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Peter Hart and his Sources
Free Trade And Famine
Letter to Valery Giscard d'Estaing

Labour Conference
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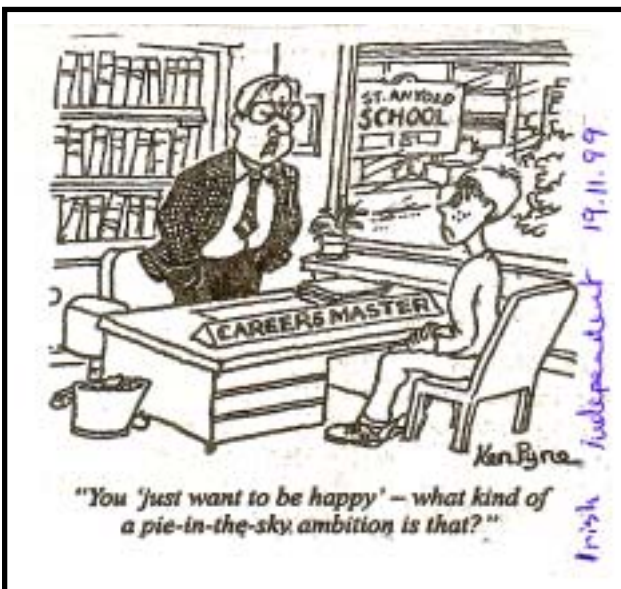
Limboland Democracy

The Taoiseach is in the grip of diplomatic insanity with regard to the North. It would be intelligible if he repudiated the Agreement and said that negotiations had to start afresh. But what he did was hold the Agreement to be sacred but increase the difficulties in the way of its implementation. When the talks about a Democratic Unionist Party/Sinn Fein set-up broke down last year over the DUP demand that the Republican act of decommissioning should be filmed, members of the Ahern Government rushed in to say that much more than a photo was at issue. Instead of taking the DUP at its word and working on the issue of the photo, they claimed that what is called “*criminality*” was also at issue, even though the DUP had not raised it. “*Criminality*” was then adopted as an issue by the DUP, which could not let itself appear more conciliatory towards the Northern Fenians than the great Fenian chief in Leinster House. It seems that Ahern did this in a fit of pique because the Provos would not deliver their side of a deal which had not been made. And now, having encouraged the DUP to greater intransigence, he has to cope with the consequences.

The current position of the DUP is that it will consider entering government with Sinn Fein when Fianna Fail does. There was a time when a strong case could have been made that the very different political circumstances in the Republic and the North warranted the application of different standards, but it would not be easy to make that case now because of Ahern’s diplomatic insanity. (And the strongest case is one that is now ideologically taboo in Leinster House—that the North is not a democracy, that it is politically disconnected from the state which controls it, and that the Stormont Government was not and will not be the Government of a state. Each of these grounds warrants the

application of a different standard in the North.)

The Tory spokesman has come up with an interesting variation on Ahern’s insistence that the Sinn Fein and the IRA are one by suggesting that, once Sinn Fein is considered to be fit for government, the IRA should be formally legalised in both States. Ahern himself appears to be suggesting that, even though Sinn Fein and the IRA are one—are two



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The European Union

The European Union was founded in the context of the division of Europe by the United Nations and the rise of a new form of politics in Western Europe after 1945, the Christian Democracy. Both of those conditions ceased to exist during the 1990s, with the result that the EU has been floundering for years.

The Christian Democracy was destroyed in Italy and Germany by use of the methods by which the *Irish Times* (as an agency of the British state) tried to destroy Fianna Fail—and succeeded in reducing it to a wan shadow of itself. And the division of Europe, caused by the antagonism within the United Nations Powers which defeated Germany in 1945, ceased to exist when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990.

The United Nations itself was an accidental, and entirely unprincipled, alliance of incompatible states brought about by the catastrophic chain of events set in motion by the British Empire in 1939, when it launched a war which it was not prepared to fight. The enemy on which it declared war, Germany, was defeated by a greater enemy, Soviet Russia. From January 1942 the alliance of UK, US, and USSR called itself the United Nations. In the moment of victory in 1945, this alliance set itself up as a world authority, and set up a subordinate body, the General Assembly, in which other states were enrolled as second-class members (with France and China being included in the dominant group). The antagonism between the USSR and the

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

sides of the same coin—and even though the President of Sinn Fein organised the Northern Bank Robbery, the time has come for Sinn Fein to sever its connection with the IRA.

Mao Tse-tung is in the news again because of a biography which depicts him as the most comprehensively evil tyrant of the 20th century, whose unparalleled power of evil was deployed for frivolous purposes. But he made one remark which is entirely appropriate to the condition of politics in the Republic today: A Smart Alec, no matter how smart, should never be put in control of a State.

Fr. Alex Reid, of the Clonard Monastery in West Belfast, who has acted as conciliator and facilitator in the various peace moves, has been provoked into saying that the Dublin politicians are now the greatest danger to the peace process. He has told them in effect to shut up. No better advice could be given. But it is not advice that will be taken, because they are all overflowing with their various brands of self-righteous humbug.

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The Robert McCartney affair pursues its peculiar course. Terence Davison has been charged with Robert McCartney's murder, and James McCormick with attacking Brendan Devine in the same incident. Meanwhile Devine has been sentenced to seven years' jail for his part

in an armed robbery in February 2004 (2 years of this to be on probation). Pleas for mitigation on grounds of his drug habit and post-traumatic stress following the McCartney incident were rejected by the Court. Another case relating to receiving a stolen car in August 2003 remains outstanding. Furthermore, proceedings continue in a third criminal case over the stabbing of a pub bouncer in November 2003 in which Devine is charged with wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm and maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm. His fellow-accused in this case is Hugh McCormick, brother of the man who later attacked him in the Robert McCartney incident. We have not seen pictures of the 'grievous' stabbing injuries inflicted on the pub bouncer by Brendan Devine and Hugh McCormick, though the long stitched cut of Devine by James McCormick has received widespread publicity. These incidents cast a different light on the McCartney incident to the rather simplistic anti-Republican view promoted by the authorities.

*

The new, double-jobbing, Secretary of State, Peter Hain, the former Young Liberal, has interned a Republican released under the Good Friday Agreement. No grounds have been given for the internment. Possibly Hain's purpose is to conciliate the Unionists, who saw him as a danger to their cause because they remembered what he used to say before

Blair offered him a Government job. But Hain is entirely without political character. He capered about on the Left for the purpose of being made quiet by being given a job, in the time-honoured manner of British radicalism. He is now Blair's odd-job man. He is nothing whatever in his own right. We did not take him seriously some years ago when he spoke at the Belfast Unemployed Centre. His position then might be described as Flimsy Left. Today his is no more than the ventriloquist's dummy.

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"It would be laughable if we came up with the only peace process in the world where democracy kills decency"—so said Tom Kelly in the concluding paragraph of his column in the *Irish News* a few months ago. Kelly, formerly of the SDLP, resigned from it some years ago on grounds that were never made clear. And it is now not clear why he does not join the Alliance Party. But the way he speaks his mind in the *Irish News* is often stimulating. In the present instance it leads one to ask what connection there is between democracy and decency. Political philosophers throughout the ages have tended towards the view that democracy is the most shameless of all political systems, and developments of the past fifteen years have not proved them wrong. The mushroom growth of an extensive pornography industry was the first fruit of democracy in Eastern Europe and Russia. And while it is not entirely obvious what is meant by 'decency' these days, one assumes that pornography is still indecent. If it isn't, then decency as a concept has lost all its meaning and it is obsolete.

The second fruit of democratisation seems to be the growth of a Mafia system, which is associated with the first fruit initially but quickly takes off on a wider basis and lays the groundwork of capitalism. A survey of the first ten years of economic development in Russia under the new democracy was published a few years ago under the title of *Violent Entrepreneurs*.

Democracy is now equated with free-market capitalism by the US/UK combination which dominates the world for the time being. The possibility that a society might democratically choose not to submit itself to the forces of free market capitalism is not allowed—although US/UK did not object when President Museveni of Uganda called for a democratic rejection of democracy by his

people, and they complied in a referendum.

Capitalism came to Russia in two forms. Under the legal form the great enterprises of the state were sold for a song to members of President Yeltsin's inner circle. That is how the oligarchs came about. The American financial institutions which helped with the privatisation were rather shocked by the procedure. Whatever one thinks of the American system, it is indisputable that its most powerful capitalists are the great beasts in the jungle and have clawed their way to the top. And they function within and are constrained by the political life of the American Constitution. But the Russian monopoly capitalists, who are now being brought to heel by Putin, were favourites at Yeltsin's Court and acquired their immense properties as gifts awarded by Presidential decree. And when Parliament tried to interfere, the President turned the guns on it and arrested its members, to the applause of the democratic West.

The top-down creation of capitalism by Presidential decree was accompanied by a slower but sounder bottom-up development, otherwise known as the Mafia. *Violent Entrepreneurs* shows how in a society habituated to collective economic activity there was an absence of the kinds of institutions of civil society that grew up with capitalism in the West and were conducive to its functioning, and how a number of informal groups filled the vacuum. There were three main groups: people who had done time in the Labour Camps and were marginalised in society on release, and therefore kept up an informal association in the course of making a living outside the system; the managers, trainers and athletes of the various sporting bodies, who had operated semi-autonomously within the system; and members of the security forces who had been sacked wholesale by Yeltsin.

Mafias don't come from nowhere. It was from these groups that the spirit required for the development of Mafia capitalism came. The state system of economy was destroyed overnight, as a result of administrative incompetence on the part of would-be reformers like Gorbachev and insistent Western pressure which fed Utopian delusions, and the Mafia system developed in its place under the immensely corrupt Yeltsin anarchy. The corruption lay in the Yeltsin elite, which was supported unconditionally by the Western capitalist powers for its destructiveness. It is meaningless to apply

How To Share Our Military History?

The following letter appeared in *The Irish Examiner*:

Why honour the Irish who fought for the British?

Dan Buckley, writing of distant relative David Lord (Irish Examiner, May 9) bemoans the fact that such brave recipients of the Victoria Cross are not honoured with monuments in Ireland.

I agree that bravery and selfless courage are well worth acknowledging. However, the case for David Lord being commemorated as Irish is slender, resting as it does on his birth in Cork. His boyhood was spent in Wales and his military service was in the army of another country.

It seems a reversal of the situation some years ago when any successful Irish person was claimed by the British media as a "British" singer, pop group, writer, etc.

There have been other calls for commemoration of Irish dead in the service of the British army. While we are urged to forget the 'myths' about Ireland's fight for freedom, it is assumed that all Irishmen who served in British forces did so out of a belief that they defended freedom and fought oppression.

Yet many joined up, as Tom Barry himself said, to get a gun and see the excitement of war, or simply because it was the best-paid job they could get.

If we want to honour brave Irishmen why not put up monuments in Britain to famous IRA leaders? Perhaps a monument to Tom Barry in Piccadilly Circus or one to Dan Breen in Whitehall. These were brave Irishmen who fought for freedom and against an oppressive form of government.

Their fight against imperialism can be seen in terms of encouragement to the downtrodden classes of Britain as much as to the colonised Irish.

Up to 1922 they were even albeit unwilling British subjects. Equally, maybe it is time Britain commemorated our shared military heritage?

Dan Buckley writes that the poppy has become a "British" symbol and wearing it is seen as "treacherous and disloyal". The poppy has always been a British and Commonwealth symbol.

It is not worn in the Irish Republic because we are neither part of the Commonwealth nor of Britain. Furthermore, the symbolism of the poppy and Remembrance Day despite including such campaigns as the Black and Tan war draws heavily on the notion that British forces always fought for freedom and democracy. Whatever about the accuracy of such a notion, the message and implication is that today's British forces are continuing this tradition even in such places in Iraq.

Nick Folley (30.05.05)

the term corruption to the Mafia groups which developed in the anarchy. The Mafia were the creators of a new system in a situation where there was no social system at all, and out of the fierce conflicts of the Mafia groups with each other the categories of capitalist political economy began to be generated. And the "protection rackets" operated by groups of people sacked from the security forces of the disintegrating state became in effect organs of a new state. While they extorted protection money from aspiring businesses, they enabled those businesses to operate by protecting them. Protection money became, in effect, a police tax. It was, and is, crude. If it wasn't crude it wouldn't be capitalism. The establishment of capitalism is an inconceivably crude business.

Yeltsin's capitalism consisted of half-a-dozen oligarchs without an underlying

system. Being unconstrained by a system underneath them in Russia, they naturally tended to merge with great capitalist enterprises in the West. They were not part of a Russian national economy, and they espoused a form of internationalism which would have placed Russian material resources directly at the disposal of the United States. It couldn't last. The cutest of them read the signs and he's now running Chelsea football team with Russian resources. The most ambitious of them is in jail. And a half-and-half oligarch, Berezovsky (half cute, half fanatic), is brooding over it all in wealthy exile. Before the last Russian election he gave expression in a BBC interview to his economic determinist belief that Putin must lose because money must have its way. It put one in mind of Anthony Coughlan's memorable anti-European statement: "You can't buck the market."

But where is the market in Russia? Not in Chelsea with Roman Abramovitch; nor in Mayfair with Boris Berezovsky; nor in Siberia with Mikhail Khodorkovsky. It's with the Mafia on the ground in Russia.

Putin recently made the shocking but indisputable statement that the destruction of the Soviet Union was the greatest political catastrophe of the 20th century. The assured framework of life for hundreds of millions of people, and for many nationalities which lived together without warfare, was broken up. Within the law of the jungle, life expectancy fell by about 20 years, and the nationalities fell into a state of war with each other (partly at the instigation of the US and the EU intent on pushing NATO as close as possible to Moscow). For a tiny handful of people life got better, but for most it got much worse. In the Western view the handful for whom life got better are the people who count. They are the quality of life and it is the destiny of the others to sustain them. But the Russian populace was never broken in to capitalist elitism.

But, while Putin describes the destruction of the old system as a catastrophe, it is not his purpose to restore it. His purpose seems to be to establish a regular framework for the Mafia capitalism which arose in the Yeltsin jungle, and thereby to restore a Russian national economy.

Violent Entrepreneurs is not a book one sees in the bookshops. Nor is another recent book on the party-political preconditions of what is called democracy, with particular reference to Russia in the 1990s. The content of that book is what this magazine has been asserting for thirty years with regard to Northern Ireland: that the functioning of what is called democracy in large states depends on the existence of a small number of stable political parties with whose policies (or at least their slogans) the electorate is familiar. A state does not consist of autonomous 'political men' any more than an economy consists of 'economic men'. In both spheres the individual functions within a collectivity, and it might even be said that the more 'libertarian' a state is ideologically, the stronger its relevant collectivities are in actual politics. Strong government in libertarian Britain operates through a strong party system which regimented opinion into two great phalanxes. Elections do not register the opinions arrived at autonomously by individual voters. What they demonstrate is which

party has been most successful at a particular moment in regimenting the opinion of the voters. This was explained by Edmund Burke 250 years ago, and it is more the case now than it was then.

Rousseau was of the opinion that democracy is the wrong name for this system. He held that the representative system was by definition not democratic. Democracy was the actual assembly of the people, as in the Swiss Cantons, and at the lower level in parts of the United States.

Representative government, in which large masses of people are acted upon by political parties, is something quite different. It has been made functional in a number of states on certain conditions. Those conditions were broken when the 6 Counties of the United Kingdom were concocted into Northern Ireland, where elections were disconnected from the governing of the state. And they did not exist at all in post-1989 Russia where the groups called political parties had no durable existence, and there were far too many of them.

In the light of world experience of the past 15 years, democracy is a word that should be used sparingly. And it should not be used at all in connection with politics in the North. If the round of political conflict in the Republic was subject to the veto of an external power and was entirely disconnected from the business of governing the state, what politician would call that situation democracy? Would the Justice Minister? We would say that the Justice Minister, whose sole concern is to exercise the powers of the state, would do so least of all.

Some further thoughts by independent Nationalist thinker Tom Kelly. He appreciates McDowell's remark, on

"the similarities between Sinn Fein and the National Socialist Party in the 1930s. Some people within the republican movement took umbrage at this outrageous claim. Perhaps the statue of Sean Russell, the IRA leader and Nazi collaborator, was not the only thing missing its head last week..."

"Some of what was said this week was priceless. In one interview, Martin McGuinness disparagingly dismissed Hugh Orde as a "British policeman" and so he is. It's disappointing in this centenary year for Sinn Fein forgets party founder Arthur Griffith's description of patriot Erskine Childers as "that damn Englishman". Not to mention former and present Sinn Fein

members who before their reincarnation as Irish rebels were in fact British soldiers!"

It has been amply proved that Sean Russell's association with the German state was purely military. The party which was in ideological complicity with Fascism with the Irish Fascist party, Michael McDowell's hereditary party from which he has momentarily strayed in pursuit of power: Fine Gael. The active anti-Fascism in Ireland in that era was to be found on the other wing.

By the mid-1930s Italy and Germany were consolidated Fascist states, unquestioningly accepted as a legitimate part of the international order, and Britain was collaborating with the Hitler regime in a way that it never did with its democratic predecessors. But in Spain the issue was undetermined. And, with relation to Spain, the line-up was Fine Gael with the Fascist insurrection and the Republican movement with the democratically-elected Government of the Republic. And both sides sent volunteers to assist their parties in Spain. General O'Duffy, the founder and first leader of Fine Gael, took a company of Blueshirts to fight for Franco. Franco found it useless and sent it home in disgrace. A much larger group of Republicans went to fight for the Republic, and they fought and suffered to the bitter end. And Fianna Fail rejected Fine Gael demands in 1936 to recognise the Franco insurrection as the legitimate state power in Spain, doing so only in 1939, when after three years of warfare Franco achieved *de facto* power throughout Spain.

Sean Russell's visit to Germany occurred when Britain, after six years of active support for the Nazi regime, decided to make war on Germany. Fascism was not an issue in the British decision to make war. The German state was just as Fascist in 1938—when Britain helped to restore it to the status of a Great Power by conniving at the German/Austrian merger which it had strictly forbidden when both states were democracies, and by putting pressure on the Czech Government to hand over the natural fortress of the Sudetenland to Hitler—as it was in 1939 when Britain declared war on it. That being so, what made it morally heinous to have dealings with Germany after 4th September 1939 when it was OK during the preceding six years? The fact that Britain decided to make war, presumably. But that it to take the expediency of British foreign policy as the determinant of general morality.

But why criticise Tom Kelly for doing that, when John Bowman does it all the time?

A final thought from Tom Kelly:

“Recent polls suggest that Sinn Fein may have little to worry about following the McCartney murder and the Northern Bank heist. This will disappoint many who thought that the criminal activities of the Provisional movement would have resulted in some electoral damage to Sinn Fein. It is a sad indictment of where we are as a society that it does not. Sinn Fein wields a mandate as lethally as paramilitaries wield M-16s. For more than 20 years Sinn Fein has assiduously conditioned sections of the nationalist community into mirroring the most repugnant practises of unreconstructed loyalism. The appalling vista of systematic bigotry; the subrogation [sic] of ordinary people in the pursuit of false patriotism... are now as important to the nationalist psyche as it is to those on the loyalist side... Since the ceasefires, by donning a veil of democracy Sinn Fein have distracted the democratic world from the reality of Provisional criminality and the smell of sulphur... The only consolation of being duped by the Provisional movement into believing they were buying into democracy is that they also duped many of their own followers—even if that reality has not dawned on some of them yet. For the majority of the nationalist community there never was any romantic notion about murder and the representatives of mainstream nationalism were unambiguous in condemning any notion that murder could be somehow justified... Whether Arlene Foster or Michelle Gildernew holds Fermanagh/South Tyrone is irrelevant... Elections in the north have rarely solved anything and the forthcoming elections will be no different” (Irish News, 21 March).

This mental floundering is not mere gibberish. The actual elements of the situation are presented in disordered form. The source of the disorder is the passive assumption that the North is a democratic state in which certain people are behaving badly. That assumption is then retained, even while it emerges as an empirical fact that pretty everybody except the writer is behaving badly. The norm from which there is general deviation is derived from elsewhere—from two elsewhere: the states between which Northern Ireland forms a Limbo. And the undoubted fact that elections settle nothing is stated, while subversive consideration of how that could be the case is avoided.

In modern times the state has become

the necessary framework of social order. It was not always so, but it is so now. The mass societies of the globalist era require strong states, whether democratic or authoritarian, as the framework of orderly life. The perverse framework of the British state in the Six Counties, deliberately established by Whitehall 80 years ago, generates disorder.

In these circumstances Martin Mc Guinness’s remark about the Chief Constable being a British policeman bears no resemblance to Arthur Griffith’s racist denunciation of Erskine Childers as an Englishman during the Treaty dispute. Orde is a functionary of the British state proper. Within Britain his opinion on a matter on which he had not enough evidence to bring a charge would be of no political consequence, nor would the opinion of the Garda Commissioner in the Republic. But in the North, Orde—who is a very political policeman—is the representative of what is in political reality an external supervisory power. He has not the organic connection with society that senior policemen have in Britain and the Republic.

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Tom Kelly’s observations are incoherent, but they are not gibberish. But political gibberish is the only way of describing Damien Kiberd’s column in *Daily Ireland* on the subject of Eamon De Valera: *Incapable Of Seeing Any Point But His Own* (June 20). It regurgitates Ascendancy and Free State propaganda of the 1920s. The title is taken from a book by Trinity Professor Alison Phillips, who launched the *canard* about the low Sinn Fein vote in 1918, ignoring the fact that in a quarter of the Constituencies, where Sinn Fein support was strongest, no votes were cast because there were only Sinn Fein candidates.

Piaras Beaslai, Treatyite propagandist in the Treaty War (who is described by Kiberd as “*a contemporary*”), has his notorious statement regurgitated about Dev flinging “*a torch into a powder magazine*” in 1922. And P. A. O’Siochain, “*a historian of the time*”, is quoted for his view that Dev was influenced by “*the intense extremism of some of the leading women, in particular Mrs. Pearse, Miss Mary MacSwiney and Countess Markievicz*”; and also for his analysis of “*the nature of De Valera*”—

“he was ‘only half-Irish and, for that reason, he had to appear holier than thou, more positively Irish and republican”.

Half-baked psychologising in place of history. The history of it is that Collins, the military man, made a deal with Lloyd George to dismantle the Republic and was not able to carry the Army with him—and he apparently knew when signing the dictated ‘Treaty’, under threat of the British ultimatum, that it would be unacceptable to the greater part of the Army. That was the powder keg. The torch which exploded it into ‘Civil War’ was Collins’s breaking of the Election Pact in June 1922, in response to another British ultimatum, and his shelling of the Four Courts with British artillery in response to a third British ultimatum.

Kiberd then re-hashes the Free State propaganda on the Treaty Oath. The Free Staters won the Election of 1922 and 1923, when the British threat of reconquest was active. As that threat receded, and British politics fell into confusion, the Irish electorate voted Republican again. The Free State authorities, who controlled the Dail, excluded elected Republicans with the requirement that they should take the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown. When that failed to deter the electorate, the Free State announced its intention of making the taking of the Oath a condition of standing for election. The Free State was by this time no longer acting under duress from Whitehall. Its exclusion of Republicans from the Dail, with the threat of excluding them from the entire electoral process, had the makings of a real Civil War, different in kind from the Treaty War. De Valera and his group warded off that possibility, and laid the basis for democracy in the 26 Counties, by taking the Oath with their fingers crossed, and going on to take power through the Dail and abolish the Oath and other features of the Treaty. And the judgment of the electorate on the use made of the Oath by the Treatyite party is found in the fact that that party has never won a General Election 1927.

There is no substantial similarity between the situation in the 26 Counties 80 years ago and the situation in the North today. And the regurgitating of Free State propaganda against Dev could generate nothing but confusion if there was.

The European Union

UK became operative immediately Germany was defeated. Churchill would, if he could, have continued the war against the ally who had defeated Germany, but he lacked the means, and he soon lost office. He looked to the United States to do what he could not, but by the time Washington was ready to go, the Soviet Union had produced the atomic bomb and stalemate set in.

The European Union was constructed within the stalemate. Its founders were also the founders of the Christian Democracy political movement, which was incomprehensible to British politicians and baffled British foreign policy during the generation when Britain, as an Occupying Power in Germany, might have been expected to exercise a determining influence on European developments.

The draconian punishment intended for Germany had to be abandoned in order to enlist public opinion in the Western Occupation Zones in the Cold War against the Soviet East. Adenauer availed of this opportunity to reassert German independence within a few years under Christian-Democratic hegemony, marginalising the Anglophile Social Democrats. The “*social market*” is a Christian Democratic concept derived from Papal Encyclicals. Adenauer, like De Gaspari, the Christian Democrat leader in Italy, had an impeccable anti-Fascist record, and direct experience of British conduct towards Europe during the Great War and after. And both had held aloof from what might be called the democratic nationalism of their respective countries. De Gaspari, in Northern Italy, accepted the Hapsburg state as an adequate framework for democratic social development, and he played no part in the irredentist nationalism with which Britain lured Italy into the War in 1915 (with Mussolini as an ally). And Adenauer in 1919-20 was willing to co-operate with France into re-structuring Germany into two states—a project which was vetoed by Britain.

The European Union was the product of a form of European politics. Without the Christian Democracy, which existed

beyond the various nationalisms, there could have been no European Union—as there could have been no British Union if there had not been a Whig political movement in Scotland as well as England.

The constant object of British policy has been to keep Europe divided. It was for this purpose that Britain established Belgium as a state in 1830 in defiance of the accepted rules of the time. But the Christian Democracy changed all of that, and Brussels became a by-word for European unity.

Europe escaped from Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. Britain could not retard its development from outside. It eventually managed to get in, and it has been working steadily from within for thirty years to break it up—assisted by Ireland ever since Haughey was ousted. The Taoiseach is now angry with Blair over the Common Agricultural Policy and

calls him dishonest, but it has been evident for years that this was the way things were heading.

The indefinite extension of the EU is the effective dissolution of the EU. It was not in the first instance a mere compromise between nationalisms, and there is little prospect that it will flourish when it is reduced to that and the number of nationalisms increases.

President McAleese made a speech on Europe in Westminster Cathedral on 20th April. In the days before she became a multi-denominational Christian she might have been expected to understand something of the real history of the EU. But now that she is all things to all men she can only utter platitudes on the subject—the sort of thing that makes the mind dizzy with its vacuous idealism. But she also expresses the vacuousness of the foreign policy of the state.

A Final Letter To Valery

Cher Valery,

Comment allez-vous? I have not heard anything from you since your compatriots and others rejected your brainchild, the EU Constitution. As the man who started the whole rigmarole that has ended in the current débâcle you must surely feel in some way obliged to give us your pearls of wisdom on the current situation. You campaigned for the Constitution on the basis that rejection would be a humiliation, presumably for yourself. Perhaps you are in a sulk. Maybe you have realised that a little genuine modesty on your part might be in order (and have decided to change the habits of a lifetime) but silence could signify other things besides modesty, disdain and contempt perhaps. Maybe you have taken on board the considered advice of our dear Taoiseach “Its [Europe’s] citizens do not need more debate about the future construction of Europe” (Irish Times, 27 May 2005). He could not be more wrong as I hope you would agree. To have more debate is precisely what everyone is now obliged to engage in.

If you recall, when you launched the process that led to this Constitution you said the EU was ‘facing an abyss’ and that was a very correct and graphic way of describing the situation then. And instead of leading the EU away from that abyss

you and the Gadarene swine of brilliant and well-paid Europhile simpletons have led the EU right over the abyss. Some achievement! Perhaps you would now have an equally graphic phrase to describe the situation the EU is now in. Maybe there are French four letter words to describe the situation. If you are going in for some genuine modesty in saying nothing we won’t go in for any false modesty—we told you so, loudly and clearly. And if people you would probably consider peasants can say that how did you and all the rest of the EU elite make such a miscalculation?

I would suggest that sheer arrogance was the cause. You all knew the answer before you asked the question. You came up with the idea of a new Constitution on day one of your “consultations”. You did not deign to acknowledge that the EU had got itself into a serious credibility problem and therefore you did not look for reasons for this. That was beneath your dignity. The reaction to the Nice Treaty here was typical of the approach. It was simply that the people did not understand unless they voted as requested. They should vote again and vote right—or else!

Shortly before that there was the disgraceful arrogance shown towards

Austria for electing its own Government in a totally open, legal and democratic way. It got to the stage where official instructions were sent out by civil servants on how to ignore and embarrass Austrians at social events. Might seem a small matter to you but the arrogance it betrayed was breathtaking.

But that was little compared to the arrogance shown towards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and its consequences when the EU initiated and facilitated its break-up which led inevitably to the ethnic wars there. The particular event that set the ball rolling there was the shabby deal to allow Britain to opt out of the Social Chapter in return for their agreement for the EU to accept Slovenia's secession, thereby initiating the unravelling of the Federation. The FRY was created to mediate the ethnic conflicts there but you and the others had no regard that these realities. The EU set the Balkans alight and bears full responsibility for the horrors that ensued. That was its one great foreign policy 'achievement'.

There was no attempt to establish an independent foreign policy where it would matter—in the Middle East—which could easily have been done in relation to Israel by economic means and could have had very positive consequences without firing a shot and could possibly have avoided the degeneration into what is now known as 'the war on terrorism'.

The end of the Cold War should have meant the end of NATO, as its war had been won. Yet EU leaders were to the fore in expanding it. And then the US simply ignored it with the contempt it deserved.

Deeper integration and the development of a social Europe, rather than superficial expansion to acquire cheap labour, should have been the emphasis of the EU in recent years. Eastern European countries should have been helped and encouraged to develop as independent states and then join as equals or form an associated trading area.

These are some of the issues that you should have looked at when engaging in your so-called consultation. If you looked at these seriously it might have dawned on you and the others that you needed analysis and policies and not Constitutions and high-sounding declarations to move forward.

You and them really do have to have a serious think-in. You need to think about, or recall, what the European project was

set up to do and judge it by those criteria.

Whether you like it or not the *raison d'être* of the EU is now in question and you and others need to face up to that. It is a case of back to basics. The rejection of the Constitution should be looked on as liberation, an opportunity to make or rather remake the case for European Unity. Forget all structures for a moment and see what really matters. But there is a great reluctance to do this.

The real driving force behind the European project is not and never was economic and social concerns despite the current preoccupation with these issues. It was and is a political project and all else are tools to that end—co-operation in matters economic, legal, social, etc.

Europe had learned the lesson of nearly three centuries of 'divide and rule' by Britain under the Balance of Power strategy. While the peoples of Europe were kept at each others' throats Britain built its Empire in the rest of the world and became the most powerful state in history. The first requirement for the European project was therefore to prevent that strategy being continued in Europe and now the chief task is to prevent it being resurrected and given a new lease of life within the structure of the EU. Watching EU leaders in recent years has been like watching a group of amnesiacs being led by the nose by Britain from disaster to disaster in a hubristic fog of Panglossian make-believe. Now there is the mouth-watering possibility for Britain of a serious

conflict between the founding members of the EU. If that develops it is the absolute end of the EU project and a total victory for the British approach to Europe.

This should be the focus for any serious thought about the future of Europe and all plans, projects and policies should be based on the reality of Britain's malign role in Europe. If not, you are dealing in more make-believe and it will only be a case of waiting for another débâcle to manifest itself.

I will not hold my breath for your response.

Jack Lane

PS: An argument made for the Constitution was that it just summarised all previous Treaties. But did it? Take the most fundamental aspect of the Treaty of Rome stated in the first preamble which begins plainly and simply: "*Determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe*". The nearest equivalent in the Constitution preamble is the following jumble of words:

"Convinced that, while remaining proud of their own national identities and history, the peoples of Europe are determined to transcend their former divisions and, united ever more closely, to forge a common destiny."

Was this an improvement? Why was the original wording changed except to drop the word 'union' in the most convoluted way possible and thereby hide the fact that this Constitution was a regression from European Union despite all the verbiage. The rejection has hopefully prevented any more trickery in this regard.

Book Review: *La Face Cachée Du Monde*

(The Hidden side of *Le Monde*)

by Pierre Péan and Philippe Cohen

The Power And The Story

This book of over 600 pages by two French journalists is about the *Le Monde* newspaper, but it is not without relevance to newspapers closer to home. It raises questions about journalism in general and its power in society.

Both authors were devoted readers of the newspaper up until the 1980s. If they were on holidays abroad they would travel many miles each day to read it. They took a certain national pride in the paper which they believed was the best in the world. For these Frenchmen *Le Monde* was their "daily prayer".

But around the 1980s they noticed a change. The paper became more populist and the articles less rigorous. In 1995 when *Le Monde* openly supported the right wing Presidential candidate Edouard Balladur the journalists realised that the paper had not just changed but had departed completely from the vision of its founder Hubert Beuve-Méry.

The book is a story of the rise to power of three people: Edwy Plenel who became Editor; Jean-Marie Colombani who rose to the position of Chief Executive; and Alain Minc who was the finance man within this triumvirate.

Plenel was from a comfortable middle-class background and joined the French Trotskyist group the League for the Communist Revolution (LCR) in his youth. This group seems to have been a very small organisation which underwent a dramatic increase in membership among middle-class students in the aftermath of the 1968 riots. Plenel was part of this post-1968 intake.

The authors provide a fascinating insight into the *modus operandi* of the LCR which remains quite influential in French life (its current leader Olivier Besancenot was prominent in the recent campaign against the EU Constitutional project).

Plenel did not just 'join' the Party, he effectively became a full-time unpaid worker. The activism was, in effect, financed by the families of party members (hence the largely middle-class membership). The LCR devoted a lot of time convincing parents that party membership was not damaging to career prospects. It claimed that it encouraged its members to study hard at 'university'. But this was a pious fraud. The 'university' it was referring to was that of the LCR. Edwy Plenel never obtained a formal third level educational qualification.

The authors interviewed some ex-comrades of Plenel. One of them remarked that Plenel's involvement had very little to do with the working class. Even when the LCR discovered 'the workers' in the 1970s and became active in the Peugeot trade unions, Plenel remained with the traditional post 1968 orientations: anti-imperialism and youth issues. He edited some LCR youth papers which tended to pander to a certain type of 'student': bad language was *de rigueur* and the education system in its entirety was denounced (an insult to past socialists who had fought for working class access to the system).

The other remarkable thing about Plenel that his ex-comrades remembered was a fascination with the police which was considered unhealthy. Very significantly one of Plenel's historical heroes was Joseph Fouché who was the Minister of the Interior in Revolutionary France. Fouché led a campaign of de-Christianising the society and in 1793 brutally repressed an insurrection in Lyon. His most famous dictum was:

"The people of France only recognise one religion and that is 'Universal Morality'."

In the early eighties *Le Monde* was in the midst of a financial crisis and morale was low. Plenel landed a job as a security

correspondent despite the longstanding unofficial ban on Trotskyists joining the paper. Journalists in this department were looked down on by correspondents in the elite political and foreign sections of *Le Monde*. But all of that was about to change. The financial problems led to a management appetite for 'scoops' in order to boost circulation. Plenel found himself at the centre of this new strategy.

The security services in France were a rich source of leaks in the early eighties. In 1982 the Mitterrand coalition of socialists and communists had come to power after decades of Gaullism. The security services (police and secret services) were considered to be bastions of reaction and enemies of the new Government.

Mitterrand's approach to this problem was to demand of employees of the security services absolute loyalty to the State as distinct from loyalty to the Socialist or Communist Parties. Some of the socialist activists, however, favoured greater power for the Trade Unions. Plenel cultivated the leader of the Police Trade Union and, in effect, acted as his PR man in the pages of *Le Monde*. The *Le Monde* journalist was also involved in the Police Trade Union's paper, writing articles for it and advising on editorial content. The quid pro quo was that confidential files relating to sensitive investigations were shown to Plenel. The head of the Police Union became powerful within the security services because of his influence on *Le Monde* and Plenel became a journalistic hero because of his scoops.

Plenel had ceased to be a mere 'reporter' he had become a participant in the power struggles within an important arm of the French State.

This story gives an insight into the nature of 'investigative' journalism. A journalist who receives confidential information is not receiving it gratuitously. In general, the information is given because it serves a **specific** interest as distinct from the **public** interest. The person who leaks information is, of course, not likely to reveal anything that is against his own interests even though there may be plenty of such information.

It turned out that the head of the Police Union was corrupt. An investigation into the accounts of the Union forced him to resign in order to avoid a criminal prosecution. Needless to say this was a 'scoop' that escaped *Le Monde*'s investigative reporters. To cover his tracks, Plenel denounced the investigation as a sham. The truth was that for all its 'scoops' *Le Monde* had only succeeded in giving a

distorted view of France's security services in the previous years.

It was one thing to be engaged on one side of a power struggle within the security services. However, the leaks began to become matters for the head of State. In the 1980s Mitterrand became aware of interesting developments in the Soviet Union and wanted France to have closer relations with the new Soviet leader, Gorbachev. Unfortunately, every time the French approached the Soviets, details of the meetings were revealed in *Le Monde* which had the effect of undermining relations between the two countries.

Mitterrand authorised the bugging of the phones of *Le Monde* journalists. This, of course, has resonances of events in Ireland at around the same time. Was the French President right? In my view he was. The effect of the leaks was to undermine the French State. Why should the President have tolerated this?

Of course, there is a civil liberties argument that the all-powerful state should not infringe on the freedom of the individual. But the journalists were not acting as individuals: they were working for an organisation. It could be said that the freedom of the Press is one of the pillars of a democracy and therefore no interference should be tolerated. But Mitterrand didn't interfere with the publication of details. (He was known for never taking a libel action against newspapers even though there were many occasions when he would have won.) His reasons were to cut off the supply of information in the interests of the State. To argue that Mitterrand had no right to do this would be to say that *Le Monde* had the right to eavesdrop on important affairs of State, whereas the State had no right to protect itself by eavesdropping on *Le Monde*.

The effect of the eavesdropping was that Yves Bonnet, the head of the Secret Services was sacked for being the source of some of the leaks. But relations had already been damaged with the Soviet Union. It is interesting to speculate on what would be the consequence of closer relations between France and the Soviet Union. It is possible that the Soviet Union might not have opted so quickly for an unrestricted free market with all the disastrous consequences that that had for Russian society.

It was the policy of the USA at the time to prevent direct relations between non communist countries and the Soviet Union. All relations were to be routed through the USA. Shortly after Mitterrand's retirement

he said of Plenel that he had concluded that the *Le Monde* journalist was working for the Americans. Such is *Le Monde*'s power in French society that the comment was not reported on in any French newspaper.

The role of *Le Monde* in French society and by extension the role of the Press in general is the main theme of this book.

On the face of it Plenel had nothing in common with his colleagues, Colombani and Minc. Chief Executive Colombani comes across as a dominating, aggressive leader (a less flattering description would be that he was an arrogant bully). His politics were never as clearly defined as Plenel. He was a journalist by profession who worked in the elite foreign section of *Le Monde*. However, he had one characteristic in common with Plenel. They both seemed to have been heavily influenced by their fathers. They have each written a number of books in which their fathers featured. However, in both cases the picture given was incomplete. The general impression is that both fathers were alienated from the French State and this had a big influence on the sons.

However, the authors of this book fill in some of the gaps. Both fathers worked for the French Foreign Service. Colombani's father was a Corsican. In the 1930s Mussolini asserted Italian claims on Corsica. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the island declared their loyalty to France, but Colombani's father was among the tiny minority who threw in their lot with Italian fascism. His activities were such that he merited a quite detailed file by the French Secret Service. However, he managed to obtain a job in the French Foreign Service during the Pétain era when allegiance to fascism would not have been a handicap. His activities in the 1930s were forgotten about after the war.

Plenel's father was the assistant Governor in the French island colony of Martinique. He saw this island as another Cuba and tried to encourage an anti-imperialist uprising much to the bemusement of the natives. The French State seems to have taken an indulgent position in relation to his activities and moved him to places where he would not cause too much damage. But, of course, his career stagnated.

The authors of the book consider it significant that both fathers in different ways were alienated from the French State.

There is less in the book about the third member of the Triumvirate, Alain Minc, *Le Monde*'s finance man. He was a brilliant

graduate of one of the elite French universities. He looked set for a glittering business career but he proceeded to run one of the first enterprises he was in charge of into the ground. His importance to *Le Monde* lies in his business connections and relationship with the top French companies. His connections have enabled *Le Monde* to obtain much needed capital.

The book shows how the three rose to power. In meetings leading to the election of the Chief Executive some of the journalists felt that they were at a Trotskyist meeting. Ex-Trotskyist supporters of Plenel (and ultimately Colombani) seemed to agree with Plenel on everything no matter what the subject. The authors remark that as soon as such people are in a position of influence within French society the Trotskyist Party ceases to be able to control them. But in the case of Plenel and his supporters the old instincts remained even if the manoeuvring ceased to have any Party-political content.

The financial problems that *Le Monde* experienced in the nineties enabled the Triumvirate to dismantle the democratic management structures of the newspaper. Alain Minc was an important player in this process. This enabled the three to control the paper unhindered.

One of the most fascinating parts of the book is the description of *Le Monde*'s relationship with Lionel Jospin. The socialist Prime Minister foolishly tried to court the newspaper in his bid for the Presidential election of 2002. Against the better judgement of his cabinet he cravenly went along with *Le Monde*'s campaign in support of the Corsican Separatists (Colombani is obviously his father's son). This led to the resignation of Jean Pierre Chevènement who was the Interior Minister at the time. Jospin also sacked his Finance Minister, Dominic Strauss-Kahn, for some trivial business matter which *Le Monde* exposed.

These actions undermined Jospin's reputation for integrity. The French people could see through the opportunism of the Prime Minister. But then *Le Monde* rather than supporting Jospin in the difficulties which it was partly responsible for, ran a series on his Trotskyist past!

Jospin apparently was a member of a Trotskyist group in the mid-sixties. Plenel, of course, was in a position to know all about this because of his own Trotskyist past. There are two ways of looking at this. On the one hand, Jospin's past can be written off as the exuberance of youth, a sort of political rite of passage. But on the other hand, while a person is entitled to

change his political philosophy, it is reasonable that a candidate for the highest political office in France should account for his political past. The difficulty for Jospin was that, like so many others, he never formally resigned. His membership just lapsed. He did not leave as a result of a political dispute. But, of course, such standards of accountability never applied to *Le Monde* journalists, including its Editor, who also never formally left the LCR.

Jospin finished third behind Chirac and LePen in the Presidential Election of 2002. *Le Monde* cannot be held completely responsible for this debacle, but it played a part, not only because of its disastrous relationship with Jospin, but also because of its general editorial line which is that France is irredeemably corrupt. If such is the case, who better than Jean Marie LePen to sort things out!

This brings us to the question of *Le Monde*'s general political orientation. The authors make the point that its politics cannot be explained in terms of the French Political Parties.

The paper engages with 'enemies' in all the political parties and is more constant in its hatreds than in its loves. Before the rise of the Triumvirate, *Le Monde* was supportive of Mitterrand, but the new *Le Monde* of Plenel, Colombani and Minc has pursued a relentless vendetta against the Socialist President. His death in 1995 has not stemmed the flow of vitriol from the newspaper. Other targets of the paper include the republican socialist, Jean Pierre Chevènement, and Jacques Chirac.

A clue to *Le Monde*'s political orientation can be found in its friends. One of the few politicians it never criticises is the free market, pro-American politician, Nicholas Sarkozy. *Le Monde* is in favour of Globalisation and as such it never tires of denigrating France. It believes France is irredeemably corrupt at present and has been in the past. It often has articles on negative aspects of French history, such as the Pétain era and the war in Algeria. There is never any attempt to place the French crimes in historical perspective or to try to understand them. One of the few times it supported President Chirac was when he apologised for France's treatment of the Jews during the Pétain era. This apology was completely against the policy of De Gaulle. De Gaulle's formula was that Pétain did not represent the real France. If he had, De Gaulle would never have fought for France because it would not have been worth saving. Therefore France has nothing to apologise for.

The authors remark ironically that

although *Le Monde* has taken an Anglo-American orientation, its interest in international politics has never been smaller. The 'old' *Le Monde* used to have three or four stories on its front page which the Editor thought the French should know about. The stories could be about anywhere in the world, even about countries that the French knew very little about and had not up until then taken an interest in. But the 'new' *Le Monde* panders to provincial Parisian concerns. It is not really interested in the history of other countries and therefore adopts a moralistic tone. For example, in the conflict in Yugoslavia, the Kosovans represented 'good' and the Serbs represented 'evil'. There was no criticism of the NATO bombing or mention that the 'ethnic cleansing' by the Serbs only took place **after** that bombing. The authors also give examples of Foreign correspondents who left the paper because their reports were frequently heavily edited for not fitting in with the paper's line.

There is a very interesting analysis of the power and influence of *Le Monde* on French society. Many French journalists have as their ultimate career objective to work for *Le Monde*, which is still France's leading paper of record. For this reason criticism of the paper from the media tends to be non-existent or very restrained. *Le Monde*'s journalists frequently appear on television and radio programmes. It has bought a number of provincial papers in France. Quite often a story that first appears in *Le Monde* is covered in other newspapers and media merely because of its reporting in *Le Monde* rather than for the story's intrinsic importance. *Le Monde* is influential in setting the French political agenda.

The authors claim that *Le Monde* is no longer respected, but is feared. It has the power to 'break' or at least damage reputations rather than 'make' them. The book gives examples of people in the political, academic, literary and business fields who have had their reputations unjustifiably damaged. Unlike the 'old' *Le Monde* the 'right of reply' is barely observed and errors are grudgingly if at all acknowledged. The authors give the example of a story that Plenel himself wrote alleging that Noriega's government in Panama made large financial contributions to the French Socialist Party. The document on which the story was based was a crude forgery. Plenel himself never apologised or acknowledged the error. Another journalist made a grudging apology on his behalf and about a week later an opinion piece appeared in which it was accepted that even though the document on which the story was based was a forgery the story

itself was 'likely'.

The authors claim that Plenel believes that it is more important to be "engaged" than to be factually correct. He has often described the newspaper as a "counter power".

Although *Le Monde* has the power to damage, the authors make the point that its capacity to influence in a positive way is very limited. They give examples of books which the newspaper promoted with generous coverage and extravagant praise. Many of these books were by authors who had connections with *Le Monde*, but, of course, this was rarely mentioned. However, positive reviews in *Le Monde* have only a marginal effect on sales. The literary pages of the newspaper are no longer taken seriously by publishers or the reading public.

Finally, there is an interesting chapter on the finances of *Le Monde*. The authors believe that the newspaper is only kept

afloat by other publications that the group has bought. As already indicated, its capital requirements are regularly replenished by companies on the French Stock Exchange. The authors also claim that its audited circulation figures are unreliable. A significant proportion of its copies are bought by French State companies such as Air France. The proportion of copies bought by these companies is far higher than that warranted by normal sales to the public. The authors suggest past political pressure as the reason for this. Also such companies buy at a fraction (in *Le Monde*'s case 25c) of the cover price. Normally the independent audit bureau would discount sales which are less than half the cover price. However *Le Monde* circumvents this problem by invoicing at the full price and then issuing a credit note and in this way such sales are included in the audit figures!

In conclusion, this book is a well researched and stimulating read.

John Martin

Peter Hart—*The Issue Of Sources*

When Peter Hart's book *The IRA And Its Enemies, Violence And Community In Cork, 1916-1923* was first published in 1998, I reviewed it in *The Month, A Review Of Christian Thought And World Affairs* (September-October 1998). That particular issue of *The Month* was devoted to Ireland and contained many excellent articles, including one by Brendan Bradshaw on *Irish Nationalism: An Historical Perspective*. At that time I was of the opinion that, as well as the question of oral sources, there were three written sources, in particular, that merited detailed attention in relation to the ambush at Kilmichael and the IRA's treatment of Protestants. These may be listed as follows:

firstly, the 'official' account of the Kilmichael ambush that was released to the press by Dublin Castle at the time;

secondly, the account of the ambush which is recorded in a captured IRA document that is contained in *The Irish Rebellion In The 6th Division Area* (Strickland Papers, P 362, Imperial War Museum);

and, thirdly, the official report into Army Intelligence in Ireland which is recorded in *A Record Of The Rebellion In Ireland In 1920-1921* (Jeudwine Papers, 72/82/2, Imperial War Museum).

All of these three sources, and, indeed, the oral sources, have been debated extensively and minutely in the year's since the publication of Peter Hart's book. Meda Ryan in her recent book, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter* (2003), has summarised much of the discussion and added important new information of her own. Here I wish simply to say a few words about the third written source, the official report of Army Intelligence, and Peter Hart's response to the comments that I made in the review article.

In that article I wrote:

"moreover, by maintaining that Protestants did not have sufficient knowledge to act as informers, Hart heightens the suspicion that they were killed for religious motives. Citing the official *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, Hart writes 'the truth was that, as British intelligence officers recognised, "in the south the Protestants and those who supported the Government rarely gave much information because, except by chance, they had not got it to give"' (Hart, pp305,306).

Hart does not give the next two sentences from the official Record which read:

"an exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave informa-

tion. Although the Intelligence Officer of the area was exceptionally experienced and although the troops were most active it proved almost impossible to protect those brave men, many of whom were murdered while almost all the remainder suffered grave material loss.”

I concluded by observing that, “in short, evidence from this British source confirms that the IRA killings in the Bandon area were motivated by political and not sectarian considerations”. Possibly, military considerations, rather than political, would have been a more fitting way to describe the reason for the IRA response to those who informed. At that time Peter Hart gave no reason for the omission of these two significant sentences. When I heard, in 2002, that he had edited *A Record Of The Rebellion In Ireland*, I awaited his treatment of the two missing sentences with great interest (see Peter Hart, ed., *British Intelligence On Ireland, 1920-1921. The Final Reports*).

The missing sentences were included in the text of the *Record* but attached to them was a footnote—footnote 28. It read:

“in *The IRA and its Enemies* (pp 293-315) I argue that the great majority of those shot as informers in Cork were not British agents, and that many actual informers were spared because they were protected by their social position and connections. Some condemned West Cork Protestants did give, or try to give, information but there is no evidence that they acted en masse despite this statement.”

Nowhere does Peter Hart give an explanation for, or an acknowledgement of, the fact that in *The IRA And Its Enemies* the two sentences had been omitted. The evidence from the *Record*, a source which Hart accepts as “the most trustworthy” that we have, on this particular issue is deemed not to be reliable (Hart, *British Intelligence*, p6). By suppressing, and then dismissing, this important source evidence, Hart was encouraged to republish in 2003, without any qualification, his essay on *The Protestant Experience Of Revolution In Southern Ireland* (see Peter Hart, *The IRA At War 1916-1923*, 2003).

The essay concluded that “all of the nightmare images of ethnic conflict in the twentieth century are here... sectarianism was embedded in the vocabulary and the syntax of the Irish revolution, north and south” (Hart, *IRA At War*, p240). One might have hoped that mature reflection on the evidence from the *Record Of The*

Rebellion, let alone other contrary evidence adduced by myself and others, might have led Hart to temper his extreme conclusions on the sectarian nature of the Irish war. It was not to be and one can draw one’s own conclusion. In forming that conclusion it may be important to note that in Hart’s edition of the *Record Of The Rebellion* there are other significant omissions.

An “*editorial note*”, presumably by Peter Hart, but possibly by David Fitzpatrick, the Series Editor, states that “for reasons of space and relevance I have omitted the introduction dealing with events prior to 1920, portions of chapter 2 dealing with censorship, publicity and the structure of the IRA, part of chapter 3 on topography and the 1921 Truce, and an appendix dealing with the Irish Republican Brotherhood” (Hart, ed., *British Intelligence*, p16). At first glance, leaving aside for the moment any *caveats* one may have about not publishing a document in full, everything seems openly transparent. There are omissions; and we have been told about them. However, we have not been informed of all the omissions! In Chapter Three, prior to the omitted section on *Topography*, there is a section on *The People*. This section tells us what the British Army thought of Sinn Fein, the IRA and the Irish people in general.

There one reads that:

“practically all commanders and intelligence officers considered that 90% of the people were Sinn Feiners or sympathisers with Sinn Fein, and that all Sinn Feiners were murderers or sympathised with murder. Judged by English standards the Irish are a difficult and unsatisfactory people. Their civilisation is different and in many ways lower than that of the English. They are entirely lacking in the Englishman’s distinctive respect for the truth and their answers are usually coloured by a desire to say what their questioner wishes. This often leads well-meaning people to act on their answers.”

“Many were of a degenerate type and their methods of waging war were in most cases barbarous, influenced by hatred and devoid of courage. It is, however, notorious that guerilla war is almost invariably barbarous and that had the IRA fought on more regular lines and in formed bodies they would have suffered far heavier casualties and achieved far less success than they did” (*Record Of The Rebellion*, pp31,32 from original copy).

Much more on the same lines is contained in this survey of the people. Underlying the presumption that the Irish were an

inferior race, there was the assumption that they should be content to live under a British Government and British law.

For anyone wishing to gain knowledge about the enemies of the IRA, one of the principal aims of Hart’s original study, this section on *The People* is of compelling interest and relevance. It tells us, in no uncertain terms, that the British Army, especially that branch of it engaged in Intelligence, viewed the Irish in racist terms. However, while damning the Catholic Irish at every opportunity, and being fully aware of the killings of informers by the IRA, the *Record* does not accuse them of sectarianism. Questions, therefore, remain: why, it has to be asked, has Peter Hart omitted this section of the *Record* from the published version? why did he fail to notify his readers that it had been omitted? and what of the two missing sentences in relation to informers?

In the meantime it seems safe to conclude, from the evidence of “the most trustworthy source” that we have, that the British Army was inspired by racist sentiments and that the IRA, while attacking loyalists, did not engage in sectarian activities.

Brian Murphy osb
21 June 2005

Uncommon purposes

“Sir - During his recent visit to a World War I memorial in Belgium, the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern said he wants to “lay to rest the spectre of violence in Ireland” and, to this end, he is inspired by Irish warfare (against Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Turks and others who never invaded, conquered, expropriated, colonised or starved Ireland) in one of the most violent and bloody episodes the world has ever known.

“Mr Ahern says the differences between Irish nationalists and unionists were “transcended by their higher, common purpose”. The unionists went to war (against a country which a few months earlier had armed them in their revolt against the British Parliament) for King and Country, aka the British Empire, at the height of its genocidal, world-conquering power.

“Nationalists joined the British Army to defend the rights of small nations. Where was the common purpose in that? What was higher about it? And what purpose did anyone actually achieve in the Killing Fields of WWI that Mr Ahern is so keen to emulate? “

Pat Muldowney

De Valera's Heir

In 1926 de Valera took the occasion of his split from Sinn Féin, on the issue of swearing the Treaty oath in order to contest elections in the Free State and take any seats won, as an opportunity to disencumber himself of the Northern nuisance. Northern members of Sinn Féin who agreed with the Long Fellow and wanted to join his Fianna Fáil, the Republican Party, were given short shrift and told to take themselves off.

Fianna Fáil was founded as a partitionist party. In 1926, slightly constitutional and all as it was, it stood idly by on the border shouting *Ne Plus Ultra*.

In 1926 it started standing idly by. It stood idly by in every year that followed, except insofar as the needs of Southern politics required it sometimes and briefly to appear to be not standing idly by. And on the heels of those occasional hunts, when IRA volunteers exerted themselves to give practical effect to De Valera's anti-partitionist rants and his anti-partitionist Constitution, de Valera exerted himself to execute the volunteers. In Charlie Kerins' case he brought the British hangman in to add grievous insult to fatal injury. (There is a case to be made for Kerins having been made an example of in defence of the South's wartime neutrality, but it is as ever a partitionist case).

In respect of the national question, the badge of difference between Fianna Fáil and the Blueshirts was simply that the legion of the rearguard was louder in its hypocrisy. Cummann na nGaedhal and Fine Gael took the Treaty as the ground of Irish politics and left the North to fester. Fianna Fáil affected to see a political life above and beyond the Treaty but really it was only concerned to now and again stir the festering Northern pot to its own occasional advantage. Both stood idly by. Fianna Fáil just stood idly by in a more truculent stance; it stood idly by with attitude.

From the party's formation the politics of Fianna Fáil have been partitionist. In bickering concert with Fine Gael it has come to constitute the political establishment of a partitionist state. The one matter on which that political establishment has been of one mind has been its *Ne Plus Ultra*, for that they've been hand in hand

on the border, all together standing idly by.

The recent rise of Sinn Féin, alike demanding and exemplifying a practical all-Ireland mode of political activity, has both shocked and consolidated the partitionist establishment. On the side of its consolidation is Fianna Fáil's self-denying acceptance of a junior role in its governing coalition with the PDs and Rabbitte's leading Labour into coalition as the first stage of a merger with Fine Gael. On the other side Fianna Fáil and Labour have been shocked into accepting a Northern membership. Labour has a functioning Northern branch. Fianna Fáil may soon have at least one functioning Constituency Party.

IN A BORDER COUNTY

The demand for a reconstitution of Irish political life to take account of the disenfranchised nationalists of the North is one that is now articulated at every level of political activity in every corner of the island. It is argued in the Dáil and Seanad and also at County Council level. Take this from the minutes of Newry And Mourne District Council, their meeting of Monday 2 December 2002:—

“The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the names of Councillor Lewis and Councillor D Hyland:—

“That this Council calls on An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern and the Irish Government, to recognize the exclusion of Irish Citizens resident in the 6 Counties from exercising their right to participate in Presidential Elections and calls on the Irish Government to bring forward the necessary Legislation to allow them to vote in Elections for the Office of President of Ireland.”

“In formally proposing the Motion, Councillor Lewis said it was very important that Irish Citizens had the right to participate in Elections for the Office of President of Ireland.

“Councillor Lewis said if such Legislation was introduced it would help implement the Good Friday Agreement and would bring an All Ireland dimension to the whole process.

“Councillor Lewis said that a person from the six Counties could become President of Ireland but if they lived in the six Counties they could not vote in the Elections.

“Councillor Lewis said it was a timely opportunity for this Council to show their support for the ongoing work of the Good Friday Agreement.

“Councillor Hyland fully endorsed the comments made by Councillor Lewis and said an important element of the Good Friday Agreement was the establishment of a number of Cross Border and All Ireland Institutions.

“Councillor Hyland said it was important that the Irish Government and the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern granted rights to all Irish Citizens to vote in the Elections for the Office of President of Ireland.

“Councillor Reilly said the whole thrust of the Good Friday Agreement was parity of esteem and equality within Northern Ireland. He said the introduction of such Legislation would be totally divisive and would alienate Protestants from the System. He asked Sinn Fein to withdraw their Notice of Motion and make efforts to build trust within Northern Ireland.

“As an amendment Councillor H Carr proposed and Councillor Bradley seconded that this Council note the All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution, 7th Progress Report on the matter of extending voting rights in Presidential Elections to Northern Ireland Voters and encourages Political Parties to promote their views on such Constitutional change through appropriate channels.

“The amendment was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows (Copy attached): -

For: 9

Against: 13

Abstentions: 4

“The amendment was declared lost and the proposal was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows...:-

For: 13

Against: 5

Abstentions: 8

“The proposal was declared carried.”

Two and a half years later the demand of the District Council's motion was restated by the area's newly elected Westminster MP, Sinn Féin's Conor Murphy, who was then replied to by the Dáil Minister for anything he cares to take under his wing. Ulster Television's Newsroom website reported on May 12th:—

“Newly-elected Sinn Fein MP Conor Murphy last night called for the 18 MPs in Northern Ireland to be allowed speak in the Dáil and Seanad in Dublin.

“The issue was a key element of the province's power-sharing agreement which foundered last December.

“But today Mr McDowell, Sinn Fein's harshest critic in the Irish Government, said the concession was “simply not on the cards”.

“He said Sinn Fein representatives had sought election to Westminster and should therefore take part in its parliament.

““Primarily, Dail Eireann is a place for people who are elected by the people of this State”, he said in Dublin.

“The minister said the newly-elected five Sinn Fein MPs had plenty of opportunities to air their views at public debates in the Republic.

““I went north and spoke at an SDLP event but it doesn’t allow me to walk into the Assembly in Northern Ireland or into Westminster and start speaking there”, he explained.

“He said Sinn Fein MPs could get their views across through their five elected TDs in the Dail or through the cross-party Oireachtas committees.

“Newry Armagh MP Mr Murphy yesterday defended his party’s decision to stay out of the Westminster chamber and argued instead for speaking rights in the Dáil in Dublin.

“Speaking in London as he collected passes to access parliamentary facilities, he said: “I have to say it is hugely frustrating as an Irish citizen living on one end of the border that the Irish Government is denying us the right to contribute to debates which effect our everyday lives”.”

All of the little comment there was on McDowell’s intervention was along the lines of ‘Who does he think he is?’, which was less than helpful.

It is true that on this as on other occasions McDowell appeared to set himself above the Taoiseach and the major party in the governing coalition and to set at naught the recommendations of the cross-party Oireachtas committee on the Constitution. But why shouldn’t he?

THE MASTER’S VOICE

The answer to the question “Who does he think he is?” is that whatever he might think he is precisely the power and the substance of what only appears to be Ahern’s and a Fianna Fáil-led Government. He is the voice of the consolidation of the partitionist Southern political establishment. When he speaks that establishment’s *Ne Plus Ultra* against Sinn Féin and a reconstruction of Irish political life to readmit Northern nationalism he is an Irish Free State incarnate.

When McDowell describes himself as the real republican and a republican with Northern roots he draws on the Treatyite legacy of MacNeill and O’Higgins which of itself, in some aspects at least, is debatable. Anyway, the Treatyite legacy is not the source of McDowell’s present power and influence.

That power and influence, his position at the plunging point of a consolidating establishment, is a tribute to McDowell’s status as the one true heir of de Valera’s longest shadow—the exclusion of Northern nationalists from the nation.

Titles and positions and all the comfortable appearances of state are nothing beside the reality which McDowell stands heir to. De Valera excluded Northern nationalists and McDowell stands unequivocally for the maintenance of that exclusion. McDowell stands for the integrity of de Valera’s state. He is de Valera’s heir.

De Valera’s Party can’t say that but they see it and they bow to it. McDowell is de Valera’s heir.

Joe Keenan

Tackling bonded labour:

Speech of Mark Langhammer to Labour Party Conference (Tralee)

“*Mark Langhammer, Labour Forum, Northern Ireland.* Chair, delegates, can I start by saying how pleased I am to be the first delegate from a Northern branch to speak at Conference for several generations.

The motion, submitted by the Northern Ireland Labour Forum, and adopted by the National Executive Committee is very like Composite 4, passed yesterday. It addresses the “bonded” status of migrant labour.

I have personal reason to support the motion. I am, myself, the son of a migrant worker – my father and his people fled from the fascist intervention in the Sudetenland of 1938 as a consequence of my grandfather’s involvement in the Czech Social Democrat movement.

My father found opportunity in the Belfast textile trade of the time, just as many migrants today find opportunity in agriculture, in food processing, in our public hospitals, in health care, in tourism and hospitality and across our economy.

One such was Oksana Sukanova, a graduate from the Ukraine, who came to work in a food processing plant in North Antrim. Her work permit “tied” her to that job. Her lodgings came with the job. And when things went wrong, when she was “let go”, she didn’t just lose a job, she lost her lodgings, and the opportunity to find work elsewhere. She was on the streets, her money ran out, she slept in shop doorways and – in the harsh winter nights of last December – suffered from severe frostbite. Both Oksana’s legs had to be amputated. She is 23 years old.

That’s the reality, delegates, of the “flexible labour market”. That’s the reality of outsourcing, de-regulation and cost competitiveness. That’s the reality of liberal, “third way” economics

Many employers do the decent thing, and play fair. Others are tempted by the criminal gangmasters who run the people trade. As the leader of the PES said so clearly to conference last night, this issue requires policy framed both cross borders and internationally. The gangmasters know no boundaries.

Motion 115 seeks a humane and civilised policy that only Labour, steeped in internationalism, can truly provide.

Our policy should cover the island, and should address the breadth of the work permit. It should address the issue of tied housing. And it should address the regulation of recruitment and employment agencies. It should, delegates, allow for migrants to be welcomed, it should allow for integration, and allow for working people – local and foreign – to stand side by side.

I urge you to support motion 115.”

“Antrim man on national body

By Barry McCaffrey

“A former Co. Antrim councillor is believed to be the first northerner to be appointed to the Irish Labour Party’s national executive. Mark Langhammer, who was an independent councillor in Newtownabbey for 12 years, was co-opted on to Labour’s ruling body after narrowly missing out on election last month.

“In September 2002 the UDA was blamed for planting a bomb under Mr Langhammer’s car as he brought his children to school.

“The 45 year old has been prominent in a campaign for the Irish Labour Party to stand in Northern Ireland elections.

“In 2003 he successfully lobbied for it to change its constitution to allow northerners to become party members.

“He stood down from local government this year to concentrate on building the party’s strength in the north. Welcoming his appointment, Mr Langhammer said:

““This step sends a significant message that the Labour Party is prepared to look, intelligently and creatively, at how serious, island-wide, governmental politics can be developed over time within Northern Ireland.

“Intergovernmental co-operation, equality within Northern Ireland, a growing island wide north/south dynamic in political life and east/west collaboration will remain at the heart of Labour policy.’

“Labour TD Kathleen Lynch, who nominated Mr Langhammer, welcomed the new northern representation on the national executive.

““Mark is a fine person who has done great work for the people of Northern Ireland and for the Irish Labour Party in recent years,’ she said.

““I felt there was an obvious lack of northern representation in the Labour Party and hopefully Mark’s position on the national executive will help to rectify that imbalance.” (Irish News 22.6.2005). ●

Shorts

Kilmichael Deep Throats

At last the identity of the famous “Deep Throat” has been revealed. His real name is Mark Felt and he was the number 2 in the FBI at the time of the Watergate Scandal which led to the resignation of President Nixon in 1974.

A few years ago Ireland had a very different “scandal”. It did not lead to any resignations. But revisionist historian Peter Hart claimed that the great revolutionary leader Tom Barry was in fact a “serial killer”. The famous “false surrender” at Kilmichael in 1920 did not happen and therefore Barry’s freedom fighters shot the British Auxiliaries in cold blood. Hart was given a prize established in memory of the British Ambassador (Ewart-Biggs) for his efforts.

However since the publication of his book, questions have been asked about the authenticity of the documents Hart relied on and his use of an account of the ambush written by Barry himself in the Irish Press.

Above all, doubt has been cast on Hart’s “deep throats”. These were the survivors of the Kilmichael ambush who allegedly claimed in interviews that there was no “false surrender”. At the time the interviews were alleged to have taken place it appears that there was only one survivor of the Kilmichael ambush and he was incapacitated. Hart has not revealed the identities of his sources even though when his book was published they, unlike Mark Felt, would have died many years previously.

In a recent interview in *History Ireland* Hart suggested that Tom Barry was not that important?! And he’d really rather talk about something else.

We’re not saying that Peter Hart is a liar without a shred of intellectual integrity

... We just find what he says extremely difficult to swallow!

Another Scandal: Irish ‘Neutrality’

Labour TD Roisin Shortall asked the Minister for Transport some very interesting questions last May.

Minister Brennan revealed that in the first four months of this year 110,766 troops passed through Shannon Airport. This compared to 47,149 troops in the first four months of 2004.

More intriguingly, it appears that the Irish Tax Payer **PAYS** for the privilege of allowing foreign military aircraft to use its airspace. The Department of Transport paid out almost 10 million euros in the five year period from 2000 to 2004. 1.1 million was paid in 2000 and for the subsequent years the amounts were 1.4 million, 1.6 million, 2.1 million and 3.7

million in 2004.

Apparently the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (Eurocontrol) charges the users of airspace for the navigation service it provides to airlines etc. But for some reason military aircraft are allowed to avail of this service free of charge. The Irish State therefore compensates Eurocontrol or to be more precise its Irish arm (the Irish Aviation Authority) for the service it provides to military aircraft.

Brennan did not give any details of the nationality of the troops passing through Shannon or the nationality of the military aircraft using our airspace. But it’s a reasonable guess that the overwhelming majority relates to the USA. So, in effect, the Irish taxpayer is contributing to the imperialist occupation of Iraq.

If we assume that the prices charged by the Aviation Authority are stable, the figures show that there has been a more than threefold increase in military activity in our airspace from 2000 to 2004. And if troop movements for the first four movements are anything to go by there will be a more than twofold increase in 2005 over 2004 (i.e. more than six times more military activity from 2000 to 2005).

The political party that DeValera founded should hang its head in shame.

Fianna Fail: The Redmondite Party?

But perhaps Fianna Fail is beyond shame.

Here is a description of a remarkable speech that Bertie Ahern made recently.

“Mr. Ahern speaking during a visit to a World War 1 memorial park in Belgium noted the sacrifices from both sides of the current Irish border during World War 1. ‘The men were Protestants, Catholics, Unionists and Nationalists but their differences were transcended by a common higher purpose’, he said. ‘This common struggle for a shared ideal is something which should inspire us as we face up to present challenges. In Ireland, it is time to finally lay to rest the spectre of violence that still stalks us.’” (Daily Ireland, 8.6.05)

But what was the “*common higher purpose*” and “*shared ideal*” that resulted in the death of 50,000 Irishmen? Does Ahern seriously believe that Britain fought the First World War for “*the rights of small nations*” or “*gallant Belgium*”, one of the most vicious imperialist powers of the time?

When he says “*it is time to finally lay to rest the spectre of violence that still stalks us*”, what spectre is he talking about? Could it be the 1916 Rising which was celebrated far less this year than the first anniversary of the smoking ban?

The heroes of 1916 were against the wholesale butchery of Irish people in the interests of British imperialism. The policy of not participating in British imperialist wars, which was followed faithfully by

DeValera, has long been part of the ideology of the State. If Ahern wants to abandon this he should do so openly in the same way as John Bruton.

But we somehow doubt that the Irish people are quite ready to rehabilitate John Redmond.

Social Regression

An *Irish Times* report (18.5.05) on the recent Medical Card controversy revealed that in 2005 there were 100,000 less Medical Card holders than in 1997 despite an increase in the population of 400,000 in that period. The proportion of the population covered by Medical Cards has reduced from 34.4% to 28.3% in that period.

Despite all the wealth generated in recent years, the level of social protection has diminished.

The Workers Must Wait

There may be a good socialist reason for voting Labour in the next election. It’s just that we can’t think of one.

Pat Rabbitte in his speech at his Party Conference denied that it was a ‘tax and spend’ party. Indeed such advocates of more taxation were “*Matt Talbot*” types. The only change envisaged is the abolition of tax loopholes for the wealthy (e.g. the tax exemption on stallion fees).

There are two problems with this. Firstly, what if Fianna Fail should get there first? Finance Minister Brian Cowen is already reviewing these tax incentives. Secondly, how can a socialist voter feel confident that even such a modest policy will be implemented by a party that has committed itself to a Fine Gael coalition?

If Fine Gael says ‘no’ where is there for Labour to go? It could opt out of government, but Rabbitte’s stated objective is to help provide an alternative to Fianna Fail. At this stage he cannot avoid the Fine Gael embrace whatever the cost.

So the left wing voter will be asked to decide which is the least right wing alternative: Fianna Fail plus the PDs or Fine Gael plus Labour and others (not excluding the PDs).

Expect a big increase in the vote of Sinn Fein, the Socialist Party and Independents in the next election.

Back to Reality

Meanwhile back in the real world we learn that the Credit Unions lent 30 million euros last year to cover medical expenses (The Irish Times, 30.5.05). The Chief Executive of the Irish League of Credit Unions believes the actual figure is much higher because ordinary people don’t like to talk about their health problems to their lenders. The Irish Medical Organisation claims that 10,000 people have lost their entitlement to a Medical Card since Mary Harney became Minister for Health last November. So the 30 million figure is likely to be even higher in 2005.

A Nation And A Half Once Again!

I think Desmond Fennell (see *One And A Half Nations?* in *Irish Political Review* June 2205) mistakes the basis of his difference regarding the Ulster Protestants. It is that he believes in the existence of a British nation, while I have never been able to find it. The British state is certainly not in origin a national state of the British. It is the English state which gained hegemonic control over the Scots and the Welsh. Bagehot was not mistaken when, a century and a half after the Scottish Union, he called his major work, *The English Constitution*.

I cannot see that this English state, though controlling the two islands for centuries, ever developed them into a common nationality—or sought to do so. The English mode of government operates by stereotypes and nicknames. The English are quite clear that their state is also inhabited by Jocks and Taffies and Pats, who are all worthy fellows of course, but who are not quite *it*. There is a natural assumption of superiority on their part. It is not an affectation, or a compensation for a feeling of inadequacy. It is simply part of the nature of being England. And, though it generates a degree of resentment, it works very well.

About 20 years ago I heard an interview with Tony O'Reilly on Radio Ulster. When he made a point of saying that he never felt inferior to the English, I thought *there* was a soul yearning for a sign of grace from the English. And then, of course, he went and got himself a knighthood.

Britain is a state which includes a combination of nationalities shepherded by the masterful English.

William Sampson, the United Irishman, was an Anglo-Irish gentleman. The ship on which he was being deported was shipwrecked and he was cast up in a strange country where the people engaged in strange rituals. It turned out to be a part of Wales where the regiment of *Ancient Britons* was recruited. The Ancient Britons were terrorising the Irish just then. As he found his bearings, he figured out that they were Methodists of the kind in Ireland was called *Swaddlers*—or it might have been Jumpers: it's a long time since I read his *Memoirs*.

The Anglo-Irish gentry were quint-essentially English in some ways but, unless they also had estates in England—which Sampson, being a professional man, did not—they tended to have a false idea of what England was. They did not appreciate that its gentility rested on a deep barbaric underlay.

I have only the haziest idea of what “*ethnic*” is. In some usages it seems to mean racial, but in others not. If it is used without the connotation of ‘racial’, is it synonymous with ‘national’? It doesn't appear that it is. It suggests something more profound. But, unless it means something quite superficial, I do not see how there can be an ethnic bond between the Welsh and the Cornish on the one hand and the East Anglians on the other. Or between the Highland Scots (or even the Lowlanders) and the men of Kent.

They are all willing participants in the English state, which humours them by calling itself the British state. Leaving aside the events particularly connected with the state—militaristic ceremonies and party conferences—I cannot see what subjective unity, what national culture, unites them.

The subjective unity between the Welsh and the English seemed to lie in Protestant fundamentalism. Welsh Methodism was at the heart of the Non-conformist Conscience which ousted the adulterer, Parnell. The English Non-conformism, with which it combined, melted away in the course of the following generation. And now Welsh Methodism seems to have gone too.

The last Welsh Church in London closed down recently. It was bought by the Greek Orthodox and is flourishing. The Orthodox religion is national. It is at ease with itself and it appeared to be unaffected by the doings of globalist Christianity. Wesleyan Methodism might once have been loosely described as the national religion of Wales, but it wasn't. It was only the variant of English culture that was strongest in Wales.

There is little in the way of national political will in Wales. Even though the

religion which was the medium of subjective unity with England has gone, the militaristic Imperial residue remains much in evidence.

The Welsh had to be browbeaten by the English into voting for a weak National Assembly, and they seem to have little interest in strengthening it. And yet one is aware, when going through Wales, that it is a region of distinct nationality. In much of it one can even hear “*a language that the English do not know*”. There is nationality but there is little political nationalism. A distinct language is the most tangible form of nationality as a subjective entity. When I was trying to find my bearings in these matters 35 years ago, I observed that, while political nationalism used up the traditional language and culture in Ireland in its development, the absence of political nationalism in Wales left their language and culture in being.

In figuring these things out, I certainly did not go on the assumption that nationality is a purely objective entity in which the opinions of those concerned plays no part. Both Jack Lane and myself used Renan's and Stalin's definition of what a nation was. Renan's is the extreme subjective definition.

The difficulty with the idea of a British nation is that it rests on the sheer objectivity of the state. It had not then, and it has not now, any coherent subjectivity.

If there is a British nation, is Welsh a mere geographical term like East Anglian?

Richard Rose conducted extensive opinion surveys in an attempt to establish hard knowledge on these matters. As far as I recall, what his surveys showed was fluctuating opinions, depending on how the question was put, what major events had been in the news recently, and perhaps what kind of day it was or what kind of night they'd had. The way it appeared to me was that they were Welsh for certain purposes and British for others. (I was then associated with the publication of a magazine in the Donegal Gaeltacht and it appeared that the people of Gweedore were Irish speakers for certain purposes and English speakers to others, and they resisted efforts to have Trade Union meetings conducted in Irish.) The Welsh were British for purposes connected with the state (i.e. politics and war), but in other respects they were Welsh. And it meant something more to them to say they were Welsh than it did to a man of Kent to say he was Kentish.

And the Welsh participated in the British state in a way that was utterly different to the way the Ulster Protestant was content to participate. They did not vote to show that they supported the Union with England, or that they loved the Queen, or that they honoured the Union Jack. They simply took part in the party-political conflicts of the state. South Wales was loyal incidentally to being revolutionary. The class struggle was Unionist in effect, and was all the more effectively so because the Union was never at issue in the great party conflicts in which it took a combative part. And in this manner—the manner of giving no thought to it—rebellious South Wales played its part in furthering the purpose of the English state, which was world-dominance.

The conclusion I reached was that Britain was a multi-national state in which England was both the heart and the head. And it is not at all obvious that England itself was a nationality when the state was being constructed. Defoe was amongst the founders of the state, and his *True-Born Englishman* was a satire on the subject. The makers of the state included Dutch and French and Germans. The Englishman was a vigorous European mongrel so far as the conduct of public affairs went, and the cosmopolitan Englishman undertook to make something presentable of the aboriginal English in their various nooks and crannies.

The sense I made of the fierce party conflict at the start of the 18th century is that the Tories wanted the state to be English in some meaningful national sense, to be self-sufficient and traditional, and to let Europe be. Their major achievement was to bring an end to the war on France without destroying the French state. The Whigs were intent on expanding the war and crushing France.

Studious books play little part in English affairs. The state developed through pamphlet wars. The pamphleteers of the reign of Queen Anne later settled down to be literary men, and are the essence of dullness to my taste. Addison and Steele in their role as literary men are useful as sleeping pills. It is as Whig pamphleteers in the time of Queen Anne that they acquired the status to become boring litterateurs in the time of Walpole, whose object was to calm things down during his long regime of corruption, so that his idea of the Constitution could take root.

Addison set out the Whig programme

for the war which was prevented from being put into effect by the Tories in 1712. (It was put into effect two centuries later, and was disastrous.) Then in 1714-15 the Whigs got a firm grip on the state for half a century and gave it the orientation which it still holds. English nationality was a disappearing quantity thereafter. It is what one finds in the novels of Fielding and Smollet.

The state has been conducted in the Whig manner ever since 1715. The search for an internal settlement was abandoned and the internal factions were drawn into an external expansion in which the residue of English nationality was reduced to a thing of no consequence.

The state is the thing. And the remarkable achievement of the state in recent decades had been to transfer the substance of the position which it achieved in the world by means of the Empire over to the money system that was established through the Empire. The chief products of England today are money and war materials, which are interconnected. It still arranges (as 150 years ago) that the world should feed it cheaply and provide it with luxuries. And, since it stopped reproducing itself many generations ago, it now also imports people (ready-made). And what do those people call themselves when, under the influence of the British National Party, the respectable parties require them to have a name which integrates them? They scratch their heads in puzzlement between British and English and then pick one of them at random.

The persistence of Caribbean, Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi culture (and even Greek and Italian) indicates the non-existence of an English and British national culture. People accustomed to living within a definite way of life find that there is no English way of life to transfer to and therefore they continue living their own. That is why I said that the only institutions of a British national culture are the political parties of the state, and that Britain is above all else a state—the English state.

When Ulster raised the standard of Home Rule, Britain was Greater Britain. Greater Britain was Britain spread around the world. It was the Britain produced by what Seeley called *The Expansion Of England* in a very influential series of lectures delivered at Oxford. The meaning of history was the English state. This was the vision which led to the Great War. And it was in the Great War that Greater

Britain came to grief. The term was in common use up to 1914, but I cannot recall seeing use of it since 1918.

“Ulster” was very much at home in Greater Britain. It was certainly one of its component peoples.

England became strictly racist in outlook in the middle of the 19th century. The satire on the True-Born Englishman was forgotten.

The sense of racial superiority and of ultimate Imperial destiny, which saturated Greater Britain, was participated in by Protestant Ulster. If the sense of racial superiority and Imperial destiny can be described as ethnic, then there was a British ethnic entity. If a master race is ethnic as well as the master, then there is no problem with the idea of British ethnicity. But, whatever about etymological origins, the word “nation” has taken on a different meaning in use from the word “race”. (Though the Official Republicans back in 1970 took the two words to mean the same thing.)

If Greater Britain had been consolidated instead of being undermined by the Great War, the expanded Empire would most likely have dominated and ordered world affairs during the 20th century. But Britain lost track of itself in the Great War and did not quite know what to do with its expanded Empire. The spirit of Greater Britain survived in the novels of John Buchan and the nostalgic politics of Winston Churchill, but the Empire began to erode six weeks after the War was brought to a triumphant conclusion—with the 1918 Election in Ireland.

The Empire took about 40 years to erode, the Imperial massacres in Kenya being its swan song. In 1914 the Ulster Protestants were one of the master peoples of Greater Britain, and therefore of the world. And in 1921 they were the first victims amongst the master race of the collapse of the Imperial vision. The world order which gave certainty to their lives fell apart in the same moment that the leaders of the Empire made a deal with the inferior people on their island. One instant they were the soldiers, administrators, engineers, and exemplars of the greatest Empire the world had ever seen, and the next instant they were under siege from the barbarians. But they hung on in the spirit of 1689.

That, as far as I could reassemble it, is how post-1918 occurrences were experienced. In 1970 I saw a batch of letters

written from prison by Gusty Spence, and that was the flavour of them. Gusty found a way out of the cul-de-sac, but there is a substantial segment of Protestant Ulster for which the traumatic events of the post-1918 years have not yet been displaced. One consequence is that every British Government is under suspicion of wanting to do to them what James II tried to do to the Protestant settlement besieged in Derry in 1689.

Protestant Ulster has been a community under siege for over 80 years. Its state of siege is a psychological condition much more than a physical fact. And, after half a century, the psychological condition produced a state of siege as a physical fact.

During that half century it was something like a residue of Greater Britain, hanging onto the illusions of the crumbling Empire through the ideology of Empire Loyalism. It had its own little subordinate statelet, but it had no use for it. Every election to its Parliament was a referendum on the British connection. No Unionist leader sought to make it anything else. I doubt that they could have done, even if they had wanted to.

What was Britain with the Empire gone? Not a nation-state. It was a multi-national state. Multi-national but not federal. Its subjective unity was not something that could be called ethnic. It was a function of the party-politics of the state. The multi-national state held together in the medium of a system of party politics developed in the course of construction of the Empire.

British culture is obsessively political, and it remains entirely Imperial in disposition. One sees the satisfaction which some of the newly-imported people from powerless countries take in discussing whether to destroy this state or preserve that one, knowing that what is being discussed is not a fantasy but is something that can be done.

It was assumed by many on the Left that, as the British state shrank back to island proportions, it would break up internally into its national components. That development appeared to be happening until the late seventies. But then Margaret Thatcher took over, reasserted the Imperial will, and gave Britain back its ordinary occupation of making war. And then in 1990 there was an enormous enhancement of British power. I remarked at the time that Britain now had the second strongest army in the

world—the second which was usable anywhere in the world. A few years earlier it had been about fifth.

The moral influence of brute force seems to be as strong as it ever was, even though we live in the era of the UN Charter. And the blatant revival of physical force politics in the British state is one of the factors curbing the growth of nationalism within Britain.

Nationalism in Britain is disintegrative. Imperialism is cohesive. And what calls itself British nationalism is only a carry-over of the racism that was integral to Imperialism for over a century but is no longer appropriate in this era of the import of people. (The black immigration to Britain has become Imperialist, by and large, in the second and third generation.)

Mrs. Thatcher would have spoken of “the British nation”, as a kind of Imperial flourish. In that usage, the term has usually meant the various peoples of the British state, combined for the purpose of making war. And, in every corner of Britain, the militarism of the state is in evidence in one way or another—ships, fighter planes, Army.

The British state, engaged in its its primary business of warfare, exerts a kind of influence over all parts of the country which over-rides national sentiment and makes fine analysis of nationality practically redundant. But I do not suppose that, when Desmond Fennell refers to the British nation, he means the state in its militarist dimension, or that he denies the existence of Welsh and Scottish nationality. Therefore I do not know what he means by the British nation.

And what practical difference would it make to describe the Ulster Protestants as a fragment of the British nation, rather than as one of the nations in the British state? I suppose it would go towards dis-entitling them as a community in Ireland and classifying them, as C.C. O’Brien did in 1970, as British *colons*. And classifying them as *colons* has the practical implication of clearing them out if they do not cease to be what they are, as was done by De Gaulle in Algeria and is now being done by Robert Mugabe with the heritage of Cecil Rhodes in Zimbabwe. Since that is not what Desmond Fennell has in mind, and he accords the same rights to the Ulster Protestants, conceiving them to be a fragment of a British nation, as he did when he conceived them to be a second nationality in Ireland, I cannot see what

iota of difference the reclassification of them makes. (He appears to agree with my comment on his previous letter that he was reasonably understood in 1970 as stating a two nations view.)

I got to know about Occam’s Razor when I was very young. (I am still being surprised at discovering things which were common knowledge in the little group of townlands in the backwardness of Slieve Luacra, where I lived into my twenties, but which are scarcely known at all even amongst highly-educated intellectuals either in Ireland or Britain.) I saw the sense in it and I have instinctively avoided theoretical analysis beyond what is practically required in the conduct of human affairs. The physical world is a different matter, because entities are fixed and stable. Entities in the human world are, by comparison, in a state of flux. They appear and they disappear.

I took a look at Belfast in 1965. What I saw during a brief visit, and with nobody to explain it to me, conflicted with all I had heard about it. It was obviously inhabited by two peoples, and both of them were vigorous. I put this to a number of people who were experienced in politics. They assured me that I had got a false impression. I took it on trust for the time being that I had. But the impression wouldn’t fade, and it was the reason I took no part in the Civil Rights agitation of 1968-9.

The second thing that struck me about Belfast then was its authenticity. I had seen Cork, Limerick and Dublin and they struck me as alien. I could not account for that impression then. I would account for it now by saying that they were the remnants of a departed civilisation and their inhabitants did not quite know how to live in them. But Belfast was very much itself. It was a creation of the surrounding society. Nobody had made it and left it behind. It had made itself. It was authentic in Heidegger’s sense. It was durable. It had its conflicts, and they were durable too. They had nothing to do with existential doubt.

“We’ve got mountebanks and spouters
But not many down-and-outers,
For the poor are seldom doubters
In Belfast.”

And its two peoples were unmistakably Irish, at least in the sense that neither of them bore much resemblance to the Scots or the English, or such West British as I had encountered. (The West British, of course, are West English. At least I have never come across any who ape the Scots

or the Welsh, least of all the litterateur who traced her ancestry to Welsh Cromwellians.)

I went on to live in Belfast a few years later, and closer acquaintance confirmed my first impressions. I found it a city, in Ireland, that I could live in: the most unaffected city in Ireland and therefore the most Irish: a city that might have grown out of the countryside I grew up in. (There was no natural migration from Slieve Luacra to Cork City. I know a number of people who went there, but they went in a masterful frame of mind to establish a sphere of dominance for themselves, but I never had any inclinations towards mastery. People who wanted to live interesting, sociable lives—things that in other regions of the world are urban—stayed in the countryside.)

Desmond Fennell asks what name I give this other people in the North. I give them no name. And if they had no name they would still be what they are. The Shakespeare tag about a rose by any other name doesn't always apply, but it applies here. Name or no name, they are what they are what they are.

I'm surprised that Desmond Fennell has not heard their name. Their slogan "*Ulster is British*" is not a statement that they are an ethnic fragment of a British nation. It is a kind of Imperial statement of a connection between Ulster and the British state.

Ulster might be the wrong name, and it might not have been put through all possible grammatical evolutions, but it is a name.

There has been little introspection on the character of Ulsterishness. There has been no call for it because there has rarely been a glimmer of existential doubt.

"*Ulster A Nation*" was proclaimed was in the early seventies by the tendency led by William Craig, with David Trimble as his lieutenant. I set myself entirely against it with a pamphlet called, *Against Ulster Nationalism*. Though not easy reading, it was widely read and had a discernible effect. I drew a significant number of people into the attempt to establish a ground for common political action by Catholic and Protestants in the party politics of the British state. And I have no doubt that the British Establishment would have been compelled to concede the demand if "Ulster" had supported it. But I uncovered a rooted objection to it throughout "Ulster". No

intellectual case could be made against it, but it was only briefly, in the traumatic aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, that reason could overcome the feeling hostile to it. And I do not see how that feeling is compatible with the belief that there is a British nation in the ethnic sense and that Ulster asserts that it is part of it.

The Ulster sense of affinity with Britain is Imperial. Britain is not an ethnic entity. And Ulster is a national, as distinct from an ethnic, entity. It is a combination of Ulster Scots and English. The Plantation was English. There was Scots migration both before and after the Plantation and the distinctive character of Antrim and Down derives from it. And I have seen Ulster Nationalists from the English region greatly irritated by the Ulster Scots cultural movement of recent times.

Perhaps there was a time when in Ulster there was both England abroad and Scotland abroad. But the Ulster Scots soon became something distinct and original. If that had not happened, Desmond Fennell's comparison of the Ulster Protestants with the British in Rhodesia would perhaps be valid.

I would not dispute that the White Rhodesians were British. But that does not imply the existence of a British nation. Their Britishness is Imperial.

I also met Major Bunting, along with his son. He was a bluff, jolly old eccentric who might have been a character in Fielding. His son was inclining towards the Stickies. He subsequently joined them and was killed in one of their internal feuds, having made his way into their revolutionary socialist IRSP offshoot.

Brendan Clifford

Does it *Stack up*?

MONETARY UNION

On Monday 6th June 2005, Anthony Coughlan issued his statement to the media titled, *The EU Crises..... what is to be done?*

I read it first with approval, yes... good stuff... Build stronger cross-national links, people want co-operation not control in Europe, Repatriate Power from Brussels to the Member States, yes, all very well but the sting was near the tail in "Restore Europe's National Currencies" when Anthony Coughlan quotes with approval from Otmar Issing, Governor of the European Central Bank who said: "There is no example in history of a lasting monetary union that was not part of one State."

This quotation is a statement of a self-evident fact. There has never been a lasting monetary union. Quite correct.

So why should such an irrelevant oxymoron be introduced by Anthony Coughlan if not to confuse a fairly simple situation? We all use the Euro. Our borrowings, savings and pension funds are denominated in the Euro. Our international trade is conducted in the Euro, as well as in other units of money.

So what is the crisis? There is no crisis and there need not be a crisis in the foreseeable future.

Anthony Coughlan does say "*The Euro may last some years yet, but its days are numbered*". He could say exactly the same about the English pound or the US dollar or the Chinese renminbi. All will assuredly pass away in time but for now people are happy to have any of them, which is what matters now.

As for the Euro's days being "*numbered*" by Anthony Coughlan, could he please tell us the number of days? It would be useful to know. It is apparent that "The EU in Crisis..what is to be done?" story is a not-too-subtle piece of anti-EU propaganda. It has no technical or academic value.+++++

ELUSIVE LUCRE

On a slightly different subject, I was reminded by Anthony Coughlan's propaganda piece to look up words like "money" and "monetary union" just to see what could be thrown up.

"*Monetary union*" was easy to dispose of. Anthony Coughlan uses it, but he doesn't explain it. I thought I understood it. But nowhere could I find an authority giving the meaning of it. It seems to have something to do with the Euro but what exactly?

"*Money*" I do know the meaning of. It is a medium of exchange, as in wages for work done; it is a store of value as in Pension Funds for the future. It is a measure of value as in the price of bread and it is a standard for deferred payment in the future such as mortgage repayments. These are economists' definitions of money.

Things got confusing when I looked up, for example, Thomson's *Dictionary of Banking* (11th Edition, London, 1965) where I read that the unit of money in England is the "*sovereign*". The *Oxford Dictionary* and also *Chambers Dictionary* define "*sovereign*" as variously the Supreme Ruler (does it mean Queen Elizabeth II or Tony Blair?) or a gold coin worth 22s.6d. to 10s or a pound sterling (up to 1914). All rather confusing, as I say.

The *Dictionary of Banking* (in 1965!) states "*many substances have been used as money but a metal of some kind has*

been found to be the most suitable in all respects". You and I know that in practice, the most important money is paper money and plastic cards. Marco Polo brought back to Italy seven hundred years ago the Chinese concept of paper money. It took us Europeans a long time to catch up with the Chinese!

The Chinese were minting coins in 2250 BC and yet in Classic Greece, Homer (about 600 BC) wrote that the armour of Glaucus was worth 100 cattle and the armour of Diomedes was worth only nine cattle. To be fair to the Greeks, their Drachma was by far the oldest of the currencies to be merged with the Euro.

The name of the money used in the UK is difficult to pin down. The US uses the dollar, the Irish use the Euro, the Japanese – the Yen. They say American Indians used to conceal their real name in case their identity or their soul might be in danger.

Could this be the thinking behind expressions like GB Pound, the Pound, UK Pound and Sterling?

Sterling refers to the purity of gold and silver e.g., sterling silver is real silver. Given the propensity of English people to refer to non-English money as "funny money", perhaps "sterling" means real money. If so, the use of the word "sterling" denigrates non-English money.

What is the proper official *legal* name of the UK unit of money?

There used to be an Irish Pound designated IR£ which probably gave rise to use of the term, GB£ or UK£ for the English, British or United Kingdom Pound.

On one occasion, I asked an Irish bank for "sterling". Among the notes I received were some notes issued by Clydesdale Bank which is in Scotland. I thought I would have no problem in London but HM Stationary Office refused to accept these notes and told me that I must go to a bank which I did, and the bank deducted 5% to change them to Bank of England notes in High Holborn in London. The bank said the Clydesdale Bank notes were not legal tender in London. Think about it? This raises all sorts of questions about Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey in all of which there are locally issued notes.

Now, when I ask for money in an Irish Bank to spend in England, I ask for "English money" and English money issued by the Bank of England is what I get. But I do not know the legal name for it. Does anyone?

I leave you to ponder with the words of this poem:

"Words are like leaves, and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."
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THE BRITISH PROBLEM.

The real problem in the six northern counties of Ireland is the British army will not get out.

They will not get out for two reasons. Firstly, because the British are afraid of an independent State in Ireland. We in Ireland are on Britain's Western flank, as they say in military circles, and to protect their western flank, Britain wants to hold control over Ireland. That control is exercised by a British army presence in the six counties and by controlling the training and numbers and armaments of the Irish Defence Forces. "Defence Forces" is what Britain permits. Not an army!

At any given time, a significant number of Irish Defence Force officers are at British Army training school in Britain and a number of British Army "technicians" are in Ireland teaching the Defence Forces their methods.

Ireland has the biggest sea area in Europe and one of the longest coastlines – but no navy. There is no Irish navy! We have a Naval Service, which is a branch of the Defence Forces. And on the bridge of our few small ships, the sea-maps in use are British Admiralty Charts of our seas and bays and ports. The buoys and Lighthouses are managed and maintained by the Commissioners of Irish Lights which is a branch of Trinity House in London. Sea rescue is done by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution of Poole, England. The Royal (British) Air Force air-sea rescue service performs many of the rescues (for which they are well paid of course) because Irish Defence Force helicopters do not fly at night. Ireland has no air force. We have the Air Corps, which is a small branch of the Defence Forces.

Yes, Britain has a sound grip on us all right.

Just because Irish Governments were too lazy and too greedy to devote a consistent and substantial part of the budget to controlling our own space. The question must be asked: why does the Irish State continue to allow this state of affairs when Ireland is economically independent?

The second reason the British will not get out of the six counties is less important to Britain as a State, but more important to British politicians and that reason is status or pride. If they got out of England's "oldest colony" (how familiar that term is again becoming), her political leaders would see it as loss of status and power. Look at what happened to the Malvinas Islands – a.k.a The Falklands. The Falklands war was all about status and British National Pride. One thousand three hundred Argentinean seamen were murdered on the *Belgrano*, i.e. intentionally killed outside (and we now know leaving) the war zone by the British to show everyone who was boss-bully. British status is bound up in "Bulldog Britain" ideology which British people accept and embrace.

British aggression is at the heart of the problem in the six counties. Jack Straw, when being interviewed on BBC radio, was asked what was the main characteristic of the British people and said he answered without hesitation "Aggressiveness". We

can see that he is correct.

We can now also see that at any time peace was in danger of breaking out in the North, the British wrecked it by setting one side against the other once more. Time after time.

Peace would break out if the Northern Ireland people would unite in one thing and that is to get the British army out.

It is a British State problem and the Irish State, which has co-responsibility under the Good Friday Agreement, has to come to grips with it now or the dire warnings issued recently in Galway by the peace-maker Fr. Alex Reid, will indeed come to pass.

Michael Stack

Population Trends In Ireland 1821-2036

"Emma Browne's article on the above subject (*Village 3-9 June 2005*) uses some questionable statistics regarding the Famine period, or the Great Hunger, as it has been more accurately described.

"The graph with her article shows a declining population before the 1841 census which is clearly wrong and an extraordinary mistake to make when dealing with Irish population figures. She says that "some estimates put it at 8.5 million up to 1845" which is in flat contradiction to the graph in which it is inserted. And she claims that "one million emigrated during the Famine and one million died."

"Officials and demographers at the time did not accept the official figure for the population of 8.2 million in 1841 as being reliable. Cecil Woodham-Smith records this in her book. It was reckoned on the basis of some recounts that there was an underestimate of about one third. Sticking with figures rounded to the nearest million, that means the population figure for 1841 as established by the partial official recount, was 11 million.

"That was not the only occasion on which census figures had to be readjusted. It happened again in the UK in 1991 because of the Poll tax. Tithes in their new form and other taxes, among many other factors, were a major factor in 1841 that inclined people not to volunteer information.

"But even this figure of 11 million in 1841 is probably an underestimate because the French statistician, César Moreau, estimated the population as high as 9,050,000 in 1827, 14 years earlier. It is accepted that the annual Irish population rate of growth of the period was 1.6% which would have given a figure in the region of 13 million by 1846-47. The official figure for 1851 was 6.5 million and ironically this could be an overestimate as people were then inclined to overinclude, themselves in the hope of extra relief.

"Accepting Emma's figure for emigration of 1 million we are left with a considerably larger death figure than the 1 million she claims. In fact, it could be uncannily close to 6 million. It is an extraordinary situation that such widely different estimates can exist for such an event.

"One of the amazing facts about the Great Hunger was that there was never a contemporary attempt to count the numbers who died. I suggest that it is a long overdue fact of our history that should be clearly established once and for all. Perhaps your columns can be utilised to help rectify that situation.

Jack Lane" (*Village 24.6.05*)

Still Fighting The French Revolution?

The *Sunday Independent* is staffed by people who have settled objections to Irish Republicanism, in all its manifestations since the United Irish days of the 1790s. They also have problems with the Volunteers of the 1780s, judging from a short article by Shane Hickey in the *Sindo* of May 15, called *Grattan's Aid To 1798 Men Of Violence*—a review of Danny Mansergh's book, *Grattan's Failure*.

Henry Grattan agitated for an autonomous Irish Parliament, legally a vassal body from the days of 'Poyning's Law' of 1483. With the setting up of 'Grattan's Parliament' in 1782, it remained a vassal body, bribery being the means of keeping it in check. According to Hickey, "he is regarded as a hero by liberals committed to non-violence". The meaning of the phrase is that Grattan was 'committed to non-violence'. 'Liberals' is a standard *Sindo* jibe at non-hairy-chested *Sindo*-readers.

Well, the innocent reader might think, even sturdy progressives like Grattan might give in to backing State violence, *in extremis*. After all the United Irish were revolutionaries: he was a parliamentary reformer, averting his eyes from the violence of the Militias, the Yeomanry, the professional armed forces of the Crown, and the proto-fascistic Orange mobs. The innocent reader would be entirely wrong. The 'men of violence' in 1798 were the United Irish—and Henry Grattan. He is accused by author Danny Mansergh, of "*actively encourag[ing] conspirators, revolutionaries and others to organise the people out of doors*", for revolutionary purposes. The term "*out of doors*" is a curious one; presumably it means outside of the doors of the Ascendancy. It is a curiously innocent-minded usage, and it may indicate that the attitude of the Mansergh family to the natives is not that far removed from those of Roy Foster and Robin Bury.

It also demonstrates a very odd attitude to the study of history. The 'revolutionary' United Irish regarded the French Republic as a guiding star in the world of the 1790s. It had introduced democracy, redistributed the land, abolished slavery and fought the tyrants of Europe to a standstill. The United Irish had been reformist Volunteers in the 1780s, regarding the achievement

of 'Grattan's Parliament' as their own handiwork. Their subsequent tendency towards revolutionary politics was not an example of sheer wickedness but of frustrated anger at not being able to bring about desperately needed reforms in the governance of Ireland by peaceful means.

Another aspect of Mansergh's approach to history is that, until Ireland's intelligentsia inflicted a collective lobotomy on itself, 'everybody' knew that the London Government was forced to drop Poyning's Law by such devices as the Volunteers parading through Dublin with such messages as 'Reform or this'—on placards hanging from their cannon. The Volunteer armies were formed, in the course of the American War of Independence, to protect the Kingdom of Ireland from invasion by France and Spain, but not from ideas from across the Atlantic. The Bourbon monarchies had joined the American colonies in their struggle against England. The American Continental Congress accepted the military aid in the spirit in which it was given, and in the process 'infected' some of the French military, Lafayette being the major example. The Volunteers, like the Americans, were able to divine the difference between a legitimate anti-colonialist struggle, and predatory behaviour by rival monarchies.

Mansergh describes Grattan as "*at most—a somewhat constitutional politician*" (the echo of Seán Lemass's famous apophthegm is, presumably, entirely deliberate), without bothering to put this assertion into an historical context. This idea is emphasised by the words following: "*operating in the grey area between revolutionary and legitimate agitation*". Grattan's historical context was the struggle by the London Government against the American colonies, followed by a long struggle against the consequences of the French Revolution. But Dr. Mansergh seems to have a strictly reactionary attitude to history; revolution is never an appropriate response to bad government. He places Grattan in a line of dubious politicians who were prepared to mix with the 'men of violence', "*Parnell, Carson and the parliamentary leaders of the 20th century loyalist and nationalist volunteers*": no attempt is made to analyse these different political tendencies.

Parnell made an arrangement with the Fenians in the course of the Land War (an entirely legitimate struggle engaged in because the London Government was not prepared to be reasonable). The UVF was set up by Carson and the Ulster Unionists to defy the Parliament to which they claimed to be ultra-loyal. The Redmondites were forced to take over an equivalent Nationalist body because the London Government was threatening to dump Irish Home Rule. After decades of decorous parliamentary activity, involving in the decade before the Third Home Rule Bill of 1912, a desire for Dominion status (see Pat Walsh's *Imperial Ireland*, 2003), Redmond could not have been more respectable and gradualist. It was the London Parliament that let him down and created a situation in which insurrection was the only honest response to British bad faith (and ethnic contempt).

The only other interpretation of this article is that Dr. Mansergh thinks England's Government is always right and the Irish people always wrong. Maybe that is the result of Shane Hickey's interpretation of what Mansergh wrote or of what he said in an interview. The large number of quotations in the article are written as if they were responses to questions, it makes the whole matter a bit vague, it is neither interview nor book review.

The French Revolution appears to be under attack in Hickey's article, and glancingly, in another piece in the same edition, *A Log*—a diary of the previous week—by Gerry Gregg, a television producer. On the Thursday and Friday he went to West Belfast to support Liam Kennedy in West Belfast where he stood in the election against Gerry Adams. His campaign was (it seems) to make the Provisionals accept responsibility for all the violence of the past four decades, thus alibiing the British Government. And the Irish Government, particularly Jack Lynch's making of ominous speeches on telly in August 1969, giving the Unionist *Ultras* an excuse for running riot, leaving thousands of people homeless, and hundreds of dwelling places in flames. There is also the matter of the Loyalist paramilitaries, which existed in the Summer of 1969—which is more than can be said for the Provisional IRA.

Gregg got bad-mouthed by a Sinn Féin election worker and witnessed some Omagh victims' relatives being man-handled by Gerry Adams's minders. The people of the pristine Republic will get the

same “*goon show*” shortly, according to Dr. Kennedy, who appears not to realise that Sinn Féin has TDs in the Dáil. What does Dr. Kennedy think would have happened if he had made a Unionist big-shot his target? Concentrating on Sinn Féin made their bad behaviour stand out, though Gregg admits that the actual Sinn Féin people at the Polling Station shared tea and soup with them. But it is a grudging, patronising admission.

More important is Gregg’s entry for Monday. He returned “*some family memorabilia*” to Conor Cruise O’Brien, having used them in a “*documentary*”. He is glad that the “*great sage*” is in “*sparkling form*”, is working away, and has completed a book about George Washington. The latter apparently “*saw through the pretensions of the French Revolution early on and secretly attempted to interest the English in a counter-revolutionary alliance. The Brits... turned down the offer to nip the coming “Terror” in the bud.*” So, Washington not only knew that the French Revolution was not the genuine article, which is the only interpretation one can put on the word “*pretensions*” here, he could also see into the future.

The Terror was a product of the fact that Republican France was being invaded by Prussia and Austria (and Spain), with England supplying the money, and a huge Navy. The Republic was an unforeseen consequence of the royal family’s trying to flee France, to join the army of reactionary aristocrats in Coblenz. The latter had run away from France because of the redistribution of the land. This interpretation of the French Revolution, the only one that is consistent with the fact that the ardently Catholic peasantry of France fought for the Republic and then the Empire for a quarter century, will never see the light of day in ‘revisionist’ Ireland. In decrying the French Revolution O’Brien and Gregg are decrying Ireland’s own Land Wars, and National Revolution.

What the “*great sage*” has done is read a few American history books. Washington was on the non-radical wing of the American Revolution. He not merely seems to have been prepared to fight the French Revolution, but is said to have entertained the notion of reinstating a monarchy in America. As the owner of a plantation he was not enamoured of the breaking up of the great estates of the nobles of France. He was even less enamoured of the abolition of the Slave Trade.

THE BEEB’S GREAT FEAR

O’Brien and the revisionists may be pleased to know that they have pre-empted the BBC on the matter of the French Revolution. On Thursday, May 26th the slot *Melvin Bragg: In our Time*, (Radio 4 UK) dealt with the French Revolution. It was part of the campaign of vilification of everything French in the run-up to the referendum on the EU Constitution. Bragg and two British (male) historians spoke, as did an American female historian. Bragg played the innocent, expressing shock at her ‘defending the Terror’.

The three Brits concentrated on the Terror. This involved the argument that Robespierre was a psychopath, and that alone explained the “*excesses*” of the Paris Mob. Bragg sneered at Robespierre’s ‘sea-green incorruptible’ image, in presumably pretended ignorance of the fact that the soubriquet was wished on him by Carlyle. They mulled over the bloodier bits of the Terror all the while pretending that nothing substantial was at stake, such as the peasants’ landholdings, the townsmen’s freedom to travel and ply their trade wherever they chose, and the question of taxes bearing down on the poor and useful and not the rich. The Republic was being invaded by the biggest armies (and Navy) in Europe. But one of the historians gave the game away by saying that the Terror stopped dead after the great Republican victory over the Prussian and Austrian armies at Fleurus.

The American woman was dumbstruck by all this, realising that she would have to defend the Terror to get her point across. It was not that she was incapable of doing so, or that she was not prepared to defend the Revolution, she simply would have needed several hours of exposition to put everything in context. She had to listen to the French Revolution being traduced: two centuries on! The French Revolution has been discussed on other BBC Radio programmes, purely in terms of the Terror – always represented as an outbreak of mindless violence. A slew of books has been produced this year promoting the same attitude to the Revolution, implicitly contrasting the violence with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. (The *Sindo*’s staff will be able to overlook the fact that the violence implicit in the Whig *coup d’état* was exported to Ireland – sure we probably deserved it.)

The so-called *Grand Peur* (Great Fear) of 1790 was mentioned in a radio show ‘fronted’ by Michael Portillo, it was simply claimed to be an outbreak of violence (by

the peasantry against their betters was the blatant sub-text). The ‘Great Fear’ was a very interesting phenomenon. In the course of a week, the length and breadth of France, the peasantry seized the palaces and manors of the landowners, and destroyed their title deeds to the land. This was allegedly because they were seized by an hysterical fear that the Coblenz aristos were coming with a mighty army to take back their estates. And, presumably, punish the peasants who had the effrontery to assume that working the land gave them a right to own it. The result of the ‘Great Fear’ was that the land of France changed hands: once and forever.

Some of the ‘reporting’ of the French referendum was breathtakingly racist, and no doubt in due course the BBC television will broadcast a series telling us how bad the French Revolution actually was. The radical Blairites and Ireland’s revisionists will have consensus on that matter. By that time the latter may have decided to openly campaign for Dominion status—just like John Redmond. And look what the Brits did to him.

Seán McGouran

Das Kapital Series

Reply To Ivor Kenna And Robert Burrage

I agree with Ivor Kenna that nobody worried about imperialist exploitation while only agricultural products were sold to the West at a price below their value. As he remarks, we are now in a new phase of imperialism in which manufacturing and even services are provided by Third World countries to the developed world.

The transfer of production and services to the developing world is putting downward pressure on wages and is undermining workers’ rights in the developed world.

I agree with Ivor’s conclusion that the solution is “*equal reward for work of equal value on a world scale*” but this begs two questions.

a) What will the value of work be on a world wide scale?

b) How will workers’ interests be protected?

The question of the world value of work is a topic that has been discussed in France (see Laurent Fabius interview, *June Irish Political Review*). Many socialists fear that Globalisation involves competition towards lower and lower

wages and diminished social protection. It can be observed that the mobility of capital has enabled a 'Dutch' auction to take place involving states competing with each other to provide the lowest costs in terms of wages and taxes. There is now competition towards the lowest common denominator. So there is a danger that "equal value on a world scale" might end up being a very low value.

In my opinion, the socialist (or communist) approach to this problem should be unashamedly "conservative". We should be against Globalisation unless it is clear that there is a benefit to the working class. This is the reason why the EU Constitutional Treaty should be opposed. It is a "globalist" document with absolutely no safeguards for workers' rights or the European Social model of first class public services. In order for Globalisation to be supported, strong protection and control by states or combinations of states must be insisted upon.

I agree with much of what Robert Burrage says about uncertainty. Nevertheless, I think it is reasonable to make hypotheses about the world which are based on a theory and are supported by observation. My point about transport is that a transport system if left to the market will be undersupplied. This is because customers will only pay for the individual benefits that they receive from travelling from point A to B. They will not take account social benefits such as the reduction of traffic on the roads and reduced pollution etc.

Nor can private companies be expected to write off, or take the long view on, the immense capital outlays required to provide transport infrastructure. I've often thought that such irrational phenomena as the internet bubble and the railway bubble (sometimes facilitated by dodgy accountancy practices) serve a social function because in the long term such investment may be good for society. If private investors were "rational" there would be no such investment. Usually what happens is that the first wave of investors goes bankrupt and the second wave becomes fabulously wealthy by taking advantage of the increased productive resources. (Although, sometimes some initial investors have the foresight to sell before the bubble bursts).

But I agree with his point about Marxists "talking about inevitabilities". I would say that this has been the biggest

curse of the communist movement. The effect of claims to absolute truths has been to end discussion. The insistence that Marxism was "scientific" has made communists inflexible in their thinking and often reality has been made to fit in with the theory.

I read Volume 1 of *Das Kapital* about 20 years ago. At the time I thought it was impressive, but to be honest I read it with a certain "reverence". I had decided that I was a communist and "Das Kapital" was going to explain to me what that meant!

Of course, a lot has happened in the world during the last twenty years, so when I read the three volumes recently I was quite prepared to ditch the whole canon of Marxism if it was no longer relevant.

Probably, because I approached the work with a more critical frame of mind this time, I was surprised at how much in Volume One I had missed on the first reading.

Das Kapital has a number of minor technical errors (e.g. Marx's understanding of money was very limited) and also Marx can be very tedious at times. However, my overall conclusion is that the three volumes are the best description of capitalism that I have read. In some ways his insights are more relevant to the 21st century than the nineteenth. Also, conventional (bourgeois) economics is a completely inadequate theoretical framework for understanding

economic developments in the world.

From a communist point of view that's the good news. The bad news is that Marx says hardly anything on how capitalism can be transformed into socialism and ultimately into communism. I think I am right in saying that he explained his silence by saying that it was not his job to "write the recipes for future cooks". I think he also described himself as a "bourgeois intellectual". By this he meant that he was restricted to analysing reality as he found it (i.e. capitalist reality). He did not see the point in fantasising about the future.

There was an interesting debate on the left in France during the recent EU referendum. There was one element among the extreme left that supported the Constitution on the grounds that it was about time that we "ended the nation state". In my view this is mindless Marxism. But it could be argued that this position is consistent with a reading of the *Communist Manifesto* which envisages the internationalisation of capital before the world proletarian revolution.

Unfortunately, the world is more complicated. Personally I haven't a clue what the future holds and I don't think Marx knew either. Marxism is a brilliant tool for understanding the world but in the day to day struggles of the working class, communists will have to continue to use their brains. There is no magic formula.

John Martin

Use Value 3:

Book Review: *Late Victorian Holocausts* (Mike Davis, Verso, 2001)

Free Trade And Famine

In the final third of the 19th century many millions of people died of starvation and starvation-related diseases in India, China and Africa, when traditional systems of storage and distribution of food and water were disrupted by the imposition of global markets on these countries by the western imperial powers.

El Nino is a cyclical weather phenomenon which originates in temperature changes in the depths of the Pacific Ocean; causing weather variations as important—and as normal—as the seasons, bringing drought and flooding all around the globe, and recurring in

severe form every ten years or so. In *Late Victorian Holocausts*, Mike Davis shows how the imposition of imperialist political and economic relations interacted with natural cyclical weather phenomena to cause catastrophe, of the order of the Great Famine in Ireland, but on a world-wide scale. This in turn set off great political movements which are still working themselves out in those countries.

Why did modern markets, communications and transport have such perverse and disastrous effects in, for instance, India? Why did they not make most people's lives easier, safer, healthier,

more prosperous? Why did they fail when the previous systems of tribute and social obligation, of water and food storage, of distribution and relief, had enabled these populations, not just to regulate supply and demand in normal circumstances, but also to cope with extreme weather, political changes, local warfare and other such challenges, without suffering catastrophe? Mike Davis's *Late Victorian Holocausts* explains this in depth.

This is not to say that pre-capitalist societies which 'went against nature' did not pay for this. Such as, the Easter Islanders, who broke the underlying natural order of use value when they cut down all their forests in order to erect their famous stone monuments, so that in the end they starved because they had no wood even to build boats to fish the teeming seas around them. But these kinds of societies are gone, while the grasping, destructive capitalist system that wrought world-wide havoc in the late Victorian era has obtained a new innings, and its champions are still peddling the same old snake-oil.

Davis says:

"The subjects of this book were ground to bits between the teeth of three massive and implacable cogwheels of modern history. In the first instance there was the fatal meshing of extreme events between the world climate system and the late Victorian world economy. This was one of the major novelties of the age. Until the 1870s and the creation of a rudimentary international weather reporting network there was little scientific apprehension that drought on a planetary scale was even possible; likewise, until the same decade, rural Asia was not yet sufficiently integrated into the global economy to send or receive economic shock waves from the other side of the world. The 1870s, however, provided numerous examples of a new vicious circle... linking weather and price perturbations through the medium of an international grain market. Suddenly the price of wheat in Liverpool and the rainfall in Madras were variables in the same vast equation of human survival... Most of the Indian, Brazilian and Moroccan cultivators, for example, who starved in 1877 and 1878 had already been immiserated and made vulnerable to hunger by the world economic crisis (the nineteenth century's "Great Depression") that began in 1873. The soaring trade deficits of Qing China—artificially engineered in the first place by British narcotrafficantes [drug traffickers]—likewise accelerated the decline of the "ever-normal" granaries

that were the [Chinese] first-line defense against drought and flood. ... The New Imperialism was the third gear of this catastrophic history. ...

"Colonial expansion uncannily syncopated the rhythms of natural disaster and epidemic disease. Each global drought was the green light for an imperialist landrush. If the southern African drought of 1877, for example, was Carnarvon's opportunity to strike against Zulu independence, then the Ethiopian famine of 1889-91 was Crispi's mandate to build a new Roman Empire in the Horn of Africa. Likewise Wilhelmine Germany exploited the floods and drought that devastated Shandong in the late 1890s to aggressively expand its sphere of influence in North China, while the United States was simultaneously using drought-famine and disease as weapons to crush Aguinaldo's Philippine Republic. ...

"But the agricultural populations of Asia, Africa and South America did not go gently into the New Imperial order. Famines are wars over the right to existence. If resistance to famine in the 1870s (apart from southern Africa) was overwhelmingly local and riotous, with few instances of more ambitious insurrectionary organization, it undoubtedly had much to do with the recent memories of state terror from the suppression of the Indian Mutiny and the Taiping Revolution. The 1890s were an entirely different story, and modern historians have clearly established the contributory role played by drought-famine in the Boxer Rebellion, the Korean Tonghak movement, the rise of Indian Extremism and the Brazilian War of Canudos, as well as innumerable revolts in eastern and southern Africa. The millenarian movements that swept the future "third world" at the end of the nineteenth century derived much of their eschatological ferocity from the acuity of these subsistence and environmental crises."

Labour, or human effort, has been the most important resource in maintaining human life and comfort up to fairly recent times. Other resources, whether scarce or plentiful, have generally been available for human use only to the extent that relatively scarce and relatively inefficient human labour has been applied to secure them. So when even rudimentary forms of trade, such as barter, develop in an economy of hunter-gathering or subsistence agriculture for instance, the law of exchange value naturally superimposes itself on all such economic transactions. This imposes a particular kind of regulation—a requirement that,

on average, a provider of a good or a service must receive in return an equal amount of labour-value. In other words, they must receive some good or service or exchange-value-token (money) that compensates—by an approximately equal amount of labour time or man-hours of human effort—the provider for the amount of labour-time contributed in their side of the transaction. In conditions of labour scarcity, or of low productivity of labour, any inequity or sustained shortfall in the labour-time compensation to either party in such transactions would be untenable, in the long term, to one or other party. In effect, this arrangement of equalising labour content achieves rational social deployment of human effort or labour, ensuring that it is not wasted uneconomically; a matter which is critically important when labour is relatively unproductive, but not so important when labour is highly capitalised or mechanised. To take an extreme example, if an individual or a society developed a penchant for digging holes in the ground and filling them in again, the labour-time is consumed without compensation, and is unavailable for other purposes, such as the more usual forms of pleasure or subsistence which are necessary in order for humans to sustain and reproduce themselves; in other words, in order to maintain a supply of labour to meet the demand for labour. And, of course, the development of markets and exchange value enable division of labour and specialisation of production to take place, often accompanied by increase in prosperity and general well-being.

The use value which was deployed and consumed irrationally or uneconomically by the Easter Islanders, in constructing their fantastic stone monuments, was not labour time, but the timber which was plentifully and freely available to them when they initially colonised the island. So even in a relatively simple, uncapitalised economy, there are circumstances in which the rationing of labour time is less important than the economic deployment of some other use values.

The equalising of labour-time on both sides of each market transaction is a constitutive equation or relation, which is a major factor in the regulation of the market as a whole. But it is an additional or restrictive condition, superimposed on an underlying set of relations between those use values which enter into each trading transaction. Whether the

transaction or trade involves an iron axe-head or a mobile telephone, it is embedded in a complex array of non-market transactions or activities, which bring together a variety of use values—materials, labour, knowledge, skills, experience, tools and luck—in the correct amounts or proportions, in the correct places, at the right times. This underlying set of relationships (or equations) drives the transformation of use value, whether or not the economic activity involves buying and selling in a market. This connection among use values can be identified with what is often called the Law of Supply and Demand. The additional exchange value relationship, whenever the use value transactions are subjected to trading, must conform with the Law of Supply and Demand by means of an adjustment of market prices. (This latter point is often thought to be the essence of Supply and Demand. But it is really an additional element which applies only in market conditions, and not in general.)

As John Martin described in his series of *Irish Political Review* articles on *Das Kapital*, the additional condition of equalisation of exchange value makes the efficient deployment of labour the predominant economic goal. Labour productivity thus takes priority over every other objective. This continues to be the case in capitalist economies in our own time, even though our strictly rationed labour is already super-efficient, and therefore superabundant, while scarce use values in the form of other natural resources are squandered.

The Law of Supply and Demand has been presented above as the irreducible relationship governing economic activity in every kind of economic system. But another way of summarising the relationships which apply among use values as they undergo transformation is to describe them in terms of Inventory Control, though this only gives part of the story. Another view of use value transformation is contained in the modern industrial practice of Supply Chain Management, which deals with all aspects of sourcing, scheduling and transportation of use values (no matter whether goods or services) in the various stages of their extraction from nature, transformation, and delivery to the point of consumption.

Whether or not the Law of Exchange Value is superimposed on the use value relationships is a politically and socially determined matter. States on a total war

footing allocate and ration resources (including human effort or labour) according to military necessity, and not in accordance with market prices or labour content. Whether or not they are at war, armies operate complex internal economic systems in accordance with the principles of logistics, not markets. Platoons, transport corps, medical units and quartermasters interact with each other, not according to market relationships, but in conformity with the fundamental, underlying rules of use value. (According to newspaper reports at the time, this went awry in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, when, instead of stocking up supplies in advance, the latest industrial Just-In-Time principles were employed in the allocation of kit and munitions.)

Markets, or the law of exchange value, can be suspended; but the underlying laws of use value cannot be suspended, no more than the law of gravity can. When the rationing of labour by the market principle is suspended, economic activity based only on the laws of use value is set free to prioritise other objectives. For instance it is obvious that military objectives must over-ride market objectives. Armies would not get very far if their component parts were obliged to pay their way in market terms, or to balance the books. Military victories are not obtained by winning some competition to achieve the highest levels of labour productivity in square-bashing. If lives are expendable then it is not unreasonable that labour should be endlessly expendable. If any resource—labour, water, air, sunlight, food, raw material—is superabundant, then there is no economic necessity, no requirement of the Law of Supply and Demand, to hoard it or ration it tightly.

The militarisation of Russian society in the Great War, Revolution and Civil War continued to some extent in the social and economic organisation of the War Communism period. In revolutionary China during the 1940s markets in agricultural produce were controlled by means of Machine and Tractor Stations, which could be viewed as an extension of the military quartermaster system to society as a whole. North Korean society is run on military principles, not for the well-being, health and comfort of its citizens, but for the purpose of national independence. While the spectacle of a whole population of serfs dedicated to militarism is nothing short of horrifying, the sheer economic potency of removing

the shackles of exchange value from the operation of use value principles is demonstrated by the success of a small, undeveloped country in maintaining its independence in a hostile environment, surrounded by military and economic giants seeking its subjugation and destruction.

Much of the success of capitalism, in its own terms, can be attributed to its mastery of the laws of use value. From the beginning of mass production by the division and de-skilling of labour, to the introduction of assembly lines by Henry Ford, to the integration of the Supply (and Demand) Chain in current practice, capitalist industry is successful in extending the scope of the laws of use value; in developing more efficient methods for bringing together materials, labour, energy, transport, information, expertise in the right amounts and proportions, at the right place and time, to enable the transformations of these use values to take place. The overall purpose of this harnessing of use value by capitalism is not military success, or national independence, or human well-being; but to enable the self-expansion cycle of the financial capital markets to take place, as described in John Martin's *Irish Political Review* articles. (This can be summarised as M-C-M+ (that is, money-commodity-increased money); in other words, capital (which is money put to productive use) must show an average rate of growth which is greater than the rate of growth of money placed on riskless deposit in banks.)

If a capital account shows a financial increase there must (on average) be some equivalent increase in the use value it represents—more commodities, more ships and planes, more skyscrapers. Otherwise the financial or exchange value increase is merely inflationary, not 'real'. So capital must increase in real terms as well as in money terms. That is why capital must constantly seek new outlets, new products, new spheres to command—new territories to colonise; more gadgets; exciting new ring tones; public services to privatise; private finance initiatives; pressurising mothers and fathers into employment and taking their labour out of the realm of pure use value in households and into the open market—with the added benefit of creating new investment opportunities in childcare.

To accomplish its relentless mission of self-expansion, capital colonises

material, human bodies, territory. History is littered with examples of 'primitive' peoples who lost everything because they could not understand how some land or material or benefit or practice, which they had enjoyed from time immemorial, could be transformed into something to be bought and sold for private profit.

Capital continues to produce surprises and ambushes. You, dear reader, may feel that you are in fairly good standing with Jehovah (or Allah or the Great Spirit). Or if worse came to worst, that you could make a Faustian pact with Satan. But beware! Mammon may already have squatter's rights to your soul. Because if there is such a use value as the human soul—some essence which uniquely determines what you are—it is probably connected in some way with your DNA. And it seems that capital has already seized control of large chunks of plant and animal DNA. The Merle Travis/Tennessee Ernie Ford song goes: You load sixteen ton, what do you get?/ Another day older and deeper in debt/ Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go/ I owe my soul to the company store. Watch out, things have moved on since 1946.

Sometimes the process of colonisation by capital has to be supported by military force. When India was conquered, the widespread native small-scale domestic cloth manufacture was forcibly suppressed so that Indians would have to purchase English-manufactured cloth in the global capitalist market. Several wars had to be fought to force China to permit the import of opium, so that the opium plantations of Burma and Bengal, where traditional crops had been banned in the interests of global capitalism, could furnish enough money to enable the natives to buy English manufactures—goods of a kind which the Indians and Burmese had formerly produced for themselves. The beauty of it was that the whole operation was self-financing. India itself supplied the manpower and tax revenues to operate the British Army in India. Though not for the want of trying, America has never yet managed such a slick operation, right up to present-day Iraq.

In spite of all this, whole areas of human activity are still conducted outside the sphere of exchange value and capital. We have armies, and countries at war, and militarised societies, which set aside the law of exchange value and organise themselves primarily on the basis of use value in order to achieve military

objectives. While capitalist industry has the overall M-C-M+ objective of self-expansion of exchange value, it has developed itself by means of massive extension of the scope of the laws of use value—in interlocking systems of inventory and supply chain management, production scheduling systems, and energy and material management. And we also have households, communities and many other groupings in society organised for child-rearing, education, sport, recreation, music, and charitable, cultural and religious purposes; self-regulating entities within and between which transactions take place on the basis of use value only, unmediated by exchange value. Outside the sphere of capitalist industry, the driving forces of this type of organisation include custom and practice, personal satisfaction, aesthetic pleasure and mutual obligation. (Of course the M-C-M+ of capitalist economy cannot function in a social vacuum, and ultimately must relate to and serve these more basic human motivations in various ways. It is said that profit is the driving force of capitalism. But living is the driving force of everything.)

The means of achieving these human objectives are the laws of transformation of use value, which can be summarised and simplified by describing them as systems of inventory control. In living memory, much of rural life was sustained by systems of transformation of use value, with relatively slight connections to the market. Seasonal foodstuffs were sown, grown, harvested, stored, and re-seeded; pigs and chickens were bred, reared, and slaughtered; often co-operatively and on a basis of communal sharing. Tobacco, bread (or flour), newspapers and books, some educational and medical services, much of the clothing or clothing materials, and some of the farm and household equipment, were obtained via markets; paid for by money income from labour or other produce. Occasionally, or at a pinch, flour and other staples would be produced outside the market as in earlier times. Supporting all this was a fairly complex system of materials and equipment management, much of which was outside the market. For instance, animal fodder was mostly grown, stored, consumed and re-seeded; but not purchased. Dung was carefully stored and managed for crop-growing purposes. A fair amount of infrastructure and equipment, such as fencing and implements, were made from freely available raw materials. Looking back to earlier times, independence from markets was even more pronounced.

(Technological improvements reduce the expenditure of human effort; in other words they make work easier. Initially that is. As explained in the series of *Irish Political Review* articles on *Das Kapital*, the only natural resource that can deliver surplus value in the M-C-M+ cycle is human labour. If that were not the case, then the predictions of thirty years ago, that computer technology was going to inaugurate a new golden age of leisure, would actually have come true. Instead, competitive globalised liberal capitalism demands longer hours of more intensive work. While the old-fashioned farm work described above was hard, there was a surprising amount of free time. In comparison, modern mechanised capitalist agriculture is intensive, stressful and demanding, and provides a living for far fewer people.)

Even now, some aspects of the practical basis of housekeeping consist of good systems of storage of household supplies. This ensures that there are sufficient—but not too much—foodstuffs, fuel, clothing, cleaning materials and other household equipment; from hour to hour, day to day, and week to week. A considerable task, different only in degree but not in kind, from what is involved in running an industry or an army. When she said that running a country is like managing a household, Margaret Thatcher was right; but in a different sense from what she intended. Because her focus was the narrow one of merely balancing the books—which is an artificial, socially-determined restriction, since everything comes free from nature in the first instance at no charge. A much more sophisticated method of accounting is needed when we draw upon the banks of natural (including human) resources. For all we know, the Easter Islanders may have been supremely thrifty and Thatcherite with their cowry shells, or whatever it was that they used as tokens of exchange value. But when their forests were used up, all their cowry shells would not have made a single boat.

A response to the Thatcher viewpoint is given in the well-known country and western song in which a child presents a bill to the parent for doing various household chores, and the parent responds by listing the potential costs to the child for nine months pregnancy, sleepless nights attending to childhood sickness, and a host of similar parental services. The monetarist dogma is simplistic.

Inventories of use value are a means of

regulating supply and demand. Supply Chain Management is not new; it is described in the Book of Genesis:

“And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

“...And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.”

Mike Davis' *Late Victorian Holocausts* relates how the disruption of these primary use value systems in the interests of global capitalism caused unprecedented famine:

“The worsening depression in world trade had been spreading misery and igniting discontent throughout cotton-exporting districts of the Deccan, where in any case forest enclosures and the displacement of gram [a traditional food crop] by cotton had greatly reduced local food security. The traditional system of household and village grain reserves regulated by complex networks of patrimonial obligation had been largely supplanted since the Mutiny by merchant inventories and the cash nexus. Although rice and wheat production in the rest of India (which now included bonanzas of coarse rice from the recently conquered Irawaddy delta) had been above average for the past three years, much of the surplus had been exported to England. Londoners were in effect eating India's bread. ... The newly constructed railroads, lauded as institutional safeguards against famine, were instead used by merchants to ship inventories from outlying drought-stricken to central depots for hoarding (as well as protection from rioters). [This contrasts with Marx's mid-nineteenth century enthusiasm for

the Indian railways.] Likewise the telegraph ensured that price hikes were co-ordinated in a thousand towns at once, regardless of local supply trends. Moreover, British antipathy to price control invited anyone who had the money to engage in the frenzy of grain speculation. ... The rise [of prices] was so extraordinary, and the available supply, as compared with well-known requirements, so scanty that merchants and dealers, hopeful of enormous future gains, appeared determined to hold their stocks for some indefinite time and not to part with the article which was becoming of such unwonted value. ... No arrangements have been made to preserve the cattle by providing fodder or pasture lands.”

Next to light and air, water is the use value most fundamental to human existence; more so than food, clothing, shelter, companionship, esteem, and all the other higher order human needs. You can make tea with it for starters. But it is also needed for animal and crop husbandry, to drive machines, for transport, as a medium for breeding fish, and in manufacturing processes. Systems of storage, distribution, drainage, irrigation and flood control are needed. Water is so fundamental that only very recently has capitalism sought to commodify it completely. Davis devotes a lot of attention in his book to the destruction of traditional water management and distribution systems by Victorian capitalism, which destroyed systems which had previously coped perfectly well with the cyclical El Nino drought and flooding; and he attributes much of the early popularity of the Chinese communist regime in northern China to its initial successes in water management. However, he sees major geopolitical problems looming from projects such as the Three Gorges dam.

In his concluding *Irish Political Review* article on Marx's *Capital*, John Martin made the point that capital has its own motive force and logic, independent of the stockholders, investors and bankers who are its servants rather than its directors; and he discussed various ways in which society might seek to liberate itself from the iron control of the laws of exchange value.

The free market Utopian theories propounded by Von Mises, Hayek, Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand in the 20th century have acquired dominance in the 21st. And when Margaret Thatcher presented her version of these on Russian television, the Soviet system collapsed.

No equivalent Utopian scheme was proposed in the *Communist Manifesto* or in *Capital*. The *Communist Manifesto* has some practical proposals for mid-19th century reform, but these are realistic rather than Utopian, and most of them have been universally implemented long ago. Utopian theories on the socialist side have generally been variants of the one presented by Robert Tressell in *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropist*. Generally they see inequities and injustice in the distribution of goods and services to the end-users—a resource allocation problem at the point of final consumption. The reformist response is to seek to temper and reduce these inequities, while a more radical approach traces the inequities to the system of ownership of the means of production and aims at political intervention in that system. The cure advocated in either case is to impose bureaucratic or state controls on market forces in order to achieve a fairer allocation of resources. What is overlooked is that markets are themselves superimposed on an underlying system of resource allocation mechanisms. And what the social interest really requires is the liberation of these mechanisms from the M-C-M+ constraint which capital markets impose on them.

About 25 years ago a speculative Utopian socialist system of a different kind was described in this magazine. It sought to show how the fundamental economic function of resource allocation (or regulation of supply and demand) could be accomplished without the intervention of either markets or governments, and focussed instead on the resource allocation mechanisms which are dispersed among autonomous economic agents of all kinds, and which are the foundation of all economic activities, regardless of the political complexion of the societies in which they are located. The speculation was based on the distinction between use value and exchange value, and has been confirmed by subsequent developments in industrial organisation.

Pat Muldowney

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LABOUR continued

follows the patient and not the other way around," Mr. Rabbitte said.

In the area of education, Labour would seek to guarantee "that no child in Ireland will be taught in a class bigger than 25."

As for law and order issues, he said the party did not rule out anti-social behaviour orders "as a last resort". He believed the central question, however, remained "one of enforcement and the need to properly structure and resource community policing".

He stressed that a garda ombudsman was necessary, as well as an independent commission on policing "to set out a road map for turning the force into a 21st-century police service. We need to identify and set up new structures to ensure accountability, independent scrutiny and, above all, partnership with the community."

"For example, he and others around him have spent a huge amount of time recently working on a book. It ought to be finished in the next couple of months and published in spring next year. If the publishers turn it down, we'll publish it ourselves.

"It's a book about Ireland, about where he'd like to take the country. It'll make him the first serving party leader ever to set out a substantial, worked-out vision of Ireland's future in book form. It'll be saying 'This is my credo, judge me on this'. And that's the measure of the man. he's painstaking, he works things out" (Fergus Finlay on Pat Rabbitte, Hot Press magazine, May, 2005).

FRATERNAL GUESTS

Amongst the fraternal guests at the Labour Party conference was the South Belfast MP, Dr. Alasdair McDonnell, Deputy Leader of the SDLP, who in his address stressed that the SDLP's goal was Irish unity too, but he said that had to be achieved through peaceful and democratic means. "People in the North, he added, did not wish to be dominated by the 'fascism of Sinn Fein on the one hand and the DUP on the other'. Democratic Ireland "needs to stand up strong, not just to the IRA, but to the DUP as well".

Alasdair was accompanied by the McCartney sisters, who received a standing ovation when presented to delegates at the conference. He owes the family much. Were it not for Robert's death, it is possible he would not be an MP today. Seldom in the history of the Northern war, has a family been manipulated and used by so many political chancers

and opportunists.

Other guest speakers were Frank McBrearty Jnr., from Raphoe who is suing the State over his wrongful arrest for murder, and former Danish Prime Minister, Poul Rasmussen.

THE REAL MR. STAGG!

"If Mr. Spring was to give him a copper-fastened commitment to staying out of coalition, then he would be in a position to re-apply: The ball is firmly in his court." (Cork Exam., 27.2.1992). This was Deputy Stagg in February, 1992, when he resigned the party whip. Indeed his Kildare Labour Constituency Council called on "Mr. Dick Spring to rule out a coalition arrangement after the next, or subsequent general election" (ibid.).

Within 12 months, Stagg broke the 50 yard Dash record getting onto the stage at the National Concert Hall, to second his party leader's proposal to join Fianna Fail in a national coalition. On that day, January 10, 1993, Emmet said Labour could now ensure it was "permanently in government" by securing full implementation of the agreed document and not losing the support of those who voted for the party in November.

"By doing this, we can move towards our objective of a Labour government", added Deputy Stagg. "Many years of wasteful strife had ended," he stated.

"In 1986, Labour had decided to stay out of government for 10 years to allow it to increase its Dail membership to 25, and beyond—but this, Stagg said, had been done in record time."

Those were heady days for Emmet, February, 1992 saw the Workers' Party lose their six TDs who went on to form Democratic Left.

"...the Workers' Party TD, Mr. Pat Rabbitte issued a thinly-veiled invitation to the Kildare TD, describing him as a politician of 'very definite calibre'." (Cork Examiner, 20.2.2005).

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Labour Vice-President Mr. Henry Haughton, Louth, was re-elected onto the party's National Executive Committee: his vote was down on previous elections. The other 14 elected to the party's ruling body were: Hugh Baxter, Roscommon; Dick Duff, Cork; Sandra Farrell; Anne Ferris; Peter Fitzgerald, Dublin; Ted Howlin, Wexford; Peter Keaney; Sadie Kelly, Kilkenny; Kathleen Lynch, TD, Cork; John McGinley, Kildare; Rebecca Moynihan, Dublin; Jack O'Connor, SIPTU General Secretary; Owen O'Shea and Henry Upton, Dublin.

Henry Haughton withdrew from the race to become party Vice-Chairman hours before the vote was taken at the first NEC meeting on 17th June 2005: "he would have received little support in the election if it had gone to a vote" (Irish Times, 20.6.2005).

Cllr. John McGinley, from Maynooth, Co. Kildare, a strong supporter of the party leader, was elected to the vice-chair.

Mr. Haughton, who is working for Labour North TD Sean Ryan, is now expected to seek a nomination to run for the party in the constituency in the next Dail election, following Mr. Ryan's decision to retire.

130 motions. 52 from Dublin area. 29 from the National Executive Council. 23 from Munster. 15 Leinster and 6 from Connacht/Ulster. Four other motions were moved by AMICUS and ATGWU trade unions and one each from Labour Women and Labour Youth.

DECLAN BREE

On going to press, we have learned that Declan Bree, the former Labour TD for Sligo/Leitrim, is to face an internal party investigation following his criticisms of two party councillors on Sligo Borough Council, who voted against plans to house Travellers.

The row began when Sligo Council voted by 11 to four on 7th February 2005, against the town's draft Traveller accommodation programme. Two Labour councillors voted with two Fine Gael and three Fianna Fail councillors, while Bree and three Sinn Fein council members voted in favour.

"In an interview with the Sligo Champion, Mr. Bree said: 'The disgraceful decision to vote down the programme compels these Traveller families to continue living in appalling and intolerable conditions.

"How can anyone who claims to share the values of the Labour movement, or how can anyone with an ounce of compassion tolerate such a situation?" (Irish Times, 20.6.2005).

The last Complaints Committee was established to investigate allegedly racist remarks made by former Lord Mayor of Cork, Joe O'Callaghan, but Joe fled to the safe arms of Fine Gael before his peers got an opportunity to sit in conclave.

Now there's a paradox: O'Callaghan out for alleged racist remarks and Bree under threat for securing a roof for the lowest stratum of Irish life.

LABOUR continued

education press all the right buttons. And the party has been careful to allay fears by promising no tax hikes" (Michael O'Farrell, Irish Exam. 30.5.2005).

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Hammering home the point that it was prepared to drive a hard bargain with Fine Gael, Labour President, Michael D. Higgins said the party had core values on which it should not compromise.

"An inclusive citizenship places at its centre universal provision on the basis of citizenship in such areas as health, education, transport, housing, public space and children's welfare," he said.

"It is important that those who would seek to co-operate with Labour recognise and accept these aims," Deputy Higgins stated.

MEDIA MASTERS

The Masters are all agreed on the Fine Gael/Labour alliance "Two into One will go", reads the editorial in Sir A.J.F. O'Reilly's anti-national *Independent*. The "welfare of the political system needs it". Your country needs you, Labour!

Listen to this: "Notwithstanding the current stability... At the very best, they will probably find it impossible to construct a coalition without Green participation."

But they won't succeed writes the *Independent*:

"It is of course doubtful if they will get to that point. It will be remarkable indeed if they can turn out a government while we still enjoy the fruits of one of the great economic advances ever made in any country." (Irish Indep. 30.5.2005).

"Childcare is a priority which Fine Gael should find easy to accept... would be extremely costly. But [Labour] may well start to profit in terms of votes. Enda Kenny needs to proceed cautiously." (ibid.).

Well, lads, you've got your instructions from the paper that declared on the eve of the last general election: 'More of the same, please', Bertie.

But don't expect the lead editorial at next election eve to be recommending your Rainbow to the electorate. Still, it's all for the good of the 'political system'. What a sham! No wonder half the population don't even go out to cast a vote.

O'Reilly's political mouthpiece, James Downey, was aghast at the thought Labour might become the second largest party in the state.

"From time to time, Labour has aspired to supplanting Fine Gael as the second party of the state" (Irish Independent, 30.5.2005).

"This is no time for Labour to take Fine Gael on. The party is thus reduced to taking the tactical option, not the strategic option."

In other words, you know your place, don't aspire beyond it. But who can blame these lapdogs, for their contempt towards political labour, when we ourselves have lost all self-esteem?

THE MUDGUARD DIG!

"The second view of the opposition... say that our aspiration is to be the mudguard of Fine Gael," states the Labour party leader.

"Marginally better than being the mudguard of Fianna Fail because there's more mud to guard," says the Mr. Rabbitte."

Sad, Sad, Sad! Why should Labour be anyone's mudguard?

Downey again:

"Mr. Rabbitte speaks wistfully of the hundreds of thousands who vote Fianna Fail instead of voting Labour. He means working-class voters. But what does the term mean in Celtic Tiger Ireland?"

"It cannot, in any objective lexicon, mean trade union members. Most union members are middle-class by occupation or aspiration, and the unions' relations with Fianna Fail are the subject of much wry humour. That was true even before the vast changes of our time in working methods and class structures" (James Downey, Irish Independent, 30.5.2005).

LABOUR AND TAX

Labour in government would not increase tax rates for low and middle-income "hard-working" families, party leader Pat Rabbitte pledged.

"We will not do so because there is no need to do so," he said in his leader's address. "Economic growth of 5% per annum, on the back of our accumulated prosperity, would, by the end of the decade, generate an additional 12 billion Euros in today's terms, without any increase in the burden of taxation.

"A second reason why it would be wrong to hike taxes on such families', he said, was because there had been 'wholesale, widespread, endemic tax evasion' by the elite in society.

"A third reason why increases in personal tax rates are unnecessary is that this PD/Fianna Fail government has turned waste of public money into an art form' he added, citing the 52 million euros spent on electronic voting machines as an example.

"Mr. Rabbitte dismissed the views of the 'Matt Talbots' who argued personal tax increases were the only true measure of a political party's commitment to social justice.

"What we will do is insist on a fairer

tax system', he said. 'The era of the designer tax break for millionaires must end. [Labour Finance spokeswoman] Joan Burton has called for high rollers to pay a basic minimum amount of tax to the common good, and I believe that tax-compliant citizens everywhere consider that a reasonable position'."

Fine and salty you might say, but according to the *Irish Times* (30.6.2005):

"Labour TD Joan Burton, who holds the finance portfolio, said Labour had 'an ambitious social programme' that would have to be paid for by taxation."

"The price tag will be high, and even when we take the chronic record of mismanagement and waste of this Government out of the equation we will still need to find a lot of money to meet the needs we have set out in our agenda." (ibid.).

Maybe Joan is the new Edel Quinn!

"The economic circumstances of the Free State at present suggest that there is no point in mounting an ideological attack on the basis upon which prosperity is created. Where is the percentage in arguing with a system that has reduced the rate of unemployment from 16 per cent to four per cent? What is the point of complaining about an economy that has doubled in size over the last decade and is currently growing at a rate of six per cent per year?"

"The focus should instead be upon the distribution of wealth within the Free State economy.

"There is plenty of money available for the people who live on the margins. For example, class sizes could be reduced across a vast swath of west and northwest Dublin. But the point is that nobody will vote for a party that advocates the destruction of the surplus that makes all of this possible. People will vote for a party that advocates a fairer distribution of this surplus, which is completely different" (Damien Kiberd, Daily Ire. 20.6.2005).

HEALTH

The party leader then outlined the priorities for the party should it be returned to office, including childcare, health, education, workers' rights, anti-social behaviour, and garda reform.

He envisages, for example, a universal health insurance system (compulsory insurance affording every individual the same access to treatment and care), with the State paying on a graduated basis for those who could not afford it.

"Ultimately, we will not tackle the problems in the Irish health service until we change the system, so that money

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LABOUR continued

election, as an independent party.

"Second, it commits us to seek to play an influential role in getting rid of a dreadful centre-right government, and replacing it with a much better centre-left alternative."

"If that happened, he said Labour would still be 'campaigning as an independent party on its own platform of policies, but will have "sought to . . . agree a statement of intent with Fine Gael, and that statement of intent would provide the overarching principles for any detailed programme for government that would be negotiated if the people give us the votes" ' (Pat Rabbitte-Irish Examiner, 23.5.2005).

THE CASE AGAINST

Brendan Howlin, TD argued effectively against a pre-election deal with Fine Gael saying the issue was simply one of tactics.

After 20 years of debate within the party, there was "*no wholly right or wholly wrong answer*" in relation to pre-election pacts. He said there was a danger that the pact would see Labour lose its "*critical relevance*" during the election campaign, and the party members could find themselves "*as cheer-leaders for Enda [Kenny]*" in the run-up to an election.

Opposing Rabbitte's proposal, Dublin North East TD, Tommy Broughan, said that a pre-election pact with Fine Gael offered "*a dismal and sickening vista*" which he described as a cul-de-sac for Labour. "*We have it in our power to make or break Fine Gael so why don't we break them?*" he asked.

Senator Derek McDowell said that in Fine Gael's moment of weakness Labour was being asked to come to the rescue. Arguing against any pre-election pact, he said Rabbitte should negotiate a coalition deal after the election. "*Whether he does it with Fianna Fail or Fine Gael, I don't care and as a member of the Labour Party I don't see why I should.*"

Emmet Stagg, TD, tore into ATGWU secretary, Michael O'Reilly, for arguing as he himself did in the Eighties, and Eamon Gilmore spoke in favour of Rabbitte's strategy. Gilmore said opponents of a pact only talked about what was good for the Labour Party but they had a duty to talk about what was good for the country.

Brendan Howlin and Kathleen Lynch were correct in stating that it makes no

sense to be either for coalition in principle or against coalition in principle. This is to be judged each time the possibility of coalition arises.

The party should get on with developing a programme of realistic reforms, these reforms though not all socialist would still be in the working class interest.

On the basis of such a programme, the Labour Party would offer to form a Coalition with either of the major political parties. If Fianna Fail or Fine Gael rejected such a programme, Labour could rightfully go back to the electorate with a persuasive case.

If it was accepted and the party authorises its TDs to form a Coalition, it should support the Coalition with an attitude of militant realism which will ensure that the package of reforms is actually enacted.

In short, Coalition is a practical question rather than a question of principle which can be decided on general grounds.

Hennessy of the *Irish Times* copped on to this straight away:

"The coalition option debate has consumed Labour for months, when it would have been better employed devising policies to attack a Government that is unlikely to be weak on the economy.

"In the past the Progressive Democrats have cleverly managed to encourage voters to increase their voice within a coalition.

"Labour, on the other hand, has never been able to do so, even though it is hardly a complex message. It must be able to explain it next time" (Mark Hennessy, *Irish Times*, 27.5.2005).

Would someone tell me when Fine Gael last called a conference to consider coalition with Labour? One statistic always remains in this scribe's mind: in 1992 Labour won 33 seats, in 2002, Fine Gael were down to 31!

THE REAL ISSUES!

Of the 130 motions there was not a single proposal relating to Pensions, at a time when there is a veritable onslaught on the rights that were built up over generations by the Trade Union movement, particularly the principle of Defined Benefit (a pension scheme in which the pension benefits are clearly defined: you know what you are going to receive at the end of your working life) as against Defined Contribution (a pension scheme in which the contribution to the scheme is defined but not the benefit. The benefit on retirement depends on the investment

returns earned on the contributions).

Had the leadership of the Labour Party an ounce of political or grass roots nous, they could turn the Pensions issue into virtually the sole issue of the next general election. Pensions are a time-bomb and far too precious to be left in the hands of the Mercers, Ark Life, etc. and the global corporate sector.

Electoral, even the Fergus Finlays' whining middle-classes would embrace a positive and radical policy in relation to retirement and fair and equitable payments but alas, the pensions issue is not sexy enough for the chattering classes.

CHILDCARE!

The first six motions all related to childcare: "support continued economic growth by enabling parents to be part of the workforce" (Tipperary North, Conference Agenda, p1).

"Labour is to insist that its childcare policy, expected to cost One Billion Euros a year, be a condition of entering into government with Fine Gael.

"We are making a commitment right here, right now, that childcare will be at the top of the next government's agenda," Senator Kathleen O'Meara told delegates, "because we are insisting that our childcare policy be accepted as a cornerstone of any election agreement we make."

The Senator chairs a working group which will shortly publish that policy. Central elements will include:

- * A year's paid parental leave, which both mothers and fathers could avail of.

- * A guarantee that every three-year-old have a free pre-school place.

- * The first 8,000 Euros that child-minders earn being exempted from tax.

- * Rates on childcare centres being abolished.

- * A subsidy to parents of up to 40% of the average cost of childcare.

Labour would be "insisting" that all these elements be included in any election agreement, she said.

"Every party wants to be associated with fixing what Pat Rabbitte this weekend termed 'society-under-strain syndrome'. After the Local and European elections last May and this year's by-elections, every party also knows that childcare is the most important symptom of that syndrome. By seizing the issue as a precondition to any coalition, Labour had cleverly denied Fine Gael ownership of perhaps the most important doorstep issue of all. A year's free parental leave and free pre-school

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Labour Conference

CONFERENCE

Seldom did a political leader smash a paradox with such emphatic precision as did Pat Rabbitte with his unequivocal declaration, along with Fine Gael, of total support for the proposed EU Constitution on the night it was so overwhelmingly rejected by millions of French workers.

During the televised debate on coalition on Saturday 28th May, the party leader made mention of the 'paradox' in Irish politics of workers who in their tens of thousands vote Fianna Fail but if resident in France or Germany would almost automatically vote for social-democratic parties!

Much in the same way as waves of Irish emigrants voted for Old Labour in Britain throughout the 20th century.

The real paradox of course is that the workers haven't deserted Labour—the party has deserted the workers. According to Fergus Finlay there is no working class.

"We don't represent the people Frank Cluskey represented, because they're not the same. We don't represent working-class Ireland, because it's not what it was 20 years ago. That's why one looks at brands. Our base needs to be built in the middle-class, and people who aspire to be middle-class. Some of the old party associations—trade unionism, etc.—are no long relevant" (Finlay, Hot Press magazine, May 2005).

The French workers have seen through Bertie Ahern's 'GAMA' EU Constitution, a charter for the employers to ride roughshod over every gain the trade union movement has ever made.

And there is absolutely no question that, if Irish workers were given the same leadership and respect, they too, would do as the French workers did.

Hard and bitterly-achieved Rights are

being eroded in the name of change and globalisation.

The 35 Hours Week, Defined Benefit Pensions, Working Time legislation are all being attacked and deliberately eroded.

"Developed economies can no longer compete with Asian manufacturing locations, such as China, the group Chief Executive of Ireland's largest private company, Glen Dimplex, said yesterday.

"Sean O'Driscoll said that, for most worldwide industries, China was the benchmark by which international competitiveness was measured.

"We cannot compete with them on functional, low cost products, he told the Cork Chamber of Commerce/*Irish Examiner* monthly business breakfast briefing (*Irish Examiner*, 24.6.2005).

The Bolkestein Directive is being pursued with vigour and encouragement from the WTO and employer bodies like IBEC. No opposition is brooked and the discredited EU Constitution acts as a mask for this development.

It is a blatant attempt to change Europe in the Anglo-American direction—one that at present seems quite acceptable to the new Europe, the new accession countries. At the moment this block is pro-USA in economics and foreign policy.

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The enlargement of the EU is threatening to undermine the way of life of 'old Europe'. The politicians don't care and the role in particular of the social-democratic politicians has been despicable.

Labour Comment was 'pro-Europe' up to and including the Maastricht Treaty. But we cannot close our eyes to recent developments. The original Social/Christian Democratic vision has been subverted by Anglo-American Free Market values. We say vote 'No' to the EU referendum and 'Yes' to the European social model and an independent EU Foreign policy.

The Labour and Trade Union movement want to start removing the scales from their eyes, particularly in relation to the private sector.

That is what the Tralee conference should have been focusing on, instead of fretting over Fine Gael's shortage of Dail seats!

It is an expression of where politics are at when the entire emphasis at the Labour Party's 61st National Conference in Tralee—27, 28 and 29 May 2005, focused on an election that could be at least two years away!

THE MOTION

The motion at the conference allowed the party leader to negotiate a deal with coalition parties as he likes.

His opponents wanted to keep the party's options open, but Mr. Rabbitte has said that he would prefer coalition with Enda Kenny's Fine Gael.

"Delegates, in essence, this motion commits the Labour Party to do two things", said Mr. Rabbitte.

"Both of them are equally important. First, the motion commits us to campaign from this conference on until the general