

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

ISSN 0790-7672

January 2005

Volume 20 No 1

The Northern Star

Incorporating
Workers' Weekly

Volume 19 Number 1
ISSN 0954-5891

What Is It About Cork?

Casement Review

Cowen & Individualisation
(Labour Comment: back page)

Contents: See Page Two

Northern Ireland

The Great Game

Throughout the game that has been played for six and a half years over the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, we said that the basic requirement was the spiritual one of seeing the Croppies lie down. It was not a particularly Paisleyite requirement. It lies at the core of Ulster Unionism and only those who make a particular effort to move onto more political ground are (tentatively) free of it. It is the resting point in the land-of-heart's-desire—and, in a situation where ultimate yearnings are not tamed by the operation of a system of party-politics connected with the exercise of power in the state, the land-of-heart's-desire remains the determining influence.

Ideals are always being blunted by compromises made in the pursuit of power in Britain and in the Republic. But ideals are never compromised in the pursuit of power in Northern Ireland because the exercise of political power in the state is simply not at issue. The farming out of government and politics to the Protestant community when Northern Ireland was set up by Westminster in 1921 ensured that ideals would remain intact. The major powers of state were retained by Whitehall, beyond the electoral processes of Northern Ireland, and the devolved system was in great part a kind of make-believe operated by Unionist communal routine, even though as the immediate presence of the British State in actual experience it bore down heavily on the Catholic community.

The fatal mistake of the Ulster Unionists was their agreement to operate this system of fragmented power and spurious responsibility in an out-house of the State. It was a system by means of which actual state power—which always lay in Whitehall—held the region without any kind of responsibility which could be brought home to it through the electoral process. Carson opposed the system at Westminster when it was being set up. But Carson was not an Ulsterman. And the Ulstermen took to it, had a marvellous time with it for close on 50 years, and have now been bearing the destructive consequences

of it for 35 years, still without any understanding of how it all went wrong. And the Stormont idyll of 1921-69 still lies there as their determining ideal.

The 1998 Agreement was not entered into voluntarily by the Ulster Unionist Party. Trimble was coerced by Blair into signing it—and, within minutes of signing it, he launched the opposition to it at a press conference. His ideal did not differ from Paisley's, but he decided to oppose the Agreement from within, lest something worse should befall the Unionist cause if he rejected it outright.



Major Tom: "Will It Never End?"
(see page 15)

A Cautious Budget

Brian Cowen made a cautious start to his first budget as Finance Minister. Most of the tax reliefs were targeted towards the low paid in an attempt to make up for lost ground in the previous two budgets.

The Single and Married Persons' Tax Credit increased by a modest 3.9% which was comfortably ahead of inflation (about 2.5%) but not likely to make much difference. This generosity should be set in the context of zero increases in these credits in the last two budgets.

He continued the policy of Individualisation of Tax Credits introduced by his predecessor and increased the PAYE Tax Credit by 22.1%. Two years ago this Tax Credit was 660 it is now 1270 Euros, almost double. This Tax Credit was introduced in the early 1980s following the PAYE tax marches, but had been neglected until recent years. There is no doubt that it has been used to encourage as many people into the workforce as possible, especially married women.

There was also an increase in the threshold for the 2% Health Levy from 356 to 400 a week, an increase of 12.4%, which will benefit the employed.

For the middle class there was the further benefit of a 5% increase in the Single Person's Tax Band from 28,000 to 29,400. Again this should be seen in the context of a zero increase in last year's budget. But the policy of Individualisation continued: he only increased the Married Person's Allowance by the same amount. The ratio between the Married and Single Tax Bands is now just over 1.3, whereas

continued on page 2

continued on page 6

CONTENTS

	Page
The Great Game. Editorial	1
A Cautious Budget. John Martin	1
The RIC. (Letter to <i>Irish Examiner</i> from Nick Folley)	3
What Was (Is) It About Cork? Jack Lane	7
A Czeched History. Tim O'Sullivan (Review)	9
<i>An Cor Tuathail: O Poets & Academicians Of Sliebh Luachra.</i> (Compiled by Pat Muldowney)	12
Revisionist Chit-Chat. (Report: P. Maume with reply from Desmond Fennell)	13
Ameranglia v. Amerope. Jack Lane (Letter)	14
Remembrance Day. Robert Burrage (Letter)	14
Major McDowell's Offer Of Assistance To Britain. Unpublished Letter	15
The Irish Times Group. John Martin	15
Has The DUP Accepted The Belfast Agreement? David Morrison	16
Reply To A Reader. Editor	18
2NT And The Neo-Con/Revisionist Agenda. Patrick O'Beirne (Letter)	21
 <i>Labour Comment</i> , edited by Pat Maloney : <u>Cowen's First Budget</u> page 24 <u>The Life And Times Of Charlie McCreevy</u> page 23	

Monica McWilliams recently took part in a Radio Eireann discussion of a Trimble biography. It emerged that she underwent a long process of disillusionment about Trimble in her association with him. The Communist Party never faced up to the basic facts of the Northern Ireland situation and therefore could not make realistic judgments within it. If Trimble's allies had been more sceptical of him from the start, he might have lasted better. He is now criticising Paisley from a viewpoint which a little over a year ago would have been called Paisleyite.

The Agreement system, which Trimble delayed for a year and a half in 1998-9, was prorogued two years ago (for the third time) in order to save Trimble from pulling it down. The Secretary of State (penitent Communist, John Reid) prorogued it on the pretext of terrorist allegations made against Sinn Fein. The allegations were circulated as if they were established facts, and the fact that they were not subsequently brought home as convictions is never mentioned. In Columbia the Court brought in a Not Guilty verdict at the end of the trial—a verdict which accorded with the evidence as reported even in the *Irish Times*, which is unremittingly hostile to Sinn Fein. Ian Paisley jr. says he wrote to the *Columbian Government* asking it to reverse the trial verdict. It has now done so following a token appeal hearing by a judge who saw no reason to have the defence lawyers present. The grounds of the reversal have not been reported in the

Irish press. It is unlikely that the reversal was a response to Paisley's appeal to the *Columbian* government to overturn the law.

A year ago C.C. O'Brien took a Guilty verdict to be a foregone conclusion, only the sentence remaining to be determined. The trial was still in process at the time. Dr. O'Brien has been refreshingly free from the ideology of legal fetishism ever since he enlisted in the service of the big battalions of the world about 25 years ago. He now explains his mistake of last year in an *Irish Independent* article (18 December): *Sentences Reflect Clear Sign Of Bush's Order To Get Tough*. Of course the word should be *Verdicts* rather than *Sentences*, but some show of decency has to be preserved. And the substance of the article shows that the verdicts are included. He is commenting sympathetically on the Taoiseach's unexcited response to the new Guilty verdicts:

"Bertie knows that the *Columbian* Courts, while nominally independent of the *Columbian* Government, are actually tightly controlled by that Government. He also knows that the *Columbian* Government is totally dependent on the Government of the United States for its financial and military backing. It therefore carries out the bidding of the U.S. in any matter deemed to be of importance by the Government of the U.S. And that emphatically includes the treatment to be accorded to the *Columbia* Three.

"While the American Presidential

Election was being contested by Senator Kerry, President Bush wished to keep the *Columbia* Three issue, potentially contentious among Irish voters in doubtful areas (such as New York City, Boston and California) on the back burner. It therefore suited him for the moment, to have the court find the *Columbia* Three not guilty on the major issue of supplying arms to the Farc rebels, but for that decision to be subject to appeal. It also suited him for the men to be found guilty—as they obviously were on the minor issue of entering *Columbia* on false passports...

"After his triumphant re-election, President Bush allowed some time for the dust to settle. And then he sent word to the *Columbian* Government that their Superior Court... were to uphold the appeal and lay down stiff sentences... All of which the *Columbian* Government, having in reality no choice in the matter, duly did.

"Bertie therefore knows that anyone who seriously challenges the decision of the *Columbian* Court, is obliquely and inferentially challenging the Government of the United States. And Bertie has the sense not to do that...

"All that may sound cynical, but it is, at least, not so cynical as it may sound. First..., as regards the *Columbian* Government, it is doing what the US government asks of them; it is doing so, not out of fear of that government but out of genuine dependence on it. If the U.S. government abandoned *Columbia*, *Columbia*, left to itself, might fall into the hands of the Farc..." (There is no "Second" reason given in the article. Was it that Bush ordered the *Columbian* Government that the Three should be got out of its part of the country before the verdict was changed?)

Sinn Fein might reflect: With enemies like that, who needs friends?

Dr. O'Brien should know, as a good 'Burkean', that this kind of knowledge of the world should not be blurted out. The "*decent drapery of virtue*" should be treasured where it is most needed—which is the region where power finds it necessary to act indecently.

Incidentally, Dr. O'Brien is now a card-carrying member of the Irish Labour Party. Is Pat Rabbitte comfortable with that kind of support?

*

The 1998 Agreement ran directly counter to the (completely unpolitical) spiritual need of the Unionist community to see Republicanism humiliated—which would be preliminary to cutting the entire nationalist bloc down to the size it had held in public life before 1969. On Good Friday 1998 both Governments implicitly

accepted the assertion of Provisional Republicanism that it was a necessary and legitimate component of the situation.

The actual governing arrangements might possibly have been got over if they had not effectively legitimised the Republican military activity which led to the Agreement—but those governing arrangements could not have been agreed with a realistic prospect of being made functional unless Republicanism had been legitimised. There was no requirement that Sinn Fein disown the IRA, or be born again and express remorse for having been associated with a murderous criminal gang for 28 years. The only requirement was that, in the new situation brought about by warfare, it should commit itself to future activity without warfare, and that it should use its influence to bring about a “*decommissioning*” of IRA arms over a period of two years during which it would hold Ministerial office in the devolved government. That is the only sensible reading of the Agreement.

It was not put into effect because Trimble blocked implementation for a year and a half on the pretence that he understood the Agreement to require the IRA to disarm prior to Sinn Fein taking office, and when Whitehall finally compelled him to take office he did so under a six-week ultimatum on decommissioning; and because Blair backed away from his Good Friday undertaking, as did the Dublin Government when Reynolds was forced out of office.

The Unionist community was brow-beaten and bamboozled and duped into voting by a small majority for the Agreement. Tom Kelly of BBC Northern Ireland, now of Downing Street, drew up a master-plan of propaganda for Blair for handling the Protestants. Dr. Goebbels could not have done better. The Protestants were induced to vote against their will. They were *Gleichschaltunged* as Dr. Goebbels used to say—harmonised, coordinated, circumvented, coaxed, coerced, made false promises. They voted in a kind of waking dream. And, when they woke up, they did not consider themselves bound by their votes.

‘*Decommissioning*’ was detached from its conditional place in the Agreement and made into an unconditional demand in a manner that was intended to obstruct its achievement. This was clearly not because Unionists thought the Republicans would revert to military activity as an adjunct of political office. It was because the basic spiritual need of Unionism had been affronted by the Agreement, and, once

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY

The following letter was published in the *Irish Examiner* on 4th January 2005:

Dear Editor,

Ryle Dwyer (*Irish Examiner* 11-12-04), in recalling the shooting of two RIC at Soloheadbeg in 1919 hints at a revisionist line of thinking currently popular whereby the RIC are elevated almost to the status of martyrs while the IRA come out the villains. There are a number of points to be made here. The RIC had been called on to surrender and had instead raised their rifles in response. As Dan Breen said “it was their lives or ours”—and they had been given a chance. Secondly, it is true—as Ryle quotes Sean Moylan saying—that the RIC were not widely unpopular prior to 1916. Up to that time the RIC had been one of a limited number of career opportunities open to Irish men and who could grudge them the right to earn a crust? Yet they were still the agents of a foreign government, which even after several centuries was still not wholly accepted here. There was no Irish police force to join any more than there was an Irish army or Irish government. While many of their duties were mundane they were also used extensively by the British Establishment to spy on the Irish people. All IRA veterans’ accounts agree that the RIC were the ‘eyes and ears’ of the British, and especially after 1916 were essential in arresting and raiding Volunteers. In 1918 the Irish democratically mandated Sinn Fein to establish an Irish Republic with Dail Eireann at its head. The RIC—the Irish origin of many rank and file notwithstanding—were immediately employed by their British masters to nip this democratic development in the bud. Their raids and arrests went largely unchallenged up to 1919 but obviously this state of affairs could not have been permitted to continue unchecked. Many younger RIC especially saw the way things stood and resigned. Some had to be encouraged by boycotting or even indeed the threat of a bullet. Some actively aided the IRA. Those who stayed on and continued to harass the republican movement—civil or military—put themselves knowingly and definitively in the firing line. Perhaps they thought it would all soon blow over as before, but this time they happened to have been wrong. The tragedy of the RIC is that it provided the British Establishment with a political tool to suppress the Irish people’s expressed will for self-determination. The fact that many rank and file were Irish only compounds the tragedy.

As in Vichy and Occupied France it was similarly tragic that a portion of the population could have been persuaded to collude in the suppression of their own people by a foreign government. Yet in France today naturally enough it is the Resistance fighter who is lauded as the hero of the hour and not the Vichy collaborator, though no doubt many of them were decent enough. Ryle would have done well to quote Moylan a little further “[the man who takes up arms against an invader] is lauded as a hero—in Poland *tuigeann tú*—but here in Ireland [he was] deemed a murderer by those who controlled all the organs of publicity”

Nick Folley

Tom Kelly’s propaganda conditioning wore off, Unionist unwillingness to share power without a prior humiliation of the enemy re-asserted itself.

Trimble is an essentially weak character. He was helped to power by the famous double-act at Drumcree, but Paisley was clearly the dominant partner in their jig. He was pressured into doing things he did not want to do. But he never did them thoroughly. He seems to have come to the opinion that humiliation was unachievable, and to console himself with futile insults, like the “*house-training*” jibe. And so he made way for Paisley.

Paisley seems to have made concessions on most of the governing arrangements under the Agreement (see *Has The DUP Accepted The Belfast Agreement?* in this magazine), but to have

made a sticking-point of humiliation which the Agreement does not provide for at all. He brought the recent negotiations to an end by his insistence on an album of photographs which would show the Croppies lying down.

Ruth Dudley Edwards (sometime literary collaborator of the celebrated murderer Sean O Callaghan) says that it was the Provos who aborted the negotiations, because they need to keep their Army functional for the the conquest of the Republic (*Radio 4*, 11 December 2004). Professor Paul Bew, Trimble’s adviser, did not go as far as that in a *Radio 4* programme on 14th September 2004, but he supported humiliation and surrender. And he dismissed the idea that the destruction of arms currently held was of little military consequence because new arms

might easily be got in the event of a decision to resume military action. Perhaps he had grounds for saying that it is very difficult to procure arms nowadays?

That programme was a strange affair. It compared the recent war in Northern Ireland with the 1745 war in Britain, treating the latter as a kind of Scottish nationalist insurrection. The 1745 war was in fact a British civil war. The Jacobites were a British party. They were Tories who could not rest easy under the successive illegitimacies of 1688 and 1714 and who disapproved of Whig-Hanoverian adventurism in the world. And, if the Jacobites had been as competently-led in 1745 as the Provos have been, the Crown of England would have changed hands again. King George was making ready to return to his German kingdom when the Jacobite leaders lost their nerve.

Wee Frankie Millar, former Secretary of the Unionist Party and now *Irish Times* London editor, has reverted to fundamentalist Unionism in his 'perception' of things. He is now spinning for Dr. Paisley. He says that Paisley has won the "blame game" over the breakdown of negotiations. He understands things no better now than he did twenty years ago when he was loosely associated with us.

Certainly there are many people—blind anti-Paisleyites a little over a year ago when their game was saving Trimble—who now declare that the negotiations did not break down over the photograph album at all but over something else for which the Provos were responsible. And some of them are in the Dublin Government. But these are people who are committed against Sinn Fein regardless of circumstances, and whose essential position is that a deal which legitimised Republicanism should never have been done. They will not deal with what exists on the terms as agreed.

The game of blaming the Provos has now been going on ever since Sinn Fein entered electoral politics in earnest about 20 years ago. It was encouraged to enter electoral politics, and then the propaganda apparatuses of two States were deployed against it in the electoral arena. The propaganda enjoyed considerable success where it did not matter, and was a complete failure where it did. Garret FitzGerald declared before a number of Northern elections that a vote for Sinn Fein would be a vote for the IRA. Then, when the Sinn Fein vote increased, he tried to explain it away as not being a vote for the IRA at all—but then tried the same trick again the next time. The only place where blaming

the Republicans counts is the Catholic constituency in the North, which has been constituted into a cohesive political community by the perverse mode of government to which it was submitted in 1921, and by Unionist conduct within that mode.

The Northern Catholic community is beyond the reach of the propagandists of the British and Irish Governments and of the Unionist Party. And the smart media operators of those institutions have no conception of how to reach it—and really don't care whether they reach it or not.

Who in the Republic or Britain can imagine political life outside the democratic electoral system of the state and under the rule of a hostile religious community? Having endured such a life for half a century and come out fighting, the Northern minority has had to devise its own mode of political understanding. The kind of blame referred to by Wee Frankie makes less impression on it than water on a duck. It has its own epistemology, appropriate to its actual conditions.

*

Media interviewers in the North sometimes try a bit of sleight of hand with Sinn Fein representatives. For example, on 25th November Noel Thomson (*Hearts & Minds*, BBC) said to Mitchel McLoughlin:

"Gerry Adams said today in Dublin that the Sinn Fein focus was to get a comprehensive agreement and take it to the IRA leaders. So that means that it's the IRA who will have a veto on this latest phase of the process."

McLoughlin patiently replied that it was the Governments and the Unionists who gave the veto to the IRA by refusing to accept Sinn Fein's electoral mandate in its own right and making the restoration of devolved government dependent on the IRA. Move and counter-move were run through quickly, as grandmasters run through opening moves in chess, and Thomson moved on to something sensible. But such things cannot happen on RTE because of the mixture of ignorance and self-righteousness that prevails there.

Questions & Answers (RTE) on 13th December (the day the negotiations broke down on the issue of photographs) included on the panel Mitchel McLoughlin (Sinn Fein), Jeffrey Donaldson (DUP), Pat Rabbitte (formerly Official Republican, now leader of Irish Labour Party), and Eamon O Cuiv (Fianna Fail). And the Chairman, John Bowman, is usually an active participant whenever there is a Sinn Fein member to harass. He is the media voice of the strictly Free Statist element of the Establishment.

The opening question asked if the negotiations had really broken down on the issue of photos. McLoughlin explained the de-commissioning provisions of the Agreement under General de Chastelaine with which both Governments were happy, but which Paisley wanted to change. *Bowman*: "Maybe the Irish public would like photographs. You needn't do it for Mr. Paisley. But you could do it for the rest of us".

There was then some sparring, in which Bowman tried to make some point against Sinn Fein, but lost track of it and gave up:

Rabbit: "Well it's obvious that it wasn't only a photo. And the entire country was led to believe that it was a photo. And I think that most people would think that, if it were only a photo, how in the name of God would one side dare risk sinking a comprehensive settlement for demanding a photo, and how could the other side resist giving a photo if that's all that is in it. I think the biggest issue, and I think the issue that this democracy has to look at is the criminality issue and the definitions of paramilitary activity. Because that's the critical issue... You would get the impression that we're talking about some normal offence that law enforcement can deal with. We're not talking about that. We're talking about the Sinn Fein writ controlling certain communities in nationalist areas of Northern Ireland but also in certain communities in this very city. And it is done through fear."

Having spoken his mind on the major issue, Rabbit then addressed what he sees as a minor issue—the breakdown of negotiations over photographs:

"To many of us watching down here it looks like old-style triumphalism. It looks like Dr. Paisley reverting to type" [Rabbit was between two old enemies of Official Republicanism, 'Provisionalism' and Paisleyism, both of which had become powerful and respectable, and he behaved like a hungry donkey caught in a dilemma between two equally repulsive thistles. He continued:]

"And I must say I'm not encouraged when I see the exchanges this evening. The Taoiseach made the apology, grovelled, and Dr. Paisley went on evening television and rubbed his nose in it."

Bowman: "But we don't know he grovelled. We know that Dr. Paisley said he apologised and so on."

Rabbitte: "I think, listening to what Dr. Paisley said, I think it was a pretty humble apology for the Taoiseach, for leaning from one foot to the other. But anyway he apologised. He's the Taoiseach of this state. And that wasn't good enough for Mr. Paisley."

Donaldson made some obscure point about the Provos publishing photos of themselves over the years. And Rabbit took it up:

"And I think Jeffrey has a fair point when he says that humiliation never troubled the IRA much. There have

been a lot of humiliating pictures published in the last 30 years that I've been conscious of politics on this island and it never upset the IRA much. They've got weak stomachs all of a sudden."

McLoughlin put it to him that Sinn Fein had brought the situation to the brink of a comprehensive peace settlement and he appeared to agree with this, and that the breakdown could not be reasonably laid at Sinn Fein's door.

Donaldson then offered the information that the IRA 'Green Book' included instructions on how to meet humiliating treatment in captivity.

The next question was whether the IRA would go away if an agreement was reached. Rabbit led off:

"Not until the issue of criminality is dealt with. Because the danger is that you convert a paramilitary infrastructure into a criminal infrastructure, the purpose of which is to ensure that the Sinn Fein writ runs in certain communities. I've seen it in my own constituency. I've seen how the drugs issue was manipulated over 10 years to build political support. I've seen people go out at night when the policing vacuum was there and filled it with hurley sticks and pick-axe handles. That's not a sanction that democratic parties can apply. And, unfortunately, I think this is the issue in terms of control and domination of certain nationalist communities in Northern Ireland and certain communities down here. We've seen it in my own constituency. The treasurer of the Sinn Fein party was found knecapped on the border..."

Rabbit later suggested that it was fortunate that the talks had broken down over the photos, otherwise these, the most important, matters would not have come to the fore. And McLoughlin said that these matters had not been raised by the Unionists until they saw them being raised in the Dail.

McLoughlin said there was "a lack of consistency in the approach of the Governments on this issue" (covered by Paragraph 13 of the British/Irish 2003 Joint Declaration). Intensive discussions began in April 2003: "Gerry Adams came up with a form of words which both governments accepted as meeting the requirements of Paragraph 13. And that was the basis on which we went into the October 2003 sequence of events". The IRA expressed agreement with the position. And Adams said the purpose was to bring an end to physical force Republicanism.

Bowman interjected: "The Taoiseach has said that's no good", because the IRA were "past masters" of equivocation.

McLoughlin: "If that has any validity, the people would need to be able to demonstrate the difference and deficiency between the position as expressed during last week, and the

position they were prepared to accept 14 months ago in relation to the sequence of events then. Because all this is a continuum. What has changed is that the DUP came in and replaced the Unionists."

In other words, the Governments made an agreement, but changed its terms later because the DUP displaced the UUP, without showing that the Republicans had acted in breach of the agreement in any way. Bowman, who intervenes freely against Sinn Fein at the slightest opportunity, did not contradict McLoughlin on this point. It was left to Rabbit to confuse the issue:

"What Martin McGuinness said on behalf of Sinn Fein was that there would be an end to any activity that endangers the Agreement. But there are many activities going on... that do not endanger the Agreement... And that's the area that remains to be resolved."

Which can only mean that activities which at present are not taken as endangering the Agreement must be made to endanger it.

Eamon O Cuiv appeared to wish he was elsewhere. When called on to speak, he took an unbelievably legalistic line. He said there must be an end to any activity not compatible with democratic politics [in Northern Ireland where there has never been what the people of the Republic would accept as democratic politics if it was imposed on them!]

McLoughlin said progress towards that end is not made easier when O Cuiv's government starts unpicking agreements which have been made.

O Cuiv was concerned that there should not be any little loophole in the words:

"Can you say that the activities Pat [Rabbit] has outlined here would all be at an end? I think that's a simple question."

McLoughlin responded with another simple question: Could O Cuiv tell us "that we have seen an end to corruption at the highest level of politics in this island?" O Cuiv responded by looking abashed.

There was a fifth panellist, Mary Harte, described as a journalist. She is evidently from the North, and she almost said what this was all about:

"On the point, Will the IRA go away if there is agreement—I don't think anybody could answer that question, because people don't know who the IRA is. There is an Army Council—"

Bowman: "—They'd be gone presumably."

Mary Harte: "Well, what happens to those people who don't agree with the present road... that Gerry Adams has taken?"

She then addressed what Rabbit called the Republican stranglehold:

"The police don't go into Creggan. The police don't go into Rosemount. They're not welcome. So who looks after things when things go wrong... I'm not saying that... no Republican is a criminal, but there's an awful lot of them

in the Republican movement. And it's going to be very difficult for the IRA to decide to get rid of those boys at the back of Creggan or the boys in Rosemount, or whoever will carry out the restorative justice."

Creggan etc. are not without policing because the Provos drove out the police. The police were driven out in 1969 before there were Provos. There was then an appeal by the Dublin Government to John Hume to establish a vigilante force to maintain order after the police were gone, but he demurred. There was no Provo Republican organisation when the police were excluded from those areas by the actions of the people in them, organised for the most part by people who did not become Provisionals. The Official IRA, with which Rabbit was later associated politically for many years, did exist and was in some degree responsible for inciting disorder. Provisional Republicanism was developed in the areas from which the police had been excluded. Its power was not that of an oppressor, as Rabbit suggests, it was that of a representative. That is the explanation of the "policing vacuum" in parts of the North. But what is the explanation of the policing vacuum in Rabbit's own constituency, in the well-ordered democracy of the Republic?

The problem with restoring official policing in the North is not one of getting out the IRA so that the police can come back in. It is one of establishing a police force acceptable to those communities. The SDLP committed itself to the *status quo*, and became a minority party in the nationalist community. Insofar as democracy can be said to exist in the North, it supports the Sinn Fein position—and it did so, understanding that things are done by Republicans which would be unacceptable to the law and order system of a democratic state.

One way of resolving the matter would have been through a kind of cantonal policing, with a police body acceptable to Catholic communities being drawn from the Republicans who had done the actual policing for a generation, usually at the behest of the community. That, in substance, is what was done on the other side, when the UVF Rebellion of 1912-14 was constituted into a devolved region of the British state. But the Unionists would not tolerate their own example being followed on the Nationalist side. The official position remains, as Rabbit puts it, that Catholic communities are oppressed by the IRA, even though it is well understood in the North that such is not the case.

The other aspect of it is that there are many Republican strands in the North, and substantial Republican opposition to the Provo peace process. It has not been proposed that the Provo leadership should

step aside and let the others free to get on with it, but it is the logical implication of condemnation of the Provos, such as Rabbit's, which treat the Provo exercise of hegemony in the general Republican movement as extraordinary criminal activity, and a breach of ceasefire. (And, of course, the Official IRA, in whose political wing Rabbit himself functioned, never decommissioned.)

Finally:

McLoughlin: "We accept the current Constitutional *status quo*, and we will work peacefully and through the democratic process to get a majority in favour of a United Ireland."

Bowman: "It's the only way Ireland would ever be united anyway."

McLoughlin: "Absolutely."

B: "If you don't mind my saying so, your followers or colleagues didn't always seem to say that."

McL: "We didn't say it for this reason——"

B: "You didn't say it. But your actions divided Ireland."

McL: "On this station and others people couldn't hear what they were saying for a long time."

B: "We saw their deeds. By their deeds shall ye know them. Come on. They divided Ireland."

McL: "You did see their deeds, and you saw the Constitutional guarantees to the Unionist position. You saw the hopelessness and despair of Nationalist and Republican politics in the North, when this Government down here, not just the Westminster Government, turned its face away from what was happening in the North. Now we have climbed our way back from that pit of despair to the verge now of a historic agreement where there will be democratic and peaceful politics from this point forward. Now you can quibble. And, as you're on the sideline, you can actually make it very difficult to achieve that. And, if that is how you manifest your politics, then let the people of Ireland judge."

B: "The people of Ireland *have* judged. They want decommissioning. They wanted it ten years ago."

McL: "And what are they getting now? What is presented to them under this deal?"

B: "I know, but it's taken a long time."

McL: "It has taken a long time——"

B: "——And they wouldn't mind a photograph either."

McL: "If you go back——"

B: "——I mean they wouldn't."

McL: "John, like you can be flippant——"

B: "——No, I'm not being flippant."

McL: "Well, you are being flippant, about a very serious issue. Let me say this——"They wouldn't mind a photograph": There are many issues that could be dealt with in the same superficial way."

B: "It's not a superficial way at all."

McL: "It is a superficial way. Well, OK, is John de Chastelaine a liar when he says——"

B: "——No, no, he's not a liar, but he's not got the credibility. A community that's been under the lash for 30 years is a big issue."

McL: "Well, tell me, what has my community been under: Internment, shoot to kill, collusion with Loyalist

murder gangs, Unionist discrimination. Now we're prepared to take a step to build trust with our political opponents."

Bowman broke off the engagement at this point. Possibly his producer had a word in his ear. ●

A Cautious Budget continued

before Individualisation it was 2.0.

To assuage any criticisms that he was anti-family he increased child benefit by 7%. Although the Government has consistently increased this relief above inflation Ireland remains well below Continental European standards.

An element of Irish economic success in the past ten years has been the availability of labour. Most of the increase in National Income has been a result of an increase in employment rather than an increase in productivity. That is not something, which should be denigrated: in previous eras we were unable to tap this resource and emigration was the result. However, an unemployment rate of 4.4%, close to full employment, means that the possibility of growth on this basis is no longer available. Government policies should be orientated towards increasing productivity rather than increasing employment. We will have to wake up to the fact that it will no longer be possible to compete on the basis of low wages and low taxes. At present other EU countries such as Estonia, Poland and Slovakia have 20% of the Labour costs of Ireland. It is pointless to even try to bridge the 80% differential.

It was interesting that a recent survey by *The Economist* magazine gave as a reason for Irish success the traditional values in the country. In general, despite the impression that is given by the media, the European money received has been well spent by Irish Politicians and Civil Service. There have been high standards in Public Office. Traditional family values, in contrast to individualist values elsewhere, have ensured high birth rates and a better balance between the working population and the retired. There is a danger that a mindless pursuit of economic growth for its own sake will undermine some of the elements that made that growth possible. The pressures of high growth have made family life almost impossible. This is not to suggest a return to rigid Catholicism. Other countries such as France have succeeded in reversing the

decline in birth rates by high levels of State support for families.

The sound finances enabled Cowen to increase Social Welfare expenditure. Old Age Pensions are to increase by 7% and Unemployment Assistance is to increase by 10.4%. There is also to be a significant increase in Disability expenditure (+11%).

Traditionally, property tax reliefs have been focussed on landlords. But a few years ago some modest relief was offered to tenants. The rent relief increased by 18% in this budget. The value of this relief to the tenant is now worth a modest 300 Euros a year.

Cowen also helped first time buyers of second hand houses by abolishing stamp duty for houses up to a value of E 317,500. He also reduced rates for houses up to a value of E 635,000. I can't express any enthusiasm for these measures. They are likely to sustain exorbitant house prices. A few years ago Bacon, the person who was in charge of the government commission to look at house prices, admitted that no one wanted a reduction in house prices. What he meant was that there was such a massive vested interest now in sustaining high property prices that this took precedence over the demand for affordable housing. This political fact of life is reflected in government policy.

Other changes included a 6.5% increase in the Income Tax exemptions for the elderly. Individuals and married couples over 65 will now have income Tax exemptions for incomes of 16,500 and 33,000 Euros respectively.

Cowen did not renew the various property reliefs that were due to expire this year and that received a stay of execution from McCreevy last year. He also promised to review other reliefs, which benefited the wealthy.

This was not an easy budget for the Opposition to score points. Richard Bruton of Fine Gael referred to it as "*a little red riding hood*" budget, meaning that it only appeared good because it followed after the budgets of the "*big bad wolf*" Charlie

McCreevy. Joan Burton of Labour made a similar point by changing the Fianna Fail slogan to “*a lot undone, much more to be undone*”. These are valid points but it is difficult to see how a viable opposition can be built on such a basis. What they’re saying is that although mistakes were made in the past, the Government is now basically on the right track.

Labour also made some telling points about the Reliefs, which continue to be granted to stallion owners, but I suspect that these will be phased out before the next election. The question will then arise as to what the Opposition would do differently: in my view, not a lot.

Fine Gael, which has been given credibility by Rabbitte’s commitment to avoid a coalition with Fianna Fail, has criticised the Government on the basis of the high taxes. But Ireland’s tax revenue is a modest 36% of GNP compared to an EU average of 40.6%. Labour is going to find it difficult to convince the electorate that a coalition with this party is in the working class interest.

Cowen’s budget was reminiscent of the Ahern budgets in the past. There was a slight bias in favour of lower income groups but no one from the wealthier sections of the society would have been too worried. There was no attempt to deal with exorbitant property prices by introducing taxes on such wealth. Neither did Cowen deal with another glaring anomaly of our system, the high level of indirect taxes, although at least he did not increase Excise Duties on alcohol and cigarettes.

Indirect taxes in Ireland account for 39.5% of total tax revenue compared to an OECD average of 31.9%. Such taxes are regressive for two reasons: firstly the same rate applies to consumption regardless of income, and secondly, a higher proportion of the income of poorer people is taken up by consumption.

In conclusion, Cowen’s budget was politically astute. It is difficult to blame him for not tackling the thorny issues I have mentioned above because he is not under any great pressure from the opposition. He cannot be accused of irresponsibility because the General Budget Deficit is going to come in at a very modest 0.8% of Gross Domestic Product and the debt ratio will be a very low 30% of GDP. His style was very different from that of his predecessor: there was none of the latter’s brashness. He emphasised the collective nature of the Budget and recognised the contributions

of the other departments in the budgetary process. He also talked about the need for all elements of society to benefit from Irish economic success. In short: bad news for the opposition!

Interesting Statistics on Irish Property

- There are about 1.3 million dwellings in the State.
- 200,000 dwelling or 15% of the total

are second homes.

- In year 2000 8% of dwellings were purchased for investment purposes.
- In 2004 20% of dwellings were purchased for investment purposes.
- Now over 10% of dwellings are in the private investment sector.
- 461,000 dwellings (over 35% of the total) are owner occupied and have no outstanding mortgage.

John Martin

What Was (Is) It About Cork?

Since Peter Hart focussed on Cork in his ‘classic’ work on the War of Independence he has created an obvious question that his fellow historians have tried to answer in various ways—why was there so much activity in Cork, and by people from Cork, during the War of Independence? Cork people have been traditionally accused of overestimating their own importance but they have not sought this new prominence in the history of the War of Independence. It has been foisted on them by Hart and co. There is no doubt that if you take away, for example, Collins, Barry, Moylan, Liam Lynch, Sam Maguire, MacCurtain, MacSwiney, Deasy, the Hales, Florrie O’Donoghue to name but the more recognisable names, and their associated actions, undoubtedly the war of Independence would have been quite a different event.

The attitude of Cork activists has been something of a mystery to many from the time of the war itself. In the first well-known account by Ernie O’Malley, *On Another Man’s Wound*, he put it down to the *Gascon* in the Cork character but did not enlighten us further as to how and why this existed.

To Hart himself the reason was self-evident. As the War itself was a sectarian event, Cork was obviously the most sectarian place in the country. Why else could they possibly fight so effectively? To him it could not be otherwise because of his assumptions about Ireland.

In *The Village* (6.11.04) Brian Hanley asks “*Why was west Cork the most violent part of Ireland during the revolution?*” but gives no answer.

Michael Hopkinton refers to the hilly topography of the area as a possible explanation. “*Many*”, he says, “*have sought explanations in the suitability of the countryside for guerrilla fighting*” but, as

Wicklow and other places are even more hilly, he admits that is no explanation (see p200, *The Irish War Of Independence*, 2002). He then refers to “*charismatic and effective leadership*” as a possible explanation, but the idea of a ‘follow my leader’ mentality as the explanation does not even convince him. Why were all these charismatic leaders located in Cork in the first place? so we are back to square one.

A new book on Cork makes another attempt: *Cork Historical Perspectives* by Henry Alan Jeffares (Four Courts Press 2004). It has a chapter by Gerard O’Brien, *Rebel Cork*, that attempts to answer the question. He poses the problem thus:

“*The prominent role to be taken by Cork in the Anglo-Irish conflict of 1919-21 and in the subsequent civil war was not foreshadowed in any obvious sense, though both city and county gave official concern in the period following the 1918 rebellion. At first it was unclear whether the unrest reflected merely a continuation in a somewhat more aggressive form the type of disorder which had characterised Cork local politics for a generation*” (p198-9).

But this theory is not developed, no explanation of this earlier local ‘disorder’ is given. We are told that the results of the 1918 Election “*was a radical departure from earlier years when the city had been in the more conventional nationalist hands of William O’Brien and Maurice Healy*” (p201). This is a strange way of describing William O’Brien and his colleagues who dominated Cork politics for decades. He was in fact the most unconventional nationalist in the country. For a start, he was leader of a separate party to Redmond, the *All for Ireland League* with its own daily paper, the *Cork Free Press*, which was the successor to the daily *Cork Accent* and each was an alternative to *The Cork Examiner* which to its eternal shame under the Crosbys had defected from O’Brien

to Redmond lured by what they reckoned to be the privileges of being a supporter of first Irish Prime Minister. The *Accent* had been set up and named to commemorate the Home Rule 'Baton' Convention of 1909 where anyone with a Cork accent was barred from speaking from the platform and batoned from the Convention hall. The conventional nationalist who organised this was Joe Devlin, Redmond's hard man. What was this all about? Our historians have not touched it. I wonder why?

O'Brien had fought tooth and nail with Redmond's and the Home Rule Party's politics for years and comprehensively defeated Redmond, and the Party which was in alliance with the sectarian Ancient Order of Hibernians (The Molly Maguires), in both 1910 Elections taking all seats in Cork city and county except one in East Cork which O'Brien did not contest because the candidate there was a Protestant Home Ruler. The conventional nationalists were therefore wiped out in Cork by O'Brien 8 years before 1918 and Gerard O'Brien is therefore writing rubbish about the 1918 Election in Cork. Also, O'Brien was closely allied and almost synonymous with the precursor of the Irish Labour Party in the area and there had been decades of political class conflict led by the *Land and Labour League* under D.D. Sheehan—who developed all sorts of solutions to Irish social problems and had them implemented. Sheehan became one of the first Labour MPs in the House of Commons. Another "conventional nationalist"?

O'Brien's national programme policy was a radical alternative to the Nationalist/Unionist conflict. It was based on what was known as the *Three Cs* towards the Unionists—*Conference, Conciliation and Consent*. It aimed to prevent sectarian conflict—and partition decades before it was formally established—by the most thoroughgoing non-sectarian policies for a Home Rule Ireland. They voted against the Home Rule Bill because of its divisiveness. Indeed, Carson appealed that "*the Member for Cork*" should be listened to in the House of Commons but the attempt to establish a dialogue there was howled down by the Home Rulers. A "conventional nationalist"? Conventional by Cork standards, yes, but by no other standard. And all this highly unusual activity in Cork is dismissed simply as "*disorder*" by Gerard O'Brien.

We are then told that "*Social, economic, and cultural factors, whether taken collectively or separately, provide*

few clues as to why Cork became synonymous with revolution and die hard republicanism during these years" (p201). Note the omission of politics as a factor. And political differences is what Cork was renowned for in the decades before the War of Independence. One need only study the Cork scene for any single day in those decades and that fact becomes obvious and yet our historian of Rebel Cork misses it completely. How could one see two parties in conflict and two daily papers dealing with every issue from its own perspective and not realise that something significantly political was going on?

And, if it was not any or all of the above factors, what was the explanation? Here our historian realises he has to be a little coy and delicate because, if one cannot give any rational explanation why the people of an area act in a particularly vigorous political way over a period of time, then the conclusion must be that they are simply mad. Or to put it another way—"The close association of political expression and the need to physically assault one's opponent already existed in the Cork psyche"—which is how O'Brien puts it. So there you have it. There was something wrong with their psyche and what does that mean except that they were 'basket' cases? There was nothing whatever of any substance at issue in Cork politics before the War, but they fought like hell about it! And this loony aggression simply found a new outlet in the War of Independence.

He says

"It is entirely possible that, with the collapse of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the temporary passing away of the familiar context for riot and revenge, the pent-up energies of Cork's large politically-active minority was transferred to the only nationalist outlet available after 1918... the rowdier element of the "All-fors" and "Mollies" ... fell quickly into the pattern of pre-emptive strikes and retaliatory counter-blows."

So the War of Independence was just a continuance of nonsensical violence, as before.

All this is a pathetic excuse for history, as well as insulting, but this book was launched and praised to the skies by that retiring Professor John Murphy as "*one of the most important books on Cork in recent times*". For this alone, Murphy deserves a verse all to himself in *The Langer Song* as the Great Langer of Cork historians. The current Lord Mayor of Cork, Sean Martin, joined in the praise at the launch, causing movement in a couple of local

graves.

So what gave rise to two competing parties, two competing daily newspapers and sometimes violent conflict with each other for a generation before the war of Independences? There was clearly something fundamental at issue. Such parties did not exist elsewhere. These politics were there because of the politicians that were there. A crippling leftover of academic Marxist thinking is that, as politics is not the primary force in political life, you don't really need to take the politicians seriously. They are simply the puppets of other forces. But politicians make the politics of any era, they are the primary element but academics never seem to accept this simple fact. O'Brien, coming from and representing Mallow, was very consciously an inheritor and practitioner of the Young Ireland and Davis approach to Irish politics. Modern popular political life took shape in the area under the influence of *The Nation* and *Young Ireland*. The determinedly secular Republican citizenry of the Fenians were the immediate successors. The O'Brienites and the *All for Irelanders* were the next manifestation after the Fenians. This was an inherently non-sectarian, generous, open-ended nationalism that has kept re-manifesting itself in new situations. The *All for Ireland League* supported Sinn Fein in the 1918 Election and effectively became Sinn Fein in Cork after that. The group then evolved into Fianna Fail—O'Brien being asked to stand for Fianna Fail in 1927. Frank Gallagher, who worked for the *Cork Free Press*, also helped found *The Irish Press*: he is another personification of that evolution. His book, *The Four Glorious Years*, written under the pseudonym David Hogan, describes that evolution very well.

The political background to the conflict was that the plans to kill Home Rule with kindness were a devastating blow to the conventional nationalists. Take away the 'land', and other social, grievances and the national movement was dead in their view. All they would then have to offer was the fact that Ireland was different only in being Catholic and the substance of Home Rule Ireland would be its Catholicism. Hence the growth of the AOH, which filled the ideological vacuum at the heart of Redmondism, and also provided the backbone, literally and metaphorically, of the Home Rule Party. AOH and Party swept all before them (again literally and metaphorically) until they came to Cork.

This development horrified O'Brien's

Young Ireland instincts. He welcomed all the land reforms wholeheartedly and demanded and achieved more: far from meaning the end of the national movement he viewed all this as the beginning of a new Ireland. But he saw a new divisive Catholic Ascendancy being created by the Redmondites and the AOH which was anathema to his vision of a new Young Ireland. There was therefore a fundamental conflict about what Ireland was and what it should be. There was nothing at all local about it: the conflict spread far beyond Cork. That was why it was so intense. And yet, despite that, the historians seem to be blind to it.

Cork and Munster fought the War of Independence in the spirit of Davis and Young Ireland in direct commonality with pre-War Cork politics. That was the reason for its totally uninhibited involvement—and it is a total perversion to see this development as sectarian. Sectarianism was introduced by the other side to try to stymie the surge.

Unfortunately, because of the split over the Treaty, the Redmondite/AOH vision was given an unexpected opportunity to reassert itself under the Free State and Cumann na nGaedhall, because of the setback suffered by the Republicans in the war over the Treaty. But Young Ireland manifested itself again with Fianna Fail in power.

It is fashionable now to stand amazed at an Ireland today without a powerful Catholic Church—commentators wonder where it came from and how it came about. There is no mystery about it. It was always part and parcel of the polity and thinking created by Young Ireland. The society did not have to wait for Europe, or the *Irish Times* to bring it about. It is another manifestation of Young Ireland and it is no accident that it came about in the period while the inheritors of Young Ireland and the All for Ireland League, i.e., Fianna Fail, dominated the politics of the society in the latter half of the 20th century.

Jack Lane

Roger Casement: *The Crime Against Europe*. 184pp. **£13, £9.99**

The Casement Diary Dogmatists
Ed. B. Clifford. 68pp. **£5, £4**

Traitor-Patriots In The Great War: Casement & Masaryk
by Brendan Clifford. 56pp **£5, £4**

Athol Books, PO Box 6589, London N7 6SG
Athol Books, C/O Shandon St. PO, Cork
or

www.atholbooks.org

Two Casement Pamphlets Reviewed

A Czechered History

TRAITOR PATRIOTS AND THE GREAT WAR: CASEMENT AND MASARYK

This pamphlet or rather brochure of pieces contrasts the fates of two noted traitor-patriots of World War One; Casement and Masaryk, at the hands of the British state, while it was still in its imperial phase. The greater part is taken up with a very interesting and original monograph by Brendan Clifford entitled *The Rise And Fall Of Czechoslovakia*.

For his betrayal of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for the sake of a new state to be called Czechoslovakia, for which the backing of no significant national movement existed, Masaryk was to be honoured as its first President. For his betrayal of the British Empire for the sake of an Irish autonomy backed by a well developed and supported political movement, Casement was dispatched through the hangman's trapdoor into artfully crafted ignominy.

The Rise And Fall Of Czechoslovakia follows the machinations of great power politics, particularly British, from the Versailles Treaty till the aftermath of WWII. Parallels and contrasts with the Irish experience are kept in the picture. Most interestingly it is a study of the lead up to World War Two and Britain's part in provoking that conflict. It covers ground tread by, and comes to similar conclusions as, the renowned Oxford Historian A.J.P. Taylor in his 1961 book, *The Origins Of The Second World War*. Taylor's work is not mentioned by Clifford. Taylor was politically left wing and was one of the original founder members of CND (The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament). He did not see Hitler as mainly or solely responsible for the outbreak of the conflict—which is something for which Taylor was not thanked by the academic mainstream. His view has never achieved full respectability.

Clifford provides a wealth of extracts from books and articles from the period. They are allowed speak for themselves without great elaboration. There are also striking titbits of information strewn through the text. For instance, did you realise that Churchill's great radio speeches rousing the spirit of defiance were spoken by an actor who would go on to play a character in a radio soap opera?

The great value of this work is that it offers an antidote to the standard received Hollywood version of European history spewed out *ad nauseum* by academia and the media.

Czechoslovakia was the product of great power policy subsequent to the Great War rather than the efforts of a well developed indigenous political movement. A number of ethnic groups were uncomfortably bundled into the state so cobbled together. The state began to break up when the Austro-Germans in Bohemia, also known as the Sudeten Germans, demanded self-determination by means of inclusion in the Greater Germany of the Third Reich. By a mixture of military bluff and astute diplomacy Hitler brought this about. The Munich Agreement of 1938 where British Prime Minister Chamberlain held up a scrap of paper before the cameras and proclaimed "*peace in our time*" spelt the end of the then Czechoslovakia.

Once the German minority had left, it was the turn of the Hungarians, Poles and Slovaks to agitate for separation. Hungary took over the part where Hungarians were in a majority. Then the Poles followed suit and claimed their slice of territory. The Slovaks demanded greater autonomy which produced a momentum which eventually resulted in an independent Slovak state. In March the rump Czech state, surrounded on three sides by Germany became a protectorate of the Reich.

After the war a new Czechoslovak state was constituted under Soviet tutelage. 3 million Sudeten Germans were brutally expelled with much loss of life, and their former territory was settled with Czechs. What was the closest thing to a genuine Communist revolution, for the Eastern Europe of that time, occurred in 1948. With the collapse of the USSR there was a revolution which led after a few years to yet another break-up of Czechoslovakia, this time into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

It is illuminating to follow the twists and turns of British policy in relation to this artificial east European state outlined here. The crisis over Danzig which led to the outbreak of WWII is also referred to. Hitler demanded its return to Germany as

part of the dismantling of the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Danzig was a German port city on the Baltic which along with its hinterland had been allotted to Poland after the Great War. As a result Germany was divided in two and lost a major port city. It is today's Polish city Gdansk. Why Britain was conciliatory in relation to the Sudetenland in 1938 yet dug its heel in regarding Danzig where Germany had a better case is described on page 41 as a "bizarre and incomprehensible reversal of strategy". Clifford is honest enough to admit he has no final definitive answer to this question.

If one must quibble then it is with the way the writer does not look beyond Britain as a means of explaining British policy, especially on the Danzig question. By the 1930s the British Empire had been in slow decline for a half century. The United States was the up and coming world power. The special relationship between Britain and the US was in the process of taking form.

One may also quibble with the attitude towards the British state. "But no other state is as morally pretentious as the British. No other state works so hard at garbling its interests and expectations into moral principles." As the major world power in the early 20th century, of course Britain took a ruthlessly pragmatic stance. It possessed a Machiavellian outlook clothed in the garb of morality and principal. But is this all so unique? Can we not see this same brazen moral pretentiousness exhibited today by other globally powerful states? Not enough information is provided to prove Britain as historically exceptional in this regard.

This is one of those rare published works on 20th century European history, where a picture is assembled from the facts and realities of the times in question as opposed to the usual outworking of well worn suppositions and ideological assumptions.

DOGMATISTS WITH AN UNRULY BARK: THE CASEMENT DIARY DOGMATISTS

This collection serves as a fine introduction to the Casement Diary controversy as it exists at present as well as explaining Casement's significance as a writer on international politics, something which has been generally overlooked. The articles come mostly from Brendan Clifford. There is an intriguing essay, by John Martin, on the contrasting attitudes of Conor Cruise O'Brien and John Bowman regarding authenticity. O'Brien (this was the early 1970s) thought

that, if the British really believed the Diaries were genuine, they would commission a comprehensive professional forensic examination so that they might in time brandish the resultant authentication about triumphantly. Bowman, writing in 2003, took it as read the Diaries are not forged. At the end is a letter to the *Irish Times* by yours truly in answer to two articles by Vincent Browne which, taking the Diaries to be genuine, described Casement as a paedophile, and in answer to letters to the paper by the two Diary Dogmatists here in question. These two are Dr W.J. McCormack author of *Roger Casement In Death* (2002) and Jeffrey Dudgeon author of *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries* (2003). (The Black Diaries, among other things, portray Casement as a paedophile.)

These two authors are described as dogmatists by Brendan Clifford because they assert the diaries to be genuine solely on the basis of a handwriting comparison done by an expert which all relevant authorities agree was carried out to an insufficient standard of exactitude and comprehensiveness to be presentable before a court of law. They argue from insufficient evidence. One can only agree. This examination was carried out by Dr Audrey Giles in 2002 under the auspices of Dr. W.J. McCormack. McCormack is a literary historian and sometime poet. He has no qualifications as a scientist or expert on forensic matters. Readers with internet access might like to look up the analysis by *Mannerings and Matley* which puts the value of the report into perspective. Marcel Matley is an American forensic document examiner. (The Internet reference is: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/marketingresearch/2179casement.htm>)

The longest piece was written by Brendan Clifford in 2002 on *Casement As Traitor-Patriot*. He writes: "*The use made of the Casement diaries was dishonourable. The forging of them would have been no more dishonourable*" (page 6). When one considers that at that time most people considered homosexuality a profound moral failing and that Casement was a famous individual with an influence on public perceptions then the Diaries had a general significance which they could not have today. They were a crucial pointer to his credibility in terms of how people then understood the world. So to forge such diaries was to crucially distort perceptions of the man and what he stood for. It was a classic case of concocted disinformation. Were the Diaries genuine, then it could be argued that the right to

privacy was over-ruled by the public's right not to be misled by a profoundly morally depraved individual. Such was the position in terms of the mentality of the times, however odd we may consider that mentality today. If we do not judge the actions of the British authorities in terms of the mentality of the times how can we judge them?

A theme running through the collection is the idea Nationalist Ireland has since Casement's execution been 'in denial' about the Diaries. This idea has been put forward by McCormack, Dudgeon and others. As Clifford points out it is difficult to be 'in denial' about something for which there is no evidence. The Home Office denied the very existence of the Diaries from the 1920s to the 1950s. They were not made open to the public without restriction until 1994. How should one believe in the authenticity of something when those most in a position to know about it are reluctant to confirm its very existence? The idea is absurd.

Clifford broaches the question of whether the undermining of Casement's reputation played a part in bringing the United States into World War One. Without the participation of the US there would have been no allied victory. The war would, in all likelihood have ended in 1917 in a stalemate. There would have been no Bolshevik revolution; no Third Reich and world history would have been radically different. He believes the US entered the war as it was in its interests to do so and whatever Casement's fate was, it would not have affected the final outcome. Casement was very passionately in favour of US neutrality. He was an icon of the movement which wanted that neutrality maintained. His disgrace cost that movement credibility and helped undermine it. A number of resolutions were passed by the US Senate seeking clemency for Irish political prisoners and for the commutation of his death sentence just before the execution. Before his fall from grace his name carried real weight. Yet, I am inclined to agree with Clifford. But, still a doubt remains. I am not aware that a full investigation of the effect of the Casement case on US public attitudes to neutrality in the Great War has been undertaken. Perhaps there is an opening here for some enterprising and intrepid researcher.

Something which biographers and others have disgracefully ignored is the matter of Casement's only published book, the series of articles entitled *The Crime Against Europe*, which pinned the

responsibility for the outbreak of the Great War on Britain. As Clifford writes:

“I have never seen an attempt to disprove the argument of his book on its own ground. I presume that anybody who read his book, and knew what the British government had been up to since about 1905, saw that challenging his book on its own ground would be a hopeless task because the argument was proved by events as well as documents revealed to later generations” (page 50).

In later pages he takes issue with the so called “forensic test” of 2002 which our Diary Dogmatists set so much store by. As he states a *forensic test* is a test which is capable of being presented at a court of law. “In this instance, all that happened is that a handwriting expert gave an opinion, for which she was privately paid” (page 64).

The term “forensic” has been recklessly bandied about. The reality is that no real *forensic tests* have ever been carried out on the physical documents known as the Black Diaries. Certainly, they have been examined. However, they have not been examined and reported upon to the level of the requirements of a court of law, such as to deem that examination *forensic*.

What I believe is required to put an end to the controversy is a fully comprehensive inter-disciplinary examination carried out by a panel of experts who have been given the time and resources to carry out their task to the highest standards.

Clifford does not share the optimism about whether the question of forgery can be ever resolved that I entertain. He admits he has not read closely *The Forged Casement Diaries* (1936) by W.J. Maloney. He does not appear fully informed about contradictions between Black Diary entries and attested Casement material.

I believe, the decidedly odd history of the Diaries, particularly in the early years, anomalies and absurdities in the text, the laboured appearance of some of the handwriting, the lack of Casement’s linguistic mannerism in the wording, evidence of erasure, and bizarre “restoration” work done on some pages all point in only one direction. The notion the Diaries are a hoax neatly explains all circumstances surrounding the case. Why then tie oneself up in knots trying to explain them as genuine when this requires a colossal juxtaposition of unlikely circumstances? The statistical chances of such a juxtaposition occurring in reality

is, conservatively speaking, in the order of hundreds of millions to one.

I have been asked, being one of those convinced the Diaries are bogus, why should I propose such an elaborate investigative procedure be undertaken. Why would one demand a matter to be investigated if one already knows the answer?

It should be stated that a lot of information on the matter is contained in books that are out of print or exists as part of the personal knowledge of various researchers scattered around the world. Were all this information to be placed in the public domain, one has the possibility of getting a handle on the subject. However, even then it would require close perseverant study to acquire an appreciation that the Diaries have been forged. There are too many powerful elements in the interlocked worlds of academia, media and intelligence with a prejudice against accepting the forgery thesis for such a presentation of the data to get a fair hearing, let alone be widely understood. A comprehensive forensic examination can provide answers which can not be blandly dismissed and which can be understood by the man in the street without recourse to intensive reading.

New technologies give the possibility of examining aspects of the Diaries in a non-invasive way which before was not before possible. I understand this may very likely open up exciting possibilities.

One recalls the case of Piltdown man where a skull purporting to be the ‘missing link’ between apes and humans was exposed as a hoax in 1953 using what were then new chemical techniques.

Of the two Diary Dogmatists, Dr W.J. McCormack steals the show in this collection. He is the subject of one article and crops up in four others. He has come to publicly represent the contention that the Diaries have been definitively certified as genuine. Indeed, if you take a look at his personal website www_billmccormack_ie you find a picture of him inspecting what is represented as “the Casement files”. With this there is a picture of his recent book *Roger Casement In Death*.

Clifford describes it:

“I have looked through Professor McCormack’s book and found it profoundly incoherent and ill-informed in the parts that I could judge” and

“His book is a tirade against Maloney in which facts are scattered about lavishly without regard to whether they are grain or chaff” (page 31).
One can only agree.

If the appearance of the website is a guide McCormack wishes to be uniquely identified with the so called “forensic test” and his subsequent related book.

I recall his performance at the Casement Foundation symposium of 2002 in Buswell’s Hotel, Dublin. He read a paper based on Maloney’s *The Forged Casement Diaries* published in 1936. It consisted of attacks on the personalities of the research team which assembled the data for the book. It did not deal with its substance and methodology in a meaningful way. Much heated reaction was provoked. He left suddenly, in a hurry, before the event was over.

He took part in an exchange of letters in the *Irish Times* in August and September last in which he again asserted his “forensic test” was definitive. Yet no letter appeared from him challenging the substance of my letter *Technical Examination Of The Casement “Black Diaries”* (reproduced at the end of the pamphlet) in which I took him to task. Nor did he challenge its substance in the pages of *Books Ireland* (December 2004), where he wrote a review of the two pamphlets here in view.

The *Books Ireland* review was a revelation. Brendan Clifford is described as propounding a Marxism based on the approach of Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, a man famed for making imaginative sketches of physically impossible structures. This Escher metaphor is then used to characterise Clifford’s views on British 1930s policy on Czechoslovakia and Poland. The idea appears to be that as the analysis lies outside the conventional then it must, by definition, recall Escher’s impossible structures. He trumps this brilliant observation by calling to his side “the bleeding obvious”. So, game set and match!

Yet, Dr McCormack, in dealing with the controversy he has stirred up, has a “Marxist” approach of his own well in hand. There is the wise-cracking bluff of Groucho Marx, the tough talking bluster of Chico, and, when called for, there is the discreet silence of the mute Harpo.

Tim O’Sullivan

Tim O’Sullivan is Secretary of the Roger Casement Foundation

An Cor Tuatail

...
Eoghan Rua " Sullivan
(1748-1784) wrote a number of comic Bar-ntais or Warrants in mock-legalistic jargon poking fun at the actual legal system which criminalised everything that moved. This verse taken from a long composition is unusual in that it contains three different languages but maintains the internal rhyming or assonance structure (usually found only in Irish) in all three languages.

Δ εἶγσε ἰς σὺαθὰ Σλέιβε Λυαχρα
(Barántas i scoinnib tuine éigin do fóid a hata)

...
As I am informed that pilfering roving
Rakes san dearmad,
Juris quoque contemptores,
Fé mar measaim-se,
Nightly strollers haunt these borders,
Déansió faire ceart
To apprehend son éisóaire pallasóicé feill
Den éisón-sprot cealzáic;

...
Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin

O poets and academicians of Sliabh Luachra

(A warrant against somebody who stole his hat)

...
As I am informed that pilfering roving
Rakes, without doubt,
Also despisers of the law,
As I judge the matter,
Nightly strollers haunt these borders,
Let a close watch be kept
To apprehend any idle, treacherous villain
Of vicious, deceitful kind;
...

No Remembrance Festival In France

Editorial Note: In Britain, Remembrance Day events can sometimes takes on the overtones of a festival, as was pointed out in the December 2004; in France things are very different.

On Saturday 13th November 2004, an article as scary as the one on young people being the audience for the British Legion's glorification of England's wars appeared in *The Independent*. It was on the film that cured France of collective amnesia. It concerned the success of *Un Long Dimanche de Fainçailles / A Very Long Engagement*, directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Apparently this successful film, seen by "More than 2.5 million French people" is "at the centre of a debate about why the country is so ignorant about the 1914-1918 war". Later in the article it is stated that "10 per cent of the working male population of the time" were killed in the Great War. This amounts to 1.4 million French dead as against 870,000 from the 'British' Expeditionary Forces—presumably this figure includes 'Commonwealth' and Empire dead as well as citizens of the United Kingdom. One would have thought that that was reason enough to disremember the 'war to end

war', and excuse the French from even fighting another round with Germany, in 1940, and save them from criticism for their surrender, when they had been comprehensively defeated by the latter. But the 'Anglo-Saxons' are not going to allow the French to forget an honourable surrender or the attempt to find a national consensus under 'Vichy'.

The scheme is, if only in this article, to attempt to get the French to take the same attitude to Remembrance as the English do. (The Scots and Welsh have always been more subdued about this sort of thing, and the Ulster Unionists have usually used it as just another sharpened stick with which to poke Fenians in the eye.) There are now only 15 Frenchmen left who fought in the Great War: none were fit to take part in the ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe. One of these men actually fought in the German army, being born in Alsace. Can anyone imagine the British

taking such an attitude to war 'remembrance'? This is usually attended by the President, but is "widely ignored", as is the Poppy-equivalent, the blue paper cornflower. France has *l'Office Nationale des Anciens Combatants et Victimes de Guerre* (Office for Veterans and Victims of War—presumably the latter refers to widows and dependents, and the war-disabled). The USA has a similar body, but the UK did not and does not. The British Legion was set up as an Old Comrades group, not unlike similar bodies in Germany, France, and Italy, which had strongly political overtones. It became less 'political' mainly because the London Government made it obvious that it was going to do nothing out of the ordinary for the veterans of its Great War (in keeping with the very little ever done for the veterans of its hundreds of comparatively small wars).

An element of this matter is the fact of "remembrance tourism" which brings in substantial amounts of money to Departments near the former British and Commonwealth and American sections of the Western Front. There is also the somewhat more presentable matter of the crude disposal of corpses by the above-named *l'Office*. When a farmer, Jean-Luc

Pamart, found eleven skeletons on his farm in 1999 he called them in. They shoved the sets of bones he had carefully arranged in what he hoped were their original composition into the back of a car—like sacks of coal or potatoes.

People were also embarrassed by being unable to talk to tourists about the battle fields, they simply did not know which armies had served in their area nor what the military names of their locality had been (Ridge 150 and the like). Other, younger, people began to wonder about the people behind the names read out by the local Mayor or Prefect at the village and town ceremonies on November 11th, a national holiday in France. This aspect of French ‘remembrancing’ is coming up from the people of the countryside. They uncover skeletons now and then. They also find bits of uniforms and equipment; M. Pamart found a makeshift chapel in a cave on his holding. Emile Desmons, the Mayor of a small town in what was the British sector of the Front, points out that the fields had to be got back into production after the War, “*The survivors of the war needed to eat*”.

This article, by Alex Duval Smith, ends with a run down of France’s wars of the twentieth century, the Second World War, the Algerian War and its role in the Rwandan genocide. Apparently the lack of discussion of these matters has been “*harmful*”, and France (presumably meaning the French people) have “*yet to reconcile the idea of remembrance with the pain of human loss*”.

It is difficult to understand what this means, it certainly does not describe the way official England commemorates the Great War. As noted above, we are expected to recall all of the wars fought since 1914. And the Festival of Remembrance, no matter what it might have been since the early 1920s, has since the early 1990s been a glorification of war. This article clearly looks forward to France being psychologically immobilised, in the way the ‘Anglo-Saxons’ have boxed-off Germany, by contemplating its own war record. A fly in the ointment (it is the size of an elephant) is that, when the French look at the Great War in particular, they may not react the way Mr. Duval Smith hopes. The fact that France’s (young) manhood was decimated and that the British Empire suffered vastly less in proportion (about 62% of France’s losses) will probably be the first thing to strike them. The next thing will probably be that England’s Empire swelled hugely after 1918: meaning the bits of the map coloured

pink. It also controlled all of Arabia and all of Persia / Iran, while France got comparatively little in terms of spoils.

In 1940, Hitler allowed the BEF (British Expeditionary Force—which was very small in the first place) to leave Dunkirk relatively unmolested. The French armies were surrounded, pinned between the Germans and their own Maginot Line. (And this fine mess had been created largely because England was intent on keeping France weak in mainland Europe and then discouraging the network of treaty-bound states from acting to contain Germany. In the 1930s England actually encouraged Germany to become powerful again, when it tried to pull the rug out from under Germany in 1939, it discovered that Germany was adept enough to avoid falling over.) The French government surrendered, for the time-honoured reason that its armed forces had been defeated (to be more precise, its land

and air forces had been defeated—England rubbed salt in the wound of defeat by sinking the French navy). If I were French, I would be inclined to blame England for some of this, rather than flagellate myself.

As for Algeria and Rwanda, they are not nice things to contemplate, but the British press is not in a position to condemn France for these adventures. When the war in Algeria was in progress there were very large sections of civil society in France passionately, and publicly, in opposition to the behaviour of the Government and the armed forces. There were riots on the streets of Paris involving the Left and the Catholics—how many riots were there in London about the treatment of Cyprus and EOKA, Kenya and the Mau Mau? There were, characteristically, riots about Viet Nam—somebody else’s war—but none about the dozens of wars fought by England since 1918.

Seán McGouran

Revisionist Chit-Chat

EDITORIAL NOTE: Patrick Maume made some remarks about Desmond Fennell on an American list service. They are reproduced below, together with a reply from Fennell.

FROM: PATRICK MAUME

Des Fennell gets less attention than he deserves (it’s odd that there is no entry on him in *THE Encyclopaedia Of Ireland*) but he is a very strange bunny. He has picked up a sort of European-conservative Kulturpessimismus which sees American mass culture as the source of all evil, draining life of meaning & based on sheer amoral power - this has taken him to the stage where he sees 9/11 as simply a response to American imperialism which could have been prevented if America would stop backing Israel. (See his essay on the subject in *Cutting To The Chase*.)

He has also written a history of the postwar world - *The Revision Of European History*, published by the former “two nationalists” at Athol Books with whom he has formed a bizarre alliance, where he declares Hiroshima worse than Auschwitz because unrepented, and declares that America’s unique evil is shown by its failure to unilaterally renounce nuclear weapons in the decades after 1945 without mentioning the nuclear capacity, or even the existence, of the Soviet Union. Rather a large omission in a history of the post-1945 world.) *Cutting To The Chase* also contains a darkly hilarious exchange with Mark Patrick Hederman over Fennell’s

denunciation of Seamus Heaney as a sell-out who wilfully chose to write elegant nullities aimed at American academics when he should have been putting his talents at the service of the glorious IRA freedom struggle. Hederman is correctly incensed by Fennell’s malevolent insinuations about Heaney’s personal motivation, and this leads him to misinterpret a perfectly valid point which Fennell makes about Hederman’s view that art and religious belief are essentially the same thing. Fennell points out that a great artist can be a flawed or evil person; Hederman thinks Fennell means he knows something discreditable about Heaney’s private life and is threatening to broadcast it to the world. Accordingly they spit fire at each other, with Hederman concluding by suggesting that library copies of Fennell’s Heaney pamphlet should be used for toilet paper. Such is the exalted nature of intellectual discourse on Planet Fennell. It’s a tragedy because he is genuinely intelligent and observant, but egotism has eaten him alive. Best wishes, Patrick

“IN RESPONSE TO RECENT MENTIONS”

Patrick Maume (02 Nov) finds it strange there is no mention of me in *The Encyclopaedia Of Ireland*. As I explain in the last paragraph of *Cutting To The Point* (Patrick refers to it as *Cutting To The Chase??*), that fine encyclopedia is marred by its ideologically selective and anti-thought treatment of the contemporary period. As a result - as I say in the paragraph cited - by being omitted from it I am in good company - Raymond Crotty, Thomas

Barrington, Anthony Coughlan, John Robb, Joe Lee and so on. Patrick says I get less attention than I deserve, but then, by a flippant, misrepresenting and mocking treatment of two or three of my publications, suggests that I do not in fact deserve attention! I am weird/funny.

Actually, he is continuing in the vein of John L Murphy (01 Nov.) who calls my study of an ACIS conference and of Irish Studies in the US 'typically entertaining and ranting' - and simply leaves it at that, quite unevincenced! In simple fact I am not a funny writer, but a serious thinker writing sober English. What is at work here in Patrick and John is an unfortunate habit of Catholic (ethnically speaking) Irish intellectuals when commenting on the work of an original thinker from their ethnic group. If it were a case of a French or English thinker saying the same things exactly, they would quote or fairly paraphrase, and either agree or present dissenting arguments. The writer in question could then counter-argue, and intellectual exchange would be occurring. But if the thinker is one of their own Irish kin, then the historical Master's Voice reminds them that 'Irish' and 'thought' are contradictory terms. What the ever-so-imaginative but thoughtless Celts excel in, and are continually engaged in, is *entertainment*. So it can only be a case of that. And it follows that the appropriate response to this

Celt's thoughtful discourse is either to laugh ha,ha, (to that the Celt has no comeback) or else to misrepresent what he has said in a way that makes it seem funny or absurd, and no counter-argument needed. To that treatment the Celt's only comeback (see below) is 'but I didn't say that, I said the following', and no intellectual exchange has taken place, only a disclaimer. It is because of this dual manner of treating original Irish thought in Ireland, especially in the last thirty years or so, that the country is now without any intellectual life and that original thinkers fall silent, die early or get out.

To illustrate the kind of misrepresentation I have referred to, I cite three examples from Patrick's letter. I have never used the phrase 'American mass culture', let alone said that it is 'the source of all evil'. In *The Revision Of European History* (2003) I do not say that 'Hiroshima was worse than Auschwitz because unrepented.' After saying 'Hiroshima founded American superpower and, with that, the subsequent history and continuing supremacy and prosperity of the West', I write: 'The contemporary West is not - despite our constant calling of them to

memory - built on Auschwitz and Treblinka, to which we have said "No". It is built on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to which we have said "Yes".'

Finally, in my 20,000-word pamphlet *Whatever You Say, Say Nothing: Why Seamus Heaney Is No. 1* (1991, in the US '94) - where I argue that Heaney is not a great poet, but a good minor one - I do not say 'he should have put his talents at the service of the glorious IRA freedom struggle' nor anything equivalent.

I welcome discussion and argument about my writing as the fuel of my working life. But then, if it is to happen, it must be about what I have written, mustn't it?

Desmond Fennell

(*Editorial Note:* Incidentally, John L. Murphy intervened in the encounter to emphasise his regard for Fennell's work.)

Letter to Editor

AMERANGLIA V. AMEROPE

Dear Editor

Your readers might be forgiven for needing a point of clarification regarding the view of the *Irish Political Review* of America's political makeup and its relationship with Europe and England. Your editorials have consistently referred to the *Ameranglian* joint venture in the world. Desmond Fennell categorises America's makeup and its relationship with Europe as constituting *Amerope* (IPR, Dec 2004). Desmond's view would lead to very different conclusions and as these issues are of some importance to Ireland's view of itself in the world they need clarifying.

Desmond presents us with an essentially sociological view of America. It was 'discovered' by Europeans, consists almost entirely of people from Europe, has inherited European ideas and is therefore Amerope. It is Europe overseas, Europe writ large. This is also the essential theme of his book, *The Revision Of European History*. It seems to me that, while all this is true, it omits enough to make the concept of Amerope unreal and almost meaningless. It flies in the face of the fact that America was made by Europeans who wanted to get away from Europe and create something new and different. It had a Revolution to effect this (which one could easily miss in Desmond's article) and, if left to its own devices, it would certainly have grown politically further and further away from Europe as it did in the 19th century.

Its real guiding political philosophy was that of the White Anglo-Saxon

Protestants (WASPS), self-consciously so—and this was certainly not a European concept. It was essentially English in origin and is a true Ameranglian phenomenon. An essential element was the systematic genocide of peoples over centuries. Not momentary crimes of passion such as what the French revolutionary terror was by comparison.

America was dragged back politically into Europe by England in a desperate bid to save itself from defeat in the World War it started in 1914 to destroy Germany and the Ottoman Empire. In the unexpectedly difficult process of doing this Britain put itself in hock to America so deeply that America had to save its client debtor much as a bank sometimes has to bail out their biggest debtors to have their debts repaid. America extricated itself from Europe after that war, but the process was repeated with knobs on in WWII.

The closer one gets to current politics the more Desmond's view breaks down. The EU was set up to be an alternative to the US and USSR. England opposed it tooth and nail. Because it could not beat it, it joined the Union—and has now effectively stymied it by playing its old balance of power game in a new way within the EU structure. The current Iraq war illustrates the relationships very well: the Ameranglian one is as real as the Ameropean one is unreal.

Jack Lane

Letter to Editor

Remembrance Day

Irish Political Review/NS December 2004 page 7 has a reprint of an article by Mary Holland, *Irish Times*, 14.11.1996, titled *Poppy Symbolism*. Holland said that the British public abandoned the two minutes silence in the 1920s. Others should feel free to correct me on this, but I think that I can recall from my childhood in Kent that British Railways trains would stop for 2 minutes at 11 AM on Armistice Day.

At Dulwich College we were required to wear poppies and observe two minutes silence en masse around the school's war memorial.

In a programme for a late 1980's London production of RC Sherriff's "Journey's End", I saw a quote, possibly from Robert Graves or Sherriff, that officers suffered twice the casualty rate (both deaths and injuries) as non-officers in the First World War. The high casualty rate for officers, in large part caused by lower-ranking officers being required to lead by example in trench warfare, eventually forced the British Army to recruit officers not just from 'recognised' "public schools" such as Dulwich College.

Robert Burrage

Major McDowell's Offer Of Assistance To Britain

Editorial Note: The letter below, published for the first time, is part of the English considered response to the offer of help, made by the Chairman of the Irish Times to Downing Street in 1969, and which was passed on to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office/Dublin Embassy to deal with. John Peck, mentioned in the letter, was a high-flying British diplomat and was to become Dublin Ambassador within six months. Kelvin White was the officer who conducted most of the day-to-day affairs on the Irish desk at the FCO.

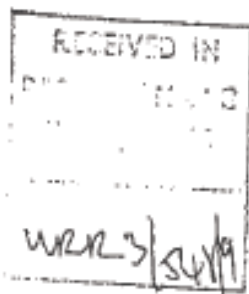
Apart from anything else, the letter confirms that this was not a matter between individuals. White wanted to absorb this into the administrative apparatus of the British State. In this letter and others what is impressive is the coherence of the British State.

RESTRICTED

Western European Department,

516

WRR3/548/9



23 October 1969

Thank you for your letter of 15 October, about Major McDowell of the Irish Times. I have spoken to John Peck, who is of course happy to help. I think the best course would be to pass on my name (and the Department's) which would be administratively convenient in serving as a point of contact, and to mention that John Peck and others would also be interested to meet Major McDowell. The exact composition of the party we would settle at the time, but we agree this should be kept as an informal gathering, limited to two or three on our side. We may of course ring the changes if the lunches become regular affairs.

(W. K. K. White)

HE Sir Andrew Gilchrist, KCMG,
DUBLIN.

RESTRICTED

The Irish Times Group

The Irish Times Group can be understood in terms of four entities:

- 1) The Irish Times Ltd.
- 2) The Irish Times Holdings.
- 3) The Irish Times Foundation Ltd.
- 4) The Irish Times Trust Ltd.

The Irish Times Ltd is the company

that produces the newspaper. As I have indicated in previous articles it is controlled by an Oath Bound Directory which exercises supervision over the editor of the newspaper.

THE IRISH TIMES HOLDINGS

The Irish Times Holdings owns all the ordinary shares in The Irish Times Ltd

and was the vehicle used to buy out the owners of The Irish Times Ltd in 1974. It did this by issuing preference shares amounting to 1,625,000 pounds to the Bank of Ireland. The money received from the Bank of Ireland was then handed over to the five ordinary shareholders: Major McDowell, Ralph and Phillip Walker, George Hetherington and Douglas Gageby.

However, in 1974 there was also 380,000 pounds of Irish Times Ltd Preference Shares dispersed among numerous individuals and entities. The

Irish Times Holdings bought all these shares at par by issuing its own Preference Shares. These Preference Shares were bought by the five former ordinary shareholders. Each of these had to pay 76,000 each and the 380,000 received by The Irish Times Holdings was paid to the Preference Shareholders in The Irish Times Ltd. It could be argued that The Irish Times Ltd Preference Shareholders were short changed because, unusually, they had votes as well as an entitlement to Preference Share Dividends.

The above might seem complicated. Maybe a simple way of looking at it is to say that the owners of The Irish Times Ltd (both the Ordinary Shareholders and Preference Shareholders) were bought out by The Irish Times Holdings. The Irish Times Holdings obtained the money to buy out these owners by borrowing from the Bank of Ireland (1,625,000 pounds) and from the former ordinary shareholders of The Irish Times Ltd (380,000 pounds).

THE IRISH TIMES FOUNDATION LTD

Effectively, The Irish Times Holdings was almost exclusively financed by borrowings and these borrowings were repaid in the 1980s. I said "almost exclusively" because The Irish Times Holdings issued ordinary shares amounting to 100 pounds. The vast bulk of these (87) were initially issued to The Irish Times Foundation Ltd and the remaining thirteen were eventually transferred to The Irish Times Foundation Ltd in January 1985. So The Irish Times Foundation Ltd owned 100% of the Irish Times Holdings from 1985 onwards.

The Irish Times Foundation Ltd is a company with no shareholders. Therefore it cannot pay dividends. Since it has owned 100% of The Irish Times Holdings since 1985 and the latter company has owned 100% of The Irish Times Ltd since 1974, all profits of The Irish Times Ltd have remained within the Group since 1985. The position is less clear in the period between 1974 and 1985 (see "The Irish Times Share Structure after 1974").

THE IRISH TIMES TRUST LTD

As I indicated in the article *The Irish Times Share Structure after 1974* the Ordinary Shareholders in The Irish Times Ltd (i.e. The Irish Times Holdings and ultimately The Irish Times Foundation Ltd) have no voting rights. Also since 1985 the entity which ultimately owned the newspaper (i.e. The Irish Times Foundation Ltd) has had no shareholders and therefore cannot pay dividends. Therefore the question of ownership of The Irish Times is of only academic importance. The real question is who controls it.

The entity which controls The Irish

Times is The Irish Times Trust Ltd. In 1974 it held 92% of the votes at General Meetings of The Irish Times Ltd. The remainder of the votes were held by individuals, many of whom were also Governors of The Irish Times Trust Ltd. It has also had the power to appoint Directors to the board of The Irish Times Ltd.

In conclusion, any analysis of the power structure of The Irish Times cannot avoid examining the relationship between The Irish Times Trust Ltd and The Irish Times Ltd. It is also necessary to understand the part played in both institutions by the enigmatic Major Thomas Bleakley McDowell.

John Martin

Has The DUP Accepted The Belfast Agreement?

The DUP became the largest Unionist party at the 2003 Assembly election on a platform of opposition to the Belfast Agreement. The Agreement was "*fatally flawed*", they said: a "*new*" Agreement was required. In a document published in 2003, entitled *Towards A New Agreement*, they set out what was wrong with it, and laid down principles and tests for a new one.

Their criticism of the old Agreement fell into two broad categories, first, the familiar Unionist objection that IRA decommissioning was not a pre-condition for Sinn Fein having Executive posts and, second, that departmental Ministers could make decisions contrary to the wishes of the Assembly, providing these decisions didn't require changes in the law.

Two famous examples of the latter are cited by the DUP in *Towards a New Agreement*:

"This unaccountable power enabled the Sinn Fein/IRA Health Minister to site maternity services, within her own constituency, at the Royal Victoria Hospital, even in the face of opposition from the Assembly Health Committee and a vote by the Assembly as a whole. Nevertheless, the Jubilee Maternity Hospital was closed and services transferred to the Royal. The Assembly was powerless to act to hold the Minister to account.

"With suspension of the institutions due to take place on the 14th October 2002, the Sinn Fein/IRA Minister of Education took executive action on 11th October 2002 to end the 11 plus examination. Neither the Assembly nor its Education Committee had agreed to the decision being taken" (page 12).

The ministerial authority to take these decisions is derived from paragraph 24 of the Belfast Agreement, which says:

"Ministers will have full executive authority in their respective areas of responsibility, within any broad programme agreed by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Assembly as a whole."

As the DUP wrote in *Towards a New Agreement*, this means:

"Under the Belfast Agreement Northern Ireland is therefore administered by autonomous Ministers who make decisions over their policy

areas within the budgetary levels granted by the Assembly. Each individual Minister can take any executive decision over the department he controls without recourse to or the consent of the Assembly. ...

"Devolution of power to Ministers rather than the Assembly creates undemocratic and unaccountable government where the will of a Minister representing less than 25% of the community can make important policy decisions unchecked and unfettered" (ibid, page 13).

This is true, but devolving power to Ministers rather than the Assembly is a fundamental aspect of the Agreement. It is there to prevent a Unionist majority in the Assembly overturning decisions of Nationalist Ministers at will.

The DUP concluded:

"The Belfast Agreement is not a democratic settlement. ... This situation must change" (ibid, page 13).

And the second of their seven tests stated emphatically that "*executive power must be fully accountable to the Assembly*".

Have the DUP achieved their goal in the proposals published jointly by the British and Irish Governments on 8th December 2004, and apparently agreed by all parties? They say so. The *Proposals* document contains in Annex E a statement the DUP had agreed to issue in the event of final agreement. This states boldly:

"During the Assembly election campaign we published policy papers and in our manifesto we set out seven Principles and seven Tests which would govern our negotiating stance. ... We believe our position in the talks and the outcome of the negotiations has been completely consistent with these mandated policies, principles and tests."

However, the DUP statement is noticeably reticent about how their demand that Ministers be accountable to the Assembly has been satisfied. Understandably so, because it hasn't: it is still the case that "*each individual Minister can take any executive decision over the department he controls without recourse to or the consent of the Assembly*"; the two Governments do not propose to change the original Agreement so that ministerial decisions can be countermanded by a vote of the Assembly.

In a real sense, therefore, the DUP has accepted the basic principles of the Belfast Agreement.

It is true, as we will see, that a new mechanism is proposed whereby what are described as “important ministerial decisions” may be referred from the Assembly for “review” by the Executive.

The proposed changes to the Agreement are described in Annex B of the Governments’ document, in some instances not very clearly. The implementation of these changes would require the amendment of the *Northern Ireland Act (1998)*, which put the original Agreement into law. Until this Act is amended—if it is ever amended—it will be impossible to be certain what these changes would mean in practice, and perhaps not even then.

What follows is an examination of the proposed changes to Strand One of the Agreement, that is, the Northern Ireland institutions. It should be regarded as a preliminary evaluation, based on the text in Annex B.

(Annex B also proposes changes to Strand Two and Strand Three, which are not examined here.)

ASSEMBLY REFERRALS FOR EXECUTIVE REVIEW

The mechanism for Assembly referrals of “important ministerial decisions” to the Executive is described in paragraph 6 of Annex B, which says:

“An amendment to the 1998 Act would provide for referrals from the Assembly to the Executive of important ministerial decisions. Thirty members of the Assembly might initiate such a referral, within seven days of a ministerial decision or notification of the decision, where appropriate. Before he could pass the referral to the Executive, the Presiding Officer, following consultation with the parties in the Assembly, would be required to certify that it concerned an issue of public importance. The Executive would consider the issue within seven days. A second referral could not be made by the Assembly in respect of the same matter. Only matters covered by the Ministerial Code, as set out above, would require a collective decision by the Executive.”

In the Assembly elected a year ago, the DUP itself has 33 Assembly members (30 elected plus 3 defections from the UUP). So, they could initiate this process on their own in respect of a decision by any Minister, including a UUP Minister. Sinn Fein, which has 24 members, would require the support of another party.

Clearly, the DUP could use this mechanism to engage in continual challenges to the decisions of Ministers other than their own. But, whether these or other challenges reach the Executive depends on the rules to be applied by the Presiding Officer to decide whether the

decision in question “concerned an issue of public importance”. Presumably, those rules will be laid down in legislation, and presumably the legislation will seek to limit these referrals.

But what happens if the Presiding Officer refers a ministerial decision to the Executive for consideration? Can the Executive overturn a ministerial decision? The answer to that appears to be in principle YES, but in practice such an event would be very rare, given the political makeup of the present and any conceivable future Assembly.

I assume that a ministerial decision referred to the Executive would stand unless the Executive passed a resolution overturning it. That would be difficult to achieve given the following:

“There would be arrangements to ensure that, where a decision of the Executive could not be achieved by consensus and a vote was required, any three members of the Executive could require it to be taken on a cross-community basis” (Annex B, para 3).

This rule, which wasn’t in the original Agreement, means that, for example, Sinn Fein would be able to bloc any attempt by the DUP to overturn a decision of a Sinn Fein, or any other, Minister, if an Executive were formed from the present Assembly.

Presumably a similar safeguard as applies in the Assembly on contentious matters, which are subject to a special vote under Article 5.d.ii of the Belfast Agreement, would then apply:

“(ii) or a weighted majority (60%) of members present and voting, including at least 40% of each of the nationalist and unionist designations present and voting.”

But it must be assumed that in such a cross-community vote in the Executive a majority of each designation, and not, for example, merely 40%, would be required to carry a resolution. This is not made clear in paragraph 3.

The present Assembly has a 59-strong Unionist bloc (33 DUP, 24 UUP and 2 others) and a 42-strong Nationalist bloc (24 Sinn Fein and 18 SDLP). This means that the DUP will nominate the First Minister and Sinn Fein the Deputy First Minister, and the 10 departmental ministries assigned by the d’Hondt process would give 4 to the DUP, and 2 each to the UUP, Sinn Fein and the SDLP. (Without the defection of 3 UUP members to the DUP, the DUP and the UUP would each have had 3 ministries). Overall, therefore, and including the First and Deputy First Ministers, the DUP will have 5 members of the 12-member Executive, Sinn Fein 3, the UUP 2 and the SDLP 2.

On its own, therefore, Sinn Fein is in a position to bloc any potential Executive

decision (a) because it has the 3 members that are sufficient to require a “cross-community” vote on the Executive, and (b) because its 3 members represent a majority of the 5 Nationalist members and are therefore in a position to stop the passing of any motion before the Executive, even if the 2 SDLP members vote in favour of the motion.

In theory, it would be possible for decisions of UUP Ministers to be overturned by a vote of the Executive, since on its own the UUP with 2 members has insufficient strength to require a “cross-community” vote (and is also a minority in the Unionist bloc). However, if the DUP were to attempt to overturn such a decision, Sinn Fein would have to acquiesce for the decision to be overturned. This is an unlikely eventuality. In theory, the decisions of SDLP Ministers could also be overturned by the DUP with the acquiescence of Sinn Fein.

STATUTORY MINISTERIAL CODE

Another proposed change is potentially relevant to ministerial ability to take executive decisions. This is the introduction of a statutory Ministerial Code (see paragraphs 3-5 of Annex B). This is to be drawn up by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister after an Executive is formed—which may provide another opportunity for the process to be stalled—and must be approved by the Assembly on a cross-community vote.

Paragraph 3 says:

“The 1998 Act would be amended to require inclusion in the Code of agreed provisions in relation to ministerial accountability.”

It goes on to list the matters to be decided collectively by Ministers in the Executive, which it says would be a forum for:

- “(i) the discussion of, and agreement on, issues which cut across the responsibilities of two or more Ministers, including in particular those that are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance and Personnel;
- (ii) prioritising executive proposals;
- (iii) prioritising legislative proposals;
- (iv) recommending a common position where necessary—for instance, on matters which concern the response of the Northern Ireland administration to external relationships;
- (v) agreement each year on (and review as necessary of) a programme incorporating an agreed budget linked to policies and programmes (Programme for Government);
- (vi) discussion of and agreement on any issue which is significant or controversial and is clearly outside the scope of the agreed Programme for Government or which the First Minister and Deputy First Minister agree should be brought to the Executive.”

Matters (i) to (v) are an accurate reflection of paragraphs 19 and 20 of the original Agreement, which, according to Section 20(3) of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*, define the functions of the Executive.

But, both aspects of (vi) are new. However, it is not obvious that (vi) represents a major extension of what can be placed on the agenda of the Executive. For example, does the first part of (vi) go further than a review of the agreed Programme of Government, which is already allowed for in (v)? And, it doesn't seem unreasonable to allow a matter to be put on the agenda of the Executive, if the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister agree that it should be.

(Strangely, there is no specific mention in this list of the Executive being obliged to consider "referrals" passed on by the Presiding Officer from the Assembly.)

Presumably, Section 20(3) of the Act will be amended to reflect the addition of (vi). Until that is done, it is difficult to judge the degree to which this represents an extension of the functions of the Executive, with the potential to infringe upon the sovereignty of Ministers within their own departments.

However, even if what can be placed on the agenda of the Executive is marginally extended, as we have noted earlier, the cross-community voting mechanism severely restricts the degree to which Ministers' sovereignty can be overridden in practice by the Executive.

One thing is certain: the Assembly will not be able to countermand ministerial decisions that do not involve legislation, and the DUP's complaint that under the original Agreement "each individual Minister can take any executive decision over the department he controls without recourse to or the consent of the Assembly" will continue to be operative.

Assembly Approval Of Ministers IN THE EXECUTIVE.

The method of choosing the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister is to be changed. The largest Unionist party would nominate the First Minister and the largest Nationalist party will nominate the Deputy First Minister (unless there are more Nationalist Assembly members than Unionist Assembly members, in which case the roles would be reversed). Then the departmental members will be chosen as before using the d'Hondt procedure. The whole Executive has then to be approved by a majority of Unionist Assembly members and a majority of Nationalist Assembly members (see Annex B, paragraph 9).

(Previously, only the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister were subject to such approval by the Assembly.)

This Assembly "vote of confidence" in the Executive is bolstered by the following proposal:

"No minister would be allowed to remain in the Executive if he or she had not voted in favour of the Executive Declaration [to approve the Executive], and if the nominating officer of his or her party did not nominate another MLA [Assembly member] who had done so, d'Hondt would be re-run excluding that party." (Annex B, paragraph 9)

So, parties with a sufficiently large number of seats to gain Ministers by the d'Hondt procedure have very little option but to vote to approve the Executive.

OTHER STRAND ONE CHANGES

Amendments are proposed to the Pledge of Office for Ministers, which is laid down in Schedule 4 of the 1998 Act. Ministers would now be required to "participate fully in the Executive and North South Ministerial Council/British Irish Council" and to "observe the joint nature of the office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister" (Annex B,

paragraph 8).

The first requirement would prevent the kind of opting out from the North South institutions that DUP Ministers engaged in previously.

The *Northern Ireland Act (2000)* is to be repealed, so it will no longer be possible to suspend the institutions (Annex B, paragraph 13)—unless Westminster passes another Act allowing suspension.

The *Northern Ireland Act (1998)* is to be amended so that Assembly members can no longer change their designation (as Unionist, Nationalist or Other) within an Assembly term, except when they change party membership (Annex B, paragraph 14). In November 2001, a number of Alliance Assembly members as well as a Women's Coalition member re-designated themselves temporarily as Unionist (instead of Other) in order to get David Trimble re-elected First Minister, when there wasn't a majority in the actual Unionist bloc for his re-election. This will no longer be possible.

David Morrison

Reply To A Reader

The following paragraph appeared in the editorial of our September issue:

"Orr made his statement after Gerry Kelly and his colleagues had stood between his policemen and nationalists who were attacking them in Ardoyne on the famous 11th Night, the night before July 12th. "Thank heavens they were there", said the Chief Constable, after Kelly had incurred injuries from police (a broken wrist) and from nationalists (bruises) while protecting the coercive apparatus of the State."

We have received a very long and very angry letter denouncing us for getting the date wrong. Gerry Kelly protected the police from the nationalist mob on July 12th itself and not during the anticipatory Orange celebrations of the 11th. Having corrected us about the date, our correspondent continues: "...The fact that the writer could not contain his passionate hatred of Ulster Protestants led him to report events in a completely distorted manner."

It is of course a serious matter that we got the date wrong. We can only plead in excuse that anybody who has experienced July 11-12th in Belfast will be likely to recall them as a continuum because the Twelfth begins in practice on the 11th. But our report of the incident differs from that supplied by our correspondent only in being free of the vituperation.

Many pages of denunciation follow,

but, since the conviction of our correspondent is such that he insists on anonymity, we will not publish them. The burden of it is that we used to be Unionists but have changed sides; that we used to say there was provocation preceding the watershed events of August 1969 but we no longer say so; that we now publish biased accounts of Israel's actions while denying "the reality of mass murder, rape, ethnic cleansing and slavery" engaged in by Muslims; and that "the Poles are no longer held in such high esteem by Mr. Clifford" as they used to be.

Here are samples from the letter:

"Ulster unionists would not accept an all Ireland state on any terms... Unless you are prepared to openly advocate the application of... superior force you may as well forget about an all Ireland state."

We reported that the International Court condemned Israel for building a wall ghettoising the West Bank, "but did not see fit to comment on the fact that the court was presided over by a judge from the People's Republic of China", which "has committed genocide" in Tibet.

The Poles defeated "the Ottoman hordes" at the gates of Vienna in 1683, and that is why we are now hostile to them. But it is not true to say that they never revolted against Soviet rule, because Solidarity revolted.

"The Ottoman Empire... was not a haven of tolerance at any time during its existence..."

"The Arabs of Palestine have a choice of

about twenty other Arab states in which to live if they find Israeli rule to be unbearable..." *etc. etc. etc.*

REPLY:

The writer seems to have been following our publications obsessively but without understanding for a very long time. Our view for more than thirty years has been that the conflict which is endemic to Northern Ireland cannot be resolved within Northern Ireland because Northern Ireland is not a State and therefore cannot be a democracy. The forms of politics which are considered normal for a democratic state can only develop within the political life of a state. Northern Ireland is not itself a state nor is it part of the political life of the British State. The two possible States into whose political life Northern Ireland might be dissolved are Britain and Ireland. Thirty years ago Britain appeared to be the more suitable state, and not only because it was the State which held Northern Ireland. It was then a state with an apparently strong socialist movement and with corporate social arrangements of which a well-organised Trade Union movement formed an integral part. Within the large Catholic minority of Northern Ireland, which could have no worthwhile part to play in its politics, there was a wide stratum which concerned itself actively with the socialist life of the British state though it was excluded from it. We launched a cross-community movement for the inclusion of Northern Ireland within the operations of the British Labour Party (Campaign for Labour Representation). When the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement shocked the Unionist community to the core we extended it to the British *party-system*, thus providing for Protestants of more conservative inclination (the Campaign for Equal Citizenship).

Considerable pressure was exerted on both the Tory and Labour Parties. Protestants were brought to the fore of both the CLR and the CEC: Kate Hoey and Robert McCartney. But when both movements were developing strongly, and Catholic support was forthcoming, provided they were conducted without Union Jackery and exhibitionist Royalism, both of these leaders succumbed to the pressure of Unionist communalism, and retreated into the comfort of what was called the Unionist Family, meaning the Protestant community.

Meanwhile the socialist movement in Britain, having baulked at the workers' control proposals of the Royal Commission conducted by Lord Bullock in the late 1970s, collapsed in the face of Thatcher's offensive in the 1980s. The corporate structure of Britain was destroyed. The Trade Union movement went into severe recession. Socialism evaporated from British society. The Labour Party remade itself into a Thatcherite party. And the jingoistic imperialism, which had been in decline in

the Wilson/Heath era, revived powerfully in the Thatcher/Blair era. This drastic alteration in the character of British politics naturally reduced its gravitational pull on the Catholic community in Northern Ireland.

The Irish State underwent a change of a very different kind during this period. The features of it to which Protestants took reasonable exception diminished. The excessive influence of the Catholic Church was curbed. Economic enterprise, which according to the historical stereotype was a hallmark of Protestantism, suddenly flourished amongst Catholics in Ireland while it declined in the Ulster Protestant community. And corporate arrangements in economic life (the Social Partnership) were enhanced in the Republic while they were being dismantled in Britain. The Trade Unions hold a position in public life in the Republic today comparable to that which they held in Britain thirty years ago.

Now it might be that these Unionist objections to association with the South were only debating points. But they were the debating of Unionist Ulster, not only against Irish independence but against Home Rule under Westminster supervision as part of the Empire. Rome Rule and Economic Backwardness—that was the case against Home Rule 90 years ago, and it was the Stormont litany throughout the period Northern Ireland was pseudo-autonomous. Well, both have gone. And, once they went, it appeared that they had nothing to do with the matter.

McGimpsey said recently that Unionism is genetically inscribed in Protestants. (Biological politics is much in fashion among self-consciously Protestant ideologists North and South these days.) If that is the case, then politics has nothing to do with it. The genes are beyond the reach of policy. Lysenkoism has been universally rejected by biologists. The genes are held to be eternal and unchanging. And, if Protestants are genetically programmed to reject an Irish State, regardless of political circumstances, then policy becomes irrelevant. And, while we cannot agree with that view of the matter, we cannot say that it is a view which is empirically refuted by the experience of thirty-five years. But that experience would also be compatible with the idea of genetic programming against the democratic political life in the British State. It was Unionism that brought our efforts to nothing in that regard.

But, if it is accepted as being the case that Ulster Protestants are unalterably committed against an Irish State—even in the vestigial form of Home Rule within the UK—that is not the end of the matter. It does not mean that, because they are a majority in the region carved out for them by the British ruling Coalition of 1920, the set-up which they were given to dominate can be described

as democratic. Carson, who rejected that set-up on their behalf in 1920 (and who retired from the Ulster Unionist leadership when it was carried through), was not one of them. And, when the set-up was put in place, it was accepted, and treasured, by the Ulster leadership—although Craigavon, who was almost British, knew that normal life was impossible within it and therefore discouraged politics as such.

Catholics formed a much larger proportion of the non-state of Northern Ireland than Protestants did in Ireland. If it was intolerable that 25% of Protestants should come under an Irish State, or even a devolved Home Rule government, why was it tolerable that 33% of Catholics should come under Protestant sub-government in a region which was not a state and which was cut off from the political life of the State?

There was easy access to the political life of the state in the Republic for Protestants who could overcome their culturally inherited distaste for mixing with the natives as equals, and themselves becoming native. There have been Protestant Ministers in 26 County Governments from the start, and two of the eight Presidents have been Protestants. But there was never a Northern Ireland Catholic either in the Stormont sub-government during the glorious half-century, or in the Government of the State. They could not be in the former because Northern Ireland was run by the Protestant/Unionist communal bloc, and they could not be in the latter because Northern Ireland was excluded (by Britain) from the system of party politics which is the mode of existence of British democracy. (The purpose of this exclusion was to enable Britain to utilise the inevitable communal conflict generated by the Northern Ireland system as leverage on the internal political life of the Republic: that is the conclusion arrived at through long and close experience.)

The role allocated to Catholics in the Northern Ireland system of communal dominance was to put up with it quietly, perhaps whingeing a bit, and to do nothing. It is not surprising that they chose to do something else. The system reinforced their coherence as a community. And they were a large enough minority to be able to aspire to become the majority by means of what is called demography—demography being what politics consisted of in Northern Ireland. (We neglected to notice the passing away of Harry West some time ago. Political activity in Harry's constituency in Fermanagh consisted of Protestant and Catholic Electoral Registration Societies, and Harry's routine speech to his Unionist constituents consisted of an exhortation to breed early and breed often.)

Our bashful critic apparently understood our position during the eighties and nineties as being Unionist. We knew that even some

people who were active in our campaigns thought it was a kind of smart Unionism, no matter how clearly we said that our concern was that the region should be democratised as part of one or other of the states, and they were astonished when they found that we meant what we said. When we came to the conclusion that democratisation within the British state was made impossible by fundamental opposition to it of the Unionist Family and by Whitehall's ulterior motives, we abandoned those campaigns—and those who thought they could take them up and conduct them as smart Unionism found that they couldn't.

At the very outset, in 1969-70, we discussed these things with people who were in the process of forging the new Republican movement. Their view was that we were undertaking an impossible project because we did not really understand what Ulster Unionism was. Events proved them right, but we do not regret putting the matter to the test.

We did not go over to a Sinn Fein position in the early 1990s. We had said all along that we recognised the Sinn Fein object as the only coherent alternative to ours. All that was possible within the Northern Ireland framework was the conflict of communities. Unionism stood for Protestant dominance in that context. Sinn Fein, while representing the Catholic community, was not a counterpart of Unionism, because its object was to bring Northern Ireland within the organic life of a state as a precondition of political normalisation.

As to the events of 1968-9, we took no part in the Civil Rights confrontations. There were certainly attempts at provocation by elements of what largely became Official Republicanism and by people associated with the *New Left Review*. Some of the latter, having stirred up trouble, withdrew to the safety of Britain after their tactics had helped to bring the house down. The 'Officials' waged a lunatic war for a couple of years before going through a series of transformations which eventually led to their becoming gurus to the Progressive Unionist Party. They certainly helped to precipitate the events of August 1969. But those events were not merely an "outbreak of communal violence", and we never said communal conflict was "caused" by those provocations. Communal conflict was built into the structure of the "Northern Ireland state". And what happened in 1969 in Belfast was not mere communal conflict, but the participation of the apparatus of state in a communal rampage. The Sinn Fein movement of the present day, the 'Provisional' movement, was formed as a result of that rampage. The "Official Sinn Fein", which made some contribution to bringing about those events, is ultra-respectable today, and it uses its media influence to conceal its history. No doubt we should mention all of these things all the

time. But it becomes tedious.

On the other points. The Ulster Unionist identification with Israel, which at the extreme leads to the Star of David appearing alongside the Swastika, in graffiti, is a phenomenon of recent decades, and signifies an absurd regression towards a Plantation mentality. The thing about the International Court is that it is international and not Anglo-American. And, if Chinese government in Tibet is to be described as genocide, it is at least different in kind from the thorough genocide enacted by Anglo-America. The USA would not exist but for comprehensive multiple genocide. The principle behind the suggestion that the Palestinians should clear out to make way for the Jewish conquest—how might that be applied in Ireland?

The Solidarity movement in Poland did not revolt. If it had done so, there would have been direct Soviet occupation. It pushed at the limits of what was tolerated. General Jaruzelski warded off Soviet occupation by

holding the ring at a critical moment, and keeping Poland functional as a subversive pressure on the Soviet system. That was "Mr. Clifford's" analysis at the time, and the subsequent course of events did not disprove it. And Clifford also suggested that, when the Poles regained political independence, they would probably conduct their affairs as badly as they had done in the past—whether between the wars or in the 18th century—so it was no surprise when they joined in the destruction of Iraq.

The point about the "Ottoman hordes" at Vienna is one that we first saw in *The Irish Catholic* a few years ago.

And it simply is a historical fact that Jews and Jewish culture flourished in the Muslim world during the many centuries of European Christian anti-Semitism. Present-day Muslim hostility to Jews is the consequence of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine as part of British Imperial policy after 1918. ●

LETTER TO EDITOR

2NT And The Neo-Con/Revisionist Agenda

On reading Brendan Clifford's and Jack Lane's material on Mansergh and the distortion of the Two Nations Theory I was reminded of the argument on why the Gaelic speakers of Connemara, Donegal and Kerry, or the Gaels of Western Scotland, had never declared themselves to be separate nations, although they met the criteria. The answer was that neither saw themselves as being of a different nationality from the English-speaking Irish, or Scots. However, differences do exist between the Highland and Lowland Scots and the 'Culchies' and "Jackeens", but those differences were relatively minor when compared to the differences between the Ascendancy crowd and the rest of us. When Foster wrote about that Prod woman abusing the Republican lad for smoking while collecting money for Sinn Fein he did so to underline the class differences that existed between the working class republicans and his bourgeois audience.

The Ascendancy mob actively suppressed the Irish by military force. They had been confiscating economic and political power, ever since Elizabethan times if not earlier. This mistreatment was encouraged by the British authorities and became a way of life. The tendency accelerated from Cromwell's time onwards and accelerated after 1689 through the use of the Penal Laws.

In an article in *The Best Of Myles* and originally published in the *Irish Times*, Flann O'Brien accused a titled Landlord type of being a member of the Black and Tans, most probably this was an accurate assessment. Some Ascendancy types were also terrified of 'sinking to the level of the peasantry'. These were probably the types who fled Ireland with the landlords after 1921. However there were others who hung in

there, in a state of permanent hostility in the hope that eventually, Ireland would be forced back under UK domination, a sort of second, or even a third, reconquest of Ireland? That's where the revisionists are coming from. I cannot say why they have managed to crawl out of the woodwork in recent years, but they are now definitely attempting to effect the reconquest.

Still I would not place them in the same category as the NI Prods despite Mansergh's condemnation of the Two Nation theory. There used to be a tendency among some NI Prods to boast that they would eventually take over 'the South'.

Most of those who left, for whatever reason, seem to have simply given up on the idea of reconquest, if they ever thought about it in the first place. I have met Irish Prods in Oz, who claimed to be proud to be regarded as members of the Irish Nation and insisted that they were genuinely Irish, but I have also met another type, those continuously denigrate the Republic, not because of its inadequate social welfare or poor working conditions. That lot are simply hostile to the whole concept of a separate Irish state. They are a tiny minority in Oz. I even know a man whose father served with the British army in Ireland, but who is now strongly supportive of the IRA and Sinn Fein.

I understood the Two Nations theory as being an explanation of why two groups of people, allegedly belonging to the same nation, who were so eager to fight each other to the death of the question of national sovereignty. I took the 2NT as aimed specifically at those nationalists who blindly claimed that we were One Indivisible Irish Nation which they definitely were not. Those Irish were just as bigoted and racist and given to branding as

continued on page 21

McCreevy continued

a lot closer to Boston than to Berlin” (Irish Examiner, 30.7.2004).

THR ‘REAL’ MCCREEVY ?

“The Irish should be proud of themselves for voting NO to Nice, Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy said yesterday.

“Speaking at the EU summit in Gothenburg, he described the rejection of NICE, against all the might of the establishment, as a healthy and positive development.

“...He said it was a remarkably healthy development that the plain people of Ireland ignored the advice of the political establishment, the media and the various lobby groups, and voted NO.

“Speaking as an old fashioned 60s liberal, I thought it was a very healthy sign that here is a country, despite all the advice, people did what they wanted to do.

“There is no point criticising the Irish people. It’s their democratic decision. For 700 years we did not take lying down too easily and the result of the referendum can be looked at as a positive thing”, Mr. McCreevy said.

“The Minister said the democratic views of the people should be accepted. ‘We are a sovereign nation and should be proud of ourselves.’

“He warned against taking the view that the Government knows best” (Irish Examiner, 16.6.2001).

HUNGRY TIGERS !

To listen to some you would think it was McCreevy who created the Celtic Tiger! But the Tiger had cut his teeth well

before McCreevy became Minister for Finance.

In the four years preceding his first budget, gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged just under nine per cent per annum.

“Indeed, if the overall performance of the economy were the criterion for assessing a Finance Minister’s performance, Ruairi Quinn would have to be declared a better one. On Mr. Quinn’s watch, GDP increased almost 10 per cent per annum and gross national product (GNP) by nearly nine per cent, compared with the average growth rates of around seven per cent and five and a half per cent respectively that McCreevy will have presided over.

“Of course, this is a ridiculous basis for comparing the records of different finance ministers. The remarkable growth rates achieved by the economy during the 1990s owed much to policies and institutions put in place over the previous several decades. It was also due in no small measure to favourable external developments over which the Government had no control: a buoyant US economy; the global high-tech boom; declining international interest rates; positive currency movements and so on. That doesn’t leave a whole lot for an Irish finance minister to legitimately lay claim to, except his stewardship of the public finances—in particular his decisions about public spending and taxation” (Jim O’Leary, Irish Times, 30.7.2004).

“Mr. McCreevy’s detractors have painted him as a right-wing ideologue possessed of a Scrooge-like parsimony when it came to public spending. Well, if he was such, he was also remarkably

unsuccessful in persuading his cabinet colleagues to adopt the same stance. During his seven-year stewardship, Exchequer capital spending will have risen at the impressive rate of almost 20 per cent annually with the ratio of such spending to GNP increasing from 3.7 per cent to 6.1 per cent, its highest level since the mid-1980s” (ibid.).

WALL STREET

The prestigious US business newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, ran an editorial under the heading *Ireland’s Political Sacrifice* and said Bertie Ahern was putting Europe ahead of his country by sending his ‘best minister’ to Brussels as Ireland’s next EU Commissioner. The editorial continues:

“Mr. McCreevy’s arrival is good news for the EU. For the past seven years, he has steered Europe’s most dynamic economy. His supply-side economics of cutting taxes and reining in government spending have given Ireland an average growth rate of eight per cent a year. In that time, unemployment has fallen by two-thirds”.

In a thundering climax, it concludes:

“Whether Europe benefits from Mr. McCreevy’s arrival depends on the portfolio new Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso assigns him.

“While Europe’s big countries want the big jobs for themselves, Mr. Barroso has insisted he’ll appoint his team based on achieving his stated aims of increased economic growth and competitiveness.

“If he really means that, Mr. McCreevy should be at the head of the line for one of the plum assignments”

Remarkably, the editorial ends with a one-word sentence: *Amen.* ●

were their NI Prod counterparts. For me the Two Nations theory provided a logical explanation of what the hell was going on in Wet Belfast and Derry. In 1969 Northern Prods came to me and offered their apologies for those pogroms. They knew exactly what was happening.

But the revisionists are something very different. They do not accept the Irish Nation and deny the validity of the struggle for self determination. They claim that the Irish State is illegitimate. They also reject the Treaty State no less than the de Valera version of the Irish State. However those Irish who support the Treaty State appear to be too stupid to recognize the threat that the revisionists pose to the whole concept of an Irish state. It is an interesting thing to note that Duffy and his Blue Shirts were just as hostile to British control of the North and the British state generally as were DeValera’s republicans. However Fianna Fail people always appeared to me to be more steadfastly pro-Irish, and anti-British than were the Fine Gael crowd. As far as I know the Blue Shirts were never Pro-British although they had supported the Treaty, but I could be wrong about their leadership. My take on the Blue Shirts was that they were Pro-

German, but so were some of the republicans.

Without being too imaginative it seems to me that the Irish revisionists are part of a whole wave of neo-liberal, neo-conservative ideologies that have developed in Britain, the US and Australia since the end of the Cold War. This ideology is based on Margaret Thatcher’s assertion that, “there is no such thing as society - there are individual men and women and their families.” In Oz there is the Institute of Public Affairs and related groups. The Americans have a similar group called the Institute of Economic Affairs. They are all linked financially and organizationally to an international neo-conservative movement, the objective of which is “to keep democracy in its place, to regard it as an activity of limited application”, to quote one of its main proponents in Australia. They vary their targets from country to country. Obviously the democratic decision of the First Dail to set up an independent Irish state contravenes the ideology of this neo conservative group, so they set out to undermine the whole concept of an independent Irish state. They are hostile to all forms of democracy, socialism and old liberalism. Being anti-democratic they oppose any group that advocate the extension of democratic rights,

either nationally or internally. They support Zionism and defend the Israeli assault on the Palestinians. In Oz they attack the concept of equality for the Aboriginal people and deny the fact that they were dispossessed, or massacred. They systematically attack the Australian Broadcasting Corporation because of its independence, and they revise history by denying that the Australians acted as running dogs for British imperialism. It is therefore hardly surprising that the pseudo Irish lot attack the Irish struggle for independence. Although the subject matter of their attacks vary from country to country the general thrust of their ideology is the same.

Out here they are shunned by academia. Consequently the universities have also become their targets. They manage to recruit a few academics whom they boost with wide publicity. Recently we had what was called “the History Wars” which were aimed at revising the history of the brutal conquest of this country.

I know it all sounds like an old fashioned conspiracy theory, but it still exists...

Patrick O’Beirne
Australia

McCreedy continued

public remark about “right-wing economists” and their alleged lack of knowledge of the real world in which people live.

“*The McCreedy legacy of low corporate, personal and capital taxation does not need changing and is arguably the reason for the country’s roaring economic success over the past seven years*” (Conor Lenihan, TD, Evening Herald, 22.7.2004).

“Some of those around the Taoiseach argued strongly that the departure of Mr. McCreedy was an absolute requirement if a shift in the public perception of the party was to be orchestrated. Mr. McCreedy insisted last night that the Taoiseach had put him under no pressure to take the Brussels job, and that he believed had he said no, he would have remained as Minister for Finance for the next couple of years.

“But the legacy of the McCreedy era is that a core economic outlook, once seen as right-wing and somewhat extreme, has become accepted as the mainstream approach. With the support of the Progressive Democrats and a few like-minded Ministers within Fianna Fail, they have driven a tax-cutting, privatisation deregulating regime.

“They have successfully convinced the public that their arrival in Government led to the boom, although the economy was powering ahead from 1994, while the first FF/PD tax cuts only took effect in 1998. In addition it was a Labour Party Minister for Finance, Ruairi Quinn who successfully argued with the European Commission to agree the 12.5 per cent Corporation Tax rate, which the McCreedy/PD axis says is at the heart of its distinctive outlook.

“Through all this, the Taoiseach has protested that he is left of centre. But in Europe, the Government is accepted as a right of centre neo-liberal one. Indeed, the only reason why Mr. Ahern was such a serious contender for the European Commission Presidency was because it was the turn of the centre-right to hold the post. The Government’s record ensured that he, like the new Commissioner, Mr. Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, the former Portuguese Maoist, was a candidate of the centre-right.

“Now it remains to be seen whether there will be a significant attempt within Fianna Fail to adopt a more populist, higher-spending approach. If there is such an attempt, serious tension over policy would be likely to emerge between Fianna Fail and the PDs for the first time since 1997” (Irish Times, 21.7.2004).

THE BANKERS’ FRIEND

“Business and finance organisations last night praised Charlie McCreedy’s control of the public purse, and mourned his loss as he prepared to take up his new post as European Commissioner” (Irish Independent, 21.7.2004).

The consensus was that, with a few individual complaints, he had presided over Ireland’s strongest economic period in history.

“Turlough O’Sullivan, director general of IBEC, said: “Charlie McCreedy has been one of the best ministers for finance. He has kept public finances in order and presided over substantial reductions in personal and corporate tax.

“He made a major contribution in improving the incentive to work, and encouraging people to engage in enterprise activity, and IBEC wishes him every success in his important new role in the EU”

“David Went, chief executive of Permanent TSB, said “While we didn’t always agree with everything the minister did, particularly with the introduction of the bank levy in the Budget a number of years ago, we would recognise that his stewardship of the economy was exceptionally strong”

“Jim Curran, head of research at ISME, said that with the exception of a black mark for benchmarking, Charlie McCreedy scored an ‘A’ from his organisation.

“He reduced taxation generally with the exception of the past two years... He also refused to comply with the regular demands from other government ministers to open the purse strings, invariably having to keep some form of control on public spending”

“Pat Delaney, director of the Small Firms Association said: “He will be a huge loss, there is no doubt about that, and leaves a great legacy behind him.

“Corporation tax went down by 70%, Capital Gains Tax went down by 50% and Capital Acquisitions Tax went down by 50%. He controlled pensions and created 600,000 new jobs”

“A spokesman for the Dublin Chamber of Commerce said: “The way to judge any finance minister is by his Budgets, and generally his have been business-friendly or at least neutral. They were never what you could call anti-business” (Irish Independent, 21.7.2004).

DECENTRALISATION ISSUE: “If the Government felt it was unpopular, it should abandon the project. Moving an enormously experienced Finance Minister to Brussels is a cowardly solution and ultimately not in the national interest”

(Irish Independent, 22.7.2004).

CHARLIE AND HIS PEERS!

Mr. Willie O’Dea, TD for Limerick East said that, judged by the traditional criteria of Government spending, Mr. McCreedy could be regarded as “*the most left-wing finance minister in the history of the state*” (Irish Times-22.7.2004).

The Fianna Fail member for Cork North-Central, Billy Kelleher stated that far from being influenced by the Progressive Democrats, Mr. McCreedy had always had his own ideas: “*The PDs were very close to his way of thinking, not the other way round*” (ibid.).

Well done, Billy, its Fianna Fail who have taken over the Progressive Democrats—not the reverse, No!

“As Mr. Proinsias De Rossa observed in a colourful moment yesterday, Mr. McCreedy is among the most right-wing finance ministers in Europe. The nature of the EU system means, however, that his ideological instincts could not be given full rein in any Commission post he occupies.

“Moreover, as a guarantor of the interests of the EU as a whole, Commissioner McCreedy would be less likely than Minister McCreedy to trumpet self-righteously the superiority of Ireland’s route to economic growth. Mr. De Rossa, who warned yesterday that Mr. McCreedy’s appointment would represent ‘a move away from a social Europe in the direction of a supermarket Europe.’” (Irish Times-22.7.2004).

In a letter to the *Irish Times*, De Rossa opposed McCreedy’s nomination:

“He engaged in a two-year spending splurge to buy the last general election, has since imposed the ‘savage 16’ attacks on social welfare recipients, echoing his ‘dirty dozen’ cutbacks when Minister for Social Welfare in the early 1990s. His taxation policies have resulted in more than 50 per cent of taxpayers now paying tax at the marginal rate of 42 per cent, and rocketing prices for basic necessities” (30.7.2004).

Not a cheep about McCreedy’s anti-family policies from this guardian of the working class.

“One of Commission President Barosso’s first jobs will be to try and calm the fears of various nation states ahead of a series of national referendums on the new constitution. Defeat in any one would consign the constitution to oblivion.

“This will not be an easy task, given the current mood in Britain, in particular. Charlie McCreedy, too, could find himself being the prime salesman for Europe ahead of the Irish referendum on the constitution, a strange outcome for a man who has always considered himself

continued on page 21

BUDGET continued

In addition, the Employee Credit—akin to the earlier PAYE Tax Allowance—was increased by 230 Euros. Again, dual-income families benefit on the double, so they are a further 230 Euros ahead of single-income household.

Reduced PRSI liability since the budget gives the dual-income family an extra 80 Euros over the single-income family. A worker now does not start paying PRSI (at 4%) until he earns 400 Euros a week, up from 287 Euros a week.

Couples with a combined annual income of between 42,000 Euros and 44,000 Euros are particularly sensitive to this change.

Before the Cowen budget, there would have been a 4,180 gap in take-home pay between the two families with 60,000 in annual income. The combined post-Budget gains for the dual-income family (308 Euros, plus 230 Euros, plus 80 Euros) adds 618 Euros a year to the after-tax gap between the two types of family.

Before McCreevy's 2000 'Individualisation' budget, whatever tax benefits an individual worker got were exactly doubled for spouses, whether they were both working or one was at home.

Brian Cowan has 'walked the walk' alright!

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLIE

The man some believed created the Celtic Tiger all by himself; the best friend the PDs had in Cabinet—is the new Commissioner for Internal Market & Services, a key economic post at the heart of the EU Commission. Mandelson, the disgraced British New Labour and former Northern Ireland Secretary of State, is Trade Commissioner.

As Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services, Ireland's former Finance Minister will soon be called on to consolidate the free flow of goods and services within the EU and breakdown protectionist trade blockages in the national systems.

In this role, he will become the EU's economic policeman. Much of his work in Brussels will be regulatory.

'Eurocrat' McCreevy's job is to enforce free trade principles on Government ministers who still think, as he did for seven years, in more narrow nationalist self-interested ways.

But McCreevy's new role will not be merely a defensive one in breaking down

barriers which cheat the EU's citizens of cheaper consumer goods such as cars and insurance policies at the national level.

"Like Roy Keane, Charlie McCreevy will be expected to be not only good on the back-foot tackles, but also be capable of fast-movements forward—and produce lightning strikes into the financial services area—by taking ground-breaking initiatives into liberalising Europe's money markets.

"The way is now open for the former chartered accountant to become as powerful a figure as were two of his Irish predecessors, Peter Sutherland as Commissioner for Competition, and Ray MacSharry as Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

"Most fascinating of all for Brussels-watchers will be how McCreevy gets on with 'the Prince of Darkness', Peter Mandelson, the disgraced former Northern Ireland Secretary of State, who has been rehabilitated by his old buddy, Blair—and who has been given the front-line position by Barroso of Trade Commissioner" (John Cooney, Evening Herald, 13.8.2004).

"McCreevy's Ireland was a place where every woman had blonde highlights, collagen injections, hired people to do their parties and wore designer clothes to the races. If you or your partner were poor, unemployed or otherwise financially embarrassed, it was your own fault ..." (Medb Ruane, Evening Herald, 22.7.2004).

"It wasn't necessarily deliberate. McCreevy's 1999 individualisation Budget was built on the 'me' principle but didn't go far enough. The 'me' he clung to was the 'me' who loved money and wanted lots of it, so he focused on low personal and corporation taxes while stealthily raising indirect taxes along the way.

"The 'me' he left behind was the other side of the balance sheet, the now-debased social capital. McCreevy's refusal to extend individualisation to welfare calculations put Ireland in the red and freed up otherwise perfectly pleasant people like Minister Mary Coughlan to regard widows as potentially fraudulent groups.

"If you were finding your childcare hard to afford, it was your fault too. After all, no one asked you to have children. Childcare was turned into a business opportunity for providers only, with the State refusing to give any kind of tax relief.

"The SSIA scheme captures the bind of the selfish society—it's madness for the country, but wouldn't you be even more of a fool not to take part?"

"Pity the poor PDs? McCreevy's removal will damage their position, giving them less influence in Government, whatever the Tanaiste claims. It is almost a recognition of how desperately in need of reinvention is the PD mantra, of how Fianna Fail took the best bits and realised just in time how politically damaging are the social policies that inevitably ensue.

"Margaret Thatcher's infamous claim that there is no such thing as society almost came true in McCreevy's Ireland, yet the yearning for more, the longing for a meaning other than only money is palpable across a span from the way people supported the Special Olympics to the droves who pay high prices to unregistered lifestyle gurus.

"Caring values don't come naturally to most of us, which is why a Government risks chaos when it gets the balance wrong" (Medb Ruane, Evening Herald, 22.7.2004).

COMMISSIONER MCCREEVY

As a European Commissioner, McCreevy will be a combination of Cabinet Minister and high-ranking civil servant. European Commissioners traditionally have little power, despite the pomp that surrounds them, but the forthcoming referenda on the European constitution may put McCreevy centre stage.

McCreevy was a member of the Dail for North Kildare for the past 27 years. It is a strange coincidence that he was elected to the Dail in 1977, in the same year as the Taoiseach, Mr. Ahern. Both were ardent supporters of Charles Haughey, both campaigned for the ousting of Jack Lynch, and both suffered different political fates in the Haughey years. While Ahern became Chief Whip, McCreevy was offered, but declined, office.

McCreevy, an accountant by profession, introduced seven Budgets. Sean McEntee, Fianna Fail, served in this ministerial position for 10 years. Ernest Blythe, Cumann na nGael and Dr. James Ryan, F.F. held office beyond McCreevy's tenure.

The complaints from back-benchers that the party was too "right-wing" and that an "alien" PD philosophy was dominating the Government came long before the recent poor election performances. However, for so long as the economy was booming and the voters appeared happy, such complaints received little airing. But now there is speculation that the Taoiseach had decided the "right-wing" tag must be shed. Just last week he made a disparaging

continued on page 22



LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 23 No. 1

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

Cowen's First Budget

In last month's magazine we wrote that McCreevy did nothing to alter the anti-Family stance he had taken in 1999 and predicted that Mr. Cowen was intent on following a similar anti-family route. The headline in the *Irish Examiner* said it all: *Cowen Will Follow McCreevy's Strategic Path* (9.10.2004).

STANDARD RATE TAX BAND

SINGLE PERSON	TWO-INCOME FAMILY	ONE-INCOME FAMILY
<u>2000</u>		
21,585 Euros	43,171 Euros	35,552 Euros
<u>2001</u>		
25,394 Euros	50,789 Euros	36,822 Euros
<u>2002</u>		
28,000 Euros	56,000 Euros	37,000 Euros
<u>2003</u>		
28,000 Euros	56,000 Euros	37,000 Euros
<u>2004</u>		
28,000 Euros	56,000 Euros	37,000 Euros
2005 (Mr. Cowen's First Budget)		
29,400 Euros	58,800 Euros	38,400 Euros

The writer Dermot O'Leary, an economist with Goodbody Stockbrokers, commented: "*There may be a new minister in Merrion Street but expect the strategy to remain the same.*"

It is certainly true in relation to the continuation of McCreevy's iniquitous policy of '*Individualisation*'!

In 2005, married couples, where one stays at home, are now even worse off, relative to couples who both work, than they were after McCreevy's 2004 budget.

However, Dr. John Considine, a lecturer in economics at University College, Cork writes that "...the difference between Brian Cowen and Charlie McCreevy could not have been more pronounced" (Evening Herald 2.12.2004).

"Forget the facts and figures. Look at what was said. And, look at how it was said.

"Brian Cowen started by praising Charlie McCreevy but spent the rest of the Budget attacking his budgetary approach.

"The introduction to yesterday's Budget was littered with references to 'the people as a whole' and 'all our people'. The contrast with the

individualisation approach of Minister McCreevy is obvious.

"The contrast continued elsewhere. After announcing a substantial package of measures for the disabled, Minister Cowen said that it was 'social inclusion in practice'. I presume he means it is NOT social in principle."

The '*Individualisation*' era is gone? Facts and figures don't matter?

"Minister Cowen has already started

Subscribers to the magazine are regularly offered special rates on other publications

Irish Political Review is published by the IPR Group: write to—
PO Box 339, Belfast BT12 4GQ or
PO Box 6589, London, N7 6SG.

Labour Comment,
C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City

Subscription by Post:
Euro 25 / £17.50 for 12 issues

Electronic Subscription:
Euro 15 / £12 for 12 issues
(or Euro 1.30 / £1.10 per issue)

You can also order both postal and electronic subscriptions from:
www.atholbooks.org

to suggest that there is a better 'Irish model for growth'. What is the very first characteristic he identifies in this new model? That it is coherent and equitable. Equitable is the new competition.

"In yesterday's Budget, Cowen distanced himself from McCreevy. We now have to discover if he can walk the walk."

But we already know, he had 'walked the walk' on the issue of the family, and that really is the core issue in this whole social battle of: do we live to work or work to live? Cowen has entered the political and social lobby with the Globalisers and the Feminists—in the age of the 'Free Market', the family is dispensable!

How this Budget worsens the relative position of stay-at-home parents is that it extends existing tax breaks that favour dual-income households without any corresponding increase in benefits for stay-at-home parents.

A couple with two incomes won't pay the higher of two tax rates until their combined earnings exceed 58,800 Euros, while the high rate kicks in at just 38,400 Euros in joint income for a couple on one salary.

Mr. Cowen's 2005 budget increased the individual tax bands but did nothing with the tax allowance for those staying at home, so it has increased the differential between a two-income married couple and a single-income married couple.

As well as that, the Home Carer tax credit is static at 770 Euros a year. By contrast, a 1,400 Euros increase in the tax band means each workers can save 308 Euros a year: that is 22% of 1,400 Euros, which is the difference between paying the high (42%) and the low (20%) tax rate on that money. So, the dual-income household saves 308 Euros more than the single-income household.

continued on page 23