishing the Free State on the authority of the Crown. Whitehall knew very well that Collins wanted to take power under the Treaty with a view to using that power to break the Treaty, and it was intent on disabling him in the course of installing him.

The thing seems obvious to me. But then I spent a quarter of a century trying to get 'Ulster' made part of the politics of the British state, and therefore had both the motive and the opportunity for getting to know how that state functions. And Coogan has always struck me as a primeval Catholic-nationalist with a veneer of irrelevant sophistication, who is easily impressed by British power. He refers somewhere to "*the ennobling qualities of the British Empire*". He appears to believe that Birkenhead struck up a genuine friendship with Collins, as distinct from striking an attitude which was helpful in manipulating Collins. (Both Tories and Liberals saw him as a

manipulable savage.)

Coogan, like Hart in his first book, suggests that the anti-Treaty position was “sectarian”, though I don’t think he attributes this to Dev’s influence. (How could he, if Dev had no influence?) He says: after the anti-Treatyites occupied the Four Courts in April 1922:

“A number of other Dublin centres were also seized: the Fowler Hall, the Masonic Hall, Kilmainham Jail and the *ancien regime* Kildare St. Club. These seizures conveyed sectarian overtones combined with a flouting of Provisional Government authority” (p315).

I suppose these were all institutions of the Ascendancy, which was Protestant, and therefore interference with them is called sectarian.

As far as I have been able to discover, the Ascendancy remnants, insofar as they found expression in the *Church Of Ireland Gazette* (which claimed to represent their views), found the Republic rather comic at first (in 1919) and assumed that British power would deal with it in the way it had dealt with other kinds of Irish nonsense in the past. Then it went rather quiet. But in December 1921 it became a player in the game. The democracy of the general election cut no ice with it, but the Treaty dictated by the naked threat of British power established legitimate Irish authority. The *Gazette* became part of the propaganda apparatus of the Treaty, and it applied to the Provisional Government (an instrument of the British state) all the fine words which it had withheld from the Dail and its Government. And it contributed what influence it had towards the drive for “civil war”.

If the *Gazette* was representative of the Ascendancy residue (and I have no reason to doubt its claims that it was), I can see no grounds for describing action against Ascendancy institutions by the anti-Treatyites as sectarian.

Coogan is at sea without compass or rudder in these matters. I recall his fierce, Catholic-nationalist, editorials in the *Irish Press* in 1969-70, when I was the outcast “two-nationist” in West Belfast. I did not know then that he was a passionate Treatyite, with a visceral hatred of De Valera, editing De Valera’s paper. I never met him, but we saw each other in passing at a conference in Belfast twenty years later, when events had gone more in accordance with my understanding than with his, and I got a puzzled look from

him. His Northern policy was Catholic breeding and an expectation that the British State would come good in the end, which I would sum up as Catholic provincialism under half-acknowledged British aegis, and with a veneer of British sophistication. (The latter is in evidence in his comment that Thomas Ashe’s jail poem, *Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord*, “struck a sharp and powerful chord in the unsophisticated Catholic Ireland of 1917” (p74).

The common flaw shared by Coogan and Hart is that, while both of them make great play with the word ‘democracy’, neither takes the thing itself in earnest as the context in which relations between Britain and Ireland in 1919-22 should be considered. Both take it for granted that Britain, despite the 1918 Election, remained the legitimate power in Ireland in 1919-22; and that the falling out amongst Republicans over whether to bow to the British ultimatum of December 1921 was the furnace in which Irish democracy was forged.

Neither takes the Republic established on the basis of the 1918 Election to have been the legitimate political authority in Ireland in 1919-21. The way Coogan put it is that it was only “self-recognised” — the word “solipsism” was not yet in fashion in pretentious intellectual circles when he wrote. (It was only self-recognised because Britain, which exercised greater power in the world then than the USA does now, would not allow the States assembled at Versailles to found the League of Nations to recognise it.)

The month from mid-December 1918 to mid-January 1919 was a turning-point in Irish history. But Coogan does not present the Election and the Declaration of Independence as a watershed event. He scarcely mentions them. His main comment on the Election is that candidates were selected in a situation of public excitement (connected with the “German Plot”), “which Collins and Boland manipulated to the full”, ensuring that—

“only those who favoured a ‘forward policy’ were selected. This short-term success would plague Collins in the long-term because the voice of moderation was muted in the National Assembly when he desperately needed its support for the Anglo-Irish Treaty” (p92).

Hart denies that the list of candidates was unrepresentative of the movement.

And of the Declaration of Independence Coogan says:

“Some high-minded declarations

were promulgated. ...Fraught and swirling words were uttered in French, Irish and English. The Declaration of Independence, for instance, contained the following:

‘We the elected representatives of the ancient people in the National Parliament assembled do, in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this Declaration effective by every means at our command.

‘We ordain that the elected representatives of the Irish people alone have the power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland...

‘We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English Garrison.’

“The foregoing was, of course, no more and no less than a declaration of war, but lest there be any doubt remaining abroad as to what the insurgents’ intentions were a Message to the Free Nations of the World was also read stating that Ireland was calling

‘upon every free nation to uphold her national claim to complete independence as an Irish Republic against the arrogant pretensions of England founded in fraud and sustained only by an overwhelming military occupation and demands to be confronted publicly with England at the Congress of Nations in order that the civilised world, having judged between English wrong and Irish right, may guarantee to Ireland its permanent support for the maintenance of her national independence’...” (p104)

Here we have a comprehensive conflation of the ballot and the bullet, to the extent that the ballot is declared to be a bullet.

The Irish electorate, six weeks after the end of a World War which England had said it was fighting in order to establish democracy and the rights of small nations as basics of the international order, votes for national independence, and Coogan describes that as an insurgency. The Declaration of Independence, drawn up pursuant to the election, is described as a declaration of war. And, if the Irish, as their first act in the democratic era, had declared war on England, the British Parliament cannot be blamed all that much for responding to a declaration of

war with war.

Coogan does not say that the Irish Declaration of Independence in accordance with an electoral mandate was tantamount to a declaration of war on the British Empire because everybody with any sense must have known that the propaganda about democracy and the rights of nations with which Britain recruited canon-fodder in Ireland was not intended to be taken in earnest with regard to the component parts of the Empire, and least of all with regard to Ireland. He does not say “*tantamount*”. He says it was the thing itself, “*neither more nor less*”.

On this view the sending of an Irish delegation to the Peace Conference at Versailles was a bit of nonsense—and it has been frankly described as such by Conor Cruise O’Brien. But the chief Home Rule writer of the time, Redmond’s nephew, took the ideology of his support for the Great War in earnest, and late in 1918 (*before* the Election) he published a book saying that the way Ireland was handled would be decisive for the future of both the British Empire and the League of Nations which it was about to set up. He said in effect that an attempt to hold Ireland by force, after all that had been said, would be fatal to both the Empire and the League.

But, whether revisionist or not—and I don’t think Coogan regards himself as such—we are all too sophisticated now for that approach.

The Foreign Minister (Fianna Failer Dermot Ahern) wants us to celebrate the Battle of the Somme because large numbers of Irishmen, taking the British propaganda at face value, thought that by participating in the British assault they were somehow fighting for Irish national freedom. But we are not to take that propaganda at face value (even though millions had died because of it) when it comes to writing the history of 1919-22. But neither are we to describe it as deception. That would never do. We are to discard rationality and enter a twilight zone in which nothing is real and, on the other hand, nothing is false.

Coogan suggests that this was how Collins saw things, and that he was never really a Republican. And Hart goes along with that.

The Irish democracy could not establish the legitimacy of its own institutions. “*Self-recognition*” is solipsistic fantasy.

Legitimate democracy begins when the Dail voted by a bare majority in January 1922 to bow to the British ultimatum, to relinquish the sovereignty which it had asserted three years earlier and transfer it to the Provisional Government authorised by Whitehall, and when the electorate in June 1922 gave way to the threat of total war, such as had broken the will of the Boers twenty years earlier, and elected a majority of Treatyites.

Hart, in his talk, cited Collins’s election strategy as an instance of his superiority over De Valera as a politician: he urged the electorate to vote Treatyite for peace and then told them they had voted for war, in the name of law and order.

In fact, Collins tried to avoid putting the matter to the electorate. He made a kind of power-sharing pact with the anti-Treatyites which would have resulted in sitting members being returned in all cases. Churchill tried to warn him off with a letter:

“It would not be an election in any sense of the word, but simply a farce, whereby a handful of men who possess lethal weapons deliberately disposed of the political rights of the electors across a table... It would be an outrage on democratic principle... The enemies of Ireland have been accustomed to say that the Irish people did not care about representative Government, that it was alien to their instincts, and that if they had an opportunity they would return to a despotism or oligarchy in one form or another...”—and Collins would prove it if he went ahead with the arrangement (Coogan, p323; “*return*” from where I wonder?).

Coogan quotes Churchill’s letter extensively and with some approval and complains that Collins ignored it and went ahead with the Pact. But, a few weeks later, Collins was ‘invited’ to Whitehall, where he was told what was what. And he came back and repudiated the Pact two days before the ‘election’. And the Free State Constitution (drafted by Collins and heavily revised by Whitehall) was not published until the day of the election.

This was the birth of Irish democracy. Professor Garvin of University College, Dublin, who is doubtful about the legitimacy of the 1918 Election, has written a book in praise of it. And de Valera is berated by Coogan as an autocrat because he would not go along with it:

“...de Valera strengthened his hard line approach in an interview with John Steele of the *Chicago Tribune* which he thought so highly of that it was reprinted

in the paper published by his faction which Erskine Childers edited, *Poblacht na hEireann*. He assured Steele that: “We all believe in democracy, but we must not forget its well known weaknesses. As a safeguard against their consequences the most democratic countries have devised checks and brakes against sudden changes of opinion and hasty, ill-considered actions.” He pointed out that in America a Treaty needed a two-thirds majority to pass the Senate. As Ireland had had not had an opportunity of devising constitutional checks and brakes”, he said, “The army sees in itself the only brake at the present time and is using its strength as such.” Looking back at this phase in his country’s history the poet Yeats would one day write

Had de Valera eaten Parnell’s heart
No loose-lipped demagogue had won
the day/No civil rancour torn the land
apart” (p321).

I haven’t a notion what that verse means. It was written by the man who became an admirer of the Fascist demagogue, O’Duffy, the founder of Fine Gael. And Parnell tore his party apart (and the land with it) in what I can only see as a fit of outrageous and despotic egoism.

Democracy as a spontaneous flow of popular feeling it not functional, which is why political philosophies throughout the ages saw it as an impossible form of state. It became possible only through the artifice of representative government in the system of party politics which originated within the oligarchy of the 1688 Revolution and retains many of the characteristics of oligarchy.

Britain treated the democratic development in Ireland as an insurgency, and the Unionist papers of the time described it much as Coogan now describes it. And, because of this, it could only survive as an insurgency. It was entirely Britain’s doing that the Irish democracy launched by the 1918 Election became dependent on the army that was constructed in support of it.

In December 1921, under threat from South African methods (concentration camps and a system of blockhouses) a bare majority of the Dail agreed to set up a subordinate government on the authority of the Crown, and the electorate were panicked into voting for it, by a small majority, in an ‘election’ which did not even elect a government. And that was democracy. If the Hapsburg Empire had got itself into such a relationship with one of its component peoples and called it democratic, imagine the ridicule

that would have been poured out from Whitehall.

Ten or twelve years ago I was buttonholed for a conversation by Professor Bew (who had begun to do that after cutting me for ten or twelve years). He expressed astonishment that I should be the last man standing who had something good to say for 1916 or 1919. I replied with something from Plato, which made no sense to him.

The assumption was that, because I had made a case for the Ulster Protestants in 1969-70, and had spent about 20 years trying to make Ulster British, I was thereby committed to falsifying the history of nationalist Ireland—even though I had always said that the historical truth of Irish affairs could only be grasped by at least two quite distinct histories, with a kind of half-history for the Anglo-Irish.

Those two histories may merge somewhere short of Kant's point of infinity, but in the meantime the marginal overlaps

between them do not make them a single historical subject. And the attempt to treat them as one, which in the past led to a denial of the historical realities of Protestant Ulster, now leads to a denial of the historical realities of nationalist Ireland, often in the groundless hope that the Ulster Protestants will be cajoled thereby.

I have no idea why Hart produced a half-reasonable book about Collins. It was possibly the accidental result of displacement activity brought on by Meda Ryan and Brian Murphy, assisted by the fact that Coogan had set the standard so low that it would be difficult to get beneath it.

Brendan Clifford

volunteer against the Treaty settlement, as he had previously at the age of 17 insisted that his Kerry family home should serve as a safe house for the IRA during the War of Independence.

Nor did the *Irish Times* choose to report a single word of the remarks to that 200-strong gathering by SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor, in which he pointed out how there could not be a more appropriate location for such an International Brigade memorial:

“It was in response to the threat to our Union's very existence that in November 1913 the first workers' army in the world, the Irish Citizen Army, was founded as a defence force, with Liberty Hall also serving as that army's headquarters. Under the leadership of our Union's Acting General Secretary, James Connolly, the Irish Citizen Army in turn became the driving force of the National Revolution. In the period prior to the Easter Rising of 1916 Liberty Hall became the HQ of the Military Committee planning the Rising, while the Proclamation of an Irish Republic was printed in its basement. It was from this very spot on Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, that James Connolly assembled and marched his troops to capture the GPO as the spark that would ignite that Rebellion. James Connolly of Liberty Hall and his Irish Citizen Army were to provide an inspiration to those Irish anti-fascists who, twenty years later, rallied to the defence of the Spanish Republic, when every fundamental political and trade union liberty in that country was faced with extinction under the combined onslaught of Franco, Mussolini and Hitler”.

The anti-fascism of British International Brigaders had been no less anti-imperialist than that of their Irish comrades. They had fully participated in Connolly and Wolfe Tone commemorations held in the Spanish Republic in 1937 and 1938. Indeed, the President of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, Jack Jones, had also been renowned for his singing of *Kevin Barry*. So it was that the last two surviving Liverpool veterans, Jack Jones and Jack Edwards, joined with their Irish comrades, Bob Doyle and Michael O'Riordan, in honouring the memory of Tom Barry's leadership in the War of Independence by their attendance at the 14th October launch of Meda Ryan's biography of Barry. And two days later, on 16th October, Jack Jones led a 100-strong gathering at the Republican plot in Glasnevin Cemetery in order to commemorate the Irish International Brigade leader Frank Ryan.

Myers & The Spanish Civil War

Time was when Kevin Myers of the *Irish Times* might have posed as an anti-fascist, if only for the purposes of deliberately confusing the Second with the First World War, so as to then work backwards to a 'justification' of the slaughter that Britain unleashed in Europe in 1914. Now that neo-Redmondism is so widespread in celebrating Irish involvement in that “*Great War*”, Myers no longer needs to adopt any such pose and feels perfectly free, with his editor's indulgence, to be as abusive as he likes of those who actually fought against fascism from the word go.

In his *Irishman's Diary* for 19th October Myers began with yet another denunciation of Ireland's War of Independence and the role played in it by Michael Collins, whom he hysterically accused of “*having left a trail of bodies behind him—mostly of unarmed men whose blood was on his hands*”. But Myers then proceeded very rapidly to what was his principal target for the day:

“Meanwhile the veterans of the International Brigade in Spain were honoured by both the President and various lefty-dignitaries. The President of ICTU, David Begg [he is actually Congress General Secretary—MO'R], declared that what 'was referred to as the Spanish Civil War was actually a fight against fascism'. If you want to know how confusing that fight could be, many of the self-same people gathered

the next day at the grave of Frank Ryan in Glasnevin. And what did this fine fellow do a couple of years after the Spanish Civil War but eagerly clamber aboard a U-boat along with Sean Russell on a Nazi mission to Ireland. Very anti-fascist indeed”.

Two days previously, on 17th October, the *Irish Times* had carried a news item that made little attempt to conceal a blatant exercise in editorial butchery of the conscientious attempts by one of its journalists to accurately record the International Brigade commemorations held in Dublin over the weekend of October 15-16. Eliminated from the report was any mention of even the name of the principal International Brigader who had been commemorated during the Saturday wreath-laying ceremony at the Liberty Hall memorial plaque, for fear that it would shatter the slanderous myth nurtured in that paper, by the likes of Myers and Peter Hart, that Irish Republicanism and the War of Independence had been by their very nature anti-Protestant. The fact is that the Church of Ireland Minister from Killarney whom the *Irish Times* found unmentionable, the Reverend Robert M. Hilliard, had not only laid down his life for the Spanish Republic in the 1937 battle of Jarama, he had also fought as an IRA

No mention was made in the *Irish Times* news item of the fact that this commemoration was also attended by ex-Senator Jack Harte, a British Army veteran of World War Two who had been a POW in Germany. This would have given the lie to Myers's claim to speak on behalf of such veterans. But Jack Harte's own Irish Republicanism is so offended by Myers that, on a previous occasion, he had actively encouraged me to take on that columnist in setting the record straight in respect of IRA leader Sean Russell. It was here that *Irish Times* editorial butchery was at its very worst, as it 'reported':

"At Frank Ryan's graveside in Glasnevin Cemetery yesterday, Manus O'Riordan, of the International Brigade Memorial Trust and son of Michael O'Riordan, rejected recent 'sneering references' to Ryan as a 'republican saint/Nazi collaborator... He warned against the development in Ireland of any sympathy for Hitlerism, and specifically denounced any anti-Semitic hostility towards Dublin's Jewish community'."

This is precisely the syntax that was used, obscuring the fact that it was Ryan's own denunciations of Hitlerism and anti-Semitism that I had been quoting, and that it was the sneers published by the *Irish Times* itself that I had been targeting. What I actually did say in Glasnevin is reproduced elsewhere in this journal.

There was no question, however, of any editorial interference with Myers's diatribe, as he went on to play, as he has previously done in respect of Belgium in the "*Great War*", a specifically Catholic card:

"One could equally say that the Spanish Civil War was a fight against Stalinist Communism... Who bothers to commemorate the opponents of communism who volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War for their faith, their hearth and their freedom?... They were, like most of the volunteers of the International Brigade, honourable dupes of tyrants. In all decency, we should honour the memory of both sets of volunteers".

"I make an exception to this generalisation. Mick O'Riordan has been a life-long defender of the Soviet Union... and on Saturday he was a special guest of the President. How lovely. Maybe we can now dig up some antique defender of Adolf for a trip to the Aras, where he can reminisce about the happy days when he fought communism in the service of merely the second-worst tyrant in the world".

Yes, the mask has slipped. For implicit in Myers's lesser evil principle is the suggestion that it would have been preferable for Nazi Germany to have defeated the Soviet Union. This would certainly have ensured that the Holocaust did indeed become a Final Solution, given Myers's preference for the Nazis to have triumphed at Stalingrad and gone further east, rather than for the Red Army to have come west and liberate Auschwitz. But in any case, Myers has blamed the Holocaust on those whom he chooses to designate as "*Jewish Bolsheviks*" (*An Irishman's Diary*, September 28), and the *Irish Times* has refused to publish my letter pointing out the character of the chords that he is attempting to strike on that score.

Glasgow journalist Geraldine Abrahams was so incensed by the cynical use made of her own Catholic faith and that of her Belfast International Brigade father that she wrote the following letter of protest to that paper:

"How I envy Kevin Myers. What journalist wouldn't? He's cut himself a fine niche there at the 'Irish Times'... It's a wonder Ireland has a single hero left to worship. No matter. Collins and Griffith have more than enough defenders. I do take personal exception however when he launches his regular attack on the motivation of the International Brigaders in the fight against fascism. My father, Gerry Doran, who went to Spain with the immensely honourable Frank Ryan on 14 December 1936, wrote a letter to his mother in April the following year in which he talked about that exact motivation. Like Ryan, my father was an Irish Catholic socialist who fought alongside communists and anarchists, and people of every religion..."

"Kevin suggests that the 'opponents of communism who volunteered' should be commemorated. Knowing the history of Church and press manipulation at that time... does not stop me having compassion for those who genuinely if blindly thought they were going to Spain to fight a Crusade. Kevin, however, is not so compassionate in his attack on Michael O'Riordan. I know Michael. Until recently, he single-handedly safeguarded the history of the Irish who fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. He has spent hundreds of hours with historians and researchers relating details of the war in Spain without once, in my experience, trying to force a communist viewpoint... I don't suppose he'll lose too much sleep because the diarist is not a fan..."

This letter was refused publication. The editor was, however, faced with a further problem when the President of

the International Brigade Memorial Trust, Jack Jones, also insisted on submitting a letter for publication, with the following covering note to Ms Kennedy "*defending International Brigade veterans from the highly personalised attack*" by her columnist. He continued:

"I must say that my initial reaction was to refer the matter to a Press Council, only to be informed that Ireland does not in fact have such a body. Given the respective ages of the veterans under attack, ranging from 88 in the case of the principal target of your columnist, Michael O'Riordan, to 92 in my own case, any more lengthy procedure would be unlikely to guarantee satisfaction within the lifetimes of all four of us. Having deliberated carefully on the matter, I have come to the conclusion that the speediest and most appropriate form of redress would be to see the attached letter in print on the same page as that occupied by your columnist".

A version of the Jack Jones letter was indeed published on 9th November. But, since he had copied his original letter to me, I could now see what further editorial butchery was being perpetrated. Any reference to Frank Ryan that would have challenged the *Irish Times* character assassination of him as a "*Nazi collaborator*" was censored. The most blatant censorship of all was of the tributes that Jack Jones had paid to previous *Irish Times* correspondents and to that paper's Editor at the time of the Spanish War, R.M. Smylie. So it was that Madam was spared any blow to her ego by unfavourable comparisons being drawn concerning her own record. In order to thwart such censorship the full version of the letter from Jack Jones is also published in this journal.

Manus O'Riordan

Jack Jones Censored !

Editorial Note: The following letter was submitted by Jack Jones to the *Irish Times* on 7th November. The version that its Editor actually chose to publish on 9th November omitted all the paragraphs in square brackets below.

I am sure that this year's Remembrance Sunday services will not provide the occasion for any personal attacks by an "Irish Times" columnist on surviving veterans of the Allied forces in the Second

World War, and that the “Irish Times” response would be one of indignation were any other Irish newspaper to act in such a vein.

Consider, then, my surprise at the vindictive and highly personalised attack by your columnist Kevin Myers (“Irishman’s Diary”, October 19) on the fact that the President of Ireland so graciously received a courtesy call from four International Brigade veterans of the Spanish Anti-Fascist War on October 15—the veterans in question being the last two surviving Irish volunteers, Bob Doyle and Michael O’Riordan, and Jack Edwards and myself from Britain.

The International Brigade Memorial Trust is a body established by veterans and their families and friends in order to pay tribute to our fallen comrades from both Britain and Ireland. This year’s wreath-laying ceremony at the Irish memorial plaque outside Liberty Hall was performed by Deirdre Davey, daughter of the Reverend Robert M. Hilliard of Killarney, who gave his life in defence of the Spanish Republic at the battle of Jarama in 1937. Our annual general meeting is held each year in a different city in these islands, but never before has it been subjected to such a newspaper attack, not even by those newspapers that historically had supported the British government’s policy of appeasing fascism and denying to the democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic the means by which to resist the military onslaught of Franco, Mussolini and Hitler.

[That “Irishman’s Diary” attack on International Brigade veterans stands out in sharp contrast with the honourable and courageous role played by the “Irish Times” at the time of the Spanish war itself. Notwithstanding the substantial financial losses that were incurred as a result of a vindictive advertising boycott, your predecessor as editor, R.M. Smyllie, defiantly insisted on continuing to carry the eye witness reports from the “Irish Times” correspondent in Spain, Lionel Fleming, demonstrating that it was indeed a defensive anti-fascist war that its elected government was being compelled to wage.]

[Other “Irish Times” correspondents similarly distinguished themselves in conscientiously recording the true history of those Irish volunteers who had come to the defence of the beleaguered Spanish Republic. The 1980 biography of Irish International Brigade leader Frank Ryan by your former Washington correspondent Sean Cronin was to provide clear documentary evidence of Ryan’s

100 percent support for de Valera’s strategy during the Second World War of safeguarding Ireland itself from the horrors of both war and fascism. Furthermore, shortly before de Valera’s own death in 1975, the former President had declared, in an interview with the late Michael McInerney, veteran political correspondent of the “Irish Times”: “I am very pleased that you are writing the biography of this great Irishman. Frank Ryan always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has earned his place in history”.]

When I was born in Liverpool in the momentous year of the Dublin Lockout of 1913, and my father named me James Larkin Jones in honour of his friend and former fellow worker on the Liverpool docks, I was also imbued with the Larkinite principle of “an injury to one is the concern of all”. The planes that were to bomb the city of Coventry to smithereens in the eleven-hour-long blitz of November 1940 were the same Nazi German bombers that a British policy of appeasement had permitted to destroy the Basque city of Guernica in April 1937.

[In defiance of my government’s policy, I decided to fight in defence of the citizens of that Spanish Republic. Having survived the Spanish war and the Republic’s defeat, I also went on to survive the Coventry blitz, sheltering with my wife and infant son in a cellar as, over our heads, our home was destroyed and our neighbours massacred. I had ample time to reflect on the fact that, for me personally, our visitors were no strangers. These again were the self-same Nazi planes that had bombed and strafed us International Brigaders on the Ebro front’s Hill 481 between July and August 1938, as so many of my friends fell in battle and both Michael O’Riordan and myself were wounded. In a citation for the particularly outstanding bravery under fire that he had shown on that hill, our commanding officers said of Michael O’Riordan: “He carried his light machine-gun into every action, and when he was ordered to withdraw, he waited until the whole company had done so. He said that his weapon was worth a dozen men. When he was wounded, he refused to leave his position until others had to leave it. Even then he did not leave until he was ordered”.]

In a message to our agm on October 15 Ireland’s Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, paid the following tribute: “The willingness of those who joined the International Brigade to sacrifice all so that others could enjoy a democratic way of life is an inspiration to us all, and the fact that Spain is today a leading democratic nation in a strong

and united Europe is no small tribute to them”.

As Spain’s democratically elected parliament had been defended by International Brigaders in 1936, so also did its democratic parliament of 1996 award the right to claim Spanish citizenship to Irish veterans Eugene Downing, Bob Doyle, Maurice Levitas, Peter O’Connor and Michael O’Riordan, together with other International Brigaders from all over the world.

[This was not due to any transient left-wing majority in that parliament. Quite the contrary. It was in fact under a government of the conservative Partido Popular that the Spanish parliament had voted unanimously to bestow such an honour on all surviving International Brigaders.]

When all is said and done, the verdict of history that matters most to us International Brigaders is that of the Spanish people themselves.

Yours sincerely, **Jack Jones,**
President, International Brigade
Memorial Trust, c/o TGWU Retired
Members Association, Transport
House, London

Frank Ryan Remem- bered

Editorial Note: The following is an edited version of the graveside oration given by Manus O’Riordan at the Frank Ryan commemoration on 16th October.

Friends: It was on the Gandesa front that Frank Ryan was captured by Italian Fascists in March 1938, along with Bob Doyle. Bob is present with us here today, in the company of his fellow International Brigade veterans Jack James Larkin Jones and Michael O’Riordan, in order to pay tribute to a man who gave such inspirational leadership to all International Brigaders during the Spanish Anti-Fascist War.

We also have a Second World War veteran present, former Irish Labour Party Senator Jack Harte who, serving in the British Army, fought against the Nazis in Greece. He subsequently became their prisoner-of-war, being transported from Greece to Italy, and then to Germany itself. As a Federated Workers’ Union

of Ireland official, Jack Harte served for many years as Chairman of the James Larkin Commemoration Committee, and he is here today in order to pay his respects to the memory of Frank Ryan, whom Big Jim Larkin himself had held in such high esteem.

Following his capture on the Gandesa front, Frank Ryan was initially sentenced to death by the Fascists. This was later commuted to a life sentence, in response to a wave of international pressure led by the Irish Taoiseach, Éamon de Valera himself. But the severity of the penal servitude that Frank Ryan was to endure at the hands of the Spanish Fascists for the two years and four months that followed, was itself a threat to his very life. The last four years of that life would be spent in Germany, well cared for by friends, but with his health irreparably damaged as a result of what he had previously suffered. He eventually died in Dresden on 10th June 1944. A cross was placed on Frank Ryan's grave by his fellow Irish national, Mrs. Budge Mulcahy Clissmann, who attended to that final act upon Frank's death with the same loving care that she had shown him in life, and who is present today in memory of that friendship.

Thirty five years later, from that Dresden grave still marked by the self-same cross, Frank Ryan's remains were accompanied back to Ireland by three of his International Brigade comrades-in-arms: Frank Edwards and Peter O'Connor, since deceased, and my father Michael O'Riordan, present here today. So it was that on 22nd June 1979, Frank Ryan was finally laid to rest in his native land in this Glasnevin Republican grave. And as today we once again approached Frank's graveside for this commemoration, it was particularly fitting that the tune played by piper Noel Pocock was that North Dublin anthem of homecoming, "*Return to Fingal*".

Frank Ryan had not yet reached his 42nd birthday by the time of his death. Born in Elton, near Knocklong, County Limerick, on 11th September 1902, it is also particularly appropriate that today's commemoration will end with Noel playing the tune that had previously been played on the occasion of Frank's reburial here in 1979, "*Marbhna Luimnighe*", or "*Limerick's Lamentation*".

Friends: When the Irish International Brigade poet, Charlie Donnelly, was killed in the battle of Jarama in February 1937, two unpublished poems were found among his personal effects. The first, entitled *The*

Tolerance of Crows, was published a year later by Frank Ryan in *The Book of the Fifteenth Brigade*. The second, which was simply entitled *Poem*, had been inspired by the integrity of their mutual friend, Republican Congress leader, George Gilmore. This Charlie Donnelly poem has much to say to us as to the challenge of setting the record straight, not least in respect of the life of Frank Ryan himself, especially the following verse:

Your flag is public over granite. Gulls fly above it.
Whatever the issue of the battle is, your memory
Is public, for them to pull awry with crooked hands,
Moist eyes. And village reputations will be built on
Inaccurate accounts of your campaign.
You're name for orators,
Figure stone-struck beneath damp Dublin sky.

Frank Ryan had been well served by his first biographer, Seán Cronin. That unsurpassed 1980 biography has, unfortunately, been long out of print. It has been followed by two more. The more recent [by Adrian Hoar] is indeed both fair-minded and well-researched, but lacking Cronin's sharpness of exposition, it has not received the media approval given to another poorly researched one [by Fearghal McGarry], in an era when the soundbite appeal of the superficial, sensation-seeking chapter-heading of *Collaborator* calls to mind Yeats's lines about "*the clever man who cries the catch cries of the clown*".

Having his memory pulled awry, as anticipated in Charlie Donnelly's poem, is indeed a long-standing experience in the case of Frank Ryan. In June 1958 the *Irish Times* published a sensationalist denunciation of Ryan by the former second-in-command of the Third Reich's Abwehr Intelligence agency, Erwin Lahousen, in which he pilloried Ryan as "*the Irish Communist*", "*a wild Irishman ... of a distinctly Red complexion*", "*a ruffian*", and "*nothing but a gangster*". And last week [on October 8] it was again the *Irish Times* that published the sneering reference by Newfoundland academic Peter Hart to "*Frank Ryan, the Republican saint/Nazi collaborator*".

Frank Ryan was none of these things. A life-long Catholic, he was in fact a James Connolly Republican Socialist. His Republicanism was that of Wolfe Tone, with the objective of uniting Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter under the common name of Irishman. He denounced Catholic sectarianism no less than he did

Protestant sectarianism. Frank further warned against the development in Ireland of any sympathy for what he called the "*disease*" and "*plague*" of Hitlerism, and he specifically denounced any anti-Semitic hostility towards Dublin's Jewish community. Frank Ryan's internationalist solidarity with the Spanish Republic was also of a kind that brought together volunteers from all over Ireland, both North and South, and from the best of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish working class traditions in this island. He proclaimed that he was fighting against Fascism in Spain in order to prevent its triumph in Ireland. And there was none braver in that good fight.

Following his brutal incarceration by Spanish Fascism for over two years, Frank's life was to be saved in July 1940 by the combined efforts of the Irish Minister to Spain, Leopold Kerney, and two members of Abwehr intelligence in Germany, Jupp Hoven and Helmut Clissmann, who, as former members of a left-wing National Bolshevik organisation—the Young Prussian League—had formed a friendship with Ryan on visiting Ireland a decade previously. And this action to save Frank's life was sanctioned by none other than the Taoiseach, Éamon de Valera himself.

Ryan was to go to Germany neither as a prisoner nor as a Nazi collaborator. Britain and France had already sacrificed Spain to Fascism, and in the subsequent World War that had been inevitably facilitated by such appeasement, Ryan came to wholeheartedly support de Valera's strategy of saving Ireland from the horrors of both war and Fascism through a policy of neutrality. In pursuit of this strategy Ryan became de Valera's *de facto* political representative in Berlin, reporting back through Minister Leopold Kerney [whose son Eamon Kerney was also present at the commemoration]. And it was in such a capacity that Ryan was accorded diplomatic status by the Germans, to whom he fearlessly pointed out that they had lost the War by their invasion of the Soviet Union. Throughout his stay in Germany, as in Ireland and Spain previously, Ryan remained a Connolly Socialist. Indeed, the Spanish Anti-Fascist War never left his thoughts, for in the delirium of his last day on earth he was heard to issue orders in Spanish, as if once more back on the Jarama battlefield. As regards Ryan's services to his native country, shortly before his own death in 1975, Éamon de Valera praised him as "*this great Irishman*", and stated that "*Frank Ryan always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has*

earned his place in history”.

In his own November 1941 pledge to Irish Minister Kerney—wherein he proclaimed 100 percent patriotic loyalty and support for de Valera’s wartime strategy—Ryan himself had written:

“There might be also a situation (I was always a pessimist) in which I might be asked to do something I don’t like. Such a situation is—soberly speaking—highly improbable. But if the unlikely should ever happen, sit yez down aisy! For—I won’t do the dirty. And when you plant my tombstone let it be of granite—like my stubborn cranium”.

And so, fittingly, this tombstone of Frank Ryan’s is indeed made of granite.

This is not an occasion for further polemic in vindication of Frank Ryan. I will in fact address the issue in greater detail next Saturday afternoon at the Annual Roger Casement Symposium [on October 22], when speaking on the theme of “Casement and Frank Ryan—Parallels?”

Today, in the spirit of Charlie Donnelly’s poem, it is more appropriate to let Ryan speak for himself, beside a grave that contains not only Irish, but also Spanish soil. Frank Ryan’s great rally at the battle of Jarama was powerfully inspirational as a deed in itself. But it was no less inspirational in the way that he himself went on to recount it in *The Book of the Fifteenth Brigade*. All the more reason, therefore, that when we visited Jarama in 1994 for the unveiling of a tombstone over the mass grave of 5,000 of its martyred dead, I should bring home some soil and an olive branch from that self-same Jarama battlefield, and bury both here in Frank’s grave.

A year after that great rally, Frank Ryan told his fellow prisoner Bob Doyle, as they were being marched away by their Fascist captors near Gandesa: “*They published my book today*”. Some book launch! It was in fact his fellow Irish volunteers Bob Doyle and Jackie Lemon who had saved Frank’s life on that particular occasion, by restraining him as he was about to launch back at an Italian Fascist officer who had hit him a punch on the jaw with all of his might. The New York Jewish International Brigader Max Parker, who was captured that same day, was to testify on several occasions of how great an inspiration Frank Ryan had been to all his fellow prisoners. A German Gestapo officer asked Ryan why he was fighting in Spain and not in Ireland, to which Frank replied that it was the same fight. Frank asked him in turn what he as a Gestapo officer was doing in Spain. The same officer told Ryan that he was a brave

man and wished him luck.

And a brave man he most certainly was. Bob Doyle recalls the argument about the anti-fascist prisoners’ right to refuse to give the Fascist salute, but, as Bob also says, “*the threat that we would be shot for refusal to comply with the order quickly changed our minds. We gave the salute. Only Frank Ryan refused, stating ‘only when a pistol is placed against my forehead’ would he obey*”.

Bob Doyle is one of the most compelling eye witnesses to Frank Ryan’s outstanding integrity. Before

we now conclude this ceremony with Noel Pocock on the pipes playing “*Marbhna Luimnighe*”—“*Limerick’s Lamentation*”—it is particularly appropriate that the person chosen on behalf of all of us to lay a wreath on Frank Ryan’s grave should be his fellow inmate of the Spanish Fascist concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardena, and now its last surviving Irish ex-prisoner, the self-same Bob Doyle.

Thank you all for your participation in this commemoration.

The Irish Catholic and Benedict XV. Part Four:

America And The Peace Note Of 1917

Stephen McKenna, a disaffected English Liberal writing in 1921, honestly described the implications of the British decision to prolong the war in 1916:

“When the belligerents took stock before settling down to the trench-warfare winter campaign of 1916-17, all must have felt that the war had reached its climax. The general exhaustion was so great that, even if hostilities had ceased, every country would have been crippled; if hostilities continued, they would continue on a scale of unlimited effort in which no reserve of strength would any longer be husbanded. Set free on her eastern frontier, Germany must mass all her resources in one last effort to break through the western line; the Allies must hold out till the attempt had spent itself and then strike one last blow at a worn enemy; Germany must in turn prevent the allies from holding out by cutting their sea communications. If unrestricted submarine warfare ranged America on the side of the allies, it must have been felt that either the war would be over before any effective help could be given or else that, in the final, hopeless, death-grapple, a few million soldiers more or less would not substantially change the degree or character of Germany’s defeat.

“Many of those who meditated on the war from its climax in 1916 to its end in the Versailles conference may wonder whether they did wisely in execrating and howling down anyone who shewed the courage to advocate peace before the sphere of war underwent its last desperate expansion. The government stood by its policy of a ‘knock-out blow’; the knock-out blow has been dealt. Is anyone the better for it? The fire-eaters who proclaimed that anything less than the unconditional surrender of Germany would entail another German war within their generation now proclaim with no more doubt or qualification that Germany is preparing her revenge... The added two years of war, then, have not brought such security as Rome enjoyed

at the destruction of Carthage; the added bitterness of those two years, on the other hand, has made more difficult any goodwill and any common effort to substitute a sane and better system of International relationship.

“Worst of all are the worldwide economic depression and political unrest for which the protraction of the war was responsible. Had negotiations been opened in 1916, the Russian revolution and its consequences might well have been averted; Germany, Austria and Turkey might have been left with stable governments and yet with enough experience of modern warfare to discourage any taste for further adventures; and Italy, France and Great Britain—in that order—might have been saved from insolvency. The war, if ended at that time, would have ended without American help; and peace would have been concluded without American intervention. This last result might by now be a matter for regret if thereby the world had been cheated of the equitable and permanent peace, such as President Wilson sought to impose on the militarist party of the Versailles Conference; but it would perhaps have been better for the terms to be drawn by M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George on Carthaginian lines than for the world to be tantalized by a glimpse of statesmanship that revealed the universal spirit and then to be fobbed off with a compromise which embraced even the good faith of England” (*While I Remember*, pp171-3).

This was written in 1921 before the effects of the Great War had become clear. Who can honestly disagree with this analysis—that if peace had been concluded in 1915, 1916 or 1917 the world would have been a much better place than it subsequently turned out to be?

Europe was prevented from heading towards a desirable negotiated peace by Britain's persistence in its crusade to destroy Germany, sustained primarily through the belief the Royal Navy could starve Germany into submission, given time and resilience amongst Britain's allies.

Once the Allies stopped the Germans at the battle of the Marne, four years of trench warfare ensued. Although the Germans launched the most effective offensives of the war, they were always strategically on the defensive and the possibility of a negotiated settlement lay entirely with the Allies. But the British Cabinet never for a moment contemplated a negotiated settlement, despite all the losses in men and materials they suffered and the fact that they did not seem to be making any territorial progress. They coldly calculated that the Allies could suffer heavier losses than the Germans and still win so long as they had a better rate of attrition proportionate to population than the Germans. England believed that, in the long run, the Royal Navy would do its work on Germany if the line could be held for long enough on land.

Britain's wavering French and Russian allies were convinced to continue the war to the bitter end as the result of an intimation that the United States would be likely to join the Allies if Wilson was re-elected and gained the necessary influence in Congress.

Although President Wilson was re-elected to a second term in late 1916 under the slogan, 'He kept us out of war' he was already intending to enter the War on the Allied side. This was because Lloyd George had let it be known to Wilson that the peace settlement was only open to the belligerents—and many of the belligerents wanted a 'vengeful peace'. If Wilson wanted to be humanity's servant he had to join the victors to affect the peace and help Lloyd George prevent a 'vengeful peace'.

America's initial view of the war had coincided with that of the Pope—there was nothing morally at issue between the belligerents, it could only be bad to get involved in it, and a settlement should be made without the destruction of any of the nations fighting it.

But, at the same time, the US set about making Britain financially dependent upon itself—largely through J.P. Morgan's

banking empire—by giving it the necessary credit to keep waging war. Loans were in violation of American neutrality but Morgan got around this by issuing \$2 Billion in credit to the Entente. (The J.P. Morgan firm was originally begun in London during the 1830s and young J.P., who had inherited his father's company just before the War, had been trained at the firm's English branch. Morgan's bank had close connections with the Milner/Round Table group in England. The Milner group had influence over it through financial holdings in it controlled by the Rhodes Trust—the vast financial fortune made in South Africa by the Imperialist adventurer, Cecil Rhodes. The British experts at Versailles in 1919 were nearly all members of the Round Table group, organised in the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The American experts were all connected to Morgan and Company. It was through this tight relationship of elites that Carroll Quigley maintains Britain passed on the torch to the US as it gradually ceded world power to it.)

American industry, in propping up London, became an adjunct of the British war effort. Of the five million pounds the British spent on weaponry and supplies each day two million pounds was being spent in the United States. By 1916, 40% of Britain's war material was being supplied by the US.

Whilst this factor helped America in the medium term to undermine the British Empire's power and replace it on the world stage, it also tended to place the US in the position of having to make a necessary defence of its investments if there was danger of its client going under with its debts unpaid.

By 1916 France and Russia were broke and London was paying for its war on American credit. In March 1917 there was only 114 million pounds of gold left in the Bank of England's vaults to cover further loans. If this had been exhausted, British finance would have collapsed and brought down a large section of American industry with it—with a catastrophic effect on the US economy. Wilson was influenced by a message from the American Ambassador to England, Thomas Nelson Page, a strong Anglophile, that Britain would be bankrupt within two weeks, if the US did not enter the war and provide her with funds. Also in the picture were cables from the US Embassy in Paris, warning that French morale was cracking. These were communicated to Congress. (The British won the information war in America early in the War by cutting Germany's undersea cables that were used to communicate with the Western Hemisphere, reducing their

information flow to the US to a trickle.)

Wilson's support produced the "knockout victory" statement of Lloyd George in which he declared that the war must go on until Germany was crushed.

The Vatican knew the US was not truly neutral in the first two years of the war and it deplored Washington's arms trade that facilitated the waging of the war for longer and on a bigger scale than would have been otherwise possible. Benedict also regarded the Anglo-American tactic of carrying munitions on passenger vessels, like the Lusitania—using civilians as human shields—as reprehensible.

With America's resources fully available to it and Wilson removed as a moral opponent—in that he couldn't talk about 'an honourable peace' anymore—it is not so difficult to understand why the Pope's Peace Note of 1917 came an unwelcome time for Britain.

The *Irish Catholic* of April 2005 tells us that: "On August 1, 1917, Benedict issued a peace proposal in which he urged the warring parties to unilaterally reduce their armaments."

The Pope's peace note, in fact, went a lot further than that, as the *Catholic Bulletin* outlined. Why does the *Irish Catholic* seek to minimise information on this important proposal? Is it sheer ignorance, shoddy journalism, or the result of a paralysed mind unable to deal with the great political questions, symptomatic of wider Irish society today?

The Pope's Peace Plan had its origins within the German side—since it was the Germans, rather than the *Entente* who desired a peaceful resolution to the conflict. *The Times* actually called it the "German Peace Move" in its editorial. There was nothing odd about Germany wanting peace at this of all moments—at the time of its greatest success in the war.

Germany had secured its defence by a military ability that the *Entente* had not bargained for. But it knew that from then on only a long and wasteful war of attrition could defeat it. It wanted to secure a peace at this point to prevent further loss of life and the inevitable political and economic destruction that a fight to the finish would end up in across Europe. So a number of elements in Germany supported the Vatican's efforts in going for a negotiated settlement.

Benedict believed Germany was the key because its strong military position could make the concessions necessary to satisfy Allied demands.

In Germany, a group of Reichstag members, led by the Catholic politician, Matthias Erzberger, passed a peace

resolution in the Reichstag in July 1917. This offer did not make any demand for retaining the occupied areas of Belgium or France. The German peace offer seemed to offer possibilities, and the Vatican envoy to Germany, Eugenio Pacelli, (later Pope Pius XII), who conducted most of the Vatican's peace efforts during the War, was sent to explore with the Kaiser and his Chancellor, Bethman-Hollweg, what terms might be feasible. Apparently the Germans agreed in principle to a limitation of armaments, withdrawal from Belgium and other occupied areas, disputed territories being decided by international agreement and the creation of international arbitration courts.

Having achieved an understanding with the Germans Benedict drew up his Peace Note to all the belligerent powers, setting out systematic proposals for bringing the war to an end and securing a just and enduring peace. He had what Germany was willing to concede communicated to the *Entente*.

This is what *Fear Faire* said in the *Catholic Bulletin*, March 1939, about Benedict's peace proposals of 1917:

"By the middle of the year 1917 the possibility of a sweeping victory for the Central Powers was gone. On the other hand, the Allies were facing such a strongly entrenched enemy and were themselves were so war-worn, that they, too, had little hope of triumph, unless at the cost of long-prolonged struggle and incalculable losses. The time had come when both sides were weary of suffering and neither had high hopes. On August 1st, Pope Benedict issued his appeal to the warring nations to end what he described as a fratricidal conflict and negotiate a just and durable peace. He laid down the conditions on which alone a peace could be established. The moral force of right must rife in international affairs in place of the material force of arms. Conquered territories must be restored. Claims to indemnity must be put aside; the freedom of the seas must be guaranteed; armaments must be decreased, and international affairs must be adjusted in the future by arbitration. Where there were conflicting claims to given territories, as in Alsace Lorraine, in Poland, and in the Trentino, the decision must rest with the population of the area concerned, and the will of the people must be found by means of a plebiscite. These peace proposals are manifestly those which would have saved the world not merely from a prolongation of the war, but from the disasters which have followed it. Almost everybody now, even in the most stubborn quarters, realises that the Allies made a disastrous decision when they rejected the Pope's proposals. It was the Allies more than Germany who

were to blame for the Peace Proposals being refused. It was President Wilson who replied to the Pope, on behalf of the Allied Powers, that peace could not be made with such a Government as Germany then possessed. The Allies would not deal with a Germany ruled by the Kaiser; and by refusing to do so they committed themselves to days to come to deal with a Germany ruled by a Hitler. Little they guessed what they had done when they flung the Pope's appeal to the ground and went on with the war for a year that was filled with hitherto unparalleled suffering. Little they knew, when at last they had beaten their enemies to their knees at the end of 1918, and when they were able to dictate a peace to their own liking, how much better they would have done to accept the just and unrevengeful peace which Pope Benedict had recommended eighteen months before.

"So the peace that was no peace came. Benedict lived to see the Peace Treaty signed and the effort to crush Germany undertaken."

The Germans and the Austro-Hungarians were favourable to the Pope's proposal, although Berlin avoided specific commitments until the Allies had responded. But, despite this, blame is spread evenly for the rejection of the Peace Note on America, Britain and Germany. It is realised that no one else had the means to continue fighting on a substantial scale without the participation of these three.

It is said that Chancellor Bethman-Hollweg was overthrown at this time by the German Army leaders—who were still fixated on a German military victory—and this scuppered the Papal initiative.

German war aims had been relatively modest until this point—basically recognition of Germany as a legitimate power in Europe which could go about her business without being threatened with destruction.

There were two views in Germany as to what should be done in mid-1917. One view was to go all out for peace on the basis of Benedict's plan because things could only get worse for Germany and its position. The other, held by some Prussian military leaders, like Ludendorff and Hindenburg, argued there was no way out of the situation but through a spectacular military victory—as the *Entente* would never make peace until they were decisively beaten. There was much to encourage this latter viewpoint in 1917 as the Russian enemy on the Eastern front was on the verge of collapse and if a blow could be struck in the West with transferred troops before American numbers arrived peace might be achievable on German terms.

The attitude taken by the *Entente* to Benedict's peace note determined that this latter view won out in late 1917-1918.

The new Provisional Russian Government welcomed the Papal mediation. But the leaders of France and Italy, with largely Catholic, extremely war-weary populations, were concerned. They wanted a fight to the finish to achieve their territorial aims set out in the secret Treaties. But they hesitated to take direct issue with the Pope in view of his moral influence on their peoples. So France ignored the initiative, Clemenceau describing it as "*peace against France*".

The British merely acknowledged it and then decided to let Wilson answer for all of them.

Wilson had a unique role—that of giving the proceedings of the Allies the character and tone of disinterested ideals of justice and liberty. By 1917 a lot of the gloss had gone off the *Entente* propaganda that had generated and sustained the crusade against "*Prussianism*" in its early days. But Wilson, with his liberal, neutralist, and disinterested credentials, was a useful moral cipher to dress up allied war aims. He gave the war a new aura of idealism just as the early idealism was fading. He projected the war as a struggle to make the world safe for democracy. Lloyd George referred to one of Wilson's speeches as "*one of the greatest sermons in the history of the world*".

Wilson saw the timing of the Pope's message as mischievous. Socialists had just convened a peace conference in Stockholm to appeal over the heads of rulers to the workers of the world. In Petrograd, the Bolshevik wing of the Russian revolution had already called for peace on the basis of no annexations and self-determination for all peoples, and pressurised the Provisional Government into going along with them.

The Pope was saying many of the same things Wilson had said before he opted for war (he had called for "*peace without victory*" in a statesmanlike pronouncement early in 1916). But these former pronouncements were things of no use to the war-like attitude that was now necessary to cultivate in Americans for the fight of Good over Evil.

It was a suitably Puritan manifesto calling for the good to triumph over evil, pioneered by the Anglo-Saxon cousins in 1914:

"The object of this war... is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible government, which,

having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligation of treaty or the long established practices and long cherished principles of international action and honor, which chose its own time for the war, delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly, stopped at no barrier either of law or mercy, swept a whole continent within the tide of blood, not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children and also of the helpless poor, and now stands balked but not defeated, the enemy of four fifths of the world. . . This power is not the German people. It is the ruthless master of the German people. It is no business of ours how that great people came under its control or submitted with temporary zest to the domination of its purpose; but it is our business to see to it that the history of the rest of the world is no longer left to its handling.”

Wilson’s reply that there could be no discussion with the German Government, only with the German people, and then the war would end in a couple of hours after regime change, suggested the Great War was all about establishing democracy in Germany and nothing else.

America’s entry into the war and Wilson’s moral rejuvenation of the Allied cause put paid to Benedict XV’s Peace Note—the last chance Europe had of averting catastrophe.

It was very unlikely that Germany would have won the war, even if the United States had not come in on the side of the Allies. Germany was eager to negotiate a fair peace arrangement at the time when Lloyd George’s “*knock-out victory*” declaration put an end to all prospect of successful negotiations.

Had sincere peace negotiations, along the lines proposed by Benedict XV, taken place the result would have been the “*peace without victory*”, which Wilson described in his statesmanlike pronouncement early in 1916 when the US was officially neutral. There would have been a negotiated peace treaty made by relative equals—militarily demonstrated by the stalemate in the war. This would certainly have been far preferable to the Treaty of Versailles and its effects. A negotiated peace would have saved the world from the last catastrophic years of war. It would have rendered unnecessary and impossible the brutal blockade of Germany for months after the 1918 Armistice—a blockade that starved to death hundreds of thousands of German women and children. And it would also have made impossible

the rise of Bolshevism, Fascism, and National Socialism—all products of the disintegration effected by the war and blockade—and the coming of a second world war.

But Britain did not want a “*moral force of right*” in international affairs. It wanted to establish itself as the “*moral force of right*” by winning the war and determining the post-war outcome. It wanted to use the “*material force of arms*” unilaterally in future, just as it was used to, when and where it sought fit, and not let any international body tell it otherwise—as it demonstrated in relation to the League of Nations in the 1930s.

It did not wish to restore the conquered territory it had grabbed from Germany in Africa, or that it had taken from the Ottomans in the Middle East. It wanted to impose indemnity on Germany to pay for the war (and escape from its own American loans as far as it could—Bull the Bilker, as the *Catholic Bulletin* called Britain in the 1930s).

It did not want “*freedom of the seas*” restricting it severely during the war and rejected Wilson’s call for it in his Fourteen Points. When Britain talked of the “*freedom of the seas*” it meant its freedom to police the seas in its own interests determining how much freedom should be allowed to other nations and what size of navies they could have.

It did not want arms limitation, except if exceptions could be made for it to police its Empire, by bombing Arab and African villages off the map if they did not pay their taxes.

And it did not want plebiscites and democracy determining the fate of territories—as witnessed by its behaviour in Ireland in 1918 when the local population decided they did not want Britain any more. Elsewhere in its vast and expanded Empire obstacles were put up against other reluctant subject peoples exercising this right.

Another reason it did not want plebiscites and democracy determining the fate of territories, except where it suited for disrupting another power—was because it had already made secret arrangement for the sharing out of spoils which it did not want democracy interfering with.

AFTER THE WAR

Benedict welcomed the Armistice but he was sharply critical of Versailles. He was, of course, excluded from the peace deliberations there. Benedict was particularly opposed to the destruction of the multi-national Austro-Hungarian Empire on a number of accounts. He feared

that the new nationalistic states created by the *Entente* would be very bad places for minorities to live in—including the Jews. He also saw the Hapsburg state as a moderate counter-balance to Prussian Germany in Eastern Europe as well as a barrier to Russian expansionism. He feared the effects of the war guilt clause, the debilitating reparations on Germany, and the Hang the Kaiser mentality. He predicted the seeds of European destruction lay in these measures.

He had no faith in the League of Nations, seeing it as an egotistical tool that the great powers would use in their own interests. Instead a 1920 Encyclical called for European integration and reconciliation.

He also opposed the Balfour Declaration, fearing the establishment of a Zionist state that would treat Arabs badly. Instead of a British mandate he wanted Palestine placed under international control.

Benedict calculated that Europe would not be a place where the Church could prosper in the future. He thought other parts of the world, like South America, South Asia, and Africa were where its future lay. So he set about his foreign mission drive after the war making provision for the Church’s future in the developing world instead.

The Vatican emerged from the catastrophe of 1914-19 well. As the *Catholic Bulletin* put it in March 1939:

“Benedict XV had what we would consider to be the most difficult task ever set to a Sovereign Pontiff by the troubles of the world. . . . When he himself died, worn out by the tremendous toil of his short Pontificate, the prestige of the Holy See stood high throughout an anxious world.”

Benedict left the Vatican with its moral authority enhanced both in Italy and abroad. It faced a difficult future in a Europe that was reduced to its elements by the effects of the war fought to a finish. The bitter class warfare seen in Russia, Hungary, and Germany, boded ill for the Church, as did also the agitation of Benito Mussolini and the Fascists in Italy. The Vatican deplored the rise of Fascism, even when the alternative of a Socialist victory looked worse for its interests. But when the anti-clericalist Mussolini eventually seized power, he wisely recognized the need for a more harmonious relationship with the Pope. Benedict laid the basis of the Roman Settlement, concluded by Pius XI, that has persisted to this day.

We cannot predict how history would

have turned out if Benedict's Peace initiatives had been acted upon by the great powers. But we know what did happen when they were rejected. So we can conclude one thing. The future of Europe, including the expansion of Bolshevism, the growth of Fascism and Nazism, the Second World War, the concentration camps, the Soviet occupation of Europe, the Israeli state built on the plantation of Palestine, were the responsibility of those who rejected Benedict's efforts. And chief amongst those were the leaders of the British Empire, the men who bore responsibility for the Great War itself.

Pat Walsh

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In The Mire. Nick Folley
Radio Five Interview With McCartney Sisters. David Morrison
The Future Of Europe. Editorial
Shorts: Englishman's Diary; Paul Nizan; Hands Off Ukraine; Syria & Lebanon; Bolkestein & McCreevy; Easons And The Irish Times
Iraq: Divide And Rule! Editorial
Professor Hart Prattles On. Jack Lane
Down In Paddy's Political Slum. Joe Keenan
By-Election Results. (Report)
Ulster Unionism's Masterpiece Northern Ireland. Pat Walsh
Propaganda During The War Of Independence. Brian Murphy (Report)
Loyalties (review of Danny Morrison's play, The Wrong Man). Seán McGouran
A Nation And A Bit. Desmond Fennell (Letter)
One And A Bit Nations: A Comment. Brendan Clifford
The French EU Referendum. John Martin
The Clonbanin Column (Confiscation; Rising & Larkin; Browne; End of Paisley).
Labour Comment: The Royal Irish Garda

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Ballot Wars (The Northern Ireland Election). Editorial
The Gaa And Rule 42. Editorial
Democratic Mandates & The 1916 Rising. Pat Muldowney (Report)
Election Results. Report of Northern Ireland results, Westminster Election, 5.5.05
False History? Editorial
The Two Nations Theory. Ivor Kenna (Reader's Letter)
French Referendum. John Martin
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Politics In Northern Ireland. A Review Of The Year. Mark Langhammer (speech)
Ireland's Intelligentsia BITE (more) Air. Seán McGouran (Part 2 of Barbican review)
Shorts: The Orange Order & The Reform Movement; Syria & Lebanon; France's Patron Saint (1905-1980); The Spirit Of The Good Friday Agreement; Irish Times & Debate; &Mandela;

Bolkestein In France; Prince Rainier Dies; Greatest Frenchman
Art & Poetry: Two Reviews.
Reports of Luke Dodd's Conquering England review and Bernard O'Donoghue on Yeats, The Love Poet by Michael Stack
Kennedy At Chappaquiddick. Reader's Letter
Ulster's Hope, or The New Gerrymander. Seán McGouran
Review of *Das Kapital*, Part Twelve: Conclusion. John Martin
"Frank Ryan, a great Irishman who always put Ireland first" (letter by Manus O'Riordan, report)
Labour Comment: Work a couple of thoughts. Cultural Vandalism In Cork: Terence McSwiney's Preface. They will even pay for Unification! Poetry

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A Constitutional Spare Wheel? Editorial
Vive La France! Editorial on French Referendum
Shorts. (Europe's Swansong? More on the EU Referendum; A Disappointed Constitution? A Disappointed Leader: A Glorious Past; A Glorious Future? An Inglorious Past; An Eye On Beirut)
Marie George Buffet Statement. Report on French Referendum
A European Balance Of Power? Editorial
Mission To Moscow. Jack Lane
One And A Bit Nations: A Response. Desmond Fennell (letter)
Playing Handball Against A Haystack? Niall Meehan
Das Kapital Series Reader's Letters
Ireland's Intelligentsia BITE (even more) Air. Seán McGouran (Part 3 of Barbican review)
Shorts: (The Orange Order & The Reform Movement; Syria & Lebanon; France's Patron Saint (1905-1980); The Spirit Of The Good Friday Agreement; Irish Times & Debate; &Mandela; Bolkestein In France; Prince Rainier Dies; Greatest Frenchman)
Reviews (Part Three). Brendan Clifford
The IRA And Bank Robberies. Jack Lane (unpublished letter)
Laurent Fabius Interview. Report
In Brief. (Bowen; Indian Dáil; Prisoners; Northern Representation; Culture)
Labour Comment: May Day Holiday by Noel Murphy. Irish Labour Party Conference: Northern Forum Motion On Migrant Labour by Mark Langhammer Statement & Profile

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Limboland Democracy. Editorial
The European Union. Editorial
How To Share Our Military History? Nick Folley (Irish Examiner)
A Final Letter To Valery. Jack Lane
The Power And The Story. John Martin
Peter Hart, The Issue Of Sources. Brian Murphy OSB
Uncommon Purposes. Pat Muldowney (from Sunday Independent, 14.06.05)
De Valera's Heir: Michael McDowell. Joe Keenan
Tackling Bonded Labour. Mark Langhammer (Report)
Shorts. (Kilmichael Deep Throats; Another Scandal: Irish 'Neutrality'; FF: The Redmondite Party? Social Regression;; Workers Must Wait; Back To Reality)
A Nation And A Half Once Again. Brendan Clifford
Does It Stack Up? Michael Stack
Population Trends In Ireland, 1821-2036. Jack Lane (from Village, 24.06.05)
Still Fighting The French Revolution. Seán McGouran
Reply To Ivor Kenna And Robert Burrage. John Martin
Free Trade And Famine. Pat Muldowney (Book Review)
Labour Comment: Labour Conference

AUGUST 2005

A Time For Peace. Editorial
The Right Wing Health Agenda. John Martin
Paddy And Mr. Redmond Liam Mhic I Shearcaigh (Poem)
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Mansergh versus Casement. Seán McGouran
Peter Hart Digs A Deeper. Jack Lane
The Sindo, The Shinner, And Filthy Lucre. Seán McGouran
Shorts From The Long Fellow. (Blood Price; Ireland Celebrates Defeat Of Allies!; Was 1916 A

Crime?!!!; Sartre Was Right!; Right On Bono!;
U2 Corporate Rights; More Corporate Values)
The Irish Catholic And Benedict XV (Part One).
Pat Walsh
Does It Stack Up? Pomp And Circumstance.
Michael Stack
Food And The Market. John Martin
Does It Stack Up? Michael Stack
CAP And Our Future. Dominique Bussereau
(Report)
Still Fighting The French Revolution. Seán
McGouran
Markievicz Revised? Seán McGouran
The British State-Nation. Desmond Fennell
(Letter)
Voting For Rebellion! Nick Folley (Letter)
Labour Comment: Work Skills Mark
Langhammer

SEPTEMBER 2005

Past And Present. Editorial
The Celtic Ant. Jack Lane
Na Creatuiri Bochta Gallda. Liam Mhic I Shearcaigh
(Poem)
China's Currency Still Red? Seán McGouran
Louisiana Floods. Randy Newman (Report)
Shorts From The Long Fellow. (Crime Ireland;
The "Doc"; The Looney Right; More Looney
Tunes)
Greaves And Connolly. Brendan Clifford
Connolly Column. Manus O'Riordan (Report)
Italy And The Great War The Irish Catholic And
Benedict XV (Part Two). Pat Walsh
Justice For Captain Kelly Open Letter To Michael
McDowell From Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh.
Report
Allied Bombing Of France Towards The End Of
World War II. F. O'Raghallaigh (unpublished
letter)
A Know-nothing review (O Caothaoir & The Catholic
Bulletin). Brendan Clifford
Green (not Red) Sticky Bile About Haughey. Seán
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Labour Comment: The End Of The Co-Op?

OCTOBER 2005

A Visionary Republican? Editorial
A Revelation In The Dail. Jack Lane
Atom Bombs On Japan. Ted O'Sullivan (unpublished
letter)
Shorts From The Long Fellow (Sindo Supports
Vandalism Again; Land Of The Brave? Who
Guards The Guards? More EU Arrogance; Media
Comment Inflated Egos.)
Keeping It Real John Martin
A Question For Mr Mansergh. Jack Lane (Report)
Casement Melodramatics? Seán McGouran
Irish Press Royal Honour: Food For Thought.
(Report)
Haughey's Legacy. John Martin
The Politics Of Criminality. Seán McGouran
UCD Symposium On De Valera. 'UP DEV'
Das Kapital A Belated Comment. Jim Dixon
(Letter)
Na Creatuiri Bochta Gallda. Liam Mhic I Shearcaigh
(Poem In Translation)
Sprechen Sie Dail? Joe Keenan
Storm In A Rubber Stamp. Joe Keenan
See no, Hear no, Speak no evil. Joe Keenan
Redmond And The Pope's Peace Efforts Of 1915.
Pat Walsh (Part 3 of series)
Spies And Lies. Conor Lynch, Joe Keenan
Gender And Identity. Seán McGouran
Labour Comment: Choppy Waters Ahead! (Irish
Ferries and Redundancies). The End Of The
Co-Op?

NOVEMBER 2005

Politics Of Exclusion. Editorial
Shadow Of One Gunman Or Another. Joe Keenan
Arrest Of Members Of First Dail On Armistice Day.
Brian Murphy (report)
Shorts From The Long Fellow (Free Enterprise In
Iraq; Health Debate; Labour Will Wait; More
On Due Process; O B E; The White Nigger . . .
Again; A Real Editor.)
Bertie's Easter Parade. David Alvey
Who Was De Valera Neutral Against? Edward
Spalton
The Propaganda That Never Sleeps. Brendan
Clifford
The IRA Connections. Conor Lynch
Sean Garland And Questions For Mickey McDowell.
Seán Swan
Ahern's Modest Proposal. Joe Keenan
Barry's Column. (Tom Barry; Father Reid)
Japan And Pearl Harbour. Robert Burrage (Letter)
Labour Comment: No Irish Need Apply? Trade
Unions Against Partnership. Dublin Trade Union
Demonstration

the 'heist', they were by the same token, competent enough to realise that Northern Bank notes are essentially non-negotiable. Most people from 'outside the jurisdiction' (to use the Magistrate's Court cliché), regard the notes as funny-money. This problem was not mentioned, but the fact that people with (vague) connections with Sinn Féin, in County Cork, were arrested on (vaguely) related matters, was. It was also mentioned that they had been released, but the notion that they were about to be re-arrested upon the nonce was left hanging in the air.

TAOISEACH McDOWELL?

The 'Acting Taoiseach' Michael McDowell was given a very long time (in television terms) to make his usual claim that Sinn Féin done-it. The Party is subsidised by criminality to the tune of millions: it was thereby subverting the democratic process, and was inherently anti-democratic. This raises a number of questions. Why was the Workers' Party never put on the spot by the political establishment in Northern Ireland or the Republic? It was, especially in the North, a tiny party, but had the most lavish, multi-colour, posters and handouts – it didn't do too badly in the Republic either.

Why was a member of a party (the Progressive Democrats – PDs) which has much the same representation as Sinn Féin in the Dáil allowed to whinge about Sinn Féin, which has a three-times bigger vote? Why was the (comparatively) lowly Justice Minister saying such things rather than the Taoiseach? And speaking of Ministers for Justice, why was he making a comment on a case that has not merely not come to court, but has not been properly investigated?

HENRY McDONALD

Henry McDonald was involved in this programme, as in MacIntyre's. He had no compunction about basically setting-up Sinn Féin as a branch of the PIRA, and as being involved in violent 'policing'. The incident shown, in *Toughest Towns*, was in fact done by the UDA. (The 'crucifixion' of a – Taig, as it happens – drug dealer, in Seymour Hill estate, to the south of Belfast.) Admittedly the term 'UDA' was mentioned once, but nothing was said about its origins, methods, or 'mission'. British and Republic viewers would have assumed that it was a sub-contractor for the IRA. It was not even described as 'Loyalist'. McDonald could claim that he had no part in the editing of the programme, but he has plenty of outlets through which he could have noted that the show was heavily loaded.

It is necessary to oppose to the flood of nonsense about Sinn Féin because it is the disorienting element in politics in the Republic. If the Establishment gets away with reversing Sinn Féin's move towards the centre of politics by way of this sleight of hand, the state will become just another 'Anglo-Saxon' outpost. It might as well become officially part of the UK once again. If Sinn Féin becomes stronger it will push Fianna Fáil in a national direction – this is already happening. The use of the Defence Forces in 2006 Easter Rising commemorations is a result of the pressure put on the establishment by Sinn Féin.

ARRESTS

A number of men have been arrested over the past week or so, since about November 1, on suspicion of having been involved in the Northern Bank 'heist'. This series of arrests have been reported at the bottom of the inside pages of the papers. We would hazard a guess that they are not senior – or even junior – members of the PIRA.

SEWER JOURNALISM

McDonald's recent notable contribution to the noble profession of journalism was to make totally unfounded, lurid and sensationalist claims about a person unable to sue him for libel, Liam Lawlor, the former TD. (These were to the effect that he was with a teenage prostitute when killed in a Moscow car crash; the lady was in fact a mother in her 30s and a translator.) He is the Irish Editor of the *Observer*, a paper which up to now has enjoyed a reputation for serious journalism (though being partly owned by Sir Anthony O'Reilly's *Irish Independent* group)—but no more. It has joined the rest of the press in the gutter.

Liam Lawlor is a proxy for Fianna Fail and he was therefore not given a fair hearing in life or in death. The *Irish Times*, while slating the *Sunday Independent* for running the 'prostitute' story, itself headlined a story, *A Corrupt Politician Whose Word Could Not Be Trusted*. But corruption was never proven against Liam Lawlor: his time in jail was for failing to incriminate himself to a Tribunal which was acting anything but impartially.

BARRY'S COLUMN

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

On Saturday October 15th the AGM of the International Brigades Memorial Trust took place at Liberty Hall, Dublin. Before that a commemorative event was held at a memorial to the Brigades outside the building. One of the veterans, Jack Jones, gave a short speech. Although in his 90s, he gave every impression that he could still lead the Transport Union. (He could certainly do a whole lot better than any of his successors in the British T & G!)

The General President of SIPTU, Jack O'Connor, gave a speech of welcome which included one of the most succinct summaries of early 20th century Irish history one could wish for. Listening to him and to the smorgasbord of characters at events over that weekend, one is left with the impression that a knowledge of the historical story of Ireland is widespread—if open to a variety of interpretations. The revisionists haven't moved all that far yet from academia and the media. And even there they are being challenged.

What is also striking is that so many people are aware that their history is under attack and are gravitating towards each other. Unfortunately, this movement still lacks a real centre, especially in Dublin where it is most needed. The General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, David Begg, also made a short welcome speech.

Later the surviving veterans were received by the Irish President. This was followed in the evening by a social in Liberty Hall, where a packed function room was entertained by a variety of musicians, including the excellent Al O'Donnell (father of the main speaker at the Tom Barry meeting). Representatives of the Government of Cuba attended and presented a medal from President Castro to Mick O'Riordan.

On the Sunday a commemoration took place at Glasnevin cemetery at the grave of the leader of the Irish volunteers in Spain, Frank Ryan. This was a simple but very emotional occasion, where his comrades paid their respects to their commander for what is probably the last time.

Manus O'Riordan sang in Spanish, read out a roll of honour of the fallen, and delivered the oration. One got a clear impression of Irish Republicans following their instinctive

Apology

Due to extreme pressure of space a number of articles have had to be held over. These include Joe Keenan's *De Valera And Partition*, in which he takes up some points from the October editorial and Seán McGouran's critique of T. Ryle Dwyer.

Ferries continued

Tierney confirmed that this would be his union's strategy. The aim, he said, would be to select employers who were "in a position to do business".

Mr Tierney said a large section of the union's 30,000-odd members in the Republic, particularly those in financial services and manufacturing, were due pay increases on January 1st, 2006.

Many of the companies involved were going through change programmes, which put the union in a strong bargaining position, he said. "They are looking for something from us, and we will be looking for something from them".

He planned to hold a meeting of officials before the end of next week to begin finalising the Union's approach.

Mr Tierney, however, alluded to a difficulty facing the Unions if social partnership is to collapse after 18 years. Only two of Amicus's 15 full-time officials, he said, had previous experience of free collective bargaining.

ATGWU COMMON STRATEGY

ATGWU regional secretary Mick O'Reilly said his Union would be lodging claims for "substantial" increases in pay and other improvements in conditions.

He believed private sector unions needed to co-ordinate their approach and adopt a common strategy.

A special meeting of the private sector committee of the Irish Congress of Trade

sense of duty by going to Spain to fight and, if needs be, to die. (Irish Republicans are portrayed by revisionists and their British masters as an insular and even sectarian lot. The very opposite has always been the case. People like Tone, the Young Irishmen, the Fenians, Connolly, Ryan and modern-day Sinn Fein have all had a very international outlook. Irish Republicans could be found fighting resisting imperialism and repression in Europe, North and South America, South Africa and elsewhere.)

Many of those present at Glasnevin were from England and asked about other graves near Ryan's. There was Cahal Brugha and Brian O'Higgins and Harry Boland and O'Donovan Rossa. In this company one couldn't help being reminded of Pearse's words "...while Ireland holds these graves..."

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www.atholbooks.org

Unions to discuss this would be held in the next couple of weeks, he said.

The ATGWU has traditionally opposed partnership deals, but Mr O'Reilly said it was *too simplistic to describe the union as being against national agreements*.

He had no problem with public service unions dealing in tandem with the Government, as an employer, but the "one size fits all" approach was not appropriate for the private sector, he claimed.

This argument has also been made by the Irish Bank Officials' Association, which last week signalled its intention to seek a 10 per cent pay rise for its members over two years.

One of the State's biggest private sector unions, Mandate, also plans to pursue its own pay strategy next year, even if there is a new national agreement.

Union leaders have had informal contacts with the Government since deciding last month to delay a decision on entering partnership talks. Substantive progress is unlikely, however, while the Irish Ferries controversy remains unresolved. The crisis deepened this week when the company rejected a Labour Court recommendation that it drop its plan to outsource crew.

On 17th November 2005, an offer to set up a special four-person "talks group" under the auspices of the National Implementation Body to "come up with a new formula designed to help solve the Irish Ferries stand-off" appears also to have been rejected by the company. Indeed, the entire approach seems a right 'cock-up' and appears to have enabled Eamonn Rothwell and his Irish Ferries crew to wriggle out of any negotiations.

NI Labour Meeting

Thursday 15 December: Poverty, Disadvantage and Public Services

Recently, the idea of social and economic disadvantage has been seized upon by the main political parties, but usually to argue the case that 'their side' is not getting its full share. Meanwhile the Northern Ireland Office is pursuing the radical privatisation of public services: how do we create policies equal to the challenge?

Common Ground café in University Avenue, beginning at 7.30pm

Ferries continued

influence as a movement comes from the collective power of our members and it is about how we as a movement harness our collective power.

“There are more powerful ways of harnessing it than at a steak dinner in Dublin Castle every four years,” says Ogle.

“We have a legion of trade union officials who have never negotiated a pay claim. What have they been doing? They are not trade union officials—they are industrial policemen. For the last 15-odd years, they have been running around the country enforcing the agreements with their members. Horror of horrors if partnership came to an end—they might actually have to go out and negotiate one themselves.” (Brendan Ogle, Business & Finance magazine, 3.11.2005).

“And it is for this very reason that relatively few trade unionists, even those who are likely to publicly speak out against partnership, have any real appetite for doing away with the structures that have delivered relatively good results over the past decade.

“There is a huge element of pragmatism in this,” says a representative of a smaller craft union that traditionally votes against partnership but happily goes along with it.

“If you are a trade union representative representing different categories of workers in different employments all over the country, to up stakes now and service all of those industries and membership would be a huge task. You will have to go foot slogging all over the place to service each one independently. It’s a monstrous task—it would demand constant attention, day-in-day-out, whereas the national approach is a much easier way to do it. No matter what he might say publicly, Jack O’Connor [SIPTU general president] will have been thinking about just how he could possibly run SIPTU properly without partnership.” (ibid).

In the above article, the journalist, Fearghal O’Connor goes on to state that in reality lower-paid workers would probably be even worse-off with collective bargaining,

“because their bargaining positions are weak”.

“By contrast, nurses, bank officials, surveyors, engineers and many skilled public sector workers are somewhat hamstrung by national agreements—skills shortages mean that free-for-all bargaining would suit them down to the

ground.” (ibid).

“The long-term SIPTU relationship with partnership would have been driven by people who are no longer there,” says one observer. “Jack O’Connor wouldn’t be seen exactly in the mould of Des Geraghty. You could speculate that if Geraghty and those around him were there it would never have been let get to the stage it is now at.” (Business & Finance, 3.11.2005).

JIM LARKIN

What did Big Jim Larkin always warn us against:

“Don’t submit your minds to any one man. Think these problems out for yourselves. A leader who can lead you out of the wilderness can lead you back again. If there is a thinking intelligent movement, no leader can mislead you.”

Throughout the Irish Ferries dispute, Jack O’Connor has demonstrated clear and calm leadership, he has taken his National Executive Council, a National Delegate Conference and a Special Delegate Conference with him. There has been no rhetoric or bluster.

“The country is at a crossroads, and must now take decisions over the kind of workforce it is creating, moving forward.

“This, in our analysis, is a watershed, a pivotal issue which will determine the shape of things for a very long time to come,” Jack O’Connor told *The Sunday Business Post*.” (30.10.2005).

SIPTU president, Jack O’Connor said the dispute was “*the greatest test that the social partnership process has faced*” since it was introduced 18 years ago.

“Some people ask if we would be better off outside an agreement, but if employer organisations are going to behave like this increasing numbers of my members are asking if we are better off inside, and I am becoming inclined to agree with them.”

Jack O’Connor also warned delegates that deferring entering talks should not be taken lightly.

“Think long and hard before you vote for this motion because it could mean that we could be out of social partnership.

“There would be plenty of forces that would like to see us out of the talks and it could be a long time before we get our feet under the table again.” he said.

While the Taoiseach, Mr. Ahern responded by saying partnership was impossible

without SIPTU, Mr. O’Connor said the cause of workers’ right would be far more difficult to achieve outside partnership:

“It is our analysis that partnership is the best way to do it... We’re not going to say that it’s impossible to do it otherwise but it’s very very difficult indeed.”

“The most daunting aspect of all that is taking place is the position being adopted by IBEC. Its director general, Turlough O’Sullivan, has refused to rule out similar approaches by other employers, citing competition as the reasons,” Jack O’Connor stated. (Irish Times, 30.9.2005)

“It is incumbent upon all of us to make people aware of the threat that is looming for them and their families—if we do not achieve a fundamental change in our present social partnership model so that social objectives are given at least equal importance with economic growth.” (Jack O’Connor, Liberty, November, 2005).

“I have no doubt that we will take punishment. But I am absolutely confident that we’ll inflict it as well if the need arises,” said O’Connor. (The Sunday Business Post, 30.10.2005).

Throughout the broad Trade Union movement, there is a realisation that this battle is different, it is taking place in a new Ireland, in a Europe which is a battleground between those like McCreevy who want an unimpeded Free Market, without a whit of concern for social obligations and a struggling workers’ movement bereft of very little political party leadership. Indeed, some of McCreevy’s greatest backers are the “New Labour” and former erstwhile Left student leaders of the 60s and 70s.

LABOUR COMMENT backed the Partnership concept from the outset, our problem with it in recent years was, that it just didn’t move on : it ended up a Pay Agreement. At worst, when wage control was accepted, we should have demanded a simultaneous control on basic commodities. Once profits surpassed the pay percentages, then we should have demanded that some form of Local Bargaining kicked in.

AMICUS DIFFICULTY —

FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Amicus National Secretary John

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Ferries continued

Continental Group, fell by 18 cent, or 1.7 per cent, to close at €10.47, after the Labour Court recommendations were delivered.

An application by the company to re-register its Irish Sea vessels to Cyprus, meanwhile, has been turned down by the Department of the Marine.

'NAKED' BERTIE

"The ferry company's proposal to shed its Irish-based seafarers and replace them with low-cost agency workers from Eastern Europe has been roundly condemned by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, and by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheal Martin.

"While the Minister of State for Labour Affairs, Tony Killeen, recently told the Dail that over forty recommendations arising from an internal review of the Labour Inspectorate were due to be brought to Cabinet shortly, he did not offer the concrete guarantees sought by unions to combat jobs displacement, unfair labour practices and gross exploitation." ('Liberty', November, 2005, SIPTU monthly journal).

Too right, Deputy Killeen didn't even say 'boo'—a similar exercise is being carried out in his own constituency at Shannon Airport by the Dublin Airport Authority involving 500 Trade Unionists in a 'take-it-or-leave-it' offer, despite local Trade Union agreements. This dispute has now been referred to the National Implementation Body.

ESTIMATES 2006

"Despite the lack of provision for any new partnership deal, Mr. Cowen said he fully supported social partnership.

"I believe it's been one of the major stabilising influences that has brought us the sort of economic and social progress that we have," he said." (18.11.2005)

"Consequently, estimates for salaries, wages and pensions are all notional, since there is as yet no pay deal for the public sector for 2006.

"But there is provision for the employment of an additional 3,000 public sector staff despite a benchmarking promise to cut the number of public servants by 5,000.

"With 290,000 already on staff, wages take up 34.5% of next year's total estimates while another 4.2% of the estimates total will pay for public sector pensions.

"Together, wages and salaries will account for 19 billion Euro of the Government's entire 48 billion spend." (Irish Examiner, 18.11.2005).

"Irish Ferries Shareholders' sinking feeling"

The contrasting views were reflected in the contrasting notes published by the two major brokers. Davy's work entitled *Battle of Wills* blasted the Labour Court for locking the company into an "uncompetitive cost base" and predicted that management will regardless tackle the cost base and win approval for its voluntary redundancy programme.

"Clearly the current uncertainty will drive the share price lower but if you believe that this is too big an issue for management to give in to, then it has to be an opportunity to buy into this weakness", according to the Davy analysis. However, Goodbody was having none of it. Its report, *A Sinking Feeling*, found "few simple solutions to the current impasse" and predicted that the "company's rejection of the Labour Court ruling will probably advance a strike" and make worse ICG's short-term financial problems (Sunday Business Post, 20.11.2005).

"Political detractors claim that Mr. Ahern's Dail outburst was more a move to keep SIPTU and their Labour Party allies on side—as potential coalition partners—rather than a threat to frustrate Irish Ferries "restructuring".

"But it may also have been intended to keep the wider trade union movement peaceful for a few stressful weeks until the ICTU secures a mandate on October 25, 2005 to enter negotiations for a seventh, successive social partnership agreement." (Gerald Flynn, Sunday Independent, 2.10.2005).

A NEW YEAR: AN OLD DOWN

HARK FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING!

Well, Gerald O'Flynn's October 25th prediction is beginning to appear more and more remote. And, despite a certain snide criticism from several quarters, Jack O'Connor's premonitions are a lot closer than we might think. And as the day of industrial reckoning approaches, an air of caution appears to have descended on many of the long-time advocates of Free Collective Bargaining!

"Private-sector unions are preparing

to hit employers with a wave of pay claims in anticipation of there being no new national agreement.

"Siptu, the State's biggest union, is to write to its 120 branches next week instructing them to begin drawing up claims for more than 50,000 members whose current deals expire at the end of December, 2005

"Other unions including the ATGWU, Amicus and the Irish Bank Officials' Association are also preparing claims on behalf of workers due to receive pay increases in the new year.

"The prospect of a spate of pay claims will cause deep concern to the Government and employers, who argue that wage restraint is vital if the economy is to remain competitive.

"A round of such claims is inevitable, however, given that the terms of Sustaining Progress expire on December 31, 2005, for workers in many sectors of the economy.

"Formal talks on a successor deal had been due to begin this week, but have been postponed as a result of Irish Ferries' plan to replace up to 543 unionised seafarers with cheaper migrant labour.

"Unions say they will not enter talks in the absence of Government guarantees on measures to prevent displacement of jobs and exploitation of workers.

"With no sign of a resolution to the Irish Ferries row in sight, it is increasingly unlikely that partnership talks will begin before the end of the year." (Irish Times, 19.11.2005).

BUSINESS & FINANCE: A MANAGEMENT VIEW ON PARTNERSHIP

Partnership:

"There is little real appetite within the unions to bring it to its knees and any debate on this is kept to the margins." (B&F, November 3, 2005).

"How has social partnership contributed to a more equal distribution of wealth in society in the last 17 years?" asks Brendan Ogle who represents ATGWU members in ESB and who does not hide his disdain for the partnership process. "If it hasn't, then it has failed. The division between rich and poor in this country is growing in an era of social partnership. That's a black mark .

"Our trade union membership and density levels are falling below which is sustainable in the long term. That is suicide by a thousands cuts. We are failing to make any inroads in recruitment in a growing private sector. That is a black mark.

"Against all of that we have the highest levels of poverty in the EU. Our

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Irish Ferries: "A Sinking Feeling"

Irish Ferries has rejected outright a proposal to resolve the continuing dispute between the company and the Trade Union movement put forward by the Labour Court on 14th November 2005. Irish Ferries intend replacing over 500 Irish seafarers with foreign seamen, paying wages of one-third the current Trade Union Rate

Three days following the Labour Court recommendations,

"Management representatives yesterday held direct talks on the outsourcing plan with seafarers on board Irish Sea vessels the *Ulysses* and the *Isle of Inishmore*.

"The 543 workers on the Irish Sea routes have been offered the choice of redundancy or continued employment on reduced pay and conditions. The company says 90 per cent of the employees involved have applied for redundancy. It is understood the purpose of the ongoing meetings with crew on the ships is to ascertain the current views of staff and to explain the company's intentions." (Irish Times, 18.11.2005).

The company's stand increases the difficulties faced by the Government in its attempts to secure a new **Partnership** deal.

Unions have decided not to enter talks on a successor to **Sustaining Progress** in the absence of specific commitments from the Government on measures to prevent exploitation of workers.

The talks had been due to begin on 16th November 2005, but have now been postponed indefinitely.

The unions' stance arose directly as a result of the Irish Ferries controversy.

On 17th November 2005, SIPTU began balloting workers from Irish Ferries for strike action.

LABOUR COURT RECOMMENDATION

In a recommendation, the Court said the company should not proceed with its plan

to lay off up to 543 seafarers and replace them with cheaper labour from abroad.

It told the company to honour a three-year agreement on seafarers' pay and conditions, reached with unions in June last year.

The recommendation was rejected within hours by the company, which described it as being "*incapable of acceptance and implementation*".

It repeated its assertion that it had no choice but to implement the **redundancy** and **outsourcing** programme in order to ensure it remained competitive.

Unless the Government moves to prevent the company from proceeding with its plan, which involves hiring agency seafarers on hourly pay of €3.60, it is unlikely that unions will enter **Partnership** talks.

The outsourcing plan has been condemned by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, who has said it remains to be seen whether the company "*gets away with*" it.

However, both Mr Ahern and Minister of State for Labour Tony Killeen have expressed doubts in the Dáil about the

potential for Government action to stop the company.

"The Taoiseach has ruled out emergency legislation to prevent Irish Ferries from laying off 543 staff and replacing them with cheaper foreign workers." (Irish Examiner, 16.11.2005).

In its recommendation on the dispute between the company and Siptu, the Labour Court said the conduct of "*orderly industrial relations*" required that parties honour agreements.

The company, it said, had not made out a "*sufficiently compelling case*" to justify unilateral termination of the agreement reached with unions in June last year on seafarers' pay and conditions.

Accordingly, it was recommending that the company honour the agreement of 2004 and that the parties resume negotiations on such modifications as were considered necessary.

In a second recommendation, the court found in favour of a Seamen's Union of Ireland claim that members who wished to remain at the company ought to retain their existing terms and conditions of employment.

The company also rejected this recommendation. It has offered its 543 seafarers on Irish Sea routes the option of redundancy or continued employment, but on reduced pay and conditions.

Union officials said this would mean national agreements were not "*worth the paper they were written on*".

The Taoiseach stated that the Labour Court was "*the proper arbiter*" of good industrial relations practice. "*I would hope that both parties would respect the decision of the court.*"

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