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## June 2005

Northern Election Analysis  
Brian Hanley Meeting  
*Books Ireland*

May Day  
Irish Labour Party Conference  
(Back page: Labour Comment)

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## A Constitutional Spare Wheel?

The significant thing that happened last month is the thing that did not happen. The "Sinn Fein Meltdown" proclaimed, and agitated for, by Dublin papers did not happen. The other thing that did not happen is that the SDLP did not lose the Derry seat at Westminster. The Sinn Fein vote increased and the SDLP vote fell. So events just followed their normal course in that regard. But there was a drastic fall in the SDLP vote in Derry over the last Westminster Election, despite the fact that it received about 2,000 Unionist votes.

The SDLP went very United Irishish for this election in order to minimise the difference between itself and Sinn Fein. And it gained 2,000 Unionist votes in Derry. This demonstrates the meaninglessness of elections held in a vacuum outside the functional democracy of a state. The SDLP brightened up its Nationalist image and 2,000 Derry Unionists voted for it for Unionist purposes.

The BBC is part of the apparatus of government in Northern Ireland. It operates on different terms than in Britain, where it is subject to the system of Government and Loyal Opposition, and is therefore closely attuned to movements in society. In the North, outside the party-system of the state, it can only be a propaganda instrument of the Government. And the Government requires it to report elections in the North as if they were conducted within the democracy of the state. The BBC website recorded a 'swing' of 2% from the DUP to SF in Mid-Ulster. Everybody knows there was no such swing; that there are always two elections in the North; and that the only 'swings' are within each of the electoral communities. Swings between the two electoral communities are unknown. The Unionist vote for the SDLP in Derry did not indicate a swing from Unionism to Nationalism. The swing was from the SDLP to SF. Unionists voted for the

SDLP because it is a spent force, and a vote for it might slow up its displacement by SF. If the SDLP recovered and again became the major Nationalist party, it would lose these Unionist votes.

In Britain the BBC is strictly a medium in which the political conflict is fought out. In the North it is a political instrument of the Government. Its propaganda is restrained only by the knowledge that exceptionally well-informed electorates on both sides see through it.

It was fully committed against Sinn Fein for this year's election. Two

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### French Referendum

## Vive La France!

*Ce que Paris conseille, l'Europe le médite; ce que Paris commence, l'Europe le continue. What Paris advises, Europe considers. What Paris starts, Europe continues.*  
(Victor Hugo in 1848 before the French Constituent Assembly)

The Constitutional Treaty is dead. *Vive La France!*

In a 70% turnout on May 29th, 55% of French voters killed off the 448-Article monstrosity. Dutch voters buried it a few days later.

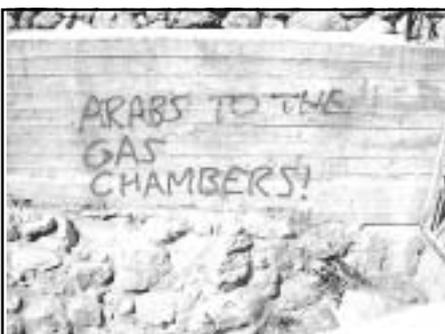
The results have been greeted with shock and hysteria by European leaders and Editorial writers. They have believed their own propaganda and therefore can only respond with incomprehension. Like eighteenth century aristocrats they peer over the parapet and remark with horror: "*the French are revolting*".

Since these European leaders and Opinion-formers are politically bankrupt they resort to psychological terms to explain it. It is an outbreak of madness. The French thought they were voting against Chirac. Perhaps it didn't happen at all! France and the Netherlands have isolated themselves. We can continue as if it never happened.

But it did happen. And it happened despite the best efforts of the Government parties (the UMP and UDF) and the main Opposition party, the Socialist Party. It happened despite the overwhelming support of the French media.

But the overwhelming propaganda in

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Graffiti like this is often found on Palestinian houses near the Israeli settlements in Hebron: see Christian Peacemaker Teams at [http://www.cpt.org/gallery/view\\_photo.php?full=1&set\\_album Name=album03&id=02\\_12\\_28\\_graffiti\\_at\\_Beit\\_Hadassah\\_2](http://www.cpt.org/gallery/view_photo.php?full=1&set_album Name=album03&id=02_12_28_graffiti_at_Beit_Hadassah_2)

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interviews stand out as blatant election-eering, both of them with Martin McGuinness. One was conducted by Noel Thompson on *Hearts & Minds* and the other by Jeremy Paxman on *Newsnight*—though neither of them reached the depths of ignorance plumbed by Keelin Shanley on *Prime Time!* And, on the day before the General Election, the BBC announced that a man had been charged with murder in connection with the Omagh bombing. That was of course not a Provo operation, but it was done by what the SDLP has called one of the Provo “*offsets*”—meaning a Republican group opposed to the Provos—and that was thought close enough to damage SF. But in fact the charging was not done till a couple of weeks after the election—and seems to have been done with no new evidence to hand. So life goes on as usual in that part of Britain—a kind of life that Britain would not tolerate.

Nevertheless SF won its election. But it won't be taking its seats.

Vincent Browne ran a Northern Election Show in April, with representatives of all parties on it. The UUP man explained what great policies his party had. Browne ridiculed the idea that the policies of parties contesting a Westminster election in Northern Ireland counted for anything in the real world of British politics. He then promptly forgot what he had just said, and put it to the Sinn Fein representative that a vote for his party

would be wasted as it would not take its seats in Westminster. The Sinn Fein had only to remind him of the truth he had just put to the Unionist. This is the only instance we know of in which the uniqueness of UK elections in Northern Ireland ever found expression on RTE. (There is no other corner of the world in which voting in a General Election has nothing to do with electing a Government for the state).

Nicholas Mansergh (whose status was close to that of official British historian) published a book on Northern Ireland, with a chapter on its parties, in which he succeeded in not mentioning the fact that the region was excluded from the party-politics of the state. His son, Martin (a Fianna Fail ideologist who lost his way when he lost his masters, Haughey and Reynolds, and who has been floundering under Bertie) has now criticised SF for its policy of abstention from Westminster, extending the criticism back to 1919. The downside of abstention in 1919, he writes (Irish Times 16.4.05):

“was the virtual absence of nationalist MPs... to challenge the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, when it was being enacted. A key issue for Northern Nationalists in this election is the price of being unrepresented in the Westminster parliament, while it continues to govern Northern Ireland”.

The 1918 Election in Britain gave a landslide majority to the War Coalition in

which the British Unionist Party was the main force. Sinn Fein could only have taken its seats by submitting itself to Crown sovereignty, and reneging on the programme on which it was elected. It could then, of course, have voted against the Government of Ireland Act. But it could not have defeated it. And, after two years of futile debate with a Government whose populous backbenches were occupied by the “*hard faced men who looked as if they had done well out of the War*” (Keynes), it would have been fit for nothing else.

Mansergh continues:

“Griffith had little enthusiasm for physical force. The passive resistance involved in setting up Dail Eireann and the Dail Courts, the ostracisation of crown forces and non-payment of taxes made an important impact alongside actual guerilla warfare.

“Paradoxically, the civil rights campaign in Northern Ireland, out of which grew the SDLP..., had more in common with the original SF. The Provisional SF of the 1970s in contrast was an ideological spare wheel on a ruthlessly militaristic IRA machine responsible for horrific civilian casualties.”

He then refers to a comment in *An Phoblacht* that a TV dramatisation of the Balcombe Street Gang “*ignored the context of a war going on*”, and says:

“That, of course, begs the question: who had the right to declare and wage war between Britain and Ireland? The answer, since independence, is only the State, which does not allow any private army to usurp its function.”

This is just glib. Provo Republicanism arose in a region of Ireland in which the Irish State has never functioned, and of which it washed its hands at a crucial juncture in 1970, after having poured oil on the flames in 1969. It continued to claim a jurisdiction which it did nothing to exercise, leaving it to others to try to make good the claim, and then it dealt with the contradictoriness of its position by imposing a rigorous broadcasting ban on those others, and interfering with publications in so far as it had the ability to do so. We remember this very well, because we tried to persuade it to withdraw the claim of jurisdiction (which it was doing nothing to implement) so as to clear the ground for other developments. Contributors to this journal chained themselves to the railings at the Department of Foreign Affairs in order to focus attention on that issue, and were taken off to Mountjoy. But the sovereignty claim stayed in place for a further quarter of a century, under Govern-

ments of *all* parties, doing nothing but harm. Either it should have been withdrawn, or the state which asserted it should have engaged in political action within the Six Counties with a view to making it good, or at least minimising its harm.

We often described Northern Ireland as a No-man's-land between two states, claimed by one and administered by another, but excluded from the political life of both. We tried to include it within the political life of the state which administered it, and the state which claimed it deployed all its influence against us—as did the “Constitutional nationalist” SDLP: we could never figure out what the ‘Constitution’ was in that description, and concluded that what the word as used meant was *Pacifist*.

Sinn Fein has now succeeded in connecting Northern Ireland to some extent with the political life of the other state—the state which claimed it until 1998 but then disowned it. And that is some achievement for an “*ideological spare wheel*”.

Mansergh implies with this phrase that Gerry Adams was running the IRA. Maybe he knows. We don't. We have had no contact with Adams for 35 years. But it struck us at least twenty years ago that he had considerable political aptitude, and the development of SF since then indicates that something more than ruthless militarism was at work.

And, although we opposed the ruthless militarism from the start (and from an address in West Belfast, which sensible people saw as madness), we will not pretend that the present state of well-being experienced by the Catholic community in the North is not the work of that quarter century of militarism. There are intangibles in these affairs, and they are often more substantial than the abstractions with which ‘political scientists’ deal. And we can say with certainty that what the Catholic community in the Six Counties is today is not the achievement of ‘Constitutional nationalism’.

We supported ‘Constitutional nationalism’ for a number of years (until 1974) even though we saw it as a self-contradictory movement. We tried to get it to take the ‘Constitutional’ part of the contradiction in earnest. But it wouldn't.

*Questions & Answers* was broadcast from Derry on May 9th. A Unionist in the audience put it to Mark Durkan that the

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#### EUROPE'S SWANSONG?

The following appeared in the French communist newspaper *l'Humanite* (30.4.05):

“It was a European dream; one of the most beautiful; a generous legacy from an illustrious, pioneering tradition; a story of men and women who still dreamed of spaces to conquer—for others. Aerospace!

“With the inaugural flight of the A380 this week, some countries from that old cantankerous Europe realised an extraordinary dream. The largest passenger aeroplane of all time has a little of France in it or at least an idea of France within Europe and the world. ...

“This project was first and foremost a product of political will and the economic involvement of four states: Germany, Great Britain, Spain and France.

“However, what does the European Constitution say on this subject? Article iii-167 specifies that measures are forbidden that are incompatible with the internal market where they affect exchange between member States such as subsidies or finance in any form from the member states which restrict or threaten to restrict certain enterprises or production.

“If there is a “yes” victory in the referendum, Boeing's bosses will be rubbing their hands”

It's a pity that the French comrade's literary flourish had to be spoiled by the leaden words of the Constitution.

#### MORE ON THE EU REFERENDUM

Lionel Jospin, the socialist who retired from politics after finishing third behind Chirac and Jean Marie Le Pen in the last Presidential election, decided to enter the debate on the European Constitution in the last week of April. Arguing for a ‘Yes’ vote he claimed that a ‘No’ victory would not result in the resignation of Jacques Chirac.

This prompted a socialist ‘No’ campaigner to ask eagerly if the defeat of the referendum would result in the permanent retirement of Jospin?

#### A DISAPPOINTED CONSTITUTION?

A commentary during the referendum suggested that the Constitution is not a constitution but a treaty. A constitution is the ultimate law of a state. But the European Union is not a state. So the French referendum is a vote on a treaty. A treaty is a set of rules which two or more states agree to be bound by.

The problem with this impeccable logic is that article i-6 seems to imply that it is a Constitution and that its law overrides the law of member states.

How is this conundrum to be resolved? Perhaps the difference between a treaty and a constitution is a bit like the difference between a pier and a bridge as the following discussion in Joyce's “Ulysses” explains:

“Tell me now, Stephen said, poking the boy's shoulder with the book, what is a pier?”

“A pier, sir, Armstrong said. A thing out in the waves. A kind of bridge. Kingstown Pier, sir.

“Some laughed again: mirthless but with meaning. Two in the back bench whispered. Yes. They knew: had never learned, nor ever been innocent. All. With envy he watched their faces. Edith, Ethel, Gerty, Lily. Their likes. Their breaths, too, sweetened with tea and jam, their bracelets twittering in the struggle.

“Kingstown Pier, Stephen said. Yes, a disappointed bridge.”

#### A DISAPPOINTED LEADER?

The phrase “*with friends like these...*” must have occurred to SDLP leader Mark Durkan when accompanied by a *Daily Telegraph* political correspondent on the campaign trail. The *Telegraph* reported the following:

“I'm SDLP through and through”, said Cathy Evans, 60, as she shook Mr Durkan's hand. “I've known Mark Durkan since he was nobody and he's still the same. He hasn't changed”, she said (*Daily Telegraph*, 4.5.05).

Fortunately for Mark, Mr. Somebody, John Hume, and some of his erstwhile Unionist enemies were at hand to help him retain the SDLP seat.

#### A GLORIOUS PAST

Vladimir Putin could teach some of our own political leaders a thing or two about celebrating history. May 1945 marked a great event for all freedom-loving peoples: the defeat of Nazism.

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SDLP had indicated that it would strike an independent deal with the Unionists if the Unionists showed willing “*but it didn’t have the guts to take it through*”. Durkan took this to refer only to Mallon’s offer towards the end of 1998, when Trimble was preventing the establishment of the devolved Government under the Agreement, that, if Trimble co-operated at that juncture, the SDLP would hold the Republicans to the two-year decommissioning schedule, and if they failed to deliver, it would do a separate deal with the Unionists. Trimble ignored the offer and prevented the formation of the Government for a further twelve months, thus using up a year and a half of the two-year period, and then participating only under a short ultimatum.

We kept this fact to the fore in all our comment on the implementation of the Agreement. The SDLP did not. Durkan went along with Trimble’s completely unreasonable reading of the two-year provision associated with the Agreement, instead of insisting that the clock was only running while devolved government was operational. And, by playing along with Trimble, it helped him to undermine the Agreement, using up his own party in the process.

We do not quite recall whether, during the seven years which have passed since the signing of the Agreement, the bits and pieces of devolved government add up to two years, even counting the months of restricted operation due to Trimble’s veto on North/South meetings.

It was the business of the SDLP and the Dublin Government to operate the Agreement strictly according to the letter in order to maximise the possibility of the IRA being phased out. And that would have meant stopping the clock on the two years whenever the devolved system was not in full operation. Instead of doing that, Durkan and Ahern went along with Trimble’s pretence that the two-year period for decommissioning was unconditional. Trimble knew what he was doing—and possibly considers that the doing of it was worth the wrecking of his party. But Durkan and Ahern gave every appearance of not having a clue. And now Durkan remembers, when it is too late.

But this is not the first time the SDLP has failed to see something through. The first time was in the Summer of 1971, when, taken by surprise with Faulkner’s proposal for power-sharing Committees, it welcomed them—but then, on second thoughts, realising that participating would

have involved striking out on an independent course, against the burgeoning Republicanism of the community, it not only rejected those proposals, but pulled out of Stormont altogether, set up its Alternative Assembly at Dungannon, and helped to drive forward the great offensive of the Winter of 1971-2.

And, when it was brought back into Constitutional politics in 1973, it did it again in 1974, refusing to do what was both reasonable and necessary to preserve the power-sharing system agreed at Sunningdale. Faulkner was the only Unionist leader who was entirely in earnest about making a deal between the communities for the operation of a devolved system. The SDLP reneged on its first agreement with him because, as that Derry Unionist said, it “*didn’t have the guts to take it through*”. And the SDLP and Dublin (the relevant Ministers being Garret FitzGerald and C.C. O’Brien) hung him out to dry after making a dupe of him over the second agreement.

Those two agreements were Constitutional, in the sense that they were designed to operate within the Constitution of the state. It is hard to find any definite meaning for the word *Constitutional* as applied to the SDLP thereafter, since its aims lay outside the state. It, rather than SF, was the “*ideological spare wheel*”. It sold itself as the alternative to the IRA, but everybody knew that it wasn’t.

The SDLP was disabled from the start by having two incompatible aims. This ambiguity was its inheritance from the civil rights campaign. Surely Mansergh realises that “*British rights for British citizens*” were achievable only within the political framework of the British state? Rights are not detached objects floating about in the global atmosphere, capable of being plucked out here or there, without prejudice to other things. And the British state has never gone along with the view that they are. Rights in Britain are, effectively, the rights of *subjects* who participate in the political life of the state. Citizens of the world who disdain the local state and live in the ideology of the French Declaration of Rights of 1789 or the UN Declaration of Rights are out of place there. And the great object in dealing with new waves of immigrants—new waves of imported people—is to break them in to the politics of the state. But Northern Ireland was excluded from the political life of the state. So we rounded out the Civil Rights slogan into its necessary political dimension—and we found

that very few of the Civil Rights of the 1968-9 agitation would go along with that. The SDLP was hostile from the start. We know because we put it to them at the start. Their slogan should have been “*British rights without British citizenship*”.

Whitehall, Leinster House and Glengall St. were equally hostile. Whitehall had a different purpose in mind for ‘Ulster’ than to have it settle down within the British state. It was its point of leverage against the part of Ireland that had escaped from it, and trouble in the North increased its purchase on the South. Whitehall easily manipulated the self-contradictoriness in the positions of the others.

So, who then has the right to declare war on Britain over its perverse mode of government in the North? Senator Mansergh raises an interesting question. The answer he appears to give is that only the Dublin Government has. But surely that right passes on to another party when Dublin washes its hands of responsibility for the North, as it did in the Spring of 1970. And who else could it pass to but the direct victims of that perverse mode of government?

We are grateful to the Senator for raising the issue—though we doubt that he knew what he was saying.

As we go to print it is announced that arrests have been made in connection with the McCartney killing. The affair has been dragged out for four months by the police for political purposes. Much less was gained than was hoped for, and it has now been judged that dragging it out has become counter-productive.

Willie O’Dea, the Dublin Minister for War, made a statement on *Questions & Answers* (May 9th) which he must have known not to be true, unless he deliberately kept himself in ignorance of the basic facts. He said there were seventy witnesses. There were 70 people in the pub, where the killing was *not* done. And the pub is so constructed that only a fraction of the people in it could have witnessed anything that happened in another part. The killing occurred amongst a small group of people who left the pub and went into a dark, narrow side-street around the corner. The names of those people were known to the police all along. The chief witness was a friend of Robert McCartney’s who had introduced the knife into an argument. The police did not question him. Sinn Fein representatives who were being harassed by the BBC asked the BBC why

it did not quiz the police about their failure to investigate, and got no answer. The job of the BBC was to harass SF on the issue, insisting that it needed to do something to compel people to give evidence, and not just urge them to do so. And then, if they did do something drastic, they would be 'terrorists'.

Noel Thompson gave Martin McGuinness a grilling on what was murder and what was not, giving hypothetical cases. McGuinness was eventually provoked into demanding clarification of what the BBC considered murder. Was the killing of fourteen people on the street in Derry murder? Thompson refused to answer. It was a reasonable question in the light of the mode of questioning. But Thompson got flustered in the course of refusing to answer.

He said it was not his job to have an opinion about such things, because he was a journalist. He could not give the true answer—that he is an apparatchik of the BBC and must follow the line. The BBC is a caricature of itself in Northern Ireland, where it is operating outside its element. But, even in Britain, BBC functionaries are not journalists, at least not on matters which touch on politics. That was laid down in its Charter 80 years ago. Thompson is not a journalist. He is the hack of a Corporation controlled by the state.

Twenty years ago the BBC forgot what it was and it made a programme about Gregory Campbell and Martin McGuinness when Sinn Fein was outlawed. It was whipped back into line. The late Vincent Hanna (J. Paxman's predecessor) declared that the BBC was a kind of independent guild of broadcasters and he called a strike. The strike was broken, the Director General was sacked, and a new Chairman of the Board was appointed to exercise strong discipline.

The BBC ventured into journalism again last year. Its journalist was Andrew Gilligan. And once again it was whipped back into line, as in 1985.

### Correction

Professor Liam Kennedy stood against Gerry Adams in West Belfast in the General Election on an explicitly anti-Sinn Fein policy. We reported last month that "Adams *increased* his vote by a large multiple of what Professor Kennedy got in total". This should have been stated in percentages. Kennedy got 0.4% of the vote while Adams vote increased by 4.4% to 70.5%. His increase was eleven times Kennedy's total. ●

# Vive La France!

continued

favour of the Constitution was not enough to suppress debate. And with all due respect to Spain, France was the first country in Europe to have a genuine debate among its people. Much of the credit must go the French Communist Party, which launched its campaign with an excellent pamphlet in October 2004. The communist daily newspaper, *l'Humanité*, continued to raise the issues and countered the propaganda of the 'Yes' side right up until referendum day. It adopted a non-sectarian approach and opened its pages to dissidents from the Socialist Party as well as the Trotskyist leader of the League of the Communist Revolution. (It took a less generous attitude to the other Trotskyist party, "Workers Struggle". After all, there is such a thing as carrying non-sectarianism too far!).

The substance of the 'No' campaign was supplied by the Communist Party, dissidents from the Socialist Party, such as Lauren Fabius and Henri Emanuelli and the Republican Socialist Jean Pierre Chevenement (the latter resigned from the Mitterand Government over the first Gulf war). They all claim to be "*pro-Europe*", but for a different Europe, a "*social Europe*".

Up until 'Blairism', it has always been the position of reformist socialists that it is essential to have a strong state to protect working class interests and assist in the development of the economy. This position has been abandoned by most socialists (social democrats) in the face of the all-conquering globalisation of capital which has accelerated its sphere of operation since the fall of communism in 1989.

The *Irish Political Review* had been in favour of the existing European project up until and including the Maastricht Treaty. But we cannot close our eyes to international developments. The International Capitalists are the revolutionary class. Since the fall of communism they have not hesitated to disrupt societies in their own interest with the help of the World Bank and the IMF. Their *modus operandi* is to weaken states as a means of maximising their sphere of influence.

The European Constitutional Treaty dovetailed with the Globalisation project.

It envisaged a free unrestricted market and at the same time disabled Member-States from exercising control over the process. The accession of the ten new states made it impossible for any new coherent European State to emerge. The last few years have seen a downward spiral caused by competition. The mobility of capital has enabled States with low wages and limited social protection to undermine employment in countries such as Germany and France which have high wages and generous social protection. The international capitalists have been quite open about all this. For example, last year a Bosch factory in France brazenly threatened its workers with transferring production to a cheaper country if they did not extend their 35-hour working week to 39 hours with no extra pay. European social legislation, such as the maximum 48-hour week, has been rendered meaningless by allowing derogations to Member-States such as the UK.

The left-wing supporters of Globalisation portray this process as inevitable. We must all submit to the inevitable laws of the market. The significance of the French 'No' vote is that it is the first challenge to this defeatism. It is a vote of hope signifying that politics matters despite all the 'conventional wisdom'.

Towards the end of the French referendum campaign, Chirac and others tried to claim that the 'No' campaign was incapable of re-negotiating the Treaty since it was composed of such diverse elements as the Communist Party and Jean Marie LePen's National Front. But LePen was uncharacteristically quiet during the campaign. At an early stage he indicated that he did not wish to "*demonise*" the 'No' vote.

There is no doubt that the substance of the 'No' vote came from the left. However, although LePen's party is particularly nasty, the 15% (probably declining) of voters whom he represents should not be dismissed. There is a rational basis for that vote. Why should a nationalist-minded French voter become an internationalist if he perceives that international trends are undermining his livelihood? It was interesting that Henri Emanuelli of the

Socialist Party said that one of the reasons why he went against his party leadership and campaigned for a 'No' was that he was afraid that, if he didn't, socialist voters would be driven to vote for the National Front!

#### LOSERS AND WINNERS

One of the big losers in this referendum has been Jacques Chirac. He called the referendum and lost. There is no doubt that his authority within France and Europe has been undermined. His only consolation is that his bitter rival Nicholas Sarkozy can hardly claim to be a replacement since the Free Market values that the latter stands for suffered a crushing defeat.

Probably the biggest loser has been Francois Holland, the leader of the Socialist Party. At least Chirac can claim that his party united behind him. The same cannot be said of Holland. As the campaign progressed his authority weakened. He was unable to discipline his dissidents and, when the 'No' side grew in strength, Jacques Delors and Lionel Jospin had to be wheeled out in a desperate attempt to shore up the flow of left-wing support towards the 'No' side.

One of the big winners has been the Communist Party. Much of the ground-work for the 'No' campaign was done by that party, which was holding meetings on the Constitution around the country since last year. Although Marie George Buffet is not as accomplished a media performer as Fabius or Emanuelli, she did not put a foot wrong. Her response to the victory was calm and measured. Unlike Emanuelli, LePen and others she did not call for the resignation of Chirac after the referendum. She suggested that the Government submit to the choice of the people or resign. This reflects a realistic acceptance that, if the Communist Party is to have influence in the development of Europe, it will have to work with the elected French Government no matter how much it might dislike it. The Communist Party has been in the doldrums in recent years, representing about 5% of the vote, but it is very likely that its share of the vote will increase in the coming years.

But the biggest winner was Laurent Fabius. His interventions were crucial and his pro-European credentials reassured many non-communist voters. He was also the first to articulate an alternative vision (see interview in this magazine). On the night of the referendum he showed almost 'God Like' contempt for media protocols and refused to give any inter-

views. He said that he would be returning to his people in Normandy. Twenty four hours later he descended on Paris to pronounce on the result. Such arrogance was worthy of Mitterrand!

He is not universally liked, but it is extremely difficult to see who else can possibly be the Socialist Presidential candidate in 2007.

#### WHERE NOW?

The interview with Fabius in this magazine gives a hint as to the direction that Europe could take. However it does not deal with the likely possibility of some countries not sharing the social vision of France (e.g. the UK). Last year during the internal Socialist Party referendum debate he suggested a two speed Europe. If Europe is to develop, with some countries preferring to follow France and others preferring the existing Constitution, the former countries will require economic protectionist policies. Otherwise, there will continue to be a drift towards outsourcing of production to the low tax 'free market' orientated countries of Europe.

A new two speed Europe would also have implications for the European Social Fund and the Common Agricultural Policy. It would be unrealistic to expect the 'social' countries to subsidise the 'free market' countries.

For Fabius's project to succeed, the support of Germany is essential. A new more social dynamic within Europe can only happen if there is a referendum in Germany. Germany has already approved the Constitution in its parliament. However, recent elections indicate that there is strong left-wing disenchantment with the rightward drift of the German Social Democrats. This discontent is united around the former Social Democratic leader Oskar La Fontaine who is a trenchant opponent of the Constitutional Treaty.

#### IRELAND

As has been pointed out in this magazine, the political establishment in this country has a wildly unrealistic view of the reasons for economic success. Ireland has benefited from being part of a Protectionist Europe. Its low tax policies have attracted a disproportional share of American capital wishing to have access to the European market. But the Nice Treaty changed all that. The wide political and economic diversity in the countries of the European Union has undermined the social model. The only way it can be retrieved is by a "two speed" Europe.

If the French social vision spreads to Germany the choice between "Boston and Berlin" will no longer be academic. Ireland will face an urgent practical decision. We are heading for interesting times! ●

#### Marie-George Buffet Statement

Marie-George Buffet is the leader of the French Communist Party. She made the following statement on 29th of May following the result of the French Referendum:

"A great hope has arisen today. Having mobilised in an exceptional manner, our people have said 'no' to the neo-liberal tidal wave that has ravaged Europe and the World for the last twenty years. It is a turning point. This victory was constructed on the rejection of the damage and suffering caused by the policies of social division; by the struggles and mobilisations of recent years and by a dynamic of popular unity which evokes the great times of the popular front and May 1968.

"This victory is above all a victory of the wage earners, employees, young people, unemployed, French and foreign activists who did remarkable work to allow our people to forge their opinion. These men and women mastered the content of the text which was given to them and they gathered in the polling booths to reject this neo-liberal straitjacket.

"Our Government must submit to the decision of the people or resign.

"France must ask for a renegotiation of the treaty and demand the abandonment of the ultra-liberal projects from Brussels: the Bolkestein Directive, privatisation, and the regression of social rights anticipated by the Lisbon timetable.

"The French parliament must meet before the European Council in Mid June, to draw all the consequences of this vote.

"Let us mobilise *en masse* for the European Council so that it might hear and respect the position of the French people.

"This 'no' of our people is European, generous and a 'no' of solidarity. It invites everyone to organise in this country, and at the different European levels, popular assemblies for another Europe. Let us have the ambition to build our strength so that it will dictate the direction of the renegotiation of the treaty.

"The left, for its part, must draw the lessons of this poll. After so many disappointments, this victory demands political unity to beat the neo-liberal policies.

"The people demand of the left that it may have the courage and strength to confront the power of money and the neo-liberal dogmas. The Communist Party calls on all of the left to assume this immense responsibility.

"I call on citizens, elected politicians, political activists, organisations, who have campaigned for this victory to meet in every community in France. I invite from the bottom of my heart men and women and organisations of the left, even those who might have voted 'yes', to take your place, to participate with us in this noble adventure to construct another Europe, a genuine left wing alternative.

"Let us forge together a popular united left so as to change our lives."

(Translated by John Martin)

# A European Balance Of Power?

Britain gained entry to the European Union under its one thoroughly post-Imperial Prime Minister. Edward Heath disarmed European suspicions by his own authenticity. He was overthrown by the rebellion of a Labour movement, many of whose leaders wished a few years later that they had done a deal with him. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by a Labour Government, which was at the mercy of a Labour movement which was anti-European on the ground that the EU (its name then being the EEC, European Economic Community) would prohibit the full development of socialism which they thought was about to happen in Britain. Heath was ousted from the Tory leadership by Thatcher during the five years when the Labour movement was busily digging its own grave. Thatcher came to power in 1979 and set about using Britain's membership of the EU to subvert it from within. Her general outlook was adopted by the Labour Party after four successive defeats, and the Blair Government has carried on her work of subversion since 1997.

British policy towards Europe for twenty years has been to gain opt-outs for itself on social measures, to prevent the formation of an EU foreign policy, to avail of the collapse of the Soviet system to extend EU membership eastwards indefinitely, and to press for 'reform' of the European economy.

The British Labour Party was apprehensive thirty years ago that EU membership would be an obstacle to the further socialist development of Britain. For the past eight years that Labour Party has been doing its damndest to destroy the social structures built into post-1945 Europe by agreement between Christian Democrats and Social Democrats.

The first European combination of 6 states was workable. It would still have been workable with Britain and Ireland if they were European in outlook (as Ireland was for a while under Haughey), and with Spain as reconstructed by Franco. But, with Britain playing Imperial games once more (with Ireland back in its pocket), and with an array of new Member States from the east—post-Soviet states and therefore

states without history or orientation—it ceased to be workable.

The European project was hijacked. It was taken away from its founders, and now two of its founders have voted against the way it is being reformed.

Anthony Coughlan of the Irish Sovereignty Movement was jubilant about the French referendum in the *Irish Times* (31 May). Ten years ago he was jubilant on Radio Eireann about British withdrawal from the ERM under pressure from the currency speculators, saying it proved that "you can't buck the market".

Well, if you can't buck the market, socialism is off and Thatcherism is all that is possible. And Coughlan has been closely allied with British Eurosceptics in recent years.

The Irish Sovereignty Movement (ISM) was directed against Europe—though it failed to protest against the imposition of the smoking ban as an administrative measure introduced under a European decree without proper domestic legislation.

Anti-Europeanism led in practice to alignment with Britain. And the founder of the ISM, Raymond Crotty, did not merely align himself with Britain in practice—he actually appealed to Britain to take Ireland in hand once more because it was unable to look after itself. He did this in an article in the (London) *Times* on 3rd July 1972, in which he said that Ireland had been debilitated economically and culturally by independence, which "put a political boundary through the British Isles resource market". And he appealed to Britain to "apply its own scholarship to researching and studying" Irish affairs. Which it did. Witness Professor Foster and Peter Hart.

Coughlan sees the French Referendum as aborting the EU, and the Euro along with it. And what does he think should happen now. The way is open, he says, for "a saner, more rational way of organising our continent". This is to be done "on the basis of the balance of power".

The "balance of power" is Britain's strategic approach to Europe, put in place

under William of Orange and continued ever since, with the exception of about forty years after 1945, when it was put in abeyance by the outcome of Britain's bungled 2nd World War. It involved preventing any long-term stability from being arrived at in Europe through the operation of the internal forces on the Continent. Britain, from the time when the Whigs took it in hand under William, saw itself as a world power and not as part of Europe. Its European policy was to give some support to the weaker powers to 'balance' them against the stronger, and thus keep Europe in a permanent condition of actual or latent warfare, thereby maximising its own freedom of action in other parts of the world. All its Great Wars were balance-of-power wars—the 1690s, the early 1700s, the 1750s, 1793-1815, and 1914-19. The emergence of the Bolshevik state out of the chaos of the 1914 war made the game problematical, and the massive expansion of Bolshevik power after 1944 took it off the agenda for over forty years. The collapse of the Soviet Union put it back on the agenda, and it has been the object of British policy since 1990 to restore it fully.

Anti-Europeans have said that the European project was always a political project, though it masqueraded as economic. It was in fact overtly political from the start, and the economic measures were a means. The originators of the project—statesmen and intellectuals in France, Italy, Germany, and Benelux, knew in 1945 what Britain had been doing in Europe since 1900: balance-of-power games, first against France, then against Germany (1905-1919), then against France (early 1920s), then against Germany again in the late 1930s. The purpose of the European project was to bring about a degree of political unity (essentially between France, Germany and Benelux) to ensure that Britain could never again play that game. It now looks distinctly possible that it will be played again. And Anthony Coughlan wants it to be played.

He may have some esoteric meaning for the phrase. In the real world of history and politics it is the way Britain has understood Europe since the Battle of the Boyne. ●

## Correction n

In last month's feature, *Yeats, The Love Poet*, there was an allusion to C.S. Lewis. This should have read, **C. Day Lewis**.

**Editor**

# Mission to Moscow

There seems to be something of a mystery about Bertie Ahern's visit to Moscow for VE Day on the 9th of May. There is no speech on record, no report to the Dail, not even a sound bite to the media that I could find. No photo of the man himself in Red Square, except among the group photo. This is not his style. He was to meet the British premier for talks on Northern Ireland. As Blair did not turn up was he a bit lost? Did he not have anyone else to talk to? I contacted his office but no more information was forthcoming about what he said or did. The man who a few short months ago single-handedly rescued the EU Constitution and thereby set Europe right for the next thousand years has nothing to say about a similar event 60 years ago. Some comparison like that could have been made (and believed by the Irish political elite). What are all these press officers and advisors paid for except to produce that kind of baloney? He must not be feeling himself?

There is a rumour that he wanted to get Putin and the Russians onside on the latest situation in N. Ireland, which means them getting awfully concerned about the McCartney killing (*ala* the mass murderers in Washington and the professional spoofers in Strasbourg). But the Russians, commemorating the killing of 27 millions of their compatriots, just could not get their heads round the historical significance of a pub brawl in Belfast. The Russians are very slow learners at this game.

Load of peasants, get me out of here!

And if the truth be known Bertie could have got that war of theirs over and done with in a fraction of the time and a fraction of the cost it took them to do so.

However, there was evidence that the Russians are learning at least the current lingo of the West. Putin declared in his speech that the Russian victory was one of 'Good over Evil'. This gets a bit tricky if taken seriously. Where does that leave the ghost at the celebrations, the war-winning leader, Joseph Stalin? On the side of Good? And leading the forces of Good? Something wrong here surely? He never claimed to represent Good and is in no

imminent danger of being so accused in the normal course of events but when rhetoric takes over anything can happen.

Stalin was a little more specific about what won the war. He called on the sons and daughters of Mother Russia to repulse the Nazi invaders of their country by any and every means possible—and they did so. And they also confirmed the one everlasting law of war, i.e., never march on Moscow in the Winter. And all those other countries represented at Moscow on 9th May had by contrast either been defeated (France), run away (Britain), or not engaged with the Nazis (US) at the time of the invasion of Russia.

But the *Irish Times* came up with a solution to this puzzle about Joseph the Good. An article by Dr. Stefan Auer (Academic director of the Dublin European Institute, University College Dublin) explained that: "*In the West, 1945 signified the victory of good over evil, but in Stalin's part of Europe evil had been defeated by evil*" (11.5.05).

This is the kind of statement that gives theology a bad name. Can there be a number of equal evils in the world at the same time? Are there degrees of evil and how many? Can Good be graded and enumerated also? Can Good fight Good, like Evil apparently can fight Evil? And how could that arise? The mind boggles. Rather more important, who decides on all this categorising? Is Dr. Auer an expert on Evil? And on Good? Is he God by any chance?

Counting the number of angels on the head of a pin was historically a very fruitful activity for developing the abstract capacity of the human mind because there was no reality check to worry about. But there are innumerable facts against which to check Dr. Auer's speculations on WWII and therefore his type of theology could easily lead to mental instability.

Dr. Auer looks at plenty facts of course but he is so selective that it becomes farcical. For example, the earliest relevant fact he refers to is the *Ribbentrop-Stalin Pact* that every schoolboy once knew followed the *Munich Agreement* and was a consequence of it. Stalin saw a trap being laid to have a united front against him spearheaded by Germany and escaped from it with the masterstroke of the Pact. Apparently that Munich Agreement must now become a footnote in history, and if possible disappear altogether, as it does for Dr. Auer. But understanding of WWII then becomes impossible.

Mr. Putin, take our advice, forget the rhetoric and stick to the plain facts of your own history (even if you must ignore the man who won the war) or you might soon become dependent for your view of the world on people like Dr. Auer and other writers in the *Irish Times*. The Russian people do not deserve that. They have suffered enough.

Jack Lane

## Reader's Letter

# One And A Bit Nations: A Response

Dear Editor

I noted Brendan Clifford's reply to my letter on this subject (*Irish Political Review*, April). The basic difference between Brendan and me is that I, on principle, always recognise the national or ethnic self-definition of a people, whereas he believes that it is legitimate to judge such definition as mistaken and to argue for another 'objective' one. Thus when close on a million people in northeast Ireland declare themselves to be British, I accept this, whereas Brendan adduces arguments to show that they are wrong. For me, since they are by self-definition British, they belong to the British nation (which comprises also English, Welsh and Scots). For Brendan, they form a separate nation whose name he has so far not revealed. So his view that in Ireland there are two nations—the Irish nation and the nameless one—opposes itself to my view that Ireland contains the Irish nation and the Ulster British.

I have not habitually called this view of mine 'one nation and a bit'—it is just a handy way of putting it. My progress towards it began when, in the 1960s, not knowing Brendan or his writings, I concluded, as he did, that the one-nation dogma of Irish nationalism was a falsity. I believed it also smacked of imperialism, as did the British assertion, under the Act of Union, that the Irish were British, when most Irish said they were not.

My first public rejection of that nationalist dogma, and my progress towards my present view, began in August 1969 when—with Douglas Gageby giving me a free hand to write anything I liked on the North—I wrote an article in *The Irish*

*Times* entitled *A Plea for Realism*. It began: “The first basic fact that needs to be recognised is that Northern Ireland contains two historic peoples, or rather, one such people (the Ulster Protestants) and part of another. Only the accident that both of them speak English obscures the fact that they are peoples as real and distinct as, say, the Austrians and Czechs.”

As a result of that article, Ian Paisley’s henchman, Major Ronald Bunting, told a press conference in Belfast that he agreed with me. I went to Belfast. We drew up a joint declaration called *Principles of Settlement*, subsequently published in *The Irish Times*. Referring to the ‘two peoples’ of Northern Ireland without naming them, we proposed mutual recognition and respect and a sharing of power. By this last we meant, for we were both enthusiasts of strong local government, a well-empowered cantonal division of Northern Ireland in accordance with local majorities. Our aim, or at least mine, was simply to prevent violent conflict.

Then, in the early 1970s, as I campaigned for condominium (joint sovereignty) in the North and worked on the four-province federal scheme, I took account of an untidy fact. In the North, the people of Irish allegiance included some Protestants, and those of British allegiance some Catholics. So I stopped describing the two communities in religious terms, and called them simply ‘Irish’ and ‘British’.

My final naming of them occurred in 1974-5, in my *Sunday Press* column and elsewhere, when I regularly referred to ‘the Six-County Irish’ and ‘the Ulster British’. I adopted the latter term from a pamphlet written by a professor of Birmingham University, who had previously worked on a commission about the ‘dual-minority’ situation in the South Tyrol.

When Brendan writes that “the ‘nation and a bit’ view was brought up by somebody in the mid-seventies”, he is referring to that usage of mine. I was the first in the Republic, and the first Irish nationalist, to publicly accept the self-definition of the ethnic minority in the Northeast, and to call them ‘British’.

That usage first entered official language in the British White Paper of April 1982, and then, in 1984, in the New Ireland Forum Report. That was the first official document issuing from Dublin which recognised the two ethnic groups in Northern Ireland by the national names they use to describe themselves.

**Desmond Fennell**

# Playing Handball Against A Haystack

## A response to Brian Hanley’s defence of Peter Hart

*“Asking the Taoiseach a question is like trying to play handball against a haystack. You hear a dull thud and the ball does not come back to you. It goes all over the world, but it certainly does not come back to the person asking the question.”* Joe Higgins Socialist Party TD, Leinster House 29 January 2003

The Ireland Institute is to be congratulated for hosting a talk by Dr Brian Hanley of Maynooth on *Historians and the Irish Revolution* on May 12.

Brian Hanley interviewed Peter Hart recently in *History Ireland*. He clarified his differences with critics of Peter Hart’s work on the War of Independence in Cork (*The IRA And Its Enemies* 1998). In the absence of a detailed reply from Peter Hart (which we still await), a response to Hanley’s talk may serve to clarify the discussion and to eliminate some of the confusions.

### PREPOSTEROUS

Brian Hanley criticized those who apparently believe that the War of Independence consisted of “four glorious years” and who allegedly have difficulty with the fact that the IRA assassinated or ambushed the enemy at close range. Adherents of this view were not identified. Ironically, these could be the type of republicans Peter Hart admires, who for “moral” reasons “refused to become ambushers and assassins” (see *History Ireland* interview, <http://www.historyireland.com/magazine/features/13.2FeatC.html>).

Focusing on Peter Hart’s Critics, Hanley said: “some ... argue that it is utterly preposterous to suggest that any action of the IRA could have been motivated by sectarianism”. The holder of this preposterous view was again not named. (Brian Hanley’s at times inability to identify who he was talking about and what precisely they said or wrote creates a difficulty—of which more below.)

### IMPOSSIBLE

Hanley said: “It is impossible to believe that no IRA member acted out of personal malice or out of the belief that Protestants were not really Irish”. It would indeed be

foolish (though not impossible) to take issue with this view. Derivation of motivation in every individual case is not the historian’s task. The issue is the significance or effect of such views, if indeed they had any significant effect over the course of the War of Independence. Where such views existed they would have to be put into context. For instance, it is not sufficient to portray as sectarian the infusion of religious belief into a political outlook. Otherwise, we would have to portray Gandhi and Martin Luther King as sectarian. By and large sectarianism as a motivating factor was explicit in the ideology of Unionism and in the policy and practice of the British Government and its forces. Sectarian violence or its justification was not a feature of republican politics or action. Peter Hart almost concedes as much in his recent *History Ireland* interview, in a way that implicitly contradicts his West Cork research.

The problem with Peter Hart’s work on Cork is that he concludes that sectarianism as such motivated the IRA campaign and the republican struggle generally in West Cork. Hart concluded that this was essentially a war of “neighbor against neighbor”.

### KILMICHAEL = DUNMANWAY

Two events are pivotal to Hart’s thesis. Indeed, he links them.

They are:

a) The Kilmichael ambush and Hart’s refutation of the claim that Auxiliaries engaged in a false surrender;

b) Hart’s allegation that the post-Truce Bandon/Dunmanway killings of loyalists (Hanley said 13, others say 14) in 1922 were motivated by sectarianism.

### KILMICHAEL

If Peter Hart had concluded from his examination of the Kilmichael ambush that he was unsure of the accuracy of the false surrender claim in the midst of the fog of war, we could agree to differ and to forget the matter. It would be too trivial to pursue. However, for Hart the false surrender claim is in fact a lie concocted

by IRA commander, Tom Barry. Hart's newspaper allegation that Barry was a "serial killer" was part of the argument that the battle was occasioned by savagery that was part of a vicious sectarian conflict. It "culminated" in the Bandon/Dunmanway killings, said Peter Hart.

Taken with Hart's deliberate omission of key aspects of a contentious document (the omitted sections reinforce the case for its being a British forgery) and the demolition of other aspects of Hart's case against Barry (see Meda Ryan's *Tom Barry*), we are left with little more than a case made on the basis of assumptions. While it is possible to believe such a case, it is not necessarily historical belief, more an act of revisionist faith.

The interest in the false surrender at Kilmichael stems from the fact that establishing it as a lie enables Peter Hart to place the IRA on the same level of moral and political opprobrium as the British forces: the Black & Tans, Auxiliaries and RIC. If Hart's evidence stood up we could argue over interpretation of the evidentiary and documentary basis of the argument. But the evidence falls apart on examination and Peter Hart has been criticised as a researcher who is, at best, less than careful in its presentation.

#### DUNMANWAY

Take the Bandon/Dunmanway killings. Peter Hart misreported, and in this case misrepresented, another document (again from British sources, though genuine in this case). Hart asserted that Protestants shot as informers by the IRA could not have supplied information because, according to the British Record of the Rebellion, Protestants "had not got it to give". Hart left out the next sentence which stated: "the exception to this rule was in the Bandon area", where there was active informing and where the IRA shot the culprits. In other words, a source said by Hart to be "the most important and trustworthy we have" contradicted his central point, and he omitted its relevant point.

When he came to publish an edited version of the Record of the Rebellion a few years later, Peter Hart glided over his omission in a manner said by an *Irish Times* reviewer to be "disingenuous" (Brendan O Cathaoir, writing on 18th January 2003). He also left out of his published version a section in which it was admitted that the British Army had a sectarian view of the Irish. (I am indebted to Brian Murphy for this latter point. It

was Murphy who in 1999 pointed to the original omission by Hart.) [We hope to reproduce this missing section in next month's magazine, ed.]

Brian Hanley did not deal with these specific and quite serious criticisms, even when raised from the floor by Manus O'Riordan and by me. Perhaps he did not wish to appear critical.

#### OUTSIDER

There are aspects of Hart's work that Brian Hanley said he does not "go along with" but these were not explained. He observed that, merely because Kevin Myers of the *Irish Times* agreed with a proponent of a historical work, in this case Peter Hart's, it did not of itself render the work wrong. Indeed.

For instance, Hart's "evidence for the Dunmanway killings is compelling", said Brian Hanley, without referring to the issue of Hart's use of the Record or other recent evidence (see below). He gave a short account of the original impetus for the killings. Hanley said they resulted from a desire for "revenge after the deaths of IRA Volunteers" (in fact one IRA Volunteer). However, Hanley reported it to be improbable that "suddenly 13 informers were found": those done to death were killed because they were a part of an "outsider" group. Hanley, following Hart, suggests the victims were picked at random from the Protestant community.

It is surprising that Hanley did not refer to the evidence in Meda Ryan's *Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter* (2003). The names of all those shot were on the list of "helpful citizens" left by the Auxiliaries when they vacated Dunmanway Workhouse. Three were directly implicated in the killing of the IRA Volunteer and two relatives of others on the list were shot (surnames were listed in that case—this in itself reveals the relationship of the killings to the Auxiliary list). Ryan documented the exceptional organization of paramilitary loyalism on an explicitly sectarian basis in the Bandon area within sections of the Protestant community (a level of organization that Peter Hart denies). During the War, the IRA shot informers or expelled them from the area, irrespective of their religion. The allegation that Protestants were targeted as such, or, even more seriously, that innocent Protestants were targeted, has little evidentiary or documentary basis. The best case that can be made for such an approach arises from the Bandon/Dunmanway killings. Under examination, as

with Kilmichael, the case is weakened considerably. (See details in references below which indicate where further information on the whole debate can be found.)

#### EXCEPTIONAL

In fact, the Bandon/Dunmanway killings were exceptional, but they were also not sectarian. They took place during a ceasefire period, in defiance of an IRA amnesty for spies and informers. They were roundly condemned by every section of republican opinion, pro and anti-Treaty. Even the Select Vestry of the Church of Ireland said they were exceptional. These comments were issued in the absence of knowledge of the Auxiliary list. Tom Barry played an honorable role in stopping the killings and preventing further targeting of former British Intelligence Agents and operatives on the Dunmanway list—for these individuals were potentially still under threat. Manus O'Riordan and Meda Ryan have detailed this episode and their evidence appears compelling.

Brian Hanley, in partial retreat, suggested that what is important is how the killings are "seen" by "one million Irish people" in the North of Ireland. Certainly British propaganda did everything it could to portray the War of Independence as a war against Protestants. Deviators were terrorised back into line. In his recent talk in Cork, Brian Murphy recounted the experience of an unfortunate Protestant trader from Cork named Biggs, who asserted in a letter to the *Irish Times* that relations between Protestants and Catholics were fine. Within three days his shop was razed to the ground by the RIC. The audio recording of Murphy's talk on *Indymedia.ie* reveals this and other similar and telling details.

#### ORANGE ORDER

Brian Hanley should realise that very effort was made to help unionists "see" the conflict as sectarian and to persuade them to fight on that basis. Peter Hart helps them 'see' this anew, which is why his work is promoted extensively on Orange Order-inspired web sites.

Many Protestants, including in Cork, supported or were sympathetic to the Republican struggle. Sam Maguire, a Protestant from Dunmanway, was Michael Collins' right hand man who took a pro-Treaty position. He took part in the 1924 Army Mutiny in protest against Free State policy since Collins' death. (On his death Maguire's former IRA comrades defied priestly prohibition to provide an IRA

honour guard at his Protestant funeral service, a point made by Manus O’Riordan at the talk.) This phenomenon, ignored by Hart, would have been highly improbable had the IRA conducted themselves as depicted by him. The main point here is that there were Protestant republicans in Dunmanway, Bandon, Ballineen and other areas, just as there were Roman Catholic loyalists. The element of support for and opposition to the British Empire as a powerful worldwide entity is missing from Hart’s account. Instead we are given a simplistic inward-looking tribal or ethnic view of the community and of the fight. It is inadequate.

However, Hanley’s observation on what northern unionists “see” leads to the question: is the perception of an event more important to a historian than an investigation of what actually happened? Historical perceptions have consequences, even contemporary ones. But presumably historians like to help in the formation of perceptions based on understanding of what actually happened, rather than on inaccurate propaganda.

Otherwise, are we not dealing simply with a history of perceptions or of sentiment and prejudice? Isn’t this approach merely a reverse of the alleged nationalist bogeyman history of the ‘glory days’ of the IRA?

#### CHUTZPAH

Although Brian Hanley said he had not read Brian Murphy’s recently published *The Catholic Bulletin And Republican Ireland*, he made a point of referring to anti-Semitic views in a series of *Bulletin* articles (by a Fr. Thomas Burbage) and as expressed later by the Editor, J.J. O’Kelly. A pity he had not read the work, as Murphy addresses the issue. It was difficult to discern the relevance of the comment (given that Brian Hanley admitted that such views were not predominant) except as an illustration of his view that critics of Peter Hart exist in a sort of pure republican cocoon.

It may have been slightly disconcerting for Brian Hanley to suggest, even implicitly, that Peter Hart’s critics have little to say about the anti-Semitism of J.J. O’Kelly, ‘*Scailig*’, when the originator of the research on that subject, and Peter Hart critic, Manus O’Riordan, was sitting directly in front of him. O’Riordan asserted that Peter Hart had a pro-British bias and spoke in detail on the anti-sectarian nature of the IRA campaign during the War of Independence.

#### CLASS ACT

It is also odd that O’Riordan, Head of

Research in SIPTU, Ireland’s largest Trade Union, and populariser and defender of the legacy of James Connolly and Frank Ryan, was also in effect accused of not being interested in the class struggle elements of the Irish revolution, another Hanley claim. Manus O’Riordan was accompanied by his father, Michael, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland, Spanish Civil War Veteran, and native of Cork, who attended both of Brian Murphy’s recent talks.

It may also be unnerving to note that Dr. O’Connor Lysaght, historian of the Limerick Soviet and over 40-year proponent of the views of Leon Trotsky, rose and spoke in tones similar to those of Manus O’Riordan. He pointed out that a feature of the revisionist method was to “generalise from the exceptions”, and that Hart’s depiction of the Bandon/Dunmanway killings was a classic example.

#### DONEGAL, MONAGHAN NOT IN NORTH

There was little if any hagiography in the remarks of O’Riordan (who was very critical of aspects of Tom Barry’s politics after the War of Independence), or from others who spoke in opposition to Hart.

Brian Hanley countered my comment on the exceptional, to the south, organization of paramilitary loyalism in Bandon. He responded that the UVF were active in Ulster Counties, Monaghan and Donegal. Brian had referred earlier to the killing of Protestants in those counties, but on that initial occasion had not mentioned the presence of the UVF.

It is a curious feature of this debate that Brian Hanley did not cite a specific word, sentence or passage from Peter Hart’s critics. Similarly, not once did Peter Hart do so in his intervention on the Internet, on the BBC or in his *History Ireland* interview. Brian Murphy’s recent talk is on *Indymedia.ie* (his previous talk on British propaganda is extensively reported and his original criticism is from 1999). Meda Ryan’s book is out over a year and a half. Manus O’Riordan’s work is published and also on the Internet, and I have also summarized the Peter Hart criticism on *Indymedia*. It is not as though the argument has been hard to come by. Brian Hanley reiterated his curious assertion that Peter Hart’s (unnamed) critics concentrate on Kilmichael to the extent that they ignore Dunmanway. There is no evidence for this assertion and I wonder why it is repeated. What function does it serve? Perhaps Brian Hanley has not actually read the criticism. Otherwise, he might quote something he takes issue with. Strangely however, Brian Hanley ignored Dunmanway in the interview.

#### KITCHEN SINK

Instead of argument that can be evaluated, Peter Hart has informed us that Meda Ryan’s criticism is not “rational” (a scarcely credible comment), and that Brian Murphy’s is not published (demonstrably incorrect). From Hanley we learn that this is the “*Limerick’s fighting story*” version of the revolution and that those who criticize Peter Hart are not interested in “*class divisions*” (though the fact that Peter Hart appears uninterested in pursuing this approach was not mentioned as a deficiency).

In his wide-ranging account, Brian Hanley told us about the shooting of Protestants in Monaghan and Donegal, about the IRA response to loyalist pogroms in Belfast, tensions between North and South, about land agitation in Galway, about Protestants in Dublin, lack of IRA action in Meath, the Labour Party performance in 1922, and the anti-Semitism of J.J. O’Kelly and Tomas Ashe. From which tour of the revolution and some of its personages, we are given to understand that Brian Hanley knows a lot.

From such generalizations onlookers are possibly supposed to conclude that this is a debate of huge and impenetrable complexity. Arguably the criticism of the criticism is in fact a smokescreen for inability to defend a largely indefensible approach.

It has long been a conceit of revisionist historiography to insinuate that nationalist history does not take into account the social and class tensions endemic to the War of Independence period. As with the accusations of republican sectarianism, this is often an attempt to project backwards into the War of Independence period a crystallized ruling elite already subordinating the working class to the interests of capital. Instead of promoting an account of the struggle that incorporates a socialist analysis of Imperialism, this approach usually attempts to separate socialism from the politics of the national question. ‘Socialist’ variants of this approach pay homage to the role of Connolly while in effect rejecting in practice the actual course he adopted in 1916.

Brain Hanley is in danger of promoting this approach by insinuating that a defence of the anti-sectarian trajectory of the fight in West Cork is somehow a failure to confront sectarianism. One reason why this generalized approach has been adopted is, it would seem, because a detailed refutation of the case made by Meda Ryan and Brian Murphy is not possible.

Frankly, it would help if Brian Hanley (or, more important, Peter Hart) read the criticism and responded directly, rather than with speculative generalizations, many of peripheral relevance. Otherwise, the debate is a bit like playing handball against a haystack.

#### FINALLY

(I may be guilty of unintentional caricature in what follows, but it encapsulates a feeling I have about an aspect to Brian Hanley's argument.)

One thing that is missing from Brian Hanley's account is the role of Britain. British policy and strategy in itself fomenting sectarianism while attempting to portray its opponents as sectarian fanatics is not examined. It makes Hanley's account rather one-sided and gives the appearance of navel-gazing – a bit like the sound of one hand clapping. Brian Hanley says he is arguing from a broadly republican perspective, that he is himself a republican. But why? —if typical republicans in Cork were narrow-minded sectarian bigots, so consumed with feelings of propriety and Catholic notions of piety, that they conducted the War of Independence by shooting innocent Protestants, and by ignoring informers within the IRA, the clergy, and in the 'respectable' ranks of Roman Catholic society.

Why a socialist republican would wish to have anything to do with the cause of such people is beyond me, and how they won by shooting those innocent of informing, while tolerating the real informers, is utterly perplexing.

Perhaps we could all agree to dispense with caricature and unfocussed generalisation, and to move on.

Brian Hanley is in the unfortunate position of answering inadvertently for the sins of Peter Hart. Hanley expressed the view that Peter Hart "*should answer for himself*". That is something on which we can all agree. We await the day and the hour.

#### FURTHERING THE DEBATE

Something else that might be agreed in the meantime would be an Invitation to Brian Murphy to deliver a talk to the Ireland Institute on British propaganda during the War of Independence period. It would allow Institute members to gauge the accuracy or fairness of the criticism of Peter Hart's approach, and whether the critics are as Brian Hanley depicted.

NIALL MEEHAN

Note: Mercier will publish the paperback edition of Meda Ryan's Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter in the autumn.

Last year the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day was celebrated. But in June 1944 there were 50 divisions of the German army in Western Europe, while in the East there were 200 divisions fighting against the Red Army. A Soviet defeat would have released these resources and made Western Europe practically impregnable. It was in Russia that Hitler lost the war.

We salute the brilliant Soviet Generals: Zhukov, Koniev, Rokossovski, Eremenko, Vatoutine, and Vassilevski under the competent leadership of Joseph Stalin. But most of all we salute the Soviet people, 27 million of whom died compared to 540,000 French, 400,000 British and 300,000 Americans.

#### A GLORIOUS FUTURE?

Boris Yeltsin did not celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Soviet victory, but it appears that Russia has recovered its self-respect after the fall of communism. As part of this restoration of national pride there has been a re-evaluation of Joseph Stalin.

Guennadi Ziouganov, the head of the Russian Communist Party, declared at the 33rd Congress of the Union of Communist Parties of the ex-USSR that:

"It is necessary to defend the truth and rehabilitate the great name of Stalin... Several communists have asked for the revision of the decision of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist party in 1956, which condemned the cult of the personality of Stalin and its consequences. They have asked that Stalin be rehabilitated. The great Stalin himself has no need of rehabilitation, but we must emphasize the merits of Stalin in the development of socialism and the survival of civilisation against Nazism" (*Le Point*, 5.5.05).

A nationalist deputy has proposed a new monument to the glory of Stalin in Moscow and the President of the Duma (the Russian parliament), Boris Gryzlov, a close associate of Putin, described Stalin as:

"a man out of the ordinary who did a lot for the Soviet victory" (*Le Point*, 5.5.05).

#### AN INGLORIOUS PAST

On the same day as world leaders were celebrating the defeat of Nazism, there was a very different event in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. A memorial was inaugurated celebrating those who "perished while fighting for liberty": more precisely for the 20th division of the Waffen SS.

The cost of the monument was 60,000 Euro and was approved by the city government in Tallinn. The memorial includes sixteen plaques with the names of the fascist units which confronted the Red Army in 1944.

Estonia and Lithuania did not attend the commemorations in Moscow. George W. Bush visited Latvia before going on to Moscow. The Latvian President indicated to the American President that the 9th of May was a day of National grief for her country.

Estonia and Latvia do not grant full citizenship rights to their Russian-speaking populations. All three of the Baltic States are members of the European Union.

#### AN EYE ON BEIRUT

The *Skibbereen Eagle* famously assured its readers that it was keeping an eye on Moscow. This column is watching Beirut. After 15 years of exile, the fascist General Michel Aoun returned to the Lebanon. His return was 11 days after the withdrawal of the Syrian Army which provoked Aoun's fall in 1990.

The recent Syrian withdrawal was after pressure from the United States following the assassination of Rafic Hariri. The withdrawal was opposed by hundreds of thousands of Hezbollah supporters in the streets of Beirut.

If Beirut explodes again, let nobody have any doubt as to who bears the responsibility.

*A history of the discussion on this matter can be found on the following web pages:*

[www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story\\_id=67769](http://www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story_id=67769)

*What Is The Dispute about Kilmichael and Dunmanway really about?*

[www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story\\_id=69172](http://www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story_id=69172)

*Now it's History (Ireland)! Peter Hart replies on Tom Barry and Kilmichael (but not Dunmanway)*

[www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story\\_id=69567](http://www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story_id=69567)

*Audio Report: 'Political Culture in Cork'—a talk by Brian Murphy*

[www.historyireland.com/magazine/features/13.2FeatC.html](http://www.historyireland.com/magazine/features/13.2FeatC.html)

*Peter Hart interview with Brian Hanley*

add your comments <[http://www.indymedia.ie/publishcomments.php?story\\_id=70063](http://www.indymedia.ie/publishcomments.php?story_id=70063)>

# The Northern Ireland Elections: An Analysis

Table I summarises the results of the 10 Northern Ireland elections since 1997—European, Westminster, Assembly and Local Government. The table gives the share of the (First Preference) vote and the number of seats for each of the major parties.

Voting share depends not only on a party's pulling power, but also on who is standing for it, so comparing a party's performance from one election to another is a hazardous business, the more so when, as in this case, the elections employ different electoral systems in different constituents. One factor to note is that small parties and independents—the 'Others' in the table—are more likely to stand in Local Government and Assembly elections under proportional representation, which depresses the First Preference share of the main parties.

Having said that, Table I does illustrate the general trends in party strengths since 1997. The outstanding features of these are well known: the rise of the Democratic Unionist Party at the expense of the Ulster Unionist Party (and the near elimination of other Unionist parties); the rise of Sinn Fein at the expense of the Social Democratic and Labour Party; and the shrinking of the 'centre' ground until recently, when the Alliance Party made a modest recovery.

## UUP DEAD IN THE WATER

On the evidence of the Westminster Elections, the UUP is dead in the water: it now holds only 1 of the 6 seats it won in 2001 (North Down). It had already lost Jeffrey Donaldson to the DUP by defection and in the election it lost a further 4: 3 to the DUP (East Antrim, South Antrim, Upper Bann) and one to the SDLP (Belfast South). Since there is a substantial Protestant majority in the latter constituency, and the DUP was the lead Unionist party this time, the seat is bound to fall to the DUP next time.

The DUP now has 9 out of the 18 Westminster seats and can look forward to a 10th in South Belfast.

It's conceivable that it could win an 11th from Sinn Fein in Fermanagh & South Tyrone, if the UUP didn't stand and the SDLP did.

The DUP's existing MPs look impregnable for the next decade and more. Old age may eventually force Ian Paisley to retire, but it is unimaginable that his successor would fail to win North Antrim. It is difficult to see how the UUP can win any Westminster seat other than North Down in the foreseeable future. It's going to be 9-1, or better, to the DUP for some time to come.

When David Trimble took over the leadership of the UUP in 1995, the score was 9-3 to the UUP, and Unionists held 13 out of the then 17 seats (Robert McCartney was the MP for North Down). The SDLP held the other 4 seats, Joe Hendron having taken back West Belfast from Gerry Adams at the 1992 election. So, David Trimble has presided over the decline of Unionism from holding 13 out of 17 Westminster seats to holding 10 out of 18, and over the decline of his own party from holding 9 to holding only 1, and having very little chance of winning any back.

It is true that the first-past-the-post voting system for Westminster treated the UUP savagely in last month's elections: the DUP received less than twice as many votes as the UUP (33.7% to 17.7%) but won 9 seats to the UUP's 1 (and the SDLP got 3 seats with less votes than the UUP).

**Table I**  
**Northern Ireland Elections 1997-2005**  
**Percentage share & number of seats by party**

	1997w	1997l	1998a	1999e	2001w	2001l	2003a	2004e	2005w	2005l
<b>DUP</b>	13.6 2	15.8 91	18.1 20	28.4 1	22.5 5a	21.4 131	25.7 30b	32.0 1	33.7 9	29.6 182
<b>UUP</b>	32.7 10	27.7 185	21.3 28	17.6 1	26.8 6a	22.9 154	22.7 27b	16.6 1	17.7 1	18.0 115
<b>Oth U</b>	4.4 1	5.4 33	11.4 10	6.3 0	4.0 0	3.0 8	4.2 2	— —	0.4 0	1.2 4
<b>All</b>	8.0 0	6.6 41	6.5 6	2.1 0	3.6 0	5.1 28	3.7 6	— —	3.9 0	5.0 30
<b>Oth</b>	1.1 0	6.9 38	3.2 2	0.2 0	0.4 0	7.5 36	3.3 1	9.1 0	2.4 0	5.6 24
<b>SDLP</b>	24.1 3	20.6 120	22.0 24	28.1 1	21.0 3	19.4 117	17.0 18	15.9 0	17.5 3	17.4 101
<b>SF</b>	16.1 2	16.9 74	17.6 18	17.3 0	21.7 4	20.7 108	23.5 24	26.3 1	24.3 5	23.2 126

### Notes:

a Jeffrey Donaldson defected to the UUP in 2004, so that at the time of the 2005 Westminster election the DUP had 6 MPs and the UUP had only 5.

b 3 UUP MLAs subsequently defected to the DUP, so the DUP now has 33 MLAs and the UUP 24.

**Source:** ARK (The Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive) at [www.ark.ac.uk/elections](http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections)

In the Local Government elections, held on the same day, the UUP received a similar share (18.0%) of the First Preference votes and the PR system ensured that it was rewarded with a similar proportion of seats—115 out of 582. The DUP won 182 from 29.6%.

So, on the face of it, the UUP is not dead yet. But, the difficulty for the UUP is that it has no longer got a reason to exist separate from the DUP, because there is no longer any significant difference between the parties on the main issue facing Unionism—the Belfast Agreement.

During the election campaign, the DUP maintained a discreet silence about the fact that before Christmas it made a deal to go into government with Sinn Fein on the basis of the Belfast Agreement, with a few cosmetic amendments to enable it to be described as a “new” agreement. The DUP campaign was full of bluster about republican paramilitary activities having put Sinn Fein beyond the pale, and devolution having to proceed without Sinn Fein: voluntary coalition between Unionists and the SDLP was now the way forward, they said. However, post-election this plan has disappeared from the DUP’s rhetoric (presumably, because the SDLP kept saying it wouldn’t play ball), and the new plan is that the Assembly be revived to supervise the activity of the Direct Rule Ministers, which is a non-runner with everybody else that matters.

In fact, the DUP know that, if there is to be devolution, it will have to be on the basis of the Belfast Agreement with Sinn Fein Ministers alongside DUP Ministers. They may not like it, but they accept it is the price for devolution. In this, there is no significant difference with the UUP. So, what is the point of a separate UUP, now that under Trimble’s leadership it has lost the confidence of the bulk of the Protestant community?

If there were an outstanding individual ready and willing to assume the leadership of the UUP, there might be a case for its existence. But there isn’t. Reg Empey is about the best there is, but he shows no enthusiasm for what is sure to be a thankless task. The most likely development is that the party slowly expires as members and public representatives move over to the DUP.

\* \* \* \*

On the nationalist/republican side, the story of the Westminster Election is that Sinn Fein didn’t manage to wipe out the SDLP, which went into the election with 3 seats and came out with 3 seats. The balance of seats went from 4/3 to Sinn

Fein to 5/3 to Sinn Fein. The SDLP has held its ground, for the moment at least. Though losing Newry & Armagh to Sinn Fein, which was a racing certainty, it held on to Foyle and South Down and, by a stroke of luck, won South Belfast from the UUP. However, the outlook is not very bright for the SDLP in the next Westminster Election.

**SOUTH BELFAST**

Next time, South Belfast is certain to fall to the DUP. Alisdair McDonnell won this time for the SDLP because of the fallout from the retirement of the nominally UUP MP, Rev. Martin Smyth, against whom the DUP didn’t stand. When the UUP refused to make a deal with the DUP about a single Unionist candidate in this seat (and in Fermanagh & South Tyrone), the possibility arose of a split Unionist vote leading to an SDLP victory, which is what happened. McDonnell won with only 32% of the vote (and fewer votes than in 2001), compared with 28% for the DUP and 23% for the UUP (and 9% for Alex Maskey of Sinn Fein). A shift of a little over a thousand votes from the UUP to the DUP would give the seat to the DUP, other things being equal.

Alex Maskey’s vote (2,882) was almost exactly the same as in the 2001 Westminster Election, but just over a thousand votes less than his vote in the 2003 Assembly Elections. It’s impossible to say if the McCartney killing, and his own personal involvement in the aftermath, had any effect on his vote. He could have lost out both because of the involvement of IRA members in the killing and also because of the subsequent suspension of Sinn Fein members. It was reported during the election campaign that Gerry Adams was heckled by republicans in the Markets area on the latter grounds.

Although I haven’t got the figures to prove it, I understand that the Sinn Fein vote in the equivalent Local Government wards on 5th May 2005 was approximately the same as in the 2003 Assembly elections. This suggests that some people who voted Sinn Fein in the local election voted for SDLP in the Westminster Election on the same day, because of the possibility of McDonnell winning with the Unionist vote split. This, rather than any fallout from the McCartney affair, may explain the drop in Alex Maskey’s vote.

(It has been suggested that former Alliance voters contributed to McDonnell’s election by switching to him. This is not borne out by the figures: the Alliance vote held steady at around two thousand in this Westminster election and the last.)

**SOUTH DOWN**

The SDLP has little or no chance of holding on to South Belfast seat at the next election. It may also have difficulty holding on to South Down next time, if Eddie McGrady retires. He is now 70 and wanted to retire this time, but was persuaded not to, so he is bound to retire at the end of this Parliament.

Table II gives the SDLP and Sinn Fein vote and percentage share in South Down in the last two Assembly and Westminster elections. (In the Table ‘w’ stands for Westminster and ‘a’ stands for Assembly.)

	<b>1998a</b>	<b>2001w</b>	<b>2003a</b>	<b>2005w</b>
<b>SDLP</b>	23,257 45.3	24,136 46.3	15,922 35.1	21,557 44.7
<b>SF</b>	7,771 15.1	10,278 19.7	12,007 26.5	12,417 25.8
<b>Lead</b>	15,486	13,858	3,915	9,140

The Table shows that the Sinn Fein vote in 2005, and vote share, was significantly up on 2001, and the SDLP vote, and vote share, fell. However, Eddie McGrady ended up well ahead with a majority of 9,140 over Caitriona Ruane for Sinn Fein, albeit significantly down on his majority of 13,858 over a different Sinn Fein candidate in 2001.

In part, his majority seems to have been due to Protestants, who voted UUP in 2001, voting for him this time. The UUP got about four thousand fewer votes than in 2001 and the DUP got about a thousand more. So, it is reasonable to suppose that at least some of the missing three thousand UUP votes switched to him in order to keep Sinn Fein out. However, he would have won comfortably without them.

(The fact that the combined SDLP/Sinn Fein increased from 66.0% in 2001 to 70.5% in 2005 lends weight to the view that some UUP voters switched to the SDLP).

Table II shows that Sinn Fein has advanced steadily in South Down since 1998 against the SDLP. It took a second Assembly seat at the expense of the SDLP in November 2003. However, there is little sign of advance since then. While the Sinn Fein share since then has remained fairly steady (and its vote rose slightly),

the SDLP share in the recent Westminster election was 44.7% compared only 35.1% in November 2003.

On the face of it, this represents a significant SDLP revival. However, as we have seen, some of the extra SDLP share is probably due to UUP voters switching, perhaps as much as 5%. Also, various minor parties—Greens, Women’s Coalition, Workers’ Party—which stood in 2003 and accounted for around 3.4% of the vote then, didn’t stand in 2005, and their votes would mostly have gone to Eddie McGrady—which illustrates how vote share is affected by who stands against you. Another factor is that an extra 2,000 people voted in 2005 compared with 2003 and it looks as if most of them voted SDLP (since it is the only party whose vote rose significantly), so it appears that the SDLP has increased its share in part by getting more people out to vote.

There is no doubt that, compared with 2003, the SDLP has increased its share of the vote in South Down—and widened the gap between it and Sinn Fein—by much more than the UUP votes ‘loaned’ to it by former UUP voters, votes which wouldn’t go to the SDLP in Assembly or local elections. It would be interesting to examine the results of the local elections, which took place at the same time—one would expect the SDLP vote to be lower by the “loaned” UUP votes, and the Sinn Fein vote to be approximately the same.

(A comparison with the local election results isn’t simple because South Down includes parts of three councils).

#### FOYLE

The SDLP also held on to Foyle, where on the retirement of John Hume the new party leader, Mark Durkan, beat Mitchell McLaughlin of Sinn Fein comfortably. Table III gives the SDLP and Sinn Fein vote and percentage share in Foyle in the last two Assembly and Westminster Elections, and the 2005 local election. The latter was easy to obtain since the Foyle constituency and Derry City council are coterminous. (In the Table ‘l’ stands for Local Government Election.)

**Table III: Foyle**

	1998a	2001w	2003a	2005w	2005l
<b>SDLP</b>	23,342 47.8	24,538 50.2	14,746 36.1	21,119 46.3	18,467 41.1
<b>SF</b>	12,696 26.0	12,988 26.6	13,214 32.4	15,162 33.2	14,744 32.8
<b>Lead</b>	10,646	11,550	1,532	5,957	3,723

The Foyle results show some of the features of the South Down results. The Sinn Fein vote in 2005, and its share of the vote, was significantly up on 2001, whereas the SDLP vote, and its share, fell. However, Mark Durkan won comfortably with a majority of 5,957.

Again, in part, his majority seems to have been due to Protestants, who voted Unionist in the past, voting for him this time. There is solid evidence for this from the difference in the Unionist vote in the two elections on 5 May: the UUP vote was 909 higher in the local election than in the Westminster election, and the DUP vote was 792 higher. In other words, about 1,700 people who voted Unionist in the local elections (which is nearly 20% of them) didn’t vote Unionist in the Westminster election. It is unlikely that, on the one visit to the polling station, they voted in one election and abstained in the other, so the likelihood is that they voted for Mark Durkan. Note that nearly half of them voted DUP in the local election. A second piece of evidence is that, as in South Down, the combined SDLP/Sinn Fein vote increased, in this case from 75.8% in 2001 to 79.5% in 2005. However, Mark Durkan would have won without these votes.

Sinn Fein has advanced steadily against the SDLP in Foyle since 1998 in terms of votes and share of the vote, and in November 2003 Sinn Fein were a mere 1,532 votes (3.7%) behind the SDLP. However, the gap widened to 5,957 (13.1%) in the Westminster Election, and to 3,722 (8.3%) in the local election, the difference being primarily due to Unionists ‘lending’ their vote to the SDLP in the Westminster election.

The SDLP has increased its share of the vote in the local elections in Foyle compared with the 2003 Assembly election—and widened the gap between it and Sinn Fein. About 4,000 extra people voted in 2005 compared with 2003 and it looks as if the SDLP got a large proportion of them—in the local elections the SDLP put on 3,721 votes compared with 2003, while Sinn Fein put on only 1,530.

#### SDLP VS SINN FEIN—OVERALL

In Northern Ireland as a whole, there wasn’t much change in the SDLP’s share of the total vote in either of the 2005 Elections, compared with 2003—it was 17.7 and 17.4, compared with 17.0. Likewise for Sinn Fein—24.3 and 23.2 in 2005, compared with 23.5 in 2003.

The considerable increase in the

SDLP’s share in Foyle and South Down must not have been repeated across Northern Ireland, otherwise there would be a more marked rise in the SDLP’s overall share. Certainly, it didn’t happen in South Belfast, which was the only other constituency I have looked at in any detail. My guess is that it was a consequence of the hard-fought contests in Foyle and South Down, which persuaded former SDLP voters to come out.

Sinn Fein’s share has fallen a few per cent from the 26.3% it got in the European Election last year, and the SDLP’s share has risen a per cent or two. But the European Election cannot be regarded as typical, since Sinn Fein had a well-known candidate in Bairbre de Brun and the SDLP’s candidate, Martin Morgan, was almost unknown.

**David Morrison**

#### Letters To Editor Responding To Conclusion Of Series On *Das Kapital*

#### **Price And Value**

I have followed with interest John Martin’s serialised review of Marx’s *Das Kapital*, Volumes, 1, 2 and 3. The book will form a useful summary.

I had hoped that Mr. Martin would move on to Volume 4, *Theories of Surplus Value*, which is rather more polemical. For example Marx pokes fun at “the conception of the productivity of all professions” with particular reference to criminals.

However, even at the end of Volume 3, Chapter 1, Marx points that, if goods are sold below value, the purchaser is in receipt of surplus value.

For many years Third World agricultural products such as tea, cotton, sugar and groundnuts, etc, have been sold for a fraction of their value. The Western consumers of these commodities have benefited from enormous amounts of surplus value.

The imperialist system ensures that very little wealth remains in Third World countries, whether by way of pay or of surplus value. Western consumers all benefit from Imperialism.

Nobody worried about this from of imperialist exploitation while only agricultural products were involved.

Now, however, Third World workers are producing goods and services that were previously the monopoly of the imperialist countries. Globalisation dictates that capital migrates to the cheap labour countries in order to keep up its rate of return. Western consumers will also benefit. Western workers will lose their jobs. 46% of Chinese workers are recent migrants from the countryside.

There is only one solution. Equal reward for work of equal value on a world scale.

**Ivor Kenna** (London)

## Capital And The Transport Market

...John Martin states regarding a country's transport system and investment from private capitalists: "If left to the market, there *would be* investment that *would be* less than the social optimum" (p23) (my emphasis—RB).

I have spent quite a few years of my life studying a numerate "natural" science: physics. In "classical" physics, if all the initial conditions are known for a system then its subsequent behaviour can be completely predicted. In "modern" physics (i.e. that which includes quantum mechanics), the state and subsequent behaviour of a system can only be described using probability.

In my science studies I never come across an axiom or deduction concerning human moral or social behaviour, including that of economic behaviour. Marxists and free-marketers should both be cautious of making assertions as regards economic truths and certainties.

I once asked London-based Workers' Party of Ireland member Jack Callan how he could be both a Marxist and also have a physical science background, pointing out that Marxists talk about inevitabilities and that physicists talk about probabilities. His response was that mainstream Marxism provided—for him—a reasonable approximation as to truth.

Many years ago I saw a cartoon titled "An Oxford don pounces to destroy the premise of an undergraduate's essay with a single fact". Like the don, we must also pounce—in this case on the erroneous claim of economic certainty ("would be" used twice in the same sentence).

I would encourage people to read: "*Devil Take the Hindmost: A History of Financial Speculation*" by Edward Chancellor, ISBN: 0374138583. The book covers many of the financial bubbles occurring in the period 200 BC—1980 AD. Many of the bubbles described included over-investment, wishful thinking, fraud, and journalists bribed to write articles to help boost company stocks.

One of the startling things from reading the book is the similarity between the Internet "dot com" bubble in the US and the old private railway bubble in the UK: in the UK many private railways in the early days of rail were constructed with regard only to hyping and selling the stock and not with regard to profitability. In both cases the bubbles burst, leaving many late investors with heavy losses.

The true triumph of Benjamin Disraeli, the Earl of Beaconsfield, was not becoming just another Anglican British Prime Minister, but rather paying off at least some of his financial debts from the earlier part of his life. In younger days Dizzy had been a financial "journalist" paid to hype South American mines. He fell for his own propaganda and invested more than his life savings in uneconomic mines.

**Robert Burrage, USA**

# Ireland's Intelligentsia BITE (even more) Air

## Part 3 of a review of events around the Abbey's guest appearance at the Barbican

The third (and last) discussion in the series spun-off from the BITE presentation of the Abbey production of O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* made one wonder, momentarily, if the fight for political freedom was worthwhile. It occurred on Thursday 27th January in the actual Barbican Theatre (not The Pit—which was so far underground that it was unnecessary to switch off mobile phones). Presumably the Barbican authorities were expecting a lot of people. The public stayed away in droves.

The public was quite right to stay away. The discussion was billed in three of the pieces of promotional printed matter as *The Cultural Life of Contemporary Ireland*, but Alistair Nevin, the Chair said it was *Would there still be rioting in the streets?* A rather odd title as there was no rioting in the streets in 1926, when the play was first performed. Nevin is the Principle of Cumberland Lodge—which was set-up in 1948 and is dedicated to bringing the former Empire, now Commonwealth, into closer proximity (possibly as a result of Ireland leaving the Commonwealth because it was a Republic and of India entering the Commonwealth as a Republic, within weeks of Ireland leaving). It would be interesting to know why he was chosen to chair this session. The word 'discussion' is irrelevant because Ireland's intellectual class is incapable of thought and thereby, exchange of same.

The invitees were, Bernard O'Donoghue, "*poet and lecturer in Medieval English at Wadham College, Oxford*" (and Close Personal Friend of Roy Foster), and Alan Dukes, former leader of Fine Gael. Dukes's main contribution to the evening's entertainment was to aver that he was tired of the consensus politics of the Republic. As he ceased to be Fine Gael leader as a consequence of the 'Tallaght Strategy' (which meant support for the Fianna Fáil Government of Charles Haughey), the 'foundational myth' of the current consensus, he was being simply silly. He also made a trivial remark about the English being fine people in flying Irish people to London "*at great expense*" for an hour's worth of talk. Tom McCabe and Ann Enright were speakers. McCabe,

author of *Butcher's Boy*, seemed to be attempting to say something of substance, but his moment did not arise. Four speakers in an hour is absurd, but Nevin genuinely attempted to get them to address substantial matters. He failed.

Nobody objected to his assertion that two forces had "oppressed" 'Ireland' over the centuries, Britain and the Roman Catholic Church. That Britain persecuted the Roman Catholic Church was not mentioned. 'British' meant 'Protestant' from at least the time of Oliver Cromwell, and possibly Thomas Cromwell (Henry VIII's main minister) until comparatively recently. (At least overtly, the intellectual classes in England, in particular, can still get very anti-Catholic in a muffled sort of way. This includes merely 'suspected Papists'—George Galloway has been described as a "friend of the foetus"—because he is anti-abortion. And Catholics can still get their throats cut, simply for Being, in Glasgow.) We were back in the strange world of sentences without subjects. Nevin mentioned, in regard to 'Ireland', a "divided nation", "ethnic differences and ancient differences in culture" and interestingly, "two different peoples". We were talking about Northern Ireland's 'Troubles', but nobody spoke to that subject. This went on for at least twenty minutes, a solid chunk of the time available, and it was a most strange sensation listening to it. For a Northerner it was just a bit like attending one's own wake.

Nobody took on Nevin's insertion of the 'two nations' argument into the discussion, for what the 'discussion' was worth. It struck me that, even if the 'two nations theory' happened to be wrong, it at least *explains* things. It explains why ordinary, decent—often strikingly intelligent—people are prepared to go out and do death to their neighbours and destruction to their own cities and towns. Otherwise the past thirty-odd years are simply inexplicable. One got the distinct impression that all of the people on this panel found them simply inexplicable.

The discussion of the "very strong" "repressive" Roman Catholic Church and Ireland's enthusiasm for the European

Union was pretty grim. Enright, a short story writer, said that the chapel in her former Convent School is now its art studio. She seemed to think this was a very good thing, though if one subtracts ‘religion’ from the art of the world there is really rather little left. She also said that the nuns had told them, in the early 1970s, not to learn Spanish as it was of no utility in ‘Europe’, but to learn German instead. I can only assume that she is suffering from galloping false memory (the curse of the intellectual classes in Ireland). The nuns presumably taught Spanish because it is a world language, the official tongue of about twenty States and partly because it is the language of most of Latin America, an Irish ‘mission field’. Presumably they introduced, in Enright’s particular school, German alongside Spanish and the other Latin-based languages.

The only section of this chat where the panel became animated (sort of) was in discussing 1798. It was not even to denounce the Rising (or, more precisely), series of risings. No, they got stuck into the French. “Always late!” “[i]t was always the fault of the weather!”, there was more stuff along such lines. It meant that they did not have to discuss the issue at hand, which was useful for people who did not want to own up to being empty vessels. Or to put themselves in the way of the tongue-lashing Dudley Edwards got the previous week. (To give the latter her due, she took her nasty medicine with some forbearance.)

I wondered if these people thought to ingratiate themselves with the London Establishment by taking the same sort of stupid attitude to the French as they do to the Germans. The latter have taken entirely benevolent attitude to Ireland, the Irish, and Irish culture, or cultures. From Kuno Meyer at the turn of the last century making early Irish language and literature known on mainland Europe to Axel Klein today doing the same for Irish ‘classical’ music.

It was in the course of listening to such drivel that I experienced a sudden warmth of feeling for Ruth Dudley Edwards. She can hardly be accused of engaging in thought, but at least she has a point of view, and is prepared to express it in the most emphatic terms. This lot did not seem to be able to actually think or feel—I hope it was not due to the fact that they were in the presence of England’s money, power and intellect in the City of London—the Barbican did not intimidate the Irish labourers who built it.

It was not entirely the fault of the panel that they were unable to get to grips with the matters Nevin raised. Even a simple discussion of such a general theme as *The Cultural Life of Contemporary Ireland* really needs a full day or weekend—or week... or month.... As would *Would there still be riots in the streets?* the somewhat shifty discussion of this theme rather emphasised the fact that there has been more aggression about such matters in Britain, specifically England, than there has been in Ireland. The Sikh play in Birmingham and the organised objections by Christians to the BBC’s showing of *Gerry Springer—The Opera* were fresh in mind. The fact that there was a public censor (with the comic-opera title the Lord Chamberlain of Her Majesty’s Household), until 1969) was not mentioned.

Nor was the fact that England is still very heavily censorious. The BBC is easily intimidated and quite often refuses to broadcast pop songs the words of which it disapproves.

The whole thing was dispiriting, McCabe mentioned television, and the fact that he now lives in Sligo, he only mentioned programmes broadcast by the BBC. RTÉ may not be up to much these days, but surely it rates a mention? And he must have to go to some pains to receive BBC television in Sligo.

One can only hope that he meets some of the people I encountered at the Yeats International Summer School in 2002. They would probably have sent the Barbican / Cumberland Lodge’s free air tickets back to them.

Seán McGouran

## Reviews (Part Three)

(Part Two was in the March 2005 issue)

“*The chiefs of the victor Powers debated and disputed the future in Paris [in 1919]... France, by right alike of her efforts and her losses, held the leading place... Five times in a hundred years, in 1814, 1815, 1870, 1914 and 1918, had the towers of Notre-Dame seen the flash of Prussian guns and heard the thunder of their cannonade*”. That’s Winston Churchill in the opening chapter of his history of the 2nd World War, which I read soon after its publication in a cheap edition in the mid-1950s. And it was partly through monitoring Churchill’s histories that I got to know something about the course of events in Europe in the first half of the 20th century. He is readable, and he is honest, and as a frank warmonger he has an old-fashioned sense of honour, but as an English statesman he must sometimes bend things in the service of the higher truth which passes understanding—summed up by Kipling as “*the argot of the Upper Fourth Remove*”. There is no historian more worth reading—provided that you doubt everything he says.

The reader who was not otherwise informed would gather from the passage I have quoted that the Germans were a turbulent people given to attacking France, and that one of the times they attacked it was 1870. I have therefore taken to mentioning the fact that France attacked Germany in 1870, losing Alsace-Lorraine as a consequence, and that Britain brought about its Great War on Germany 44 years

later by manipulating French revanchist irredentism. And I have been waiting for somebody to pounce on my error—that being how knowledge is consolidated. Well, Jeremy Addis, publisher of *Books Ireland*, has pounced.

I put out two issues of *A Belfast Magazine* on the subject of Casement last year. One, *The Casement Diary Dogmatists*, was directed at the writings of Professor W.J. McCormack and Jeff Dudgeon, who held that W.J. Maloney, author of *The Forged Casement Diaries* (1936) was “*in denial*” when he refused to accept the authenticity of the Diaries. The situation then was that documents which were said to be extracts from Casement’s Diaries, which showed him to be a pervert, were shown to a number of influential people in the Summer of 1916 for the purpose of deterring them from supporting a campaign for the commutation of the death sentence on Casement. When those documents had served their purpose they were withdrawn. Not a single copy of them survived. Some people who had been shown them, and who on the strength of them had taken part in the anti-Casement campaign or had kept silent, asked that the Diary from which the extracts were taken should be made publicly available. They did so out of concern for their own reputation as honest men. But the Government would not even admit that such a document existed. In the absence of any document

purporting to be Casement's Diary, the assumption that forged documents had been used in 1916 was entirely reasonable. And the assertion that those who did not admit the authenticity of a document which could not be seen, and whose existence was not admitted by the state which had circulated purported extracts from it in 1916, were "in denial", was therefore absurd. To be 'in denial' was to deny in the face of clear evidence. But the only evidence was that documents which had been circulated privately by the Government in 1916 to facilitate a hanging were subsequently not admitted to exist.

And the fact that such care was taken by the state to withdraw the 1916 documents that not one of them survived was also a strong suggestion of forgery, as well as indicating the existence of a highly competent element of totalitarianism in the functioning of the state.

That is the gist of the case that I argued in *The Casement Diary Dogmatists*: McCormack and Dudgeon branded those who did not believe, on the basis of no evidence, in the authenticity of a document that had never been seen, as being 'in denial'. Maloney should have taken it as a matter of dogmatic certainty that a Diary existed, and that it was authentic—even though the source of dogmatic truth in this instance (Whitehall) had not actually uttered the dogma.

The associated *Belfast Magazine*, called *Traitor Patriots*, took as its starting point Maloney's Preface to *The Forged Casement Diary*, in which he compares Casement and Masaryk as patriotic traitors to their respective states, and contrasts the British treatment of the two.

Casement was hanged and the nationality on which his patriotism was based was made war upon when it voted for independence in the 1918 Election. But Britain created a state for Masaryk on the basis of the non-existent Czechoslovak nationality and subjected large numbers of Hungarians and Germans, along with Slovaks, to what was in reality a Czech state, even though it was called Czechoslovakia. There were also large numbers of Jews in the nationalistic Czech state of Czechoslovakia, in which the Czechs were an aggressive ruling minority.

The post-1918 structure of Europe hinged on this Czechoslovak state, and the fate of Europe was determined by its inherent instability when it came under a degree of pressure in 1938.

*Traitor Patriots* deals largely with the

historical antecedents of the Czech state, with its creation by Britain in 1918-19, and with its conduct during and after the Munich Agreement of 1938. And it takes it that the destruction of the Hapsburg state (known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire) in 1918 was one of the major acts of political vandalism known to history. It was in particular the immediate source of the Anti-Semitism which was the common culture of Central Europe between the wars.

The Jews were the middle class of the Hapsburg state. They performed the function of a middle class, in conjunction with the state, throughout all its national regions, and with very little conflict with the emerging nationalities. And the Hapsburg apparatus of state was being modified so as to accommodate the emerging nationalities.

The British propaganda decreed that the Hapsburg state was an oppressor of nationalities. But it was not destroyed by the nationalist insurgency of its peoples. Vienna had no Easter Insurrection to suppress, still less a 1918 Election. It was taken apart by Britain following its military defeat in 1918, and an array of 'nation-states' was created out of it, even though great numbers of the various nationalities had been fighting in its defence throughout the war.

The new 'nation-states' were not the product of victorious national struggles. They were the creation of an outside military power. Their nationalist development did not precede their construction, but followed it—or failed to follow it. The various peoples were geographically intermixed and could not be neatly divided from each other. Some were punished (Germans and Hungarians) and others favoured (particularly the Czechs) in the partition of the Hapsburg state in accordance with the Imperial interests of Britain and France. And the Jews, as the people whose existence in that region was bound up with the existence of the Hapsburg state, suffered in every single one of the new states. The rulers of the new states, the nationalist elites, were undeveloped middle classes whose economic position was held by Jews. And the Jews, being highly evolved as the people of the Empire, could not transform themselves into nationalist elites of the new states in which they found themselves. In the course of a year they were precipitated from the urbane cosmopolitan atmosphere of the Hapsburg state into the intense nationalist atmosphere of the new states, in which they held

an economic position that was incompatible with the social dynamic of those new states. General Anti-Semitism was an immediate product of that new arrangement of things—if indeed the term 'Anti-Semitism' is the appropriate name for it. It is a term which connotes a unique hatred of Jews which is entirely irrational and groundless. The conflict between the nationalist movements of the new Versailles states and the Jews who had been the middle class of the Empire can hardly be described in those words.

The unstable Versailles system was finally torn down in 1938. And its creator was its destroyer. Britain withdrew its support from Czechoslovakia in the Czech conflict with Germany. The Czechoslovak state had a military power of resistance, but it lacked the will to resist after its creator urged it to submit. Nazi hegemony was established in Central Europe, in collaboration with Britain, in a medium of chronic nationalist antagonism arising out of the destruction of the Hapsburg Empire. And then, having brought about a vast increase in Nazi power in 1938, Britain decided to make war on Germany in 1939.

That situation is described in detail in the two Casement issues of *A Belfast Magazine*. They were reviewed in *Books Ireland*. I would have thought that a review of such material could not be written without taking up two things: the characterisation of Maloney as being 'in denial' because he doubted the authenticity of a Diary whose existence was being denied by Whitehall; and the British role in the formation and destruction of Czechoslovakia. The *Books Ireland* review dealt with neither of these things. This was not surprising in the light of the fact that that review was written by the central subject of one of the pamphlets, Professor McCormack. The Owner/Editor of *Books Ireland* gave the material to McCormack to deal with, and McCormack was neither capable of reviewing it nor replying to it. It was unreasonable to ask him to do either, and I will take the review to be the work of his irresponsible Editor.

The procedure applied was to ignore the substance of the material, while going over it with a fine-tooth comb in search of nits. Two nits were found:

"The Redemptorist Order (founded 1732) can be implicated in a publication "written about 1600". The French, you will be glad to learn, started the tiff of 1870, doubtless by invading their own country Escher-style."

The first has to do with this paragraph in *Diary Dogmatists*:

“mendaciousness can take many forms. Many years ago I read a Treatise on lying in truthful forms that was written about 1600 by some Jesuit or Redemptorist for the guidance of priests attempting to function in England under the terror of the Penal Laws. It was discovered and translated by some honest Protestant, with appropriate expressions of horror about the Romanist mind. On the strength of it I entertained for a while the possibility that the English, like the Romans, had built their Empire by brute force and raw honesty, without duplicity or casuistry. One must allow something to be possible in order to discover whether it is actual. What I had discovered in this case is that practical casuistry, as a form of truth, was far more highly developed in Protestant England than in Catholic Ireland, or in Catholic Europe as far as I could tell. After I had made that discovery it was sheer pleasure to read Cardinal Newman’s demolition of the pose of bluff honesty behind which that “*muscular Christian*”, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, had launched his attack.”

In this connection I cited Margaret Thatcher’s statement that she had “*no official knowledge*” of the secret arms sales to Iran, in breach of a UN resolution, for the purpose of raising money for President Reagan to finance terrorist operations in South America behind the back of Congress. And I remarked that—

“Practical casuistry in British politics often takes the form of a division of labour between people who devise the lies and the people who tell them. It is arranged that the people who tell the lies have no official knowledge that they are lies.”

Two matters which are altogether outside my experience are education and religion. My memory does not hold information about them for very long. And here is a case of religion and education combined! But a trace of information must have stuck at the back of my mind telling me that ‘Jesuit or Redemptorist’ would not do as another way of saying ‘Counter-Reformationist’ for 1600 because I notice that in the second paragraph following I refer to “*a truth of the kind which the Jesuit casuist devised for the hunted priests four centuries ago*”.

Addis says that for me it is an “*axiom that Britain is always wrong*”. I don’t know in what sense he uses the word ‘wrong’. It is not a word that I have used much, because it appears to me that in political practice right and wrong mean

much the same thing today as when the distinction between them was frankly made by physical combat.

And as to casuistry, and the fine distinctions to which it gives rise, I don’t see how democratic states could exist without them. Tony Blair is the arch-casuist of our time, and he has guided his state and manipulated his people out of the illusions of the immediate post-Cold War years into the era of a new imperialism. The casuistical distinctions which he makes are so extravagant that it hardly seems possible that any ordinary notion of truth can survive in his head. Bertie Ahern appears by contrast to be an honest simpleton, who blurts things out as they come to him. But who would argue that he has tended to the affairs of his state as well as Blair has?

My second mistake, as discovered by Jeremy Addis, is that I mistook the German attack on France in 1870 for a French attack on Germany. I wrote: “*The German State, founded in 1871, had by 1914 fought no wars at all. The war in which it was founded, the Franco-Prussian War, was a French war of aggression.*” Addis, apparently knowing only the outcome of the war, makes the smart Alec remark that the French must have started it by invading themselves.

Let’s go back to Churchill’s five dates on which German guns were heard in Paris, with the implication that these were five acts of German aggression.

Even in the depths of rural Ireland in the backwardness of the 1950s, I was able to work out that the Prussians occupied Paris in 1814 as allies of Britain. They occupied it again in 1815, following Napoleon’s return from exile, having saved the British at Waterloo. Then in 1914 and 1918 German guns could be heard in Paris, at the start of the Great War and at the time of the Ludendorff offensive of March 1918.

But what happened in 1870? That was not so easy to find out. But there is no reasonable doubt about it. France declared war on Germany and invaded it.

And, in launching the invasion, the French Emperor, Napoleon’s nephew, told his armies:

“Whatever road they took beyond their frontiers, they would find glorious traces of their fathers. They would prove themselves worthy of them. The fate of liberty and civilisation depended on their success.”

They would find traces of their fathers in Germany because France had been in the habit of invading Germany—and Britain had been in the habit of fighting in Germany to prevent France from gaining a secure eastern border.

In 1914 Britain went to war in support of France’s irredentist claim on Alsace Lorraine, which it had lost as a consequence of its war of aggression in 1870. Two hundred years earlier it had been at war with France and one of its objects had been to prevent France from acquiring Alsace. The merits of the particular case had nothing to do with it. It was all a matter of ‘balance of power’. And what that meant for two hundred years was that France must be prevented from gaining a secure eastern frontier.

Only a handful of farsighted Liberal Imperialists saw in 1870 that Germany, by defeating the French aggression, had made itself England’s enemy. France remained the presumed enemy for purposes of strategic planning until around 1905. The planning for war on Germany in alliance with France was then carried on in secret until 4th August 1914. During the Autumn of 1914 a wholesale revision of European history was carried out by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to show that France had always *really* been England’s Continental ally and Germany its enemy. And then Major Street (who was to become the chief Dublin Castle propagandist during the Irish War of Independence) deplored the fact that Britain had not waged a pre-emptive war against its future enemy. (See Athol Books’ reprint of his *Administration Of Ireland*.)

The notion that Germany was the historical aggressor on the Continent was part of the propaganda cocoon spun by the intelligentsia of the British war effort in 1914. That propaganda remains pretty well intact. Nevertheless, it is not entirely unreasonable to expect a Professor and a publisher of book reviews to know between them the crude facts of the Franco-Prussian War.

In 1870 Spain, after one of its periodic political convulsions, decided to have a new king, and it picked on a young prince of the Hohenzollerns. The Prussian Kaiser did not approve, but did not interfere. The French said they would not recognise a Spanish state with a German at its head—which was tantamount to a conditional declaration of war. Young Hohenzollern declined the offer. So, no problem? And yet the French refused to let go of the

matter as an occasion of war. They sent an emissary to the Kaiser, who was on holiday, to demand a guarantee that, if a member of his family was ever again asked to become king of Spain he would refuse. The Kaiser, grumpy at having his holiday disturbed, received the emissary very coldly and refused to give a guarantee about a hypothetical situation. French honour felt slighted, and the Emperor declared war with the approval of the populace and of his government. Then, from a presumed position of military predominance, he began a leisurely process of mobilisation on the frontier. The frontier was crossed in early August 1870. The town of Saarbrücken was taken, but was held only briefly. And that was the extent of the French incursion into Germany in 1870.

France was the established military power. The fifty German states were in the process of cohering into a German State. The purpose of the French declaration of war on Prussia was to abort the process of German unification. The Prussian Army had fought two small wars in the 1860s as part of the unification movement, one with Denmark and the other with Austria, but it was rated as amateurish by comparison with French professionalism. It had, however, the virtue of originality in its approach. It stopped the French advance at Saarbrücken and then inserted itself between the laboriously moving segments of the French Army and disorganised them. The war proper lasted only a few weeks. The Emperor himself was taken prisoner in the encirclement at Sedan. A revolution was declared at Paris, giving rise both to the Third Republic and the Paris Commune. No French authority was willing to accept the consequences of defeat in a war which France itself had started. The new Republican authorities proclaimed a *levee en masse*. The army had lost the war, but the people were to continue it in the form of dispersed guerilla war, or terrorism, or however you care to put it. Germany had won the war which had been declared on it, but the Government which declared it was gone and the new Government would not deal with the realities of the situation, and French society after the fall of the dictatorship was somewhat in the position of Iraqi society during the past two years—with the difference of course that France, unlike Iraq, was the aggressor.

France had started the war and so it was up to France to negotiate an end to it in the light of military circumstances. But France went into denial. Germany therefore ended up in occupation of France

during the Winter of 1870/71. A settlement was eventually made with the Third Republic in 1871. The French declaration of war, intended to abort the unification of Germany, had the effect of accelerating it. And then the Third Republic put down the Paris Commune with very great slaughter.

Forty years ago I made some attempt to see the world in Marxist terms, but the Kantian background of my mind made that impossible when Marxism was systematised philosophically in the early 1970s. The Paris Commune was one of the great historical events in the Marxist scheme, but I could only see it as a kind of displacement activity within the French denial of reality following the miscarriage of its war on Germany.

I also recall that either Marx or Engels condemned the German crossing of the French frontier during the war as an act of aggression which changed the character of the war. But I couldn't see it. The French State placed itself in jeopardy by declaring war, and the war was a continuum from August 1870 to March 1871.

The French declaration of war was one of the clearest acts of aggression to be found in modern European history. I have read some of the post-1914 British attempts to obscure that fact, but it can really only be obscured by the implantation of an entirely false record—which was successfully done in the case of *Books Ireland*.

An Irish company was raised in 1870 to fight with the French, and a long account of their adventures was published when they came home. As far as I recall, they consisted largely of Fenians, and they did not claim that they went to the assistance of France because it was the injured party. They went because it was France, and Ireland owed it a debt of honour.

Britain's Great War was brought about by exploitation of French irredentism regarding the territory lost in the aggression of 1870. The revisionists, who are trying to involve Ireland in the British Remembrance Day celebrations, condemn what they see as Irish nationalist irredentism on the Six Counties. They use the word in a way that suggests that irredentism is unquestionably a bad thing, and they deal with the French irredentism at the source of the Great War by ignoring it. Given the state of knowledge indicated by the *Books Ireland* view of the Franco-Prussian War, there is clearly a need to take up the matter of Alsace-Lorraine.

**Brendan Clifford**

## The IRA And Bank Robberies

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

Frank Bouchier-Hayes raises an interesting point in drawing attention to the Millstreet bank robbery of 1919 (letters 16/5/05) and that it is "instructive to learn that a precedent was set by the IRA as far back as 1919 for the detection and prosecution of bank robbers".

That robbery was a precedent in more ways than one. The RIC alleged it was carried out by the IRA and did nothing to solve it hoping that its non-solving would discredit the IRA. When the Northern bank robbery is solved it may well be that more precedents and similarities will emerge. For example, the Millstreet robbery was carried out with inside help.

However, it is a pity Frank does not elaborate on what exactly it would mean to follow the precedent today. Surely it means that either the PSNI should hand over the investigation of the current case to the IRA or they should copy the very successful methods of the IRA of 1919. Which option would Frank prefer?

**Jack Lane**

**Editorial Note:**

**There have been two robberies since the Northern Bank Robbery, using exactly the same method of kidnapping employees: one in Dublin and the latest in Belfast, involving the Boots chain. Strange to say, neither of these have been blamed on the Provisionals by the police.. Nor has there been any evidence yet forthcoming to implicate the Provisionals in the Northern Bank heist. Indeed, the forensic examination of money captured in police raids in Cork has so far provided no link with the N. Bank robbery.**

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There is now a page up for  
discussions about the  
Eu Constitution,  
as well as other features

# Laurent Fabius Interview

The following appeared in *l'Humanite* 17/5/05. It is an interview with Laurent Fabius the former Socialist Prime Minister (translated for the *Irish Political Review* by John Martin).

Fabius is the Number Two in the French Socialist Party and was generally perceived to be on the right of the party. However, much to the surprise of many, he has defied his party leader and advocated a 'No' vote in the forthcoming referendum on the European Constitution.

At the time of writing the outcome of the referendum is unclear. However, a recent opinion poll showed that the French consider him to be the most effective campaigner on the 'No' side with 40%, followed by the French Communist leader, Marie George Buffet with 32%.

## INTERVIEW

*Humanite*: You campaigned in favour of *Maastricht* and then approved the *Amsterdam* and *Nice Treaties*. Why are you now opposed to the project for the European Constitution?

*Laurent Fabius*: I approved the *Maastricht* treaty because it contained a major advance: the Euro. Despite its current shortcomings (it remains too strong) it can be a means of stability and power in the world. The single currency should allow the European Union, and therefore France, to balance its monetary strength with the United States. It should help us adjust to the development of China. But *Maastricht* was not the end of history. It was a first step towards a Europe of growth, of employment, a social Europe. That was the vision of Francois Mitterrand. We are far from that now.

The European Central Bank is a buttress of the "sacrosanct" price stability and independence from political power. It does not allow us the means to fight against unemployment and poverty. There are 20 million unemployed and what does the Constitution offer us in the Europe of 25, 27 and soon to be 30: policies of unrestricted competition to the detriment of production, wages, research and innovation. This is one of the reasons which led me to say 'No'. I am a partisan and artisan of Europe. But I draw the lessons of my experience in government. It is in this sense that my 'No' vote is for a more social Europe.

*H*: You have said that there is a strong

risk of "social disruption" with the Constitutional Treaty. What do you mean by this?

*LF*: I have always conceived of the construction of Europe as a movement which permits slowly and surely an upwards social and economic harmonisation. We on the left who are pro-European and Internationalist wish to unite the peoples under a social model. But with this last enlargement Europe has changed its nature. The new countries are diverse. The old methods will no longer work. If the Constitution is adopted each country will have the right to a veto in taxation matters. When the member states had a comparable level of taxation this did not pose a problem. But today some of the new entrants have a corporate tax rate of less than 10% which may be heading for 0%. How can that not exercise downward pressure on French, German and Spanish rates? This will lead to a fall in Public resources throughout the Union, damaging employment and public services. The Constitutional project forbids social harmonisation upwards. And yet the differences between the old members and the new ones are considerable. Competition will be extreme. Wages, social protection, workers' rights will be dragged downwards. That is why I speak of "social disruption".

*H*: Nothing legally prevents a renegotiation, but on what basis will it be?

*LF*: Declaration 30 annexed to the Constitutional Treaty anticipates that if in November, 2006, some countries have rejected the Treaty, the Heads of State will meet and re-examine the situation. In simple language that means that they will have a new discussion. And the new Constitution will not be in force until 2009. From this perspective it is important that the French 'No' is a pro-European and social 'No' because other countries will have different positions to ours and as always renegotiation will be difficult. France on its own cannot impose its point of view. But neither should it give up on its demands. With a clear vote for change France will be in a strong position. Renegotiation will have to be on three essential points:

- 1) Deletion in Part 3 of all specific policies which have no place in a Constitution.
- 2) Make the text more flexible.

- 3) Take out all the restrictions on strengthening cooperation. That is to say allow countries which wish to go further and more quickly together such as France and Germany to be able to do so.

This revision of the Constitution will not be perfect. But at least the Constitution will not be inflexible. It will be a step towards the Social Europe which we wish.

*H*: Martine Aubry (the Socialist Mayor of Lille and daughter of Jacques Delors—JM) has accused you of playing on people's fears by considering foreign countries as our enemies and the causes of outsourcing of production away from France.

*LF*: I haven't broken any rules nor have I entered into a dispute with the leaders of the Left. In the matter of the transfer of production from France outside Europe, it is not obvious that stating the facts is to play on people's fears. I represent upper Normandy where "outsourcing" is not a fantasy, alas, but a painful reality. Jean Jaures said: "courage is to search for the truth and to tell it". To recognise the extent of "outsourcing" is to tell the truth. Fighting against it is not easy, but it is necessary. Regarding "outsourcing" within Europe, it is an urgent task to help the new entrants more. It is in our common interest. This assumes an upward revision of the European Budget, which is precisely what Jacques Chirac refuses to do. On the contrary, he has demanded a reduction. Other essential decisions that are required include a minimum level of taxation, for example, corporate taxes and an upward social progression (employment laws, social welfare etc). But as I've said these last two measures are forbidden by the Constitution (Article iii-210). This is very serious. It means that if the Text is passed we will be deprived of the means to fight against outsourcing of production.

*H*: But how can we struggle against outsourcing of production to countries outside Europe?

*LF*: The development of the emerging countries is a source of satisfaction for all those who like me have been preoccupied by underdevelopment. But it is in the interests of all that this is balanced and regulated. If we do not decide to discuss seriously, at a world level, the social, environmental, energy and financial implications of development in China or India, that will be a source of planetary imbalance. For a country like ours it will be difficult to have strong industry. However, there cannot be growth without a solid industrial base. Today, Europe

does not possess the means to react effectively. The case of the textile industry is a good illustration. The Ministers have made numerous statements of intent. But at the rate things are going the French Textile industry will have closed down by the time measures are taken. I fear that the same scenario will repeat itself for the furniture industry and eventually even the car industry.

For a long time many believed that there would be an automatic adjustment and counted on a rapid increase in the wages of the emerging nations, on our advances in technology and the costs of transport preventing disruption. But this reassuring analysis is out of date. The demographic weight of countries such as China and India exercise a massive pressure on our wages and salaries. They have accomplished massive technological advances and the revolution in information technology has reduced the costs of transport.

Therefore we must conceive another model of world regulation. And it is for Europe to propose it with generosity and solidarity. At the same time we must allow our own industries to develop by training and technological development to create employment. That is why we need a great ambition in Europe for industry, research and technology. To avoid these questions is to hide the most important problems which we will face in the next 20 years. Let us not avoid doing this with this Constitution.

*H:* Has your experience of the Jospin Government and then the failure of the Left in the 2002 election (Jospin finished third in the Presidential election behind Jean Marie Le Pen and Chirac—JM) led you to defend a ‘No’ vote?

*LF:* Of course. The defeat of Lionel Jospin was also a collective defeat. Like others I bear my share of responsibility. Among the reasons for the defeat was the division within the Left and the distancing of it from factory workers, employees, teachers, pensioners and the young. For three years I have drawn the lessons, in particular, by advocating “*frontal opposition*” to the right: in other words resolute and responsible. I observe that a large part of the people of the left have united around a ‘No’. This is no coincidence and it is a magnificent hope. The unity of the left remains for me an absolute necessity.

*H:* Will a ‘Yes’ victory compromise the possibility of implementing left wing policies in the future?

*LF:* If we wish to develop scientific research, a transport policy, public services, it is necessary to have the financial means to do so. However, the Constitution will not allow us a sufficient budget: unanimity is required and borrowing is forbidden. At the same time the Constitution sets in stone the Stability Pact and risks preventing member States from implementing a policy of growth. So we are not able to do things at the European or the national level. In such a Europe left-wing policies in favour of employment and social progress will be very difficult. The Right-wingers, like Nicolas Sarkozy, have started to come out of the woodwork and have recognised publicly that this is the real reason for their support for this Constitution. For the UMP (the leading Government party—JM) and the MEDEF (the employers’ organisation—JM) a free market Europe will happen with a ‘Yes’ vote. And they want to use this Europe to force regressive policies on France. The choice is clearly between a “*free market Europe*” and a “*social Europe*”. To prepare for the social alternative we must vote ‘No’.

## In Brief

### BOWEN

“WHERE would the Irish be without someone to be Irish at?” Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973). *The House In Paris*.

At least that was one problem Elizabeth never had to worry about!

### INDIAN DAIL

“A figure caught my eye when I was reading about the recent Indian parliamentary elections. India’s lower house has 545 deputies. The Dail has 166. The population of India is 1.05 billion, compared with 3.9 million in the Irish Republic.

“To achieve the same level of representation as India we would have to reduce the Dail to two members. It’s hard to think of even that many who deserve to remain, but the prospect is tempting nonetheless.

“Readers in India might wish to note that, to match Irish levels of representation, they would need to elect more than 44,000 extra deputies.”

A letter in “The Irish Times” last year following the Indian General Election by Mr. Paul Leahy of Douglas, Cork City.

### PRISONERS

“IN June, 2002, the U.S. overtook Russia to have the world’s largest prison

population. One in every 37 Americans has spent time in jail and if the current trends continue, one in every 15 American children born in 2001 will go to jail in their lifetime. Of those children born in 2001, a white male has a one in 17 chance of going to prison, Hispanic males have a one in six chance, and for black men, it’s one in three. A sixth of all black men are current or former prisoners compared with one in 38 white men” (*50 Facts That Should Change The World* by Jessica Williams, Icon publishers, 12 Euros).

### NORTHERN REPRESENTATION

“There should be no increased representation from Northern Ireland in the Seanad until there was a united Ireland, a Fianna Fail member said. Ms. Ann Ormonde said she had no difficulty with the Taoiseach nominating a representative from the North, but she would not like too much representation from that part of the country.

“When unification came about, people from the North could canvass for votes ‘like the rest of us. I would not give them a hand out. I don’t mind having a representative here, but there should be no more than that”.

“Earlier, Dr. Maurice Hayes (Ind.), a nominee of the Taoiseach, said the only way he could see of increasing Northern representation, in the present form, was by giving the Taoiseach an extra two or three ‘slots’ and by trying to fill them from across the political spectrum in the North.

“Dr. Hayes suggested that consideration should be given to allocating a third or a quarter of seats in the Seanad to those under 25” (*Seanad Report*, Irish Times 1.10.2004).

### CULTURE

“I see ‘culture’ as more than the ‘arts’. Culture is the noise made by community, the sum of what we are, the way we behave as beings in society, the way we think and feel about our surroundings, and the values we pass on to the next generation. Culture also has very regional strengths. Each city has its own personality.

“In Cork we are used to a working-class life, to close living and community cooperation. Workers in this city have always operated to help each other. Sports and social clubs, societies and schools, all have a prodigious expertise in mutual help and cooperation. Cork people operate across different spectrums, not only socially, but in the arts and sport.

“The Cork person in Croke Park on Sunday will more than likely be wearing a Munster jersey the following Saturday; a soccer club might very well raise money through a golf outing. This is all part of the multi-tasking of Cork life; it is one of the reasons for the brightness and quick-wittedness of our people... we cross boundaries easily” (Anthony Dinan, M.D. Thomas Crosbie Holdings commenting on Cork 2005: European Capital of Culture).

## Conference continued

welcome and accommodate growing numbers of migrant workers.

Recent reports (1) raise concerns that the deregulation of the economy creates the conditions for exploitation of labour to occur. The current intolerable and unacceptable social conditions for many migrants make a mockery of notions of social justice at the heart of Labour's international mission.

In many sectors of the economy—health, agriculture, food processing, hotels, catering, care and construction—migrant labour is an essential component.

The UK has Europe's most 'flexible' labour force. The core policies of the 'flexible' vision—the British way—are cost competitiveness, outsourcing, downsizing, private finance, short term contracting, light touch regulation and poor union and worker consultation. These same policies provide the context by the coercive employment, the 'twilight zone' within which 'bonded' status flourishes. That the criminal organisation of much of the migrant labour force underpins our 'competitiveness' should not be tolerated by the Labour Party.

The exploitation of migrant workers is the dirty secret of the economic 'success' of the 'third way'. Competing with countries with no labour rights, by importing their conditions in no answer. The social costs, in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, are too high. As such, conference resolves to:

Propose that the InterGovernmental Conference, on an island wide basis, consider

- \* the regulation of recruitment and employment agencies, North and South
- \* that work permits are available for work in the area, rather than ring fenced to a particular employer"

(1) See **Forced Labour and Migration to the UK**, Bridget Anderson and Ben Rogaly for the TUC and International Labour Organisation, and **Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland**, Kathryn Bell, Neil Jarman and Thomas Lefebvre, Institute for Conflict Research, University for Ulster

### Mark Langhammer's Statement To Irish Labour Party Conference

Dear Delegate

I am writing to you in advance of the Labour Conference in Kerry in May to seek your support for my nomination, by the Northern Ireland Labour Forum, to the National Executive.

You will be aware that, following changes to the Party's constitution in 2002

to allow northern based members to join, a branch (the Northern Ireland Labour Forum) was formed and launched by Pat Rabbitte TD in October 2004. My candidature for the Executive indicates a seriousness to develop a Labour political presence across the island of Ireland.

This is a critical juncture for the Labour Party. The orientation we take towards government in the South is also critical to the growth of the party in Northern Ireland. The May Westminster election is likely to be a landmark one, likely to significantly shift the balance of power. I make no secret that, for Northern Ireland to evolve towards normality, we need access to party politics orientated towards Government. Governmental politics is the way forward, not the communal based politics focussed on sectarian bloc management within Stormont. The debris of the election in May could give Labour an opportunity to influence a progressive and radical realignment within Irish politics. This is the principal reason why the Labour Forum has nominated me as a candidate for the National Executive.

Since its inception, the Labour Forum has developed a range of policy in relation to:

- \* The Economy (Response to the Government Economic Vision and NI Skills Strategy)

- \* Public Services (Submissions on Water Reform and Railways)

- \* The Review of Public Administration (Local Government reform)

These can be viewed at [www.labour.ie/nireland](http://www.labour.ie/nireland) and will give you an indication that our emphasis is on building responsible practical solutions for democratic socialists in Government.

If you would like any further information, I would be delighted to discuss the matter with you further, I am contactable at e-mail [mlanghammer@newtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:mlanghammer@newtownabbey.gov.uk).

Yours Fraternally,  
Cllr Mark Langhammer  
Chair, NI Labour Forum

### Biographical Notes for information

Mark Langhammer first stood as a "Labour Representation" candidate in the 1989 European elections. He has been elected to Newtownabbey Borough Council as an independent Labour candidate since 1993, topping the poll in 1997, and being elected on the 1st count on all other occasions. The Macedon area, part of the North Belfast Westminster constituency, includes the Rathcoole estate, once the UK's largest housing development, and Bawnmore, an estate with the highest "pro rata" rate of Troubles related deaths during the northern conflict. In 1996 Langhammer led the Labour Coalition to

election to the NI Forum and Talks, although—opposing the set-up of a Stormont Assembly as "institutionalised sectarianism"—he took no part in the Talks. Mark Langhammer has been Northern Ireland's most electorally successful Labour politician since the 1960's.

Cllr Langhammer had been a member of the Campaign for Labour Representation since the early 1980s. Having helped disband the CLR in an orderly fashion in 1993 on the grounds that the British political establishment (including British Labour Party) had no intention, at the highest level, of normalising Northern Ireland and ending its exclusion from mainstream UK politics, Cllr Langhammer led the attempts to secure membership and organisational rights within the Labour Party across Ireland. This campaign has been largely successful, with membership and branch organisational rights secured through a change in the Labour Party constitution in 2002. Pat Rabbitte TD, Leader of the Labour Party, launched its northern branch, the Labour Forum, in October 2004. Cllr Langhammer is Chair of the Labour Forum.

Achievements: Amongst Cllr Mark Langhammer's key political successes have been:

- \* Chairman of Newtownabbey's Economic Development Committee 1995-2001, leading the Borough through its first three Economic Development Plans.

- \* As Chair of the Rathcoole Regeneration Working Group, he has been responsible for overseeing the development of some £4m in environmental, recreational and leisure improvements, as well as lobbying for some £30m in housing improvements. Cllr Langhammer hosted the first ever visit to Rathcoole by a British Secretary of State, by Mo Mowlam in 1996. He was also responsible for the building of the Dunanney Centre, Rathcoole's Community Enterprise Centre, opened by Princess Anne in 1998

- \* Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux from 1994 to 1998

- \* Chair of Playboard NI, Northern Ireland's lead body on children's play, hosting a visit by Hillary Clinton in 1999. Responsible for the adoption of a Borough Play Policy, the first in Northern Ireland, heralding a widespread investment in play facilities across the Borough.

- \* Inaugural Chairperson of the Newtownabbey District Partnership (now Local Strategy Partnership) – set up to distribute European Peace & Reconciliation monies across the Borough

Cllr Langhammer is employed as Regional Director of a large UK e-Learning and educational charity. He is married, with two children, aged 13 and 11. He is an occasional follower of local football, and is a life member of Crusaders Football Club. He is a volunteer helper at Monkstown Amateur Boxing Club, County Antrim.

For more on Mark Langhammer, and the Northern Ireland Labour Forum, go to [www.labour.ie/nireland](http://www.labour.ie/nireland) —see Speeches, Press Statements and Policy

More coverage of the  
Irish Labour Party Conference  
Next Month



**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## May Day Holiday

The Editor,  
LABOUR COMMENT.

*A Chara,*

Regarding your article on Mayday in your last issue (Vol 23 No 5), permit me to make some comments.

The original motion which was passed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in 1993, which demanded that Mayday as a holiday would be incorporated into the next National Partnership agreement, was only partially implemented.

When Congress went looking for the Holiday, they settled for a Holiday on the first Monday of May rather than a Holiday on May 1st. This decision, eroded significantly the idea of the 'Workers' holiday as it had now been transformed into another long weekend.

Had it been a holiday on 1st May, as exists all over mainland Europe, the significance of the the day would be more profound and indeed might even have led to a festive type of day—when it fell mid-week as is the case with St. Patrick's day.

Regarding the Dublin Council of Trade Unions holding its Mayday march on 30th April, this has to be regarded as better than nothing, but it really shows the decline in the Trade Union movement, as the thinking was that we could get nobody to march on Sunday 1st May.

Likewise, the debacle of the Cork Council of Trade Unions, having no Mayday march at all (now for the second year in succession) and having the laughable 'sponsored wax' instead, shows a chronic weakness on behalf of the CCTU.

However, much of the Trade Union weakness, stems from the Trade Union leadership being afraid to put forward, revolutionary demands of a social/communist hue. If there was ever a time to be calling for the Nationalisation of Banks : it must be now, if there was ever a time to demand a public housing building

programme, it must be now and if there was ever a need to demand protection for minorities in our society it must be now.

Unfortunately, our Trade Union 'leadership' prefers to pursue more middle-class objectives, such as having leg-waxes. No matter how commendable the cause, trade union representatives having bodily hair plucked out is unlikely to inspire radical demands.

As long as our leadership panders to Middle-class values and abandons revolutionary demands, then the movement will continue to decline and May will mean little or nothing to most workers.

Finally, May 1st was celebrated in Cork in 2004 and this year with a Mayday march and rally organised by the Independent Workers' Union. This year also saw the launch of a new play, commissioned by the I.W.U. on the 'Crime of Combination'. Although our numbers were small (about 100 of us), we continued the tradition of remembering International Workers Day and it was nice to note that some people applauded as our march passed by.

*Is Mise,* NOEL MURPHY,  
National Secretary,  
Independent Workers' Union.

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Irish Labour Party Conference:

### Northern Ireland Forum motion

PRESS STATEMENT

**Labour Party Conference Hears First Northern Motion**

The Labour Party conference (May 27-29) in Tralee heard a motion from a Northern Ireland branch for the first time in several generations. The Northern Ireland **Labour Forum**, the branch for Northern based members, put forward a motion aimed at improving the conditions of migrant workers. **Cllr Mark Langhammer** commented:

"The Labour Forum motion will be the first by any northern branch in several generations, and represents a small, but historic step away from sectarian politics in the direction of governmental politics.

*"Motion 115, proposed by the Northern Ireland Labour Forum and tabled by the National Executive Committee, seeks a policy framework to look at the regulation of recruitment agencies, and at the manner in which "bonded labour" status is encouraged by present work permit policy. Developing an island wide policy to tackle an island wide issue makes sense."*

Conference passed the Northern Ireland Labour Forum motion, which reads:

*"Ending Twilight conditions for migrant workers*

*"Conference notes the recent coverage of the position of migrant workers, and the treatment minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland (1).*

The Labour Party welcomes the Department for Employment & Learning's Skills Strategy in Northern Ireland and its emphasis on the need to

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