

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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Dev Neutral Against Who?  
Northern Dail Representation  
The IRA Connections  
The Sean Garland Case

No Irish Need Apply?  
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## Politics Of Exclusion

Garret FitzGerald drove the Ulster Protestants crazy in 1985 when, in furtherance of the sovereignty claim of the unamended Articles 2 & 3 of the Irish Constitution, he achieved a role for the Irish State in the governing of the Six Counties, which were part of the British State. Ulster Unionists were shocked out of their communal routines. We availed of their disrupted condition to implant amongst them the knowledge that they were politically disconnected from the British state to which they professed loyalty. We urged them to demand incorporation into the democratic political life of that state as a means of overcoming the rigorous communal, or sectarian, division which was an inevitable consequence of the 'Northern Ireland State'.

We had been advocating this remedy for more than ten years before that, but it was only after Dr. FitzGerald traumatised the Ulster Protestants in 1985 that we got a hearing. And when we did get a hearing, and a movement for the democratisation of the Six Counties within the political life of the British state got under way, Dr. FitzGerald was very angry. We were subjected to close scrutiny and harassment by his Special Branch as well as by the Special Branch of the RUC. An apparatus supposedly intended for use against terrorists was used against us, who were the ultimate constitutionalists.

The 26 Counties, in our experience, came closer to being a police state during the year following the signing of the 1985 Agreement than at any other time during the past forty years. And it was thanks to Charles Haughey's refusal (as leader of the Opposition) to go along with it that Dr. FitzGerald's authoritarian inclinations were curbed.

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## Shadow Of One Gunman Or Another

Fine Gael is currently having an identity crisis.

It may be simply the usual old septagenarian end-of-life crisis we've all seen our grandparents go through, embarrassing us by claiming in their young days to have scoured Dublin with the Squad, blasting British officers and their wives as they lay abed all unbeknownst to blessed lady pity and hell slap it into them.

Well, whatever the reason, those masters of prudence and rectitude, long the champions of deference and decorum, dull grey upholders of lore and ordure as ever we've known them, are busily re-inventing themselves as dashing desperados, romantic revolutionaries, the gallant men who roamed the glen and rode with Michael Collins. It's all a bit disconcerting.

Myself I put it down to the pernicious influence of a bunch of dangerous radicals styling themselves the *Collins 22 Society*, whose *Mission Statement* is as follows:

The Mission of the Collins 22 Society is:

To perpetuate the name of Michael Collins:

To honour his ultimate sacrifice:

To aspire to his life principles:

To actively campaign for the erection by the State of his statue in the courtyard of Leinster house by 2022 (the centenary of his death):

To be non-denominational and non-sectarian:

To abide by the Constitution of Ireland:

To ally itself politically to Fine Gael (United Ireland) Party:

To extend the influence of Michael Collins by promoting an interest in

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ARREST OF IRISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AT 76 RANGERS' HOUSE, DUBLIN, November 15th, 1922.

Lest we forget . . .

On the first  
Remembrance Day  
Irish elected  
representatives  
were arrested and  
imprisoned

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Dr. FitzGerald has now written a reflective article on the Northern problem (Irish Times, 15 Oct) in which he attributes the feeling of the Northern majority that it was a threatened minority to the higher nationalist birthrate combined with “*Southern irredentism*”. The combined pressures of Catholic fertility within, and the Dublin claims from without, led to “*carefully disguised political and economic discrimination against the Northern minority*”. Meanwhile the 26 Counties developed itself as a state in accordance with its predominant culture. It did not hold itself in abeyance lest, by shaping itself as a state and allowing itself to develop, it should deepen its differences with the Ulster Unionists. Thus—

“From these events a deeply paradoxical situation emerged. First, on the Protestant Unionist side, their artificial electoral majority within the six-county area never translated itself into a psychological sense of being actually a majority.”

And

“the Protestant unionist community could never lose a sense of being a threatened minority on the island of Ireland. In that key respect, and at the deepest level—that of fear—unionists in Northern Ireland continued to think in all-Ireland terms. In sharp contrast, the nationalist people of the rest of the island... rapidly became deeply involved in the construction of their new State... Within a very short period, we in this part of Ireland, for practical purposes, ceased to think of the island as our home,

but came to identify primarily—one might say almost exclusively—with our new State.”

It would be too harsh to say that paradox is the last refuge of a scoundrel. But there are few authentic paradoxes in the world. Most paradoxes do not arise from inherent difficulties in thought but from evasion of thought. We have just now the paradox that established commentators who praised Peter Hart’s truly dreadful book on the IRA in Cork five years ago are denouncing his very much better book on Michael Collins. But that paradox is no more than an expression of mindlessness. Hart, for all the adulation of asinine critics in high places, was made to understand, by authentic criticism in publications associated with this magazine, that his initial vision would not play. So he regrouped and produced a much better book, and is condemned for it by a critical acumen which is of a kind with that which praised his first book. We are here in the realm of fashion, not of thought.

Dr. FitzGerald’s head is not as empty as the heads of these ‘critics’. But he constructs his paradox by averting his mind from a fundamental fact of the situation which is politically unacceptable to him—that the preconditions of democratic political life were deliberately and calculatingly withheld from the Six Counties when they were constituted into ‘the Northern Ireland State’ by the British Government, which never ceased to be

the sovereign authority in the area.

Partition remained the only issue in Northern elections because it was deliberately arranged that it should be so. The arrangements made for the Six Counties in 1921 had nothing whatever to do with the provision of good government. So-called elections there have never been anything but referendums on whether the region should be part of the British state or the Irish state. They were unconnected with the governing of the state, which is what democracy is about. It might be said that voting on which state the region should belong to was democratic in a secondary sense. But democracy in the proper sense has to do with the governing of a state. In the British state that is done through the operation of the two-party system, with one party as the Government and the other as a Government-in-waiting, and other parties marginalised. The party-system of the state excluded Northern Ireland from its operations. Voting in the Six Counties was therefore disconnected from the actual democracy of the state. It is a virtual certainty that large numbers of Catholics in the North would have participated in the democracy of the state if it had been open to them to do so, and would as a result have found themselves acting politically with Protestants.

But electoral activity in the North had nothing to do with governing the state. Elections were only convoluted referendums on the question of whether the region should belong to the British state or the Irish. They were referendums conducted as elections. And, in order to remain within the British state in semi-detached form, Unionists had to secure ‘party’ majorities within the devolved system. Devolved governments were elected, but government policy played little or no part in the voting. And the conducting of referendums in the form of the election of devolved governments ensured that both Protestants and Catholics remained cohesive communal blocs.

Catholics would have taken part in the democracy of the state if it had been open to them to do so. If simple referendums had been held on whether to retain a subordinate attachment to the British state or transfer to the Irish state, it is probable that at various times quite a few of them would have voted for the former. But, in the convoluted referendums in which a vote to remain attached to Britain could only take the form of a vote for the Ulster Unionist Party (the communal party of the Protestants with the Orange Order at its

core) only a minuscule number of Catholics could be expected to vote for the British connection.

Partition, therefore, could never be taken for granted and political life be conducted with regard to the governing of the existing state. And Catholics could only vote against Partition, because they would otherwise be voting for their own humiliation.

We assume that Dr. FitzGerald is familiar with this view of the matter. Although it was never allowed expression in the *Irish Times*, it forced its way into the Northern media during the years after 1985 when he was Taoiseach, and he took the trouble to harass those within his jurisdiction who were advocating it. (We have no reason to suppose that his Special Branch was acting without his authority.)

It is a view which neither he nor anybody else has ever attempted to refute. In our experience everybody who applied his mind to the matter has had to agree that 'Northern Ireland' was an ingenious system of perverse government—and that includes people who subsequently became British Cabinet Ministers, after being given to understand by discreet pressure from the corridors of power that their careers would be cut short unless they let the matter drop.

The Unionists could never feel secure because they were placed in a situation in which Partition was the only possible issue in electoral politics, and voting with regard to Partition was conducted in a way that kept Catholics together as a cohesive Anti-Partitionist bloc. A permanent minority, beginning as a third and rising, would be much too large to allow for stability even in a state—and Northern Ireland was a flimsy construction that was never a state and was incapable of becoming one.

"*Southern irredentism*" was not the influence chiefly responsible for keeping the Northern Catholic community alienated from the state in the North. It was the Northern state itself which did that—the British state in the perverse form which it chose to assume in the North.

But, insofar as "*Southern irredentism*" added to the inherently unstable condition of the North, the most disruptive "*irredentists*" were Jack Lynch and Dr. FitzGerald himself. Lynch poured fuel on the flames in August 1969 with his speech about not standing idly by. And the next irredentist event in order of importance with regard to the Unionist feeling of being under siege was the Hillsborough

## Arrest Of Members Of First Dail On Armistice Day

**As Brian Murphy points out, on the first Remembrance Day in 1919, Irish elected representatives were carried off to jail. A letter pointing this out sent to the *Irish Times* of 24th November 2003, but was not published. It remains as relevant as ever and is reproduced below.**

I note from the Irishman's Diary of Friday 21 November that Kevin Myers has sunk to a new low. From criticising Irish republicans for their opposition to commemorating the dead of the two World Wars, he now criticises two contributors to your letter's page who, while prepared to commemorate the war dead, were not prepared to do so with the same total sympathy for the actions of the British Army in Ireland as himself. Your two contributors were quite prepared to go down the path of forgiveness and reconciliation, the basis of all community commemoration, but that was not enough for Kevin Myers. He wanted them to forget what the British Army had done in Ireland and to rejoice with him that the British Army had prevented the creation of a united Irish republic during the war years of 1919-1921. He also suggested that they should exult with him in the victories of the British Army in Iraq during the same period.

Kevin Myers directs our attention to the heroic actions of the British Army in Iraq and as that country has a present relevance, we will do so. It should, in passing, be noted that the boundaries of the state of Iraq were drawn up by the British government in 1921 to serve British interests, including those of the oil industry. The British Army had a major role in acquiring and sustaining the territory that became known as Iraq and, in so doing, they used mustard gas against the Shia rebels who opposed them. In 1922 the Royal Air Force force was encouraged by Winston Churchill to use the same methods against Kurdish rebels because they had had an 'excellent moral effect' when used earlier. Is this the policy of the British Army with which Kevin Myers wishes us to empathise?

In Ireland, itself, consideration of what happened in Dublin on 11 November 1919, the first anniversary of Armistice Day, offers another perspective on the British Army and provides no little insight into republican attitudes towards the commemoration of that Day. Erskine Childers, who had served in the RAF during the War, recorded that

'on 11 November, the morning upon which two minutes silence had been ordained to commemorate "the divine blessing of peace," the police and military carried out an armed raid upon the Dail's offices and arrested every male person upon the premises indiscriminately and without warrant.'

Here we have the crux of the problem: while asking the people of Ireland to commemorate peace, the British Army and the British administration in Ireland, under the direction of Lord French, Viscount of Ypres, were waging war against the democratic institutions of the country. Is it any wonder that the Irish people should associate Ypres and the British Army with repression rather than liberation? And yet, when Irish republicans announce that they will forgive past wrongs and join in commemorations, Kevin Myers asserts that more is required. Certainly his reputation as the man who has done more than any other person to make it difficult for the many traditions in Ireland to come together in commemorating the war dead is assured.

**Brian P. Murphy osb**

Agreement of 1985 which Dr. FitzGerald wrung from Mrs. Thatcher. And he was also centrally involved in the third major irredentist event—the funny business over sovereignty that surrounded the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973 and led to the Unionist General Strike (or "*Constitutional Stoppage*") of May 1974.

In 1985 it was John Hume who gave the sharpest expression to Dr. FitzGerald's project when he spoke of ripening the Unionist boil in order to lance it. But Hume could not be an irredentist—or could he? He was not claiming any territory. He was coping as best he could with the mess

that had been made of the *irredenta* claimed by Dr. FitzGerald. But, if we are to follow Dr. FitzGerald's use of the term, it must be said that he himself and Jack Lynch were the two most active irredentists in the conduct of the Irish state during the past forty years. It was they who did most to stir things up. And they did so in a fine disregard of the social and political realities of the Northern situation, without any semblance of a practical policy to harness the energies which they provoked, and they were then reduced to moral exhortation and moral condemnation of the consequences.

By contrast with them, Charles Haughey, the man of the “*flawed pedigree*” (as Dr. FitzGerald put it) was only a token irredentist who kept a certain ideal alive but knew better than to poke at the Northern situation as they did.

But is it sensible to apply the term *irredentist* to this matter at all?

The greatest irredentism in which nationalist Ireland was ever involved was the First World War, which is celebrated on Poppy Day. The French state laid claim to a piece of the German state, Alsace-Lorraine, and made war on Germany to gain it. Redmondite Ireland supported that claim and supported the war. And then Redmondite Ireland encouraged a second irredentist claim in the Spring of 1915 in order to bring Italy into the War. And the following year an attempt was made to draw Greece into the war by encouraging it to make an irredentist claim on Turkish Asia Minor, which had been part of the Greek system thousands of years earlier. (The Greek Government rejected the offer, but was overthrown by a British invasion, and a puppet Government declared war, but came to grief when it tried to occupy the territory that Britain had awarded it.)

Without the French irredentist claim to Alsace-Lorraine there would have been no European War in 1914, and without the European War there would have been no World War.

Alsace was a region acquired by France in the 18th century and lost as a consequence of its aggression against Germany in 1870. In 1914 it was a settled part of the federal German state with extensive Home Rule. The population was of divided nationality, but predominantly German speaking, and with a patois of its own.

An Italian state was set up in the mid-19th century, taking its final form in 1870 in conjunction with the French war on Germany. But, according to the doctrine of Mazzini—who is cited as an authority by Roy Foster in certain matters—it would not be complete unless it filled out its historic form, stretching northwards to the Alps and eastwards across the Adriatic to the Dalmatian coast of what is now Croatia. Britain supported this irredentist claim for the purpose of drawing the Italian state into the war against Austria. There was extensive opposition within the Italian state to this irredentist war. The Catholic Church opposed it, as did the Socialist Party. The leading irredentist warmonger was Mussolini, who at this juncture com-

bined extreme nationalism with the radical socialism which he had preached hitherto and thus laid the basis for Fascism.

Within the *irredenta*—the Trentino and the Alto Adige—the majority spoke Italian and the minority German, but there was extensive participation by all in the political life of the Hapsburg state. One of the leading politicians of the region was Alcide de Gasperi, who took part as a Christian Democrat in the political life of the Hapsburg state, and did not support the irredentist claim made by the Italian state. When the Trentino was incorporated into the Italian state in 1919 he distanced himself from Fascism. And after 1945 he emerged as one of the founders of what became the European Union, his moral position being founded on rejection of the irredentism of 1914.

The ‘Northern Ireland’ situation is in no way comparable to that of the Alsace or the Trentino, both of which were stable and well-governed parts of the democracies of their respective States, and neither of which had the long continuity as a historic territory that was the case in Ireland. Neither the Norman Conquest nor the subsequent conquests by Elizabeth, Cromwell and William, treated the country as anything other than the Kingdom of Ireland. It was always governed as a distinct political entity under the Crown—formally so until 1800, and actually so thereafter, whatever notional theoretical arguments may be deployed in connection with the Parliamentary Union.

The constitutional unity of the island was not questioned until 1914 and was not actually tampered with until 1920. And, when it was tampered with, the thing was done in a way that gave rise to endemic conflict and chronic instability, the main causes of which did not lie in any claims made by another state.

If one cared to use the word “*paradox*” as it is used by Dr. FitzGerald, one might say that it was paradoxical that those of the Redmondite tendency, which supported the irredentist conquest of stable and well-governed regions of the German and Hapsburg States in 1914, should now be complaining of irredentism with regard to the unstable and atrociously mis-governed segment of the Kingdom of Ireland that was cut off in 1921 for some reason that had nothing at all to do with good government.

Martin Mansergh had an article on the same day (15 Oct) in which he made a case for physical force under the title, *Physical*

*Force Cannot Solve Problems Of Divided Society*. Fianna Fail’s intellectual is slowly and painfully coming to terms with the fact that he cannot make his stand on the ground set out by his father, the influential British academic-cum-administrator, Nicholas Mansergh:

“Sinn Fein points out that terrible and indefensible things happened in the War of Independence. The difference lies in the overall legitimacy of that earlier struggle”.

He does not indicate what “*indefensible things*” were done (on the Irish side) in the War of Independence. If the indefensible thing was not the War itself, it is hard to see what else was indefensible. War is war, as supporters of the war on Iraq like to say when civilian casualties are mentioned.

The “*overall legitimacy*” of 1919-21 is presumably supplied by the election result, which the British Parliament chose to ignore. But what de-legitimises the insurrection in the North by the very large minority deprived of democratic outlets and subjected to a kind of harassing communal control which has nothing in common with democratic government?

A few months ago Mansergh wrote something which we understood to say that only the Dublin Government had the right to declare war anywhere in Ireland. But surely that is an expression of the irredentist claim which Dr. FitzGerald now deplures?

In any event, the Dublin Government backed down in a confrontation with the British Government in the Spring of 1970, and launched prosecutions against various people for things which they had done under its authority during the preceding six months. And by that measure it forfeited its authority in affairs in the North, whether its claim of authority is regarded as legitimate or mischievous. It left the Catholic community in the North to cope with its predicament on its own. And its predicament was in many ways worse than that of the national community as a whole after the 1918 Election, and certainly much worse than that of the 26 County majority after Partition was enacted in the Summer of 1921. Self-government of one degree or another was then going to be allowed by Britain, even though independence would be conceded to nothing but force. And nationalist Ireland as a whole had never been excluded from the party-politics of the State. It withdrew itself under O’Connell’s leadership from the politics by which the state was governed.

O'Connell might have developed the Whig/Liberal Party in Ireland and become a member of the Government, but he chose a different course of action. And, although he preached pacifism as an absolute for Irish nationalists, the course of development on which he set the country led to war three generations later.

He believed in some kind of spirit of the age which would disable the British will to fight the Irish democracy in defence of its Irish conquest. The moment of truth for that belief came in 1919, and it was found that Britain had not lost the will to fight to hold a dissident national democracy within the Empire. But the Irish decided not to back down, as they had done under O'Connell's leadership in 1843. They resisted British government by force. Mansergh says there was an 'overall legitimacy' in the War of Independence. Where did it come from? Not from the British Parliament. Not from the Versailles Conference. Not from the League of Nations. Not from France. Not from the USA. It came from no external authority. It was a self-asserted legitimacy by Sinn Fein, recognised by no major state in the world—except Bolshevik Russia, which was itself not regarded as legitimate by the arbiters of legitimacy, the victorious Powers assembled at Versailles.

Sinn Fein's assertion of its own legitimacy as the Irish Government on the basis of the 1918 Election has never been recognised by Britain. When Britain recognised a governing authority in Ireland in 1922 it was not the Sinn Fein Dail but the subordinate Parliament of Southern Ireland provided for by a British Act of Parliament. What Sinn Fein saw as a legitimate War of Independence pursuant to an electoral mandate was treated by the British Parliament and Government as a rebellion against legitimate authority. And Britain restored order by making a deal with a group of the rebels who were prepared to give up the vain conceit of independent Irish authority and accept a devolution of authority from the English Crown.

Independence was reasserted in 1932, and the Sinn Fein view of the source of legitimacy was not questioned during the next forty years. But, over the past thirty years, the view of the War of Independence as rebellion against legitimate authority has been revived and it now dominates academic history. It is what 'revisionism' is all about. Charles Townsend set it going with his *British Campaign In Ireland 1919-21* (1975). In virtually every history issued since then by mainstream publishers

the 1918 Election is disregarded as a source of legitimacy. The extreme case was Peter Hart's *The IRA And Its Enemies*, written in language reminiscent of the Orange propaganda against the United Irishmen, and highly praised by almost everybody who counts in the institutional hierarchy.

This collapse into West Britishism has led to the re-emergence of the Sinn Fein Party in the electoral life of the Republic. The anti-democratic structure of the North was the cause of the formation of *Provisional* Republicanism. Official Republicanism in all its forms (Fine Gael, Fianna Fail, the Labour Party) washed its hands of the North, in the way described by FitzGerald. But at the same time it was, in all its forms, implacably hostile to our project of democratising the North within the political structures of the UK. It left the Catholic community in the North to its own devices, with the proviso that it must be denied an outlet into British politics. Then it sat in judgement on the device by which the Northern Catholics coped with their predicament: Provisional Republicanism. Now this political force, which arose in the North because of the default of Official Republicanism, has crossed the Border and has reminded the Republic where it has come from. And, Lo and Behold, the military ceremonies commemorating 1916 are to be restored after thirty-five years of a wilful attempt to forget.

Mansergh defends this revival as if it was not a concession to position established by Sinn Fein/IRA in the hope of warding off its further spread. But the tactic is too blatant. (The Taoiseach is addressing the Seán Moylan commemoration in Kiskeam, Co. Cork, this month. But the date of the event has been pushed back a week to facilitate him. Why did he insist on that? Because this is the date on which Mary Lou MacDonald, Provo MEP, is addressing the Tom Barry commemoration at Kilmichael, about twenty miles away, and he wants to take some of the limelight away from her. It is regrettable that the organisers of the Moylan event lent themselves to this manoeuvre.)

Mansergh:

"Virtually all democracies hold commemorative military parades. The unionist tradition holds hundreds each year in memory of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, so they can scarcely object to commemorating the event which marked the beginning of the Irish revolution. It cannot be emphasised enough that this Republic is the heir of 1916, not paramilitary-linked move-

ments which till recently all refused to recognise it or participate in its institutions" (IT 29.11.05)

And yet "*this Republic*" forgot what it was heir to until the "*paramilitary linked movement*" brought home to it the consequences of forgetting.

As for participating in the institutions of "*this Republic*", the "*paramilitary linked movement*" is eager to do so, but is excluded. The heartland of this movement is cut off from the Dail by the Border at the insistence of all the Official heirs of 1916. This was the case while the old Articles 2 & 3 were intact and it remains the case after they have been reduced to an aspiration. And, while excluding representation of Northern parties in the Dail, Fianna Fail (which apparently has resumed its subtitle, The Republican Party) continues to refuse to extend its own operations to the North: *Establishing Fianna Fail in the North could destabilise it [!!!!], split the nationalist vote, and weaken progress towards shared goals*" (Mansergh 29 Nov). But, when the "*shared goals*" are achieved and the North is peaceful and contented and ceases to be a problem, then the matter might be reconsidered. Which means that things must settle down within the UK before the Dail will consider opening its doors to elected representatives from the North. But the settling down in the North must happen outside the political structures of the UK, in a No-man's-land where the only possible form of politics is the conflict of the two communities.

The concluding paragraph of Mansergh's 15th November statement is as follows:

"Northern Ireland, which for so long lacked a proper democratic dispensation, now has one, even if part of it is in abeyance. [Like the 1914 Home Rule Act?] Its full realisation requires reasonable confirmation of the abandonment of physical force. The future is constitutional."

The suggestion that the resort to physical force by the Catholic community was at the source of the problem is groundless, and it reverses the historic order of cause and effect. It was the particularity of Northern Ireland that was the problem, and the problem was the cause of the sudden and spectacular rise of the physical force movement in the Winter of 1969-70, leading to the declaration of war in, as far as we can recall, the Spring of 1970. Physical force was a symptom of the problem, and the problem survives the repudiation of physical force. And the problem is that Northern Ireland was not,

is not, and cannot be, a democracy—because democracy is a mode of governing a state, and Northern Ireland is not a state and it is excluded from the democracy of the state which holds it, and likewise from the democracy of the state which asserted sovereignty over it for sixty years but has recently reduced that assertion to an aspiration.

And, while the future may or may not be peaceful, present arrangements provide no grounds to assume that it will be constitutional.

Northern Ireland never formed part of the British Constitution, as that entity has been understood by the major writers on it. It was an extemporised device externally associated with the Constitution, connected by Union Jackery but excluded from what Erskine Mayne (who wrote the gospel on the matter) described as the “*lifeblood of the Constitution*”: the system of party politics on which everything else depends in real life.

‘Constitutional nationalism’ is no more constitutional than Republicanism. Its aims lie outside the Constitution. And that was why the foremost Constitutional authority of the time, A.V. Dicey, supported extra-Parliamentary opposition to the 1914 Home Rule Bill: i.e. the Bill was carried with the support of the Irish Party whose purpose was to remove Ireland from the sphere of operation of the Constitution.

The Good Friday Agreement is not a Constitutional settlement, and it certainly has not made Northern Ireland a democracy. It is in essence a transitional arrangement with instability built in. It meets the requirements set out by Gerry Adams twenty years ago as conditions for the operation of a peaceful policy by the Republican movement. But peace in this matter means the absence of military activity only. It means the continuation of war by other means. The conflict of communities goes on after the war as it did before war was declared. And it would go on even if Sinn Fein dissolved itself and handed the game back to the SDLP.

The Agreement unsettled the Protestant community more than the war had done because it was so obviously a transitional arrangement towards something else.

Graham Gudgin had an article on this theme in the *Irish Times* on 19th September. He is described there as “*special adviser to First Minister David Trimble during 1998-2002*”, but he is something much more interesting than that. He was

active in the late 1980s in the movement to bring the North within the British Constitution. But he lost patience with our approach of building up support within the British parties in order to force their leaders to do what they did not want to do. At the critical moment he was one of those who undermined the project by shifting it from political ground to legal ground, thereby relinquishing the political ground that had been established, both in the North and in Britain. The division that occurred on that issue was chiefly between men of property who believed in the power of money to buy politics through the medium of law, and those of us who were making political headway by use of our political wits and our powers of persuasion. We argued that the judiciary would not usurp the authority of Parliament in this matter, and that the Government had an ulterior purpose for Northern Ireland which over-rode considerations of good government. But the men of property—the people with a stake in the country, as one of them actually put it—mistook money for political acumen. They went to law against the Labour Party. After many years had passed and much money had been spent, the Labour Party made an out of court settlement under which it enrolled individuals in Northern Ireland as individuals but prohibited them from political activity.

The political movement up over 20 years by the activity of David Morrison, Pat Muldowney and others, was dispersed by Gudgin and his colleagues, who regressed into the politics of communal antagonism. Gudgin in particular rejected the suggestion that Whitehall had an ulterior purpose for Northern Ireland, and that its resistance to our project was not due to misunderstanding. But it seems that he is no longer sure of this, since he writes of “*the long deterioration in unionist confidence in the British government*” because of concessions to the enemies of the state.

He dismisses the view that Republican military activity is the problem:

“The deeper reality is that sectarian violence from loyalists will continue for the same reason as it has since the 1840s. Electoral reform in the early 19th century first made Irish nationalism a credible threat to Protestants’ position in the UK. This threat has remained ever since and will get worse as the Catholic proportion of the electorate creeps towards 50 per cent in coming decades. As it increases we can expect communal divisions to widen. The panoply of cross-community measures and integrated education will count for little... We remain in a world

in which few are willing to relax the pressures that have lasted since the 1840s. Emboldened by the agreement, Northern nationalists have strengthened the priority they give to Irish unity as a political aim. In the South the expression of the aspiration to unity is universally regarded as a birthright. Even Michael McDowell, greatly esteemed by unionists for his stand against IRA criminality, feels the need to describe himself as a republican who aims to “make partition history”.

“Few nationalists are able to see their aspirations as divisive, and none perceive how they feed loyalist paranoia and increase the need for the Orange Order and others to mark out their territory...”

“The nationalists need to persuade the unionists that they present no real threat to their British identity. At present there is little sign that even moderate nationalists North or South are willing to do that.”

But how might they do it if they wanted to? Dennis Kennedy has an answer. It is given in the title of his *Irish Times* article on 31st October: *Nationalists Must Now Abandon Unity Aspiration*. And its blurb: “*The nationalist goal of Irish unity remains a major obstacle to progress in Northern Ireland*”.

Kennedy is a member of the exclusive, and exclusively Unionist, think-tank, the Cadogan Group (along with Professor Bew, Professor Patterson and Professor Aughey, as far as we recall). And, although he was once the public relations man of the European Union in Belfast, he has a much more narrowly “*Ulsterish*” focus on the world than Gudgin.

He says that the condition of “*political progress*” is that nationalism must cease to be, and that in return Unionists should bring about a Northern Ireland “*which is not ‘simply British’*”. But Northern Ireland has never been “*simply British*”, and that is why it has always been a problem. It is simply not British in all that has to do with “*political progress*”.

Kennedy is less able to describe the situation than Gudgin but is basically in agreement with him:

“Northern Ireland has been dragged back... to the stark tribal hostility of nationalism versus unionism; community relations are worse than before the agreement. The long-awaited IRA act of decommissioning and the announced end of its campaign of violence... do not change that reality... The IRA act of decommissioning is almost irrelevant.”

So the obstacle is not the IRA but “*the nationalist goal of Irish unity*”; and the solution is that nationalism should cease



to be. But how, within the confines of “the Northern Ireland state”, might nationalism cease to be?

Without facing up to the reality that the structure set up in the North in 1921 preserves communal antagonism as its only normality, Kennedy concedes that “Nationalists will not stop being nationalists”. But how then can nationalism cease to be? Is there to be nationalists as discrete atoms which never combine into a collective nationalism?

There must, he says, be “some serious thinking on what constitutes nationalism within the circumstances now prevailing in N. Ireland”. But he gives no hint of what he thinks it might be, other than what it is. It is the circumstances prevailing ever since 1921 that have made it impossible for Northern Catholics (leaving aside eccentrics) to be anything other than anti-Partitionists, Irish nationalists.

The fashionable description of the communal antagonism as tribal is something we have never gone along with. It does not arise from a refusal to engage in the normal politics of the democratic state, but from exclusion from the democratic state by the democratic state. Unionism accepted that exclusion and operated a make-believe state whose politics consisted of the policing of a 40% community by the 60% community. In its traumatised condition in 1985-7 it considered our proposal that it should aspire to be British and to open up the range of British politics to the minority which was approaching equality. Having considered the proposal, it rejected it, and it has ever since been regressing towards something like tribalism.

The Catholic community, though ghettoised, refused to tribalise. It remained political beneath the oppressive apparatus of the make-believe state. And, when it was effectively disowned by the party-politics of the Republic, despite the sovereignty claim, it made its own arrangements both for war and peace, and it is now a political presence in its own right amongst the Pontius Pilates in the South.

Senator Mansergh has come out with an article entitled, *Talk Of A United Ireland Is Legitimate But premature* (IT 8.10.05). He cites Kant’s *Prolegomena* as a prelude to a proposal that talk of a united Ireland should be put on the long finger. But anything that goes beyond the attrition of communal antagonism must have to do with entry into the political life of either the British or the Irish state—and the British option has been closed off by

Whitehall and by Ulster Unionism.

He writes:

“It is a telling admission of weakness and lack of persuasiveness with unionists, after 30 years of attempted use of force, that the two governments are called in by Sinn Fein, the British Government to produce a xxx persuade the unionists, the Government to produce

a green paper on Irish unity.”

This is a very cheap debating point indeed. It is not only the 30 years of war that failed to persuade the Unionists, but the 50 years of peace during which Dublin Governments nominally committed to unity did nothing at all but churn out empty rhetoric. ■

## Shadow Of One Gunman Or Another continued

his life, his work, his writings, and in the ethos he bequeathed to the Irish people, primarily among the youth of Ireland.

Let’s face it; it’s one thing to have murder by the throat, it’s quite another to then kiss it full on the mouth and call it daddy!

On October 16th 2004, Mr. Gerry O’Connell, a man of some property and Vice President of Fine Gael (the Republican Party?) spoke in historic Kilkenny at the inaugural Conference of the 22 Society. Said the firebrand to the little sparks, his audience:

“I stand here before you today in Historic Kilkenny, as Vice President of the Fine Gael party, as we gather to remember, exactly one hundred and fourteen years to his very birthdate, the spiritual founder of Fine Gael and the father of Irish Democracy, General Michael Collins...

“...aside from an iconic picture on a wall, Michael Collins’s life, his writings, the political principles he followed and the civilian political tradition his life and death inspired, is our inheritance in Fine Gael. It’s our standard, it’s the torch that can never be quenched, it’s the dream that will never die, and it’s our historic mission to carry on the Politics of Hope, to rise above the morass and the blancmange of politics as usual. To renew hope in public life. A hope that was first planted in the minds of Modern Ireland by Michael Collins.”

Grand rousing stuff to be sure. But let’s be clear now and call things by their proper names. Michael Collins died in 1922. Fine Gael wasn’t founded until 1933, eleven years after Michael Collins’ death. Michael Collins was not the founder, and he was never the absent centre, of Fine Gael. One of the groups which came together to form Fine Gael was the Cumann na nGaedheal party and it isn’t ludicrous to suggest that the later party was a continuing successor to the earlier one. But Michael Collins was some six months

dead before Cumann na nGaedheal was formed. He didn’t found that party either and it’s a bold man who would lay the sins of Cosgrave, O’Higgins, MacNeill and Blythe at the door of dead Michael Collins.

Michael Collins didn’t found Fine Gael and he didn’t found Cumann na nGaedheal. He didn’t found any political party. He led the Irish Republican Brotherhood and, when it became necessary, he founded and/or directed a plethora of expropriations, a private intelligence network, and a squad of assassins.

In 1924 Cumann na nGaedheal crushed the IRB organisation in the Free State Army which was its last tangible connection with Collins. When Cosgrave and O’Higgins ran crying to London in 1925 to have the Boundary Commission Report suppressed any faint intangible trace of Collins’ stance or motion disappeared entirely.

Really, Collins had no legitimate heirs. He left no detailed political testament. (*Path To Freedom* is a haphazard collection of the dashed down spurs of his occasional moments, either no programme at all or the germ of a hundred competing programmes that was cobbled together after his death.) The core principle of his political activity in the last year of his life, seeking the freedom to achieve freedom, was spurned by Cosgrave and O’Higgins and was later adopted by de Valera to inform twenty years of the best work of Fianna Fáil.

Today the closest party to the party Collins maintained and supplied with his criminality and murders is the Sinn Féin of Adams and McGuinness.

So the leader of Fine Gael went to the 22 Society last week (October 16th, 2005) and invoked Collins’ name to blackguard the followers of Collins’ clear example, using not one word that was not used to blackguard Collins for the self-same

actions in the self-same cause.

Enda Kenny has this trick, he takes murder by the throat and spews hypocrisy all over it:—

“A political party with clear links to organised criminality, defenders of suspected beneficiaries of the proceeds of such criminality are not inheritors of the legacy of Griffith or Collins. They undermine the vision and aspirations of constitutional republicans and corrupt the political process that they previously refused even to recognise. Their attempt to wrap the modern manifestation of Sinn Fein around the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the original Sinn Fein Party is a tortured exercise in collective delusion.

“Instead of the idealism of Collins we have the destructive and corrosive effect of modern day Sinn Fein. Collins once said: ‘The real riches of the Irish nation will be the men and women of the Irish nation, the extent to which they are rich...rich in body, mind and character. What we want is the opportunity for everyone to be able to produce sufficient wealth to ensure these advantages for themselves’.

“Today’s Sinn Fein merely offers outdated and discredited policies and an approach to politics that only serves as a warning to the present generation of the risks associated with a flirtation with a Party that shares nothing but the wording of the Party founded by Griffith and none of the true Republican idealism of Collins. The continued ambiguity about FF support for Sinn Fein must be a continuing source of concern, especially among the business community.

“If today’s Sinn Fein wants to be fully accepted as an exclusively democratic Party then all links with criminality have to be severed. In addition, the Party should have no problem, if it is truly democratic, in assisting the authorities in the recovery of the proceeds of criminality wherever it has information that can help in such a process.”

Just to pay Enda Kenny back for inflicting those most noxious of his bodily fluids on us innocent passers-by, let’s maybe share a word or two about the man who really did found Fine Gael. The man who was Fine Gael’s first leader. Its real founder. Its real first leader. Eoin O’Duffy.

Fine Gael was formed in 1933 by a joining together of three like-minded groups: Cumann na nGaedheal, the National Centre Party and the National Guard. Cumann na nGaedheal we know. The National Centre Party was Frank McDermott and James Dillon and a scrum of disgruntled Farmers and Ratepayers. The National Guard was the recently

renamed Army Comrades Association; an avowedly Fascist movement better known as the Blueshirts. The blueshirted fascist leader of the National Guard was Eoin O’Duffy. His movement provided all the ideology and most of the commitment to the new party so naturally enough Eoin O’Duffy was the first leader of Fine Gael. (On 8th October the *Irish Times* carried a photograph of a saluting General O’Duffy and his lieutenants, naming amongst them Mayor Alfred O’Byrne but omitting to mention Mr. W.T. Cosgrave, as a reader subsequently pointed out. See page 9.)

This is a be-kind-to-Enda-Kenny issue of the *Irish Political Review* so we’ve sworn off embarrassing him with more than the minimum necessary about his party’s fascist origins. We’ve done that now and Enda Kenny can relax. It’s time to talk about the founder and first leader of Fine Gael: his early days in the IRA of Collins and Mulcahy; his time along the border and in Belfast, his speeches on the Truce and the Treaty in which he memorialised his border days and his time in Belfast

For reasons which are not entirely clear (perhaps to demonstrate to the recently created and opened Government and Parliament of Northern Ireland, if perhaps they didn’t already know, where all the real power bar a little of the pomp and some of the perks of it resided) the Truce, which came into force a few hours before the bonfires were lit on the eleventh night of 1921, was unexpectedly applied to the area around the bonfires. For some months the Northern divisions of the IRA were legitimised and Eoin O’Duffy was sent to Belfast as Truce Liaison Officer for Ulster, with an office in St. Mary’s Hall.

As briefly as I can summarise it, the position of the IRA in the province of Ulster at the time of the Truce was as follows. It had 8,500 volunteers organised in 5 divisions, the most effective of which was Frank Aiken’s 4th division covering Armagh, South Down and North Louth. From March 1921 until the Truce in July the 2nd Northern Division, covering County Tyrone and part of Derry, was commanded by Eoin O’Duffy. The Belfast Brigade was one of three (along with the Antrim and East Down Brigades) which comprised the 3rd Northern Division.

Enda Staunton, in *The Nationalists Of Northern Ireland, 1918-1973*, records the veteran Jack Mulvenna’s opinion of the Belfast Brigade:

“The officers in the Brigade,

McKelvey, Woods and McCorley, came from families outside Belfast. The republican tradition went back generations in some cases (McCorley’s grandfather, Roddy, was hanged in 1798 and is commemorated in a famous ballad). They played Gaelic football and many were language revivalists. Their followers were descendants of city bred men, they played soccer and were often little more than Hibernians with guns” (page 37, Staunton references his 1991 interview of Mulvenna).

Woods, who was second-in-command to Joe McKelvey (until McKelvey went South for the Army Convention of March 1922 and failed to return to face calls for his resignation in respect of a degree of incompetence, and Woods was elected OC in his place) wrote to GHQ:

“Prior to the signing of the Truce in July 1921, the percentage of the Catholic population in the division that was in sympathy with the IRA was roughly 25%. Taking into consideration the proportion of the Catholic population to the whole our support in the division would have been something less than 10% of the entire civilian population” (quoted in Staunton, *ibid*, page 37).

During the Truce 75% of the 1000-strong Belfast Brigade was unemployed; broke and demoralised. The Antrim and East Down Brigades were so poorly organised that the only Belfast ASU ever formed was sent to fight in Cavan.

Facing these five IRA divisions were over 1,000 police, some 3,000 British troops and 43,000 very well armed men of the old UVF, now formed into the Ulster Special Constabulary. When it came to a stand-up fight in the Spring and Summer of 1922, which, facing Southern politics and Northern pogroms, the Northern IRA could not avoid, it was wiped out.

Woods’ explanation of the comprehensive nature of his Division’s defeat is revealing in so many ways it just has to be quoted as fully as I have it from Staunton:

“There is a feeling among the civilian population we are not recognised by GHQ and that our orders come from the executive. Most of the priests are under the impression also and some of them in fact have said from the pulpit they will not give absolution to anyone who is a member of the secret military organisation. They have refused to hear Fianna Boys’ confessions. The people who supported us feel they have been abandoned by Dáil Éireann, that the fight was no longer a national one in common with all Ireland. They feel all the suffering is in vain and they cannot see any hope for the future. The people



who did not support us are only too glad of the opportunity of assisting the enemy and practically all over the Division police barracks are stormed with letters giving all available information against the IRA and their supporters. We have captured such letters and in most cases suggestions have been made to the police as to how best they could cope with the situation. In some cases, they regret they did not give this information years ago” (to GHQ I assume, 1st June 1922, quoted Staunton, *ibid*, page 67).

Now here is the founder and first leader of Fine Gael, Eoin O’Duffy, who had commanded the 2nd Northern Division and had been in Belfast during the Truce; this, in its entirety, is Eoin O’Duffy’s speech to the Dáil on 22nd August 1921:

“DEPUTY O’DUFFY stated that he did not agree with the statement made that Ulster wished to be left alone; England said so, but as far as they in Ulster were concerned they thought force should be used against Ulster. There were sufficient Volunteers in Belfast to hold it for Ireland. The Ulster people had very little force themselves if unaided by British armed forces. So far as Ulster was concerned they could not meet them by concession. He had dealt with them by force in Monaghan, Fermanagh and Tyrone, and those people were now silent. There was no Ulster question so far as Ulster was concerned. They realised they could not exist without the rest of Ireland.”

And here is the founder and first leader of Fine Gael speaking in the Dáil on 17th December 1921 during the Treaty Debates:

“I agree with the Minister of Defence that since the Truce there has been an improvement in the members and discipline of the men and that they are a little better in the way of equipment. We certainly have improved but we have to consider where the balance of improve-

ment lies, whether on ours or the enemy’s side, how far we can carry on with honour as regards Ulster. The Deputy for Monaghan referred to the Partition Act but certain parts of Cavan and certain parts of Donegal would come under the next boundary. We in Monaghan have been able to deal with the enemy there without very many arms. I think Comdt. McKeon will speak for Cavan and I think so far as Donegal is concerned there are several Teachta’ from it here who will speak, but I do say that taking up the five Northern divisions including County Louth of these counties—and some of the Teachta’ from those areas can contradict me if I am not correct. As regards the Six Counties we have done pretty well in the past against the Orangemen with the equipment we had but we did feel that the enemy were better equipped than we were. If they were not better equipped we would not have to fight against these people because they are cowards but we made damn good use of the material we had. As regards other parts of Ireland...”

Before the Treaty debates were concluded on January 10th 1922 O’Duffy succeeded Mulcahy as IRA Chief of Staff and remained as such until the Army split. In the reorganisation of 12th July he was, with Collins and Mulcahy, one of the War Council of Three. Which is only to say that he was at and about the head of military affairs while the Free State was (in collusion with Lynch and the anti-Treaty forces) arming the Northern IRA. At the end of all that rearming the, now 800, men of the Belfast Brigade had this not very impressive arsenal:

“...181 rifles with 11,000 rounds of ammunition, 308 service revolvers with 7,400 rounds and 5 Thompson guns with 1,220 rounds” (Staunton, *ibid*, p 66).

Which is more than they had in August ’21 when O’Duffy was boasting to the

Dáil that the IRA in Belfast had the men and the guns to seize the city and hold it for Ireland. And as for those cowardly Orangemen, I mean really!

Enda Kenny and Fine Gael are desperate to find themselves a respectable republican heritage. Like Michael MacDowell they want to pass themselves as “*real republicans*”; not thugs and hooligans like Adams and McGuinness, but republicans of prudence and rectitude who wouldn’t say boo to a bank clerk. But Enda Kenny clearly doesn’t have a grandfather of the stature of even the hero of the Boundary Commission. Their founder and original leader, the fascist buffoon O’Duffy, can’t cut the mustard as they require the mustard cut. Hence their claim on Michael Collins. But that claim is tenuous in the extreme and can really only be sustained by way of Collins’ chosen successor (who didn’t actually succeed him) and that was the fascist buffoon. Strange how vicious some circles can sometimes be!

A better way to proceed would be to damn the past to its own devices and become the real republicans of the here and now. A good beginning to that noble work would be simply to really republicanise in a most modern fashion their stance on Northern speaking rights in the Dáil. One wee speech from Enda welcoming Sinn Féin and the SDLP and looking forward to the Unionists joining them in double quick time and the past seventy-two years would be as if they had never...Eoin O’what now? Never heard of it.

On Mature Reflection I think that’s the course the *Irish Political Review* would recommend to Mr Kenny. Go on Enda, try it.

**Joe Keenan**



### General O’Duffy And Friends

This is part of a larger photograph which appeared in *The Irish Times* on 8th October.

The caption identified Mayor Alfred Byrnes, standing to the right of General O’Duffy. It did not mention Mr. W.T. Cosgrave, who was standing just behind O’Duffy on the right.

It was left to a reader (Gerry Murphy, 18th October) to point out the omission.

# Shorts

from

## *the Long Fellow*

### FREE ENTERPRISE IN IRAQ

Articles on the Aljazeera and BBC web sites (19.9.05) indicate that over 1 billion dollars has disappeared from the Iraqi defence budget. "It is possibly one of the largest thefts in history", the Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Allawi is quoted as saying.

Apparently, officials in the defence ministry, possibly with the aid of rogue elements within the US military and intelligence, have siphoned off this huge amount of money abroad by spurious arms transactions. The report says:

"...rather than purchasing state-of-the-art weaponry Iraq procured museum-piece weapons..."

"...arms purchased including armoured cars which turned out to be so poorly made that even a bullet from an elderly AK-47 machine-gun could penetrate their armour..."

"Other armoured cars reportedly leaked so much oil that they had to be abandoned..."

"A shipment of the latest MP5 American machine-guns turned out to be Egyptian copies worth a fraction of the price."

"28-year-old helicopters were purchased, despite the fact they should have been scrapped after 25 years."

Such pacifist, anti-imperialist and entrepreneurial initiatives should be actively encouraged!

### HEALTH DEBATE

An interesting debate is taking place on Mary Harney's reforms in the pages of *The Irish Times*. These reforms will have profound implications and yet opposition politicians are practically absent from the debate (there was one article from Labour's Liz McManus).

Private investors in health will make 80% plus returns on their investments (*The Irish Times*, 12.9.05). There will be an 8.5 billion cost in terms of tax write-offs for developers of private hospitals. Harney has admitted that the State will lose 145 million euros a year in revenue from private patients as a result of removing them from public hospitals (*The Irish Times*, 29.8.05). There is no accountability on costs from the National Treatment Purchase Fund, which buys treatment for public patients from private

facilities.

Why do people buy private health insurance? It is because they are worried about the public service. The poorer the public service, the greater will be the demand for private health provision. Harney, by subsidising private health, is creating a vested interest in poor public services.

### LABOUR WILL WAIT

Under Pat Rabbitte the Labour Party has gone out of its way to show that it is really no different politically from Fianna Fail or Fine Gael. Members, such as Declan Bree, who disagree with the new line, are dealt with before a "complaints committee" and the dissidents can read about the charges in *The Irish Times*.

The Fine Gael/Labour "alternative" is claiming to offer a more competent government and a new set of faces. It has made a virtue of the fact that it will not reveal its policies until just before the election. Enda Kenny, the "alternative" Taoiseach, almost did a good job saying nothing to *The Irish Times* journalist Mark Brennock, but at the end of the interview the mask slipped.

"The 'Colombia Three' should be jailed in Ireland, he says simply and if Colombia signs up to a Council of Europe Convention on this, then it can happen." So much for due process! Once Columbia signs, its sudden commitment to Human Rights will have retrospective effect! Then Kenny explains why the 'Columbia Three' should be locked up.

"The direct consequence of the 'Colombia Three' being here and giving two fingers to the Irish system is that you are now having criminal types of other categories wanting to come to Ireland on the basis that it is a safe haven and I understand there has been movement in that direction by paedophile priests" (*The Irish Times*, 10.9.05).

So, the 'Colombia Three' should be locked up (no trial necessary) to protect us from paedophile priests! This is the leader that Pat Rabbitte is betting on to get him cabinet seats.

### MORE ON DUE PROCESS

*Irish Examiner* journalist John Moher has done an excellent job in exposing the so called "anti-terrorism" treaty which Michael McDowell signed with the US Ambassador. Article Eight of this Treaty allows US officials to question directly suspects in Irish custody.

The Minister can refuse requests from the US, but if he is going to refuse all requests why sign the agreement? Once a request has been accepted, US officials

have very definite rights in relation to the Gardai.

The Irish will be required to keep confidential all information indicating that a request has been made or responded to (Article 5). So the suspect will not know who is doing the investigation.

If the suspect exercises his right of silence, "the testimony of evidence shall nonetheless be taken..." (Article 8, Paragraph 4). How can silence be "testimony of evidence" unless silence itself is considered evidence and can be used against the suspect?

### O B E

Irish journalist Aidan Hennigan received an OBE recently. The ex *Irish Press* reporter was one of the four journalists who failed to discover, or failed to report, the notorious "white nigger" letter when it was released by the British Public Records office in December, 1999.

Regular readers will know that this letter was a description by the British Ambassador of a lunch he had with *Irish Times* director Major McDowell in October 1969. The Ambassador wrote that McDowell described the then Editor of *The Irish Times*, Douglas Gageby, as a "renegade or white nigger on Northern matters" and wished *The Irish Times* be taken in hand by the British State.

Maybe Hennigan, who was working for the *Irish Examiner* in 1999, got the OBE for his attention to detail and his eye for a story.

Could the other discreet journalists: Rachel Donnelly (*The Irish Times*), Bernard Purcell (*Irish Independent*), Professor Ronan Fanning (*Sunday Independent*) be next in line for a Royal Honour?

### THE WHITE NIGGER... AGAIN

The "White Nigger" had another outing, this time in the *Village* magazine (16-22 September, 2005). He's not going to go away, you know. An article by Niall Meehan gives the details known to IPR readers: the "white nigger" letter, the "ammunition" letter etc (see *Irish Political Review*, December, 2004, available free in PDF format from the Athol Books website).

The article in the *Village* is headed *A little subversion At Irish Times*. Regular *Village* columnist and consultant Editor Conor Brady was *The Irish Times* Editor when the "white nigger" and "ammunition" letters were made available at the British Records Office in December, 1999. The article by Meehan refers to Brady's "error" last year claiming, in effect, that

the “ammunition” letter which refers to the “white nigger” letter was not discovered by *Irish Times* journalists at the time. But there has been no response as yet from Brady.

See no evil. Hear no evil. Speak no evil. Above all don't put anything on the record. Keep smiling, Conor and maybe, just maybe, it will all go away . . . eventually?!

#### A REAL EDITOR

Congratulations to Tommie Graham the Editor of *History Ireland* for facilitating the excellent debate on Peter Hart's *The IRA And Its Enemies*. However, readers of the *Irish Political Review* with a sensitive

disposition (surely a tiny minority) should avoid the September/October issue of *History Ireland*! The clinical taking apart of Hart's thesis on the Kilmichael Ambush by Meda Ryan, Dr. Andreas Boldt of NUI Maynooth and others will cause some queasiness among members of the academic establishment, who have been remarkably silent.

Referring to the *Irish Political Review* and *History Ireland*, a review of Hart's book in *Amazon.Com* contains a health warning (or cynical commercial ploy): don't buy Hart's book without also buying Meda Ryan's *Tom Barry: Freedom Fighter*, now available in paperback.

You know it makes sense!

historical matters that the anti-national lobby would prefer forgotten. But Fianna Fail is in no position to take on that lobby. It is hard to envisage a single member of the establishment, academic or political, with the possible exception of Eamonn O'Cuiv, capable of making a coherent case for 1916.

If the revived commemoration does nothing else but alert a few minds to the incongruity of celebrating an event that we dare not think about, it might do some good.

David Alvey

#### Postscript:

After this article was written an item on the *This Week* programme on RTE radio (October 30th) shed light on how the Government intends to carry off its commitment to restoring the Easter Parade. It was an interview between Gerald Barry (a journalist often favoured by Fianna Fail) and former Army Chief of Staff Mangan.

The questions as well as the answers made it clear that the parade will primarily be about acknowledging the role of the defence forces. Great emphasis was placed on the army being the *only* Oghlaigh na hEireann. Apparently the Irish Army traces its beginning to 1916.

So, Fianna Fail, and indeed the State itself, is no longer open to criticism for failing to commemorate its origins; the army is acknowledged as the living embodiment of 1916; and a potentially controversial occasion is de-politicised. A tamer commemoration cannot be envisaged. Yet the Government may not get everything its own way. Former Chief of Staff Mangan came across as an applicant at a job interview, dutifully endeavouring to say the right thing. His enthusiasm for the parade sounded forced and false. The historical origins of the State will not be so easily sanitised.

## Bertie's Easter Parade

Bertie Ahern's decision, announced at this year's Fianna Fail Ard Fheis, to revive the practice of holding a military parade every Easter in commemoration of 1916 is difficult to make sense of.

For thirty-five years there has been no official commemoration of the insurrection that led to the formation of the State. (A celebration of sorts took place in 1991 to mark the 75th anniversary but it was deliberately low key.) The parade was cancelled in 1970 by a Fianna Fail Government in the aftermath of the Arms Crisis, specifically, after the Lynch Government had capitulated to pressure from the British Ambassador regarding the import of arms to Northern nationalists.

Since that time the political landscape has been transformed. Notably the nationalist world-view that once lay at the heart of the State has collapsed. History as a school subject has been downgraded, and school children are no longer given a sympathetic understanding of the struggle for national independence as a core part of their socialisation. In international affairs, Ireland's standing as a small neutral State capable of standing up to pressure from the major powers has been discarded for a lickspittle policy of keeping in with the White House regardless of its military adventures. And, in economic affairs, since the late nineties when Bertie Ahern took office, the overriding imperative has been to follow the bidding of the purveyors of globalisation in the US and Britain.

Alongside all of this, various strands of anti-nationalist opinion have become influential. The three main daily newspapers, *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* and the *Examiner*, all share a rabid anti-republican bias. Most of the top columnists are openly critical of the tradition that gave the State its reason for existence, the tradition associated with 1916. There is even a pressure group openly campaigning for a closer political relationship with Britain.

So, having stripped the national tradition of practical meaning and opened the gates to the enemies of the national ideal, Bertie Ahern now proposes a return to nationalist piety. By all accounts the two Government parties agreed in advance of the Ard Fheis to revive the 1916 commemoration as a defensive move against the rise of Sinn Fein. The Government is tinkering with the official view of the event that inspired the founding of the State as a ploy in electoral politics!—a political stunt!

The strangest aspect of the matter is that Bertie is in earnest. The centrepiece of his office decorations is a portrait of Patrick Pearse! To the extent that he holds political beliefs, he believes in 1916!

Reviving the Easter commemoration and setting plans in train for a major celebration of the centenary in 2016, as Bertie has promised, are welcome in the sense that they may provoke debate about

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# Who Was De Valera Neutral Against?

The following article by Edward Spalton was written for the Unionist newsletter, *Hands Across The Irish Sea*, and submitted to this magazine. It appears here with a response

It is the fate of neutral countries to be called names by belligerents, especially by those with whom they have close social ties. Jan Myrdal recounts how the Germans referred to the Swedes as “*those swine in their smoking jackets*”, sitting out the war in comfort whilst the Reich fought as the champion and defender of Europe (see lecture in “European Voices” section [www.freenations.freeuk.com](http://www.freenations.freeuk.com)). Such name-calling did not preclude ‘correct’ persistent diplomacy and pressure upon neutrals for concessions which would stretch the concept of neutrality to its limits and beyond.

Sweden provided transit facilities for German forces. Such cooperation diminished as the fortunes of war swung against Germany. With its far closer relationship to Britain and its near total dependence on British goodwill for coal, petrol, the morning cup of tea and much else, it is unsurprising that the Irish Government stretched the terms of neutrality in favour of Britain, whatever the public rhetoric of the time.

The beleaguered Britain of June 1940 could not have spared the men or coastal artillery to garrison the Irish Treaty ports which Chamberlain had surrendered a couple of years before. If they had been in British hands, a German descent on Ireland would have had to be anticipated—in a re-run of the French attempts during the Napoleonic wars. It was a distraction the British Government could well do without. Whilst German respect for the Royal Navy rather than the niceties of neutrality was the deciding factor, their legation in neutral Dublin was an ideal observation and listening post at Britain’s back door. With a considerable traffic of people coming and going from mainland Britain and Belfast, the Irish facility for ‘the craic’ would surely provide attentive ears with useful information.

The Irish authorities were elaborately punctilious in their dealings with German diplomats, partly playing to the gallery of extreme republican opinion as well as to an agreeable sense of the consequence and dignity of their hard won independence, whilst ever mindful of its extreme fragility in a world at total war.

Industrial Britain needed food from Ireland but Britain was Ireland’s only possible wartime customer so the bargaining was hard and tough. Whilst Ireland had nowhere else to sell, every rasher of Irish bacon or pound of butter was one less for Britain to carry past Atlantic U boat packs. Britain needed Irish labour to build its airfields and man its war industries. But above all, there were 160,000 Irishmen who volunteered to join the forces of the Crown in the fight against Hitler. This equals an average of some 6,000 from every county of the Irish Free State. Everyone had someone they knew—relative or acquaintance, involved in the fight against Hitler.

From a small state with a population of some three and a half million, this enormous contribution of manpower to Britain’s war effort had a decidedly un-neutral aspect. Ireland’s stratagem was to ignore them totally. By a far stricter system of censorship than applied in Britain, they were simply not mentioned. Indeed, until very recently, that was still the official Irish attitude to their countrymen who fought in the foreign army of the ancient oppressor.

During the Emergency, as the war was called in Eire, every word of every newspaper, including the advertisements, had to be passed by the censors. Occasionally they were outwitted. A society columnist was able to tell his readers that a well-known figure of the Dublin scene was “*recovering from his boating accident*”. The gentleman in question had survived the sinking of the Prince of Wales and the Repulse by the Japanese!

Behind the screen of censorship, De Valera was able to make concessions which were of considerable benefit to Britain. Flying boats on anti-submarine patrol from Lough Erne in Northern Ireland were permitted to fly over neutral Donegal, thus adding some 100 miles to their effective range. British air/sea rescue crews in civilian dress were allowed to operate out of nearby western Irish ports. Flying boats which landed in Irish waters from lack of fuel or mechanical breakdown were permitted to be refuelled or repaired and sent quietly on their way. Flying boat crew who were washed ashore were

classified as “*mariners*” and, as such, repatriated under international law. Other members of the British armed forces were interned. In the heavy blitz of Belfast, De Valera sent the Dublin fire brigade north to give humanitarian assistance.

Perhaps one of the most valuable assets to the Allies was the use of the Irish flying boat base at Foynes. Over ten thousand important passengers made the trans-atlantic crossing by this route during the war. High ranking British officers were given papers showing that they were officials of the Forestry Commission or some such civilian body to preserve the veneer of neutrality.

The very successful Irish Intelligence services passed on the results of interrogations of captured German spies to their British counterparts but refused to allow British officers to participate. Whether simply influenced by the pressure of his much more powerful neighbour, or by what De Valera himself called “*a certain consideration towards England*”, the balance of Irish policy certainly favoured British interests.

Neutral states almost always come in for name-calling. In Ireland’s case, the jeering came entirely from the British and Allied side. The American wartime Ambassador, Gray, is still remembered for his hectoring attitude and public denunciations of Irish neutrality. When Germany declared war on the United States, Winston Churchill sent a telegram to De Valera, urging him to join the war—“*Now’s your chance. A nation once again!*”. Because of Churchill’s nocturnal working habits, the telegram arrived in the small hours and De Valera was roused from his sleep, fully expecting to be handed a British ultimatum.

These and all the other anxieties and slights, to which small states are subject when great powers have urgent matters on their minds, must have added up to a fair load of accumulated resentment by the time the war was drawing to a close. Perhaps this played a part in De Valera’s extraordinary public excursion to the German legation to sign the book of condolence upon Hitler’s death. There was absolutely no requirement of protocol for him to do such a thing. The ghastly story of the Nazis’ Final Solution was being made known in newsreels all over the world at the time. He must have realised that he would bring international obloquy upon himself and Ireland. So why did he do it?

It set up a very public spat with

Churchill which served to remind domestic opinion that the Allied victory was not a victory for the Irish nation, whose territory still remained partitioned. The slanging match with Churchill did him no harm at all with hard line republican opinion. One factor may have been De Valera's high personal regard for Dr. Eduard Hempel, the German minister. At the end of the war, the Allies demanded that neutral states should hand over German diplomats. Apart from the Vatican, Ireland was the only European state to refuse this request. Dr. Hempel and the small staff of the German legation remained in Ireland, having claimed political asylum. By 1948 it was obvious that the Allies were setting up a West German state which would require a diplomatic service. Dr. Hempel submitted his request for de-nazification, which had by then become a German responsibility. On 24th November 1948 Hempel sent his application to the Special Commission for the Denazification of Higher Administrative Officials in Stade. It was accompanied by glowing testimonials from leading Irish personalities, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland and from De Valera himself. This reads as follows:

"It is a pleasure for me to testify that Dr. Eduard Hempel was German minister in Ireland from 1937 to 1945. During the whole of this time I was foreign minister and prime minister. Our official positions brought Dr. Hempel and myself into frequent contact.

"Dr. Hempel always appeared to me as a man of intelligence, refined education, manners and complete honesty. Whilst he fulfilled his duty to his country with zeal, he conducted himself in conformity with the best traditions of the diplomatic service and did not act in any way as a propagandist for the National Socialist view of the world.

"His task as envoy of a belligerent state in a neutral country was especially difficult and delicate. He fulfilled it in a way to which I never had the least reason to take exception. He knew completely how to assess the position of Ireland as a neutral country and, it is my opinion, that his clear understanding of our position contributed on more than one occasion to preventing unpleasant situations from taking a dangerous turn. No representative of a democratic state could have behaved with greater insight or intelligence." (This is a retranslation of the German version of De Valera's letter, prepared for the commission, and may differ from the original in a few words.)

Hempel had become a Nazi party member in 1938 but the Commission accepted the view of Schroeder, the Head of Personnel at the German Foreign Office,

that he was "*without influence*" and "*more or less apolitical*". Schroeder recommended a denazification certificate in the second class. Along with all other Foreign Office personnel records of the Nazi era, Hempel's were destroyed by Allied action in 1943. He had not been able to send a replacement CV because there was no courier service between Dublin and Berlin. Given the evidence to hand, the Commission accepted Hempel's account and his excellent character references. He got his "*Persilschein*", as the certificate of denazification was called because it washed whiter than white. He was in category V—exonerated. Hempel could reasonably expect to resume his diplomatic career as a representative of the new democratic Germany.

Perhaps the glittering recommendations diverted the Commission from enquiring why the envoy to neutral Ireland had been awarded the War Merit Cross first and second class.

It was apparently unaware of the Interrogation Summary of the Reich Foreign Office State Secretary, Adolf Baron Steengracht von Moyland, at Nuremberg, dated 19th March 1947. In this, Hempel was not only named as "*envoy in Dublin*" but also as "*Lieutenant Colonel in the SS*" (*Obersturmbannfuhrer*). This contradicts the SS seniority lists of 30th January 1944 and 1st October 1944 where Hempel's name is absent. Steengracht's allegations about other diplomats and SS officers proved to be correct.

The SS recruited people in key positions and membership conferred considerable prestige and privilege. Correspondence going back to 1936 shows that the chief of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD—security service), SS Gruppenfuhrer Heydrich, was at pains to ensure that names of those recruited to the SD could not be traced through the SS Central Registry. With bureaucratic pedantry the Central Registry insisted that existing cards could not simply disappear. An "*ersatz*" card would have to be inserted, showing service up to the time of transfer but with no indication of the transfer. Then the original cards could be transferred. These records were kept in a separate archive which was given the name "*Ortsgruppe Braunes Haus, Sektion Berlin A*"—(local group Brown House, Section Berlin A). Personnel in charge of these records were warned of the severest consequences of a breach of security. The name was later changes to "*Ortsgruppe Braunes Haus, Gau Reichsleitung*" (Local Group Brown House, District Reich Leadership). Officers recruited directly into the SD

would never appear on the Central Registry. From 1938 to 1945, Hempel was listed in the secret section, whose records were available at the US Documentation Center, Zehlendorf. Hempel must therefore have had a special function as an SD agent, either within the Nazi party or in the Foreign Office.

A parallel can be drawn with another diplomat in this special section who combined his official mission as Consul in Glasgow with intelligence work. In May 1950 the Jewish American weekly *Aufbau* accused Hempel of having misused his diplomatic immunity in Ireland for espionage, producing evidence from German secret records. It was said that Hempel had sent cipher telegrams from Dublin via Berne to Berlin, detailing "*rewarding*" targets in Britain for bombing.

These claims were taken up by a German Centre Party MP, Reisman, as part of a general attack on rehabilitated Nazis within the Foreign Office. On 18th December 1951 Hempel was placed on the retired list eighteen months early. Whilst he got to enjoy his pension, his former colleague in Dublin, Henning Thomsen (who had joined the SS cavalry in 1933 and the Nazi party in 1937), flourished modestly and went on to become Ambassador to Iceland. His SS Central Registry record shows that he was listed in the section "Foreign Service—Abroad" until 1937 (the year he was posted to Ireland). This was an "*ersatz*" replacement card. With benefit of hindsight, it seems highly likely that his original card was transferred to the local group "*Braunes Haus, Gau Reichsleitung*". At least two of Germany's very "*correct*" diplomats in Ireland seem to have doubled as intelligence agents.

Whether De Valera was aware of this and wished to shield them from Allied interrogation and himself from unwelcome exposure is not certain. Perhaps he had held conversations with the German diplomats as to Ireland's position in event of a German invasion and occupation of England. As emissaries of Heydrich, Hempel & Thomsen would have carried far more clout than simple diplomats. The Gestapo and SD were tasked with controlling occupied Britain's civil administration. Something other than routine reports must have justified Hempel's War Merit Cross awards.

Every other German embassy or legation in neutral or occupied Europe had an officer whose task was liaison with the local police and legal authorities. These appointments were frequently

camouflaged as cultural attache. There was no such appointment in the Dublin legation but the minister and his deputy were, in all likelihood, both members of the SD which supervised police work all over Europe.

It would have been unnatural if De Valera had not considered the possibility of British defeat in 1940, but in 1945 maybe he just enjoyed taking a high moral stance alongside the Vatican and twisting the British lion's tail. Asylum for the German diplomats perhaps served a second purpose of keeping them quiet. Certainly his Government's actions during the war had been overwhelmingly favourable to Britain and the Allies.

Wartime tales of German submarines refuelling in Irish ports could hardly be true in a country which was practically destitute of petroleum products. Britain controlled the supply and was understandably niggardly with it.

Whilst he played hard for his side and never lost sight of his goal of a united independent Ireland, De Valera seems to have played his wartime innings with a pretty straight bat. Neutrality was overwhelmingly supported by the Irish people, as it prevented the reopening of the wounds of the civil war which had followed independence. Neutrality was a policy acceptable to the former combatants of the Free State and Republican sides and not unacceptable to Britain. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many who volunteered to serve in the British forces supported it for the same reason.

The long sequel was a denial of the independent Ireland for which De Valera had striven.

The formation of the post-war German Foreign Office was a triumph of continuity. By and large, the same people were running the show in 1949 as had run it up to 1945—often with the same responsibilities. The Cold War enabled Adenauer to insist that his core team of foreign policy specialists should be exempted from denazification. The examination of the rest, as we have seen, was hardly very searching. An early pledge that no former Nazi would be sent abroad as an ambassador was soon dishonoured. Some eighty former Nazis served as post-war ambassadors for the new democratic Germany.

It does not take a great deal of imagination to see how such an ideologically orientated cohort saw the proposals for the European Iron and Steel Community of 1951. It and the European

Economic Community of 1957 provided an opportunity to fashion a European polity after the model they had envisioned in the Thirties and before. As Dr. Seebohm, one of Adenauer's ministers, expressed it for home consumption in 1951, "*Will free Europe join Germany? Germany is the heart of Europe and the limbs must adjust to the heart, not the heart to the limbs*".

#### Some Sources:

*The New EU Superstate from a Swedish Perspective*—Jan Myrdal, [www.freenations.freeuk.com](http://www.freenations.freeuk.com)

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*Verschworene Gesellschaft—das Auswaertige Amt unter Adenauer—zwischen Neubeginn und Kontinuitaet*, Hans-Juergen Doescher, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1995. ISBN 3-05-002655-3

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#### On The Same Subject:

### The Propaganda That Never Sleeps

The morality of world wars is determined after the event on the basis of the military outcome. There is in the modern world no recognised source of moral authority which stands apart from the conflict and passes moral judgment on it when the shooting stops. Moral judgment is invariably given in favour of the victor, because it is the victor who delivers it.

In both its world wars of the 20th century the British State absolutely refused to consider ending the war by a settlement. A settlement would have left the morality of the war in doubt. Only total victory was a certain guarantee of moral righteousness. Britain therefore had no war aim in either war, except the unconditional surrender of the enemy to its will. By means of this approach it inaugurated the era of total war, war without restraint or conditions, totalitarian war on a scale which would compel the world to accept the outcome as the determinant of morality in the following generation.

The United States was sceptical of British moral professions during the first two years of both world wars—which, therefore, were less than World Wars in these years. This made Britain uneasy on moral grounds, even before it became desperate for American military assistance, because a major power on the wings seemed to be too much like an impartial moral arbiter. The US found it expedient to declare war on Germany in the Great War for actual motives which are unclear,

but which certainly included the consideration that a German victory would make it impossible for Britain and France to repay the immense debts they had incurred to the United States. (The Royal Navy made it impossible for Germany to get heavily into debt to the US. America was willing to trade with both sides, but Britain stopped German trade with the US.)

And, when America did enter the war, it trumped Britain's moralising.

In 1914 there were four countries at war with Germany: Russia, France, Britain, and Serbia. In 1915 Italy was induced to break a Treaty with Germany and Austria by the secret British offer that, in the event of defeat of Austria, it should have Austrian territory up to the Alps, also the Dalmation coast of Croatia and a number of islands. In 1917 Greece, which had rejected tempting offers of Turkish territory, was compelled to join the war against Germany by a British invasion and the installation of a British puppet government.

But, after the United States declared war on Germany, the anti-German alliance mushroomed. In 1918 there were more than twenty countries at war with Germany. This was not brought about by sordid deals and secret treaties, but by the influence of the United States as a presence on the American Continent. The States to the South had been broken in to the Monroe Doctrine, and they knew that it would not be good for them not to declare war on Germany.

To declare war on a state which has done you no harm, and against which you have no ambitions, might appear immoral under a system of abstract and general morality. But, in these affairs in modern times, morality is a concrete affair. To curry favour with the imminent victor by declaring war on his enemy is a moral action. And the victor has no objection to people jumping on his bandwagon. *Au contraire*. The jumpers on his bandwagon moralise his war.

There have been few in high places in the victor states who dissented from the practice of totalitarian morality in this matter. One of the few was Lord Hankey, perhaps the most influential British civil servant since Elizabethan times. He disapproved of putting enemy leaders on trial as criminals for doing things which the victors themselves did as a matter of course. He knew, for example, that the British Empire had made preparations for war on Germany long before 1914 because he had himself been in the thick of these



preparations as Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Then, during the War, he was Cabinet Secretary: he actually created the position. At the end of the War he would have liked to take the pretensions of the War propaganda in earnest by becoming Secretary of the League of Nations and making it the centre of a new departure in world affairs. But Government gave him to understand that the League was to be a facade and that the world would be ordered by the British Empire. So he remained in Downing St. as Cabinet Secretary. And a generation later he was against the “war crimes” trials at Nuremberg.

The Nuremberg Trials were a travesty of law on many grounds. There were held under laws which did not exist. They were conducted by the victors acting as judge, jury and executioner. The guilt of the accused was presumed by the Court from the outset and they were displayed as debased criminals. The defence lawyers were impeded and intimidated. Actions which were known to have been the work of the prosecuting Powers were charged against the defendants. The conduct of the prosecuting Powers, which might have served as a substitute for the law which did not exist, was ruled out of order as a basis for defence. And all military actions of the prosecuting Powers were exempted from the presumed law. This was derived from some notion of natural right, which they pretended to be instituting as the formal law of nations.

Nuremberg was a biased display of power and vengeance. But laws have often been inaugurated by vindictive acts of power. If a regular system follows from an originating act of power, there is law in the making. But nothing followed from Nuremberg. The prosecuting Powers subsequently did exactly as they pleased, regardless of the humbug which they mouthed at Nuremberg. The international law proclaimed at Nuremberg did not, as was promised, become part of the domestic law of the prosecuting Powers. Nuremberg Law could not be applied to the British in Malaya, Kenya etc; to the French in Algeria and Indochina; to the Americans in Vietnam—and, oddly enough, no occasion arose for more than 30 years in which it might conceivably have been applied to the Russians.

In 1939 there was much condemnation of the bombing of Warsaw, but it did not figure among the crimes charged against the Germans.

The situation was that the Polish armies had been defeated and Warsaw refused to

surrender, although it was surrounded and was without hope of relief. The city authorities decided on a street-by-street resistance to occupation. In effect the city declared itself a fortress and was treated accordingly.

A few years later the Americans atom-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki without having called on them to surrender, as had been done at Warsaw. They could not have surrendered, because the American Army was hundreds of miles away. They were bombed in a deliberate exercise of killing undefended civilians in order to exert pressure on the Government.

The British created a fire-storm in Dresden a few months earlier without even the the political purpose the Americans had at Hiroshima.

The point I am making is not a moral one. Morality has no real application to the kind of war inaugurated by Britain in 1914. The point is that the war for which Britain prepared in the 1930s was a bombing war, and the major British war effort lay in the bombing of cities with a view of exterminating the workers in them. The bombing of cities was therefore excluded from the category of war crimes at Nuremberg. The victors made law to suit their own methods.

The War was not called *The Emergency* in Ireland during the War. It was called the War. But it has been made a fact by the British propaganda that it was called the Emergency. I first noticed this in a book by BBC propagandist Jeremy Paxman about ten years ago. The latest instance of it occurred in BBC’s *Mastermind*, compered by John Humphreys, this August. A competitor took as his Special Subject Irish neutrality during the 2nd World War. The first question was entirely predictable: What was the War called in Ireland? I assume that, if the right answer had been given, a point would have been lost. But the competitor knew the game, so he gave the wrong answer and gained a point. The *slibhin* mentality, which was almost extinct when I was young, is undergoing a strong revival.

In between Paxman’s book and Humphrey’s quiz show, it was made an indisputable fact on the British media that the War was called The Emergency in Ireland. I even noticed a couple of years ago that Maurice Hayes said so in a book review. Hayes, one of the few Catholics to reach the top of the civil service in the North, is now retired, and is therefore old enough to know on the evidence of his own eyes and ears that it was not so. Is it

that the suggestive power of the British media has erased his own memory and that, instead of remembering, he echoes what he hears?

The British propaganda, which never sleeps, is intent on cleaning up the record of the British involvement in Ireland, and that can only be done by blackening the record of the Irish. The view of the Irish as volatile fantasists, who deny realities which irk them, and who are therefore at their best entertainers of the matter-of-fact English, but are also liable to indulge in atrocities without quite knowing what they do, is cultivated today as much as it ever was. And the story about The Emergency is the extreme example of the Irish capacity for denying reality.

I know very well that the War was called the War. I picked up the knack of reading when I was very young and I read accounts of the War in the *Cork Examiner* and the *Irish Press* during its last two or three years. And I heard it discussed. And I never saw, or heard, it called anything but the War.

I also remember the critical moment in The Emergency. That was when people who had been involved in the War of Independence twenty years earlier began to make preparations to meet a new British invasion. One of the preparatory measures was that my uncle took down the signposts in the area.

I notice that historians like to present a balanced view, in which a German threat is put on a par with the British threat, but I cannot recall that there was any actual apprehension of a German invasion. And now, having read a great deal on the subject, I would say that the popular view was well founded. A realistic estimate made in the realities of the time had grounds for seeing a British invasion as an immediate probability and a German invasion as a remote possibility—except as a counter to a British invasion, as in the case of Norway.

“The Emergency” was not an Irish name for the War. It was the name for the condition of readiness which the War made necessary in Ireland. It was a condition as close to one of armed neutrality as was possible under the severe military restrictions imposed on Ireland by the Treaty in 1922, and kept up by other means after the anti-Treaty party came to power. If the Irish State had described itself as being in the War by virtue of the Emergency measures which it adopted for the purpose of keeping out of the War, it would have merited ridicule.

Here are some samples of how the War was reported and commented on, taken at random from the *Irish Independent*:

May 11, 1940. [Main headline:] *Allies March Into Belgium.*

[Editorial:] "To the detached outsider it has appeared from the very outset of the present war that the countries now invaded have striven courageously and impartially to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality and to preserve their independence. The horrors of war may now be said to have been unloosed on Western Europe with full ferocity."

May 13, 1940. *A Toll Of War*

[Editorial:] "...not yet fully recovered from the effects of the 1914-18 war the struggle which will be still more destructive of life and property is now raging over an extensive area. The engines of war to-day are more deadly than those employed a quarter of a century ago... How are the belligerents financing the war? Great Britain is doing so both by a steep increase in taxation and by borrowing... In the pre-war years taxation in Germany was exceptionally high... No big war loan has yet been issued by Germany, although the cost of the conflict to her must be formidable."

May 16, 1940. *The Allied Lines Pierced. Germans Get Through Near Sedan.*

June 3, 1940. *Allied Troops' Great Feat At Dunkirk.*

[Editorial:] "With the first stage of the war practically ended, speculation is rife concerning the next phase. Up to the present the Germans have the initiative, and it seems more probable that the course of the war in the immediate future will be a big counter-offensive by General Weygard."

June 11, 1940. *Italy Enters The War. Fascist Invasion Of France Reported.*

[Editorial:] "...the *Irish Independent* has consistently supported Italy in her claims for fair treatment. There is no doubt that she was given a "raw deal" at Versailles, and when she endeavoured to develop a Colonial Empire, as Britain and France have done, she was met by a policy of sanctions. We held that Italy had as much right to Colonial possessions in Africa as had other great Powers, and that the enforcement of sanctions against her was not only unjust, but a high political blunder of the first magnitude, since it forced Signor Mussolini to seek the friendship of Herr Hitler and accept the German annexation of Austria, which he would otherwise undoubtedly have opposed and perhaps prevented. Italy has taken a plunge which, from the point of self-interest alone, would appear to be a mistake. Taking a long view, she must lose more than she can gain."

June 23, 1941. *Germans Invade Russia.*

[Editorial:] *The New War Phase* "Mr. Molotov proclaims that Herr Hitler must work with the fate that overtook Napoleon when he invaded Russia. War has, however, undergone a tremendous change since Napoleon's day. The present war is in technique vastly different from even the World War of 1914-18. Besides the actual army which they can now employ the Russians have immense reserves, but as war is waged to-day machines are more important than men."

June 25, 1941 [Editorial:] "The war in the East is yet in the preliminary stage, and for that reason the actual operations do not provide material for examination or comment. What is of relevance at present is the strength and quality of the opposing forces... The purges carried out by Stalin in the Army Commands had, at any rate for a time, a bad effect on the Red Army... Some of the Soviet war material—aeroplanes and tanks—are good, but not fully equal to the best German equipment."

In addition to news reports and editorial comments, the paper published a regular feature: *The War—Week By Week by Irish Independent Military Correspondent.*

I am not saying that nobody in politics or the media in Ireland ever referred to the War as The Emergency, only that I never heard or saw such a reference. If somebody comes up with such a reference I will give it the publicity it deserves. But, until somebody comes up with it, I will take presentation of it as a fact to be a concoction of the propaganda apparatus from which Hitler and Goebbels learned the propaganda business.

And, with regard to "the screen of censorship", as far as I know it screened out warmongering. If somebody has knowledge that it also suppressed information about the course of the war, I would be glad to have it, and to give it the publicity it deserves.

I don't know how the War censorship in Ireland and Britain can be compared for strictness, since what was categorically banned in Ireland was given top priority in Britain, i.e. war propaganda. In Ireland there had to be reporting without propaganda. In England there had to be propaganda, with accurate reporting as optional—and perhaps even with limits placed on it.

Back around 1960 I was surprised to find myself better informed—or at least more objectively informed—about the course of the war than English people with whom I discussed it. I suppose that was due to exclusion of propaganda from the Irish reporting. But, since nothing was

then further from my mind than that I should write history, of the War or of anything else, I took on something of the British moral/propaganda view, even though it conflicted with what I knew to be the case.

I think it was Robert Fisk's book on Ireland during the War, written while he was Northern Ireland correspondent of *The Times* (feeding on Government briefings), that provoked me into forming a view of the War based on what I knew about it. And that view could only be that the War, which Britain began on the pretext of Danzig in 1939 and worked up into a World War, was its most thoroughly bad war rather than its only good war.

In 1914 Britain entered a War with reasonable prospects of rapid success, the balance of force was so much in its favour. It fought with a will, and raised an Army of Continental proportions even before conscription. The World War was its doing, but there would have been a substantial European War even if (as it had given Germany reason to expect) it had remained neutral. But the 1939 War was all its own work. It had made itself the arbiter of European affairs in 1919 by preventing France from making a settlement which would have disabled Germany as a state, and it had brought on Germany in opposition to France, especially in the Nazi period. Then, having made Germany the dominant Power in Central Europe by conferring the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia on it in 1938, it made a military alliance with Poland against Germany, with France in tow. The only conceivable purpose of the British (and French) military guarantees to Poland in the Spring of 1939 (leaving aside *kindergarten* fantasies) was to encourage Poland to refuse to settle the only dispute remaining from the Versailles Treaty.

Poland was an ally of Nazi Germany from 1934, and took part with it in the dismantling of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Nazi-Polish friendship followed over a decade of antagonism between Weimar Germany and Poland over the Versailles border. Hitler reduced the border issue to the question of the German city of Danzig. Poland had failed entirely over twenty years to gain influence in Danzig. Early in 1939 Hitler proposed as a final settlement with Poland that the city should be transferred to the adjacent East Prussia. The British (and French) military guarantees were given at that juncture, giving the Poles the sense of belonging to the predominant power in the world and encouraging them to refuse the German

offer. The issue then was no longer between Poland and Germany but between a powerful Triple Alliance and Germany. (The Poles, after all, had defeated Soviet Russia in the 1920s.) But, when this led to war in September 1939, the Triple Alliance proved to be an illusion—a deception. Britain (and France) did not fire a shot in defence of Poland. What there was in 1939 was a German/Polish War. But, though not delivering on the guarantee to Poland, Britain (and France) used the German/Polish War as the occasion to declare war on Germany—not for the purpose of defending Poland, but for some other purpose entirely.

Having let the Polish/German War run its course, Britain (and France) then maintained a formal state of war with Germany, in which there was no action (aside from the stopping of German sea-trade by the Royal Navy, the effect of which was minimised by the German/Russian Trade Agreement of August 1939). But Britain (and France) attempted, during the Winter of 1939-40 to get into military conflict with Russia in Finland. When the Finns settled with Russia before they could do so, Britain prepared an invasion of Norway, but proceeded so laboriously that Germany extemporised an invasion of its own and got in first.

While all of this was going on the British (and French) declaration of war on Germany was kept up, but with no action by those who declared it. Then, while Britain was still licking its wounds over Norway, Germany responded to the declaration of war, disrupted the Anglo-French Armies, allowed Britain to take a great part of its Army home from Dunkirk, and made a temporary settlement with France pending a settlement with England.

Britain had eight months (September 1939-May 1940) to organise an attack on Germany following its declaration of war, and five months before that to prepare for the declaration of war, the decision to make war having been made in effect in late March 1939. It is evident from its conduct during those thirteen months that its purpose was to start a World War but not to fight it. Others were to fight it. It was intended in the first instance that those others should be the French. But the French, remembering what happened in 1918-19, were not going to fight Britain's war for a second time. When Britain took its Army home, France accepted the consequence of defeat by the State on which it had declared war, and made a settlement.

The British strategy during the

following year was, by use of the Navy, to make small interventions on the margins which provoked German counter-interventions. The important thing was to keep the war going by expanding it. And the great object was that, in this general war atmosphere, a German/Russian war would ensue. "*The worse the better*" was the guiding British maxim. The great object was gained in June 1941. The war then changed character utterly.

Britain boasts of having "*stood alone*" from June 1940 to June 1941. It stood because Germany made no real effort to knock it down. (And, because of Enigma, Churchill knew that there was no real threat of invasion, which facilitated the pose of bravado.) But, from June 1941 to May 1944, Russia fought alone in Europe while Britain engaged in displacement activity on the margins; and Russia took control of half of Europe when it had defeated Germany.

Britain set itself up as the guardian of civilisation. Nobody asked it to. It gained that position by force.

As guardian of civilisation it prevented France from dismantling the German State in 1919, even though for four years the German State had been represented in the war propaganda as the major source of Evil in the world. It maintained the German State against France, whilst humiliating it by the conditions of the Versailles Treaty. And, during the period of the Weimar democracy, it enabled it to strengthen itself, though prohibiting breaches of the Versailles conditions. But, during the period of the Nazi dictatorship, it either collaborated with Hitler in breaking the Versailles Treaty or connived at Hitler's breaches of it, e.g. militarisation of the Rhineland and the merger with Austria. In September 1938 it went far beyond Versailles by conferring on Germany a region which had never belonged to it, the Sudetenland. It seems to me that responsible action at that point would have been to get Danzig transferred to Germany in order to get that live issue of German nationalism out of the way, to declare that to be the end of the matter, and to make credible alliances with a view to stabilising the post-Versailles condition of Europe. What it actually did was utterly irresponsible.

The case against Irish neutrality in retrospect is that the relevant institutions of the Irish State—the Taoiseach's Office, the Department of External Affairs, and the Universities—did not sustain and develop in the post-war era the morality

that was implicit (and partly explicit) in its wartime position. Ireland held in 1939 a well-founded scepticism about Britain's declared purposes in launching a second World War only twenty years after its victory in its first World War of the century had made it master of the European situation and of the oceans of the world. But, in the course of the generation after 1945, the moral position which sustained it during the war gradually seeped away for want of thought. And, as its own position seeped away, the Churchillian mythology of the war seeped in to take its place—and not even the quite complex account of affairs given in Churchill's own writings, but the essentially mindless version of events distilled from his writings and actions by adherents of the Party which came to effective power in Britain during his Prime Ministership (and which he described as a potential Gestapo during the 1945 election campaign), that is, Ernie Bevin's Labour Party.

Charles James O'Donnell—a Donegal man who joined the Indian Civil Service (i.e. the British Civil Service which governed Imperial India) in the 1870s, but resigned from it after a generation of service in protest against the populist Imperialism of the Curzon era (which he saw as laying the basis for a division of India along religious lines) and tried unsuccessfully to raise the British democracy against it—subsequently wrote what I take to be the only history of the 1914 War seen from something like an Irish viewpoint. Perhaps it was only the viewpoint of Gladstonian Liberalism—or of an ideology connected with it—but since England 'moved on' from that viewpoint in 1914, it did service as an Irish viewpoint. In the course of that history, O'Donnell said that a nation was a country that knew its own history and had a foreign policy—or words to that effect: I have not the means of getting his exact words where I am writing this. It is evident today that Ireland meets neither of these tests, at least in its official institutions. And it lost both together, losing one as a by-product of the loss of the other. It was demoralised in its domestic history by its failure to sustain its foreign policy position of 1939-45 in actual thought, in the form of a history of the War which was not the British history and which therefore would necessarily have been developed in confrontation with the British history.

Ireland failed itself. But in failing itself it also failed Europe.

The way things are at the moment with regard to morality has two possible

explanations: Either there is a transcendental force of Providence whose decrees constitute morality and the British State is its agent; or morality is what suits the interests of the victors in great wars, and Britain is its constituting agent (along with its American offspring), since it has embarked on many great wars over the past three centuries and has won, or been on the winning side, in all of them. If the latter is the case—and it is the way things are working just now—morality becomes a mere expression of power. It can therefore be argued, in a thoroughly vulgar application of this principle, that Bertie Ahern acts morally when he submits to US-UK interests at every turn.

But the Irish State itself only exists because of the successful exercise of power against Britain by the Irish national movement. It had to come into existence as a power structure which stood the test of war because Britain would not relinquish control of it to mere voting. It was then its business to express morally the power through which it existed. It did this inadequately for three generations—the inadequacy being due in great part to British success in bringing about a ‘civil war’ within the national movement in the course of relinquishing direct control to the national movement. Ireland has ceased to do it at all during the past 20 years, and it has handed over control of organised intellectual life to institutions of the British State, so that the history of the establishment of the Irish State can be ‘revised’ into a history of loutish Irish ingratitude towards English goodwill. And that must be judged immoral, even by the most sceptical view of what morality is.

Ireland was uniquely placed after 1945 to constitute itself a kind of European memory bank on which the waves of the totalitarian British propaganda/morality would break. Europe itself, bombed and demoralised (France only less so than Germany), with the exception of a small

Christian Democratic core, scarcely dared to remember, or did so covertly, or it remembered a kind of fantasy scheme of what had happened. And it had no voice in the English-speaking world. Ireland might have been both its memory and its voice in the dominant and domineering language.

I wondered over many years why no serious attempt had been made in Ireland to do this. Then a couple of years ago I heard Manus O’Riordan’s remarkable attack on Desmond Fennell for dedicating his *The Revision Of European History* (Athol Books) to the memory of a British spy who was Professor of History at University College, Dublin and hatched a brood of ideologues of which Kevin Myers is the prime specimen. I did not know what to make of it at the time. But since I knew from experience that Manus did not invent facts, I searched around, and I found that Manus had only told the half of it.

I had regarded T. Desmond Williams as a History Professor of no intellectual consequence. He edited a number of collections of articles, and his own contributions to them were slight and banal.

I looked up his obituaries, and I learned from one Myers wrote for the *Irish Times* that all who came under his influence at UCD felt that they were in the presence of one of the great intellects of the mid-20th century. Their explanation of why he had published nothing of substance was that he was a perfectionist and would let go of nothing he did not consider perfect. It was expected that his executor would release the masterpieces that Myers was sure would be found in his study. But, as far as I could discover, nothing has appeared.

There was apparently nothing to support Myers’ view of him as a very great historian, but I found that Manus O’Riordan’s assertion that he was a spy was indisputable. Williams was an intellectual prodigy, educated at home by his father, who was Professor of Education at UCD. He then went to Cambridge to be finished off. This was towards the end of the war. In 1945 he was whisked away from Cambridge by the British Government, and taken to Germany to investigate the State archives which had fallen into British hands. It was necessary for this purpose that he should be sworn in to MI5. Then, in the late forties, he went straight from MI5 to the Chair of History at UCD. He was then only in his late 20s, and he squatted in the Chair for the next thirty years, impressing the students,

behaving eccentrically, and producing nothing of substance.

Bill Sharkey had told me about a group of academic layabouts into whose company he had fallen for a time when he was working on Irish manuscripts in Dublin in the 1950s. I realised that this was Williams’s coterie.

The most substantial piece of writing by Williams I had seen was a long article in *Irish Historical Studies* (an obscure journal rarely seen) on the Anglo-Polish negotiations of early 1939, in which Britain laid the groundwork for the 2nd World War. It was out of place, and was oddly inconclusive. But, when I found what Williams had been, I went back and read it again. And I also discovered, in an even more obscure publication (a report of a Conference of Irish Historians held in the late 1950s), a survey of British writing on the war since 1945. And I gathered from these two publications that Williams knew that what was being produced in Britain as histories of the war was not history at all. But he expressed himself in such a way that he concealed what he knew in the act of revealing it, while letting those in the know understand that he knew. The style could not be more different from the simple, *kindergarten*, form of his little articles on Irish history.

It seemed to me that the intellectual who was fitted to write the pathbreaking Irish history of the 2nd World War did not dare to write it. He was intimidated, or was disabled, by his own participation in that war as a high-level British spy. Anyhow, he made no attempt to write that history, except in these brief, Aesopian snatches. And he occupied the space in which it should have been written.

**Brendan Clifford**

**PS:** Desmond Fennell’s invention of the “*state-nation*” to accompany the nation state and the multi-national state should, I think, receive the attention of Occam’s razor. ■

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## **APOLOGY**

Due to pressure of space, *Irish Political Review* has to hold over a number of articles. These include:

- \* The Irish Catholic and Benedict XV. Part Four: **America And The Peace Note Of 1917** (Pat Walsh)
- \* **De Valera And Partition** (responding to last month's editorial, *A Visionary Republican* (Joe Keenan)
- \* **Barry's Column on the International Brigades AGM**

# The IRA Connections

When the Republican Movement split thirty-five years ago, the “*Official*” wing produced a pamphlet called *Fianna Fail, the IRA Connection*. This was intended to demonstrate that the “*Provisional*” wing, the Provos, were a mere creature of Fianna Fail—a reprehensible offspring of a reprehensible parent.

The pamphlet was probably the best known and most widely read publication of the time. No one interested in politics in Ireland could be unaware of its contents. (And many people outside Ireland were also made familiar with it.) Yet it had no adverse effect whatsoever on either the Provos or Fianna Fail.

But it remained at the core of “*Official*” Republican thinking—in all that movement’s various guises and incarnations—Official Sinn Fein and IRA, the Workers’ Party, the Democratic Left and, now, the leadership of the Irish Labour Party. And it has made it impossible for any of these to think rationally about or deal with the Provos and Fianna Fail.

It turned the “*Official*” movement into a marginalised rump which the British State seems to be finally getting around to destroying. It has made those who have taken over the leadership of the Labour Party incapable of seeing Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein as anything but demons. It has orientated the Party towards Fine Gael and the right of Irish politics.

One would have thought that the total ineffectiveness of *Fianna Fail, the IRA Connection* would have warned its authors that they may have got something wrong. But it did not. It was clung to like divine revelation. And it made thought about either history or politics well-nigh impossible.

The fundamental flaw in the pamphlet lay in the fact, seemingly obvious to the rest of the world, that the Provos were not a Fianna Fail creation but arose out of the events in Northern Ireland in 1969-70—events which the original Republican Movement failed to deal with.

It was not, as portrayed, a left-right split. Some of the best socialists in the movement went with the Provos. It was not about attitudes to participating in Free State institutions. Contending views on the matter continued on both sides of the split. It was about responding to a siege laid to the Catholic community in the

North, and devising a political and military response that would ensure that such a siege could never again be laid.

There was, nonetheless, a Fianna Fail/IRA connection. But, on and off, there always has been. And there was also an IRA/Fine Gael connection in 1969-70. And these connections applied to the Official IRA as well as to the Provos. And to anyone else who was at all involved at the time.

Everything in Irish politics, apart from the Unionists, comes out of the Republican Movement which fought for independence between 1916 and 1921. And in case anyone in the Irish Labour Party thinks he’s above all this, he should remember that the founder of the Labour Party was the first Commander in Chief of the Irish Republican Army, James Connolly.

The continuation of these connections is inevitable since the goals for which they all fought, and many died, remain unfinished or unresolved business.

The specific Fianna Fail - IRA connection was essential to Fianna Fail being permitted to achieve electoral power in 1932-3. Irish democracy had to be established over the barrel of a gun. The Free Staters would not have allowed it otherwise.

When the democracy was threatened by the Blue Shirts/Army Comrades Association/Fascist threat in the 30s, it was the Fianna Fail/IRA connection that saved it. (Can’t Irish Republicans be proud of the role that this alliance played in sparing Ireland from Fascism? This period is also conveniently forgotten by the make-believe anti-Fascists who have recently been attacking Eamon DeValera and Sean Russell, and know nothing about either.)

A more recent interconnection between nationalist parties concerns the military campaign in the North from 1956 to 1962, otherwise and more properly known as the Border Campaign.

After coming to power in 1932 De Valera set about constructing the kind of Irish state he wanted in the Twenty-Six Counties. This was reflected firstly in the 1937 Constitution and secondly, in practice, in the state’s genuine neutrality during World War Two. When he lost office in the late 40s his job was done. The new Coalition Government of Fine Gael,

Labour and Clann na Poblachta declared a Republic and launched the Anti-Partition League.

This was designed to achieve international recognition for the South’s claim on the North, while concealing the fact that there was a real opposition to a United Ireland in the North; that there was in existence another Irish nation which wished to remain part of the UK.

Up to this point DeValera had opposed anti-partitionism in any concrete form—beginning with the Treaty debates in 1922. The North was a complication he didn’t need in constructing his *de facto* Irish Republic in the South, his *Eire nua*. But now that this project was on auto-pilot he joined with the Anti-Partition League. And with time on his hands he travelled abroad to campaign on its behalf—most famously perhaps with his meeting with Nehru.

Behind the public campaign was work done by the Irish Civil Service. In particular by Conor Cruise O’Brien who devised detailed propaganda for use by the politicians.

Into all this, planning for a military campaign dovetailed almost perfectly. It was as though the plans laid by Michael Collins in 1922 had been postponed for about 30 years. Only this time there existed a settled democratic state in the South.

The IRA campaign was organised so as to bring international pressure on the British without causing a conflagration in the North or causing trouble or divisions in the South. Arms were to be procured by raiding British Army barracks in Armagh, Omagh and in England. The Armagh raid was successful enough to equip a battalion.

Volunteers wore proper military uniforms complete with pretty shoulder flashes. Fighting with the B-Specials was to be avoided where possible. No military activity was permitted in Belfast for fear of starting communal conflict. General Army Order No. 8, which forbade kind of conflict in the South, was rigidly enforced—to the extent of armed volunteers who crossed the Border having to surrender to unarmed Guards when they were unable to outrun them.

Recruits were new younger men, a very high percentage of them from as far away from the Border as possible, i.e. from Cork. These were considered as being more amenable to being disciplined to accept the rigid controls under which the IRA was allowed to operate. Older men from the IRA of earlier periods, who were more used to fighting Free State forces, were for the most part rejected when they

volunteered.

The Campaign opened on 12th December 1956 with spectacular raids on installations all over the Six Counties. There was one major setback in military terms: the attack on Brookborough Barracks on New Year's Day 1957. Two of the attackers, Sean South and Fergal O'Hanlon, were killed and several were wounded, including the commander.

But the funeral of Sean South showed the extent of support for the Campaign from people of all political parties throughout the Twenty-Six Counties. The cortege as it moved from the North, through Dublin, to Limerick attracted 100,000 mourners. Sean South was a mere Section Leader at Brookborough. But he was a Commandant (a Major) in the Free State Army's reserve—the FCA.

De Valera returned to power in 1957 and IRA men caught under arms in the South continued to be treated with leniency, to say the least. (De Valera was never sentimental about the IRA and had no compunction about executing them in the 30s and 40s when it suited him.) But by the end of 1958 it was clear that the campaign was going nowhere. International recognition for the Anti-Partition claim was not forthcoming. The IRA was not being treated as a legitimate army in the field and its captured members were not being treated as prisoners of war. Even the International Red Cross refused to get involved.

Pressure was being brought on the IRA to abandon the Campaign. When it refused to do so the Free State Justice Minister, Charles Haughey, introduced internment in 1959 to cut off the supply of volunteers. The Campaign was finally called off in 1962 and the prisoners were released. No talk then about decommissioning: arms were dumped for further use!

The Official Republican Movement/Workers' Party/Democratic Left/Labour Party should know all this. Most of their leaders volunteered for and saw action in the Border Campaign that was launched in the atmosphere created by the all-party Anti-Partition League. And most of them were later involved in attempting to procure arms through Southern politicians in 1969—including through wicked Fianna Failers.

Nevertheless they tried to distinguish themselves from the Provos by criticising them for trying to get arms from Fianna Fail and for carrying out military actions which they themselves carried out for two years (at least). Or do they repudiate Joe McCann and all the others?

This was (and is) a monumental exercise in self-deception that is at the very core of their ineffectual ideology.

**Conor Lynch**

## Sean Garland And Questions For Mickey McDowell

Workers' Party President, Sean Garland, aged 71, was arrested by the PSNI on 7th October in Belfast on foot of an extradition warrant issued by the US. This followed the indicting of Garland and six others in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, Washington, on 19th May 2005. The charges were Conspiracy, Counterfeiting Acts Committed Outside the United States, and Dealing in Counterfeit Obligations or Securities, and had been under investigation by a Grand Jury since 30th September 2004.

Following his arrest Garland protested his innocence and was released the following day on condition that three personal sureties of £10,000 each were lodged with the court and that he remain in Northern Ireland. The US authorities were given 65 days in which to lodge the extradition papers with the Court. And there the matter rests for now.

The first mention of Sean Garland and 'super dollars' was in coverage of a trial at Worcester Crown Court in July 2002 resulting from a joint operation between the US secret service and the British national crime squad. Three men were sentenced for distributing forged hundred dollar bills (the trio are amongst those indicted with Sean Garland on 19 May). The case was colourful with the Russian Mafia, ex-members of the KGB and the sum of \$27 million all featuring. Only 007 was missing—and North Korea, which was not mentioned during this trial. Sean Garland was reportedly referred to in Court as the "top jolly of the Official IRA". But there was no proof of involvement by Garland substantial enough to warrant any action by the British or Irish authorities. He is still not wanted for any offence here or in Britain.

North Korea first entered the story via BBC Northern Ireland's *Spotlight*, broadcast on 16th March 2004, followed by *Panorama* in June that year—the *Panorama* being little more than a rebroadcast of the *Spotlight* programme. The *Spotlight* programme was given a further airing on 11th October, following Garland's arrest. The main source for *Spotlight* was Bill Gertz, Security

Correspondent of the *Washington Times*, which is owned by Fun Myung Moon's Unification Church (the Moonies).

The *Irish Times*, on 17th October, published a story based on the 24 page Washington indictment. The indictment is not a Book of Evidence and contains allegations, but offers no supporting proof; this fact did not emerge in the *Irish Times* coverage. Nor did the *Irish Times* query some of the factual errors contained in it. For example, in the indictment it is stated that, "*Sean Garland was President of the Irish Workers' Party*". He was not; he is President of the Workers' Party of Ireland. There was an "Irish Workers' Party", but Sean Garland was never a member of it. That was the name of the communist party in the south from 1962 to 1970. (In 1970 it merged with the Communist Party of Northern Ireland to form the Communist Party of Ireland—not to be confused with the Workers' Party of Ireland). This error might seem irrelevant, but the indictment is a legal document which even a misplaced comma would normally render invalid.

The indictment is online exclusively at "[http://counterterror.typepad.com/the\\_counterterrorism\\_blog/files/USvGarlandIndictment051905.pdf](http://counterterror.typepad.com/the_counterterrorism_blog/files/USvGarlandIndictment051905.pdf)." This website is run by Andrew Cochran, Vice President of GAGE, a business consulting and government affairs firm headquartered in Washington, DC. Cochran also serves as a special adviser to the Congressional Anti-Terrorist Financing Task Force. Some indication of Cochran's politics and objectivity can be gleaned from his online reference to Ken Livingstone as a "*Terrorist Toady*".

Cochran is one of Washington's experts. Despite this, the same site, on a different page, carries the claim that the 'Super dollar' affair constitutes the "*biggest international incident regarding the IRA since the Columbian terrorist training situation*". This confused statement falsely links Garland to alleged Provisional republican connections with FARC. A generous interpretation would be that Cochran's confusion springs from the repeated references in the indictment to the "Official" IRA. However such



confusion is not what you would expect from an 'expert'. But Cochran is not unique in this: the BBC, reporting on the Worcester trial in 2002 referred to Garland as "a top IRA dissident". While this differentiates him from the Provisionals, it gives the even more distorted impression that his politics are the same as those of RIRA or CIRA.

Faced with a fog of allegations and assumptions linking North Korea, FARC, the KGB and the Russian Mafia, a US jury might be forgiven for assuming that with so much smoke there must be fire. And links between Sean Garland, the Workers' Party and North Korea are easy to demonstrate—because they were quite open. North Korean delegates were frequent guests at Workers' Party conferences in the 1990s. The fact that these links do not prove the allegations might be lost on a US jury presented with easily demonstrable links to a state which Bush has labelled part of the 'Axis of Evil'.

Despite Garland's frequent trips to Belfast, including a fairly well-advertised Billy McMillen commemoration at which he was flagged as speaker, he was not arrested until 7th October. That was the opening day of the Workers' Party's 2005 Ard Fheis. Political damage to the Workers' Party as a result of this timing was inevitable and probably intentional. Why wasn't Garland arrested on one of his many trips to Belfast in the five months previously? Garland is an Irish citizen who is not wanted for any crime in Ireland or the UK. He is on conditional release pending possible extradition to the US under the 2003 Extradition Act (legislation which requires a higher burden of proof for the extradition of US citizens to the UK than for the extradition of UK or other citizens to the US). There is obviously insufficient evidence to prosecute Garland for anything in Ireland or Britain, so how can there be enough evidence for his extradition? Does Dublin believe that Sean Garland, a self-confessed communist and critic of US foreign policy, will get a fair trial in the US?

Mickey McDowell, the Republic's Justice Minister, does not want to discuss it. When it was raised in the Dáil on 20th October he simply left the Dáil chamber. McDowell usually enjoys being outspoken, why so reticent now?

Sean Swan

(For further information, see "www.seangarland.org")

## Ahern's Modest Proposal

I hope the articles in last month's *Irish Political Review* concerning Dáil rights for Northern representatives made at least three things clear to IPR readers. First, that the commitment on speaking rights given by Bertie Ahern was not a matter of secret deals in smoke-filled rooms but was given in Dáil Éireann itself, in a debate on 13th May, 2003. Second, that the commitment was specifically in respect of the recommendation of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution. And third, that the All-Party Committee recommended:

"...a limited right of audience within the Dáil. This would not require a constitutional amendment, and might technically be effected through the Dáil periodically forming itself into a Committee of the Whole House for the purposes of selected debates, most obviously for instance on Northern Ireland matters and on the operation of the Good Friday Agreement. The frequency and organisation of such debates could easily be altered as no constitutional amendment is required over time, in the light of experience."

Very little of that information has filtered through to the National Press of Ireland. But then highly-paid journalists, historians and political commentators have a duty to maintain active social lives and safeguard who-knows-what high levels of employment in the entertainment industry. They can't be expected to do that **and** read accounts of Dáil proceedings or relinquish the price of almost half a pint for the small circulation magazine that does read such accounts and does actually bother to report them.

Anyway, when Bertie Ahern wrote on Wednesday 26th October, to the leaders of all the parties, North and South, that had an interest in the matter, proposing no more than that the recommendation of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution should at last be implemented, the degree of journalistic and editorial ignorance of basic facts was...well, frankly, it was just about what all well informed people would expect.

The journalists all noted that of all the parties written to, only Sinn Féin and the SDLP were in favour of the proposal. The Official Unionists and Democratic Unionist Party were not in favour of the

proposal. Fine Gael, Labour and the wee PDs were also not in favour of the proposal. No paper to my knowledge pointed out that Fine Gael had 2 TDs and 1 Senator on the All-Party Committee, or that Labour also had 2 TDs and 1 Senator on the Committee, or that even the wee PDs had 1 Senator on the committee (Fianna Fáil had 4 TDs and 1 Senator on the Committee and Sinn Féin wasn't represented at all on the Committee, which is perhaps the most interesting fact about it).

No paper to my knowledge mentioned the debate which was held in Dáil Éireann on 27th May 2003, which is of some considerable interest in the context of Fine Gael, Labour and the wee PDs failing to come out in favour of a modest proposal which only sought to implement the recommendation of a high powered committee on which they were all represented (and even more important on which Sinn Féin wasn't represented).

That debate was on a Sinn Féin motion which I simply don't understand, which was introduced by Aengus Ó Snodaigh and reads:

*Go ndéanann Dáil Éireann:*

– *ag athdhearbhú di a tacaíocht le Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta ar aontaigh muintir na hÉireann leis i reifrinn;*

– *ag aithint di an dul chun cinn polaitiúil mar thoradh ar phróiseas na síochána agus ar an gComhaontú, atá le leas mhuintir uile na hÉireann;*

– *ag cur a buíochais in iúl as an obair atá déanta agus glactha chucu ag na hinstiúidí uile-Éireann;*

– *ag aithint di go bhfuil comhdhualgais agus dualgais chomhionanna ar Rialtas na hÉireann agus ar Rialtas na Breataine i leith cur i bhfeidhm iomlán an Chomhaontaithe a chinntiú, mar atá sainordaithe ag an bpobal;*

– *ag cuimhneamh di ar an dul chun cinn atá déanta i gcainteanna a raibh athbhunú na n-institiúidí mar aidhm leo;*

– *cáineadh ar chinneadh rialtas na Breataine chun toghcháin an Tionóil, a bhí le bheith ann ar 29 Bealtaine 2003, a chur ar ceal;*

– *a éileamh ar rialtas na Breataine: –na hinstiúidí polaitiúla a bunaíodh faoin gComhaontú a athbhunú;*

– *dáta roimh dheireadh mhí Mheithimh 2003 a shocrú do thoghcháin an Tionóil;*

– *a áitiú ar Rialtas na hÉireann:*

– ionadaíocht sa Dáil a shocrú do shaoránaigh sna Sé Chontae; agus  
 – polasáithe agus straitéisí uile-Éireannach a chur chun cinn ar fud an éimse dualgas Rialtais, ó aithnítear na bunáistí do mhuintir uile na hÉireann a bhaineann le seoladh cúrsaí poiblí ar bhonn uile-oileáin. Tá mé ag roinnt ama leis an Teachta Arthur Morgan, a gheobhaidh cúig nóiméad, an Teachta Ferris, a gheobhaidh cúig nóiméad, an Teachta Healy, a gheobhaidh seacht nóiméad go leith, an Teachta Finian McGrath, a gheobhaidh seacht nóiméad go leith, agus is é an duine deireannach ná an Teachta Boyle, a gheobhaidh cúig nóiméad. Tá súil agam go bhfuil sé sin ceart go leor.

By the look of it only part of that is the motion (in recent years this magazine has been almost taken over by Gaelgoeri, so I'll keep my opinion of the incredible stupidity of conducting current politics in a dead language to myself). Anyway a later speaker, a TD called Healy was kind enough to point to:

“...the section that urges the Irish Government to provide for representation in the Dáil for citizens of the Six Counties. That is something they should have. They are Irish citizens and, if they elect people to represent them in the Six Counties, they should have an opportunity to represent the views of their constituents in this House and in Seanad Éireann. I support this part of the motion.”

Thanks to Mr. Healy I know what the final part of Brian Cowen's amendment of that motion (the amendment is in English, the motion is in Gaelic, which is simply ludicrous) is getting at. Here is the tail end of a long amendment which—

“...notes the recommendations of the Oireachtas All-Party Committee on the Constitution with regard to Northern representation in the Oireachtas, and agrees that these recommendations should be taken forward through consultation with all political parties represented in the Dáil and Seanad.”

An amendment tabled by Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny did not mention the issue of Dáil rights. Another amendment, moved by Liz McManus on behalf of the Labour Party when the debate resumed on 28th May, also failed to mention the issue of Dáil rights. But Ms McManus, who had been a member of the All-Party Committee which recommended that Northern representatives should attend and speak at the Dáil on special occasions when it formed itself into a “Committee of the whole House”, raised the matter in her speech:

“Turning to the motion tabled by Sinn Féin, I recognise that the issue of northern

parties achieving representation in the Oireachtas periodically arises in the House. Efforts have been under way to review the situation since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement five years ago, recognising the new context it created for political structures throughout Ireland. It is the Labour Party's view that the relationship and interaction between elected representatives in the North and in the Oireachtas should only be considered alongside full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. In the present context, such consideration serves only to distract us from the main issue of re-establishing the institutions created under the Agreement and using them as templates for future political structures North and South. This does not mean that accommodating elected representatives in the North in some fashion is out of the question. The terms in which Sinn Féin has chosen to present the issue in this debate do not recognise the efforts made through the All-Party Committee on the Constitution, of which I was a member. We held hearings and heard from a number of political parties, including Sinn Féin and the SDLP, which presented cases to the committee. This was a recognition that a new kind of relationship should be explored and considered by the committee. Recommendations were published and presented to the previous Government after consideration of the issues was completed.

“I can recall the discussions in the committee very clearly. There was cross-party agreement that the fact that cross-community representation was a significant factor should be recognised. We could not disregard the fact that the mandate that exists in Northern Ireland does not belong to any one community, but is instead a cross-community mandate. We had to take that factor into account in our deliberations about any proposals we were bringing forward. The Seanad is revisiting the issue of Oireachtas representation for northern politicians. I welcome the Seanad's explicit efforts, as part of its internal review, to explore ways of accommodating representation for people in the North. I anticipate that a way of resolving the matter will be found that is to the satisfaction of parties in the Oireachtas and in Northern Ireland.”

Please, let it be noted for the record that in the Dáil on 28th May 2003 Ms McManus, moving an amendment on behalf of the Labour Party, endorsed the recommendation of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution of which she had been a member. If only Stickies could stick to such things! (But the only guns they've ever stuck to are the ones they used to kill all round them in their gory glory days.)

In the event, the Fine Gael and Labour

amendments were not voted on. The motion as amended by the Government was put to the vote and carried overwhelmingly, with only the Sinn Féin deputies and a few others voting against. Just before the vote Sinn Féin's Dáil leader, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, had this to say:

“We regret that our MPs, or Deputies, from constituencies north of the Border, are unable at this point to join us in this important debate on the floor of the Chamber. It is something we have pursued actively and we welcome the stated intent of the Taoiseach to have this matter expedited and addressed in the autumn session.

“While regretting that our colleague MPs are unable to join us this evening, I want to make it abundantly clear that we also regret the fact that all 18 MPs for the northern constituencies are unable to be with us here today. I want to put on record that we look forward to the day when all 18 MPs will have the opportunity to represent their particular analysis and outlook in a debate on this issue or on related matters. I hope and expect that day is approaching, which is something I hope to be here to welcome.

“It is important to acknowledge at this juncture the Government's agreement in its amendment to our motion that the issue of northern representation in the Oireachtas should be taken forward by agreement in both the Dáil and Seanad and that that should happen before the end of this session.”

Fine Gael and Labour and the wee PDs, who had been represented on the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution, voted for a Government amendment which endorsed the recommendation of that Committee. Not one of those who voted for the Government made the little effort it would have taken to disown the reference to the Committee. Liz McManus of the Labour Party went out of her way to commend the Committee, its efforts and its recommendation.

But none of the papers, their journalists, historians and political commentators, mentioned any of that. So none of them were in a position to mention (as if they would have anyway) the incredible hypocrisy of Fine Gael, the Labour Party and the wee PDs in all of a sudden all of them rejecting a proposal in whose development they have all been so closely involved. Hypocrites one and all!

So what did they find to write about, those heroes of the third estate, so full of . . . well, just so full?

The *Irish News* (28 October, 2005) noted that all sorts had rejected a proposal which involved a committee and reported that Dermot Nesbitt was outraged. It didn't go into any kind of detail.

An editorial in *The Irish Times* (29 October, 2005) returned to the old canard that “A commitment to provide access to the Oireachtas for Sinn Féin MPs was extracted from the Taoiseach during arms decommissioning negotiations last year...” Incredibly, it claimed that the All-Party Committee on the Constitution

“...found the Dáil should consider granting a right of audience to MPs on specific Northern issues, on a cross-community basis. But it worried about the impact this might have on unionist support for the Belfast Agreement and it favoured, instead, the development of a North-South parliamentary forum or the system under which Northern representatives are appointed to the Seanad by the Taoiseach”.

Last month we quoted the whole of the Committee’s recommendation. Perhaps we should do so again this month. I’ll leave that to the editor. Suffice it to say it is comprehensively misrepresented here.

Brendan O’Connor on the front page of the *Sunday Independent* (30 October 2005) took the issue into a grotesque fairytale of imagined outrage, with not a word of truth, or a hint of integrity about it:

“The story so far went like this: Pat Doherty of Sinn Féin/IRA announced in August that Northern MPs would be allowed to address the Dail. And naturally everyone was livid.

“In fairness, people felt, we didn’t really want the representatives of a neighbouring state participating in our Government, a government of which they don’t even accept the legitimacy. So Gerry Adams backs it up.

“Says that Bertie told him in a secret meeting that Sinn Féin MPs could speak in the Dáil, on any issue. And we start wondering then what the hell else Bertie and Gerry cooked up alone.

“The two of them there in secret, with Bertie, the great deal-maker, promising anything at all that would keep Gerry happy.

“Then Bertie says that no actually, he never said that MPs could speak in the Dáil. Because it’s clear that people aren’t into the idea.”

And so on, and so on. *Ad nauseam*. And so on. The Dáil record speaks for itself and we have repeated the relevant sections of the record time and again. But never mind all that. Brendan O’Connor knows what he knows and no boring recital of dull facts is going to constitutionalise him out of his delerium. Well, its his delerium and he’s welcome to it. The real world has its own rhythms in which its motions continue regardless. So, rock on.

Brian Feeney (in the *Irish News* on 2 November) is the only commentator I’ve seen who knew the simple basics of that

whereof he spoke. He was mistaken in his conclusions but he came to those conclusions by way of the facts of the matter.

“Why did Bertie propose it in the first place?

“Yes, you can say he’s responding to a long-standing demand from Sinn Féin and also to proposals for reforming Dáil representation that have been in the offing for years. True, but Bertie knows better than to rush in with a proposal he must have known would be rejected.

“So why did he do it?

“Politics folks, politics.

“Now no one can say Fianna Fáil did nothing to make the Dáil a truly national chamber. He can always turn to SF and tell them he did try to make speaking rights for northerners a reality but that wasn’t his main reason.

“In the run up to the next election in the Republic, probably in 2007, the taoiseach can wrap the green flag round him and point to those parties which frustrated plans to include northerners in any shape or form in the Dáil.

“Fine Gael and Labour walked straight into it exposing themselves as partisanist to their core...

“...Quite obviously he didn’t want last week’s proposal to work any more than the parties which summarily rejected it. But Bertie walks away with the credit. A classic stroke.”

Brian Feeney missed the point of his own point. The next Southern election is going to turn on Partition. But not in the old nationalist sense of a torrent of empty anti-partitionist rhetoric that just gets old republicans drunk and young republicans killed. The next election will turn on Partition as the crux of a new national politics that will cross the border with a smile in its eyes and a song in its heart, asking what all the fuss is about. It’s the post-nationalism revisionists have nightmares about.

Ahern’s modest proposal, and it is a modest proposal with no constitutional ramifications, is the bottom line of that national politics. He can no more go back on it and win the next election than he can win the next Eurovision Song Contest with himself and Michael McDowell singing *A Bicycle Built For Two*.

And finally, Bertie has rejected the idea of Fianna Fáil organising along the lines of that new national politics by fighting elections across the border, on the extraordinary grounds that he doesn’t want to split the northern nationalist vote which is united between Sinn Féin, the SDLP and some odds and sods on councils here and there. That leaves Fianna Fáil only one way back into government ever, COALITION WITH SINN FÉIN. The modest proposal is at least a starting point for those negotiations.

Joe Keenan

# BARRY'S COLUMN

## TOM BARRY

The paperback extended edition of Mesa Ryan’s book, *Tom Barry—IRA Freedom Fighter*, was launched to a full house in the Teachers’ Club, Dublin, on October 14th. The occasion was organised and chaired by Niall Meehan who ironically thanked Professor Peter Hart for helping to cause a much needed debate on the direction that the writing of Irish history has taken in recent years.

Hart is at the cutting edge of the historical revisionism of the kind represented by professor Roy Foster. He is so far ahead of the pack that if he is sometimes felt to be an embarrassment, he can be cut loose from the rest. Being a Canadian facilitates this.

Revisionism sees the major events which led to the creation of the Irish State as unnecessary. And because they were unnecessary they were therefore wanton acts of violence, and the individuals involved ranged from the misguided to the downright murderous. This was, and is, the British perspective on Irish history. Revisionism is about replacing an Irish history of Ireland with a British history of Ireland.

Another and more insidious aspect of revisionism is its attack on history as a story. As a description and analysis of people and events being a consequence of what went before and having an effect on what comes later. (An example would be the teaching in schools about “*the Nazis*” as a unique evil. As something for which no one but the German Nazis themselves is to blame. Another would be the notion that the “*famines*” in Ireland in the 1840s or in Niger today are caused by crop failures or bad weather.)

Prof. Ruan O’Donnell of Limerick University, who introduced the launch, said that proper history implied the necessity of chronologies and the possibility for everyone to access these chronologies. He wondered why Mesa Ryan’s *story* of Tom Barry was attacked rather than ignored. Barry was known. He lived on long after the events of 1919-23. And while being able when necessary to come to terms with former foes, he never felt the need to excuse what he’d done, never mind apologise for it. And he made periodic interventions on behalf of Republicanism throughout his life when he believed circumstances called for this.

Mesa Ryan, in her talk, catalogued many of these interventions. These included his beatings by the guards in the Beresford Square “*riots*” in 1937 alongside Frank Ryan, when Ryan was on leave from the war in Spain. She included Barry’s disputes with Ryan before this and with Mick O’Riordan later.

These stories were apposite as the book launch was attended by Mick O’Riordan, Bob Doyle, Jack Edwards and Jack Jones, all comrades of Frank Ryan’s in the Fifteenth International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War.

Of great importance in the revised edition of Mesa Ryan’s book is her dealing with Peter Hart’s attacks on Tom Barry over the fight at Kilmichael in 1920. In *Guerilla Days In Ireland*,

Barry stated that the Auxiliaries made a mock surrender and then killed two of his men when they stood up to take that surrender. and that that was why he gave the order to “fight to the finish”. Hart says that there was no false surrender and that Barry butchered a defenceless enemy.

Hart says his source, who he refuses to name, was a volunteer who fought at Kilmichael. Meda Ryan shows that Hart could not have interviewed a Kilmichael veteran when he says he did as they were all dead!

This matter is not just important for Tom Barry’s reputation, but also for the reputation of the whole IRA during the Black-and-Tan War. That war was almost unique in warfare for the gallantry with which it was fought. The IRA treated its prisoners impeccably, while the British tortured, shot and hanged their prisoners.

There was probably another reason for the revisionists coming into the open to attack Meda Ryan. They had for some years been the only history game in town. But then they came under very effective attack at every turn from people outside of academia most of whom seemed to them to have Cork accents. Though at the time there was no connection between their tormentors and Meda Ryan, they saw her as coming from the same stable (or cow-shed). There is a connection now.

## FATHER REID

The *Irish Times* got into a very confused lather over Father Alec Reid’s depiction of the Unionist treatment of Catholics over the years as being “in the same category as Nazis”. It says that such a claim is “as outrageous as it is untrue”. Really? The paper goes on to state that we must nevertheless be able to:

“articulate—in appropriate language—what 53 years of unfettered unionist rule in Northern Ireland was like for the minority population... There was institutionalised sectarianism and rampant discrimination in employment, education, housing, policing and politics” (Emphasis IT)

Is this not a fair description of the position of the Jews in Nazi Germany? There was later the deportation and extermination, of course. But these occurred in the context of the War in the East. Who is to say what would have happened if West Belfast had been over-run in 1969? There were already refugees heading for the South. And is there any reason to believe that masses of Catholics would not have been deported? And what would have happened if there had been no Free State to take them in?

*Fr. Reid’s Remarks ‘Not Advisable, Says Ahern*, was the *Irish Times* headline the next day. True, but not true. Ahern, as well as generally praising Reid, emphasised the provocation offered to the priest at the public meeting where the remarks were made. He explained how it was natural, if not politic, to lash out under such provocation, and made it clear that he would probably have done the same himself.

And Reid was provoked. Willie Frazer from the Protestant victims’ organisation went after him relentlessly as a priest and as a Catholic. Nothing would have satisfied Frazer other than Reid apologising for both and for the temerity of his community in rebelling against Unionist misrule. (A problem with attacking Reid is that everyone knows that what he definitely is not is a Republican, of any variety. In fact, he thinks 1916 was a mistake.)

Victims’ groups (for want of a better term)

## Letter To Editor

# Japan & Pearl Harbour

I write in response to “Atom Bombs on Japan” by Ted O’Sullivan (*Irish Political Review* October 2005, p3), and in particular his comment, “*The Japanese {people? RB} served mainly as pawns in a wider game*”.

The Japanese ‘government’ was certainly coaxed by the US into attacking Pearl Harbour, but could not be described as being a mere pawn or innocent in international affairs. More accurately it was a player and was perceived as a competitor to US interests. Internet <http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/japanese.html> (as of 18-Oct-2005) has a timeline that includes the following entries in the 50 year period before Pearl Harbor:

“1894: Japan invades China (first sino-japanese war). 1895: Japan defeats China and China is forced to cede Taiwan and recognize Japanese sovereignty over Korea. 1902: Japan signs the London treaty with Britain that recognizes Japan’s rights in Korea and Britain’s rights in China. 1904: Japan attacks Russia in Manchuria, destroying the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, and invades Korea. 1905: at the battle of Mukden between Japan and Russia over 100,000 soldiers die. 1905: in the naval Battle of the Tsushima Straits, Japan destroys the Russian fleet. 1905: Russia withdraws from Manchuria, loses Sakhalin, and recognizes a Japanese protectorate over Korea (treaty of Portsmouth), the first time that a non-European country defeats a European power. 1910: Japan annexes Korea and thereby terminates the Choson dynasty. 1914: World War I breaks out in the Balkans, pitting Britain, France, Italy, Russia, Serbia, USA and Japan against Austria, Germany and Turkey. 1931: Japan invades Manchuria and creates the puppet state of Manchukuo. 1932: the Japanese army institutes the first “comfort houses” during the battle of Shanghai. 1933: following the condemnation of Japan’s occupation of Manchuria, Japan Leaves the League of Nations. 1936: Germany and Japan sign the Anti-Comintern Pact (de facto, an anti-Soviet pact). 1937: Japan invades China and captures Nanking (350,000 Chinese are killed and 100,000 women are raped during the “rape of Nanking”). 1938: Japan opens the first wartime facility for “sexual comfort” in Nanjing. 1939: Japan establishes the “Unit 731” research laboratory for biological warfare in Harbin, China, and tests biological weapons on war prisoners (10,000 die). 1940: Italy, Germany and Japan sign the pact of the “axis”. 1940: Japan occupies French Indochina (Vietnam) with approval by France (Vichy government) and announces the intention of creating a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere”. 1940: Japan bombs the Chinese city of Ningbo with fleas carrying the bubonic plague. 1941: Japan attacks the USA fleet at Pearl Harbor.”

The 1940 occupation of French Indochina was the US excuse for an embargo on steel, scrap metal, and oil. Internet [http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=25637](http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=25637) (as of 18-Oct-2005) has Patrick Buchanan writing that FDR did not intend an ‘oil’ embargo, but was manoeuvred into it by State Department lawyer Dean Acheson. Buchanan also writes:

“If Japan withdrew from southern Indochina, the United States would partially lift the oil embargo. But Chiang Kai-shek became “hysterical”, and his American adviser, one Owen Lattimore, intervened to abort the proposal. Facing a choice between death of the empire or fighting for its life, Japan decided to seize the oil fields of the Indies. And the only force capable of interfering was the U.S. fleet that FDR had conveniently moved from San Diego out to Honolulu.”

The conflict between Japan and the US was a conflict between one imperial power and another. It is unlikely that Japan would have hesitated in using atomic bombs on the US if it could have done so.

The US used atomic bombs against Japan in a situation where it knew that Japan was seriously considering surrender, and it used them against Japanese civilian targets.

**Robert Burrage**

exist in both communities and are very political entities. On the Catholic side politics is ingrained and disciplined, so it is with the “victims’ groups”: Bloody Sunday, the Finnucane and Nelson campaigns, etc. On the Protestant side, where politics is looked down on and is therefore undisciplined, these groups can behave like a bunch of football hooligans. This reflects the way that most of Unionist politics is carried on. And the situation gets worse as time goes on—as we saw in the recent parades riots.

We pioneered the idea, 35 years ago, that there were two nations in Ireland, and that any resolution of the problems in the North had to take that fact into account. In other contexts we have had occasion to quote Patrick Pearse’s description of the Irish people in the 19th century as a mob realising itself as a nation. The Ulster Protestant community is giving the ever increasing impression of a

nation realising itself into a mob.

Fr. Reid’s outburst was about the best thing that’s happened in Ulster politics in recent times. It has penetrated the make-believe world being constructed by the British and Irish media. (And the politics of codes and cyphers being engaged in by almost everyone.)

We are presented with a potential idyll being thwarted by wicked men on both sides, though mostly on one side. We are to ignore the real world of Northern Ireland with its two communities polarised more than ever. (The difference now is that the Catholics are no longer the underdogs.) This situation suits the British establishment perfectly well so long as it can keep outbreaks of violence to ‘acceptable levels’. There are no votes in Northern Ireland.

Father Reid has helped to mess things up. He has got people talking about cause and effect. And that may lead to solutions beyond (relatively) peaceful co-existence. ■

## Partnership? continued

*Union of Ireland general secretary, Bobby Carrick said seafarers had been fighting displacement of crews by Irish Ferries for over a year and would continue to do so* (Irish Examiner-4.11.2005).

The *Irish Independent* and its Chairman, Sir A.J.F. O'Reilly are ardent backers of globalisation and EU Services Directive, which is one of the reasons people have heard so little of it in the news media. Journalists in Ireland, like their counterparts in the UK have minds that are so addled by Free Market ideology that they are incapable of seeing, never mind reporting, on anything that affects the lives of ordinary people.

At the Dublin rally on November 3, 2005, Jack O'Connor warned that the proposed **EU Services Directive** would allow jobs displacement to spread far wider than Irish Ferries.

"It's about time that we asserted a few principles and the first of them is that whether a worker is from Dublin or Cork or Mullingar or Warsaw or Vilnius or Cyprus or from anywhere else in the world, we're here to assert that, here in Ireland, they have a right to be treated with courtesy and dignity and respect," said Jack O'Connor.

Yes, Jack, the Irish rate and conditions for the job! Nothing less! The same way Irish Emigrants in Britain, the U.S., Canada and Australia were treated—as equals.

### The Bolkestein Directive

In the March, 2005, issue of *Irish Political Review*, we gave the background to the EU Service Directive:

"The *Bolkestein Directive* is a directive liberalising services, including employment services, throughout the EU. The way it works is that a factory owner in Ireland, for example, can decide to use, for example, a Latvian employment agency to supply him with labour services (factory workers).

"The Directive will make it almost impossible to apply Irish employment laws, pay, and conditions to workers registered with the Latvian company. The aim of the Directive is to reduce administrative 'obstacles' (such as employment inspections) to services across the European Union. It also enshrines the principle that the laws applying to the service will be determined by the 'country of origin' of the company supplying the service. There is a derogation of this principle for employees working in a different country to the country of origin of their company. However, this looks like a 'fig leaf'. The inspectors in the above example can be from the country of origin (i.e. Latvia). Will Latvian inspectors apply Irish law rigorously?

"But even this 'fig leaf' may be

discarded if the EU Constitution becomes law. This Constitution enshrines Free Market principles and is likely to declare any 'obstacle' to the free market unconstitutional.

"This means that a company in Ireland can use an agency in a country with inferior wages and conditions to import workers. These workers will be subject not to Irish law, but to the law of the country in which the Agency is based. Under the new dispensation it would be advantageous to an Irish company to use imported workers, who will not have Irish entitlements in terms of wages and conditions. Indeed, once the idea catches on, companies may be forced to import such workers in order to remain 'competitive'.

"Understandably, many Trade Unionists in Europe and others are going berserk over this. They see this, rightly, as a way of undermining social protection and leading to higher unemployment in 'old' Europe. The UK, of course, is in favour, therefore no doubt so are the Irish establishment. Chirac is against, but most believe that he will change his mind after the French referendum on the EU Constitution. There is little said about it in Ireland and this is undoubtedly because of the looming referendum on the EU Constitution.

"The Bolkestein Directive is an attempt to change Europe in the Anglo-American direction—one that at present seems quite acceptable to the 'New Europe'—the new accession countries. At the moment this block is pro-USA in economics and foreign policy." (Irish Political Review, March, 2005).

How many times has Eamonn Rothwell, the Chief Exec. of Irish Ferries read that Directive? Yes, the European Constitutional referendum was defeated in France, which seriously altered the game plan. Had it succeeded and a referendum was held in Ireland, would not the Labour Party, the ICTU and even, SIPTU have campaigned in its favour—of course they would. But along comes Irish Ferries!

At the SIPTU Conference in Cork on 3rd October 2005, a motion calling for SIPTU to oppose the proposed EU Constitution was defeated by a 4-1 majority. Surely here was an opportunity to show some leadership and resolution by clearly voting against a Constitution which at present espouses stark Free Market values. It wouldn't necessarily mean that SIPTU was opposed to a Constitution *per se* but that they would only support a Constitution which advocated genuine social values.

It may have been a case of opposing the singer, Kieran Allen, and not the song but in times like these we should be sending out a clear message to Ahern and McCreevy!

### The Sins Of The Father

On 1st March 1996, the German Government introduced a new law on minimum wages and training standards for building workers in that country. The new law meant all employers engaged in construction work in Germany had to pay the same rates to Immigrant workers as to their German counterparts.

"It was thus unfortunate to read in the *Irish Times* on March 1, 1996, that a prominent member of the ICTU Executive declared that the decision by the German government was not 'in the best interests of the Irish worker.'

"The ICTU Executive member admitted: "...the system had been used to employ cheap labour and, while Irish workers may not have been happy with it, they had been forced to accept. Many Irish workers had moved to Germany from Britain because of the building slump there."

"Only last year, Eithne FitzGerald, Minister of Enterprise & Employment joined the British Tories and IBEC to oppose and defeat a directive by the EU Social Affairs Council which would have given Irish construction workers posted abroad in the EU the same wages, rights and conditions as workers in the host countries, Germany and Holland, etc." (*Labour Comment*, 9.3.1996).

How the past comes back to haunt us!

### At The Crossroads

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

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

If trade unionists cannot grasp this, we'll quote the US magazine *Newsweek* which gave its prescription to Ireland's 'ills':

"Prosperity has come at the cost of delaying confrontation with some powerful vested interests, whether businessmen or union leaders," the magazine says.

"A dose of British-style privatisation and swifter deregulation may be needed to add zest to the domestic economy." (Irish Independent, 28.10.2005).

If in the so-called 'good times' we cannot stand our social and economic ground, God help us when the hard times arrive.

**P.S.**—As we go to press (7.11.2005), Strike action by postal workers, which began this morning, is likely to be called off by this afternoon after An Post agreed to an independent review of its costs.

## Partnership? continued

couldn't get rid of them fast enough.

Perhaps the events in Paris for the past week might require them to re-think!

But failing to reproduce ourselves, we need the numbers to fill TESCO and our investment in new apartments and shopping centres, and, yes, somebody to serve the cappuccino.

### Trade Unions Against Partnership

Ireland's third largest union has pulled out of talks on a new Social Partnership deal for the first time in 20 years.

MANDATE, representing more than 40,000 pub and retail trade workers, announced that it is boycotting talks on a successor to the Sustaining Progress agreement.

MANDATE claims that low and middle-income earners are effectively being ignored in the current round of negotiations.

Besides MANDATE, the Irish Bank Officials Association (IBOA), AMICUS, and engineers in the TEEU are opposed to the "one size fits all" centralised pay deal in the Social Partnership talks.

These unions are also pressing for a local bargaining clause in addition to a centralised wage deal.

This would mean that unions would have the right to negotiate additional increases from profitable companies on top of the national wage agreement.

"There is an 'inability to pay' clause for employers," said one source. "By the same token, there should be an 'ability to pay' clause based on profitability and productivity."

But divisions are emerging among the public sector unions, with the Irish Nurses' Organisation (INO) supporting local bargaining for its own members based on productivity. This is opposed by IMPACT, which insists that local bargaining is not a runner in the public sector.

Liam Doran, General Secretary of the INO, said that "*flexible local bargaining*"—rather than benchmarking—represented the way forward for nurses, as it would allow the examination of productivity and grades "*on their merits*".

"We don't believe that 'one size fits all' is the way forward and would say that local bargaining would also work in the public sector, as it would give unions the freedom to negotiate specifically for grades they represent—such as in the health sector," said Doran.

However, Bernard Harbor of IMPACT was adamant that "*local bargaining is not going to happen in the public sector*

*because the government won't agree to a national pay deal, a benchmarking award and another bit of the cherry*".

There's a man who knows which side his bread is buttered on!

### The 'Real' Taoiseach McCreevy?

On 25th October 2005, Commissioner McCreevy faced his critics in the European Parliament. Socialist MEPs who launched a series of "*stinging attacks against him, complaining his policies were too right-wing*" and some felt were an attack on Sweden's social partnership.

The conservatives and liberals backed Mr. McCreevy and accused their left-leaning colleagues of populism.

But the socialists argued the whole debate was about the quality of jobs Europeans want.

Socialist leader, Martin Schultz advised the Commission President to "*put the brakes*" on "*neo-liberal*" Commissioners such as Mr. McCreevy or the Dutch Neelie Kroes, in charge of competition, to demonstrate support for the European social model and to receive the group's support.

But the Commissioner also received some strong support, with some coming from unlikely sources, including Ian Paisley's DUP.

The party's sole MEP, Jim Allister, spoke out on behalf of Mr. McCreevy.

"I rarely see it as a function of mine to defend the commission. Just occasionally they may say eminently sensible things," he said.

However, there was a low turnout when the Commissioner, backed by Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso, came before them.

"If members of this house expect me to creep around quietly... then I'm afraid they're going to be disappointed," McCreevy told them.

He said he should not have to justify remarks he made in relation to a legal dispute between the Swedish government and a Latvian construction firm over wage agreements.

McCreevy "*insists that as someone who was involved in the social partnership in Ireland between unions and employers, he wouldn't attack it elsewhere in the EU*".

"A Swedish building contract awarded to the Latvian company was withdrawn and the company subsequently went bankrupt after the Swedish construction union, BYGGNADS, blockaded the firm's site. The union took action against the firm after it refused to sign a Swedish wage agreement.

"Mr. McCreevy has come in for criticism for publicly commenting that

the Swedish stance was not compatible with EU treaties, particularly article 49 on the freedom to provide services.

"The commission did not call into question the organisation of labour relations or collective agreements in Sweden or any other member state, he said. However, there was a broader issue of the development of the internal market and he had a 'duty' to express his view.

"I find it extraordinary that I have to justify remarks made about an incident that raises questions of compatibility with article 49," Mr. McCreevy said. 'I will continue to express my opinions loud and clear and I don't care if they upset some people.'

"He was not expressing a view that any social model was better or worse than another, but defending rights laid down in the treaty. (Irish Times, 26.10.2005).

A legal case is now before the European Courts to decide whether Swedish rules or less restrictive EU internal market laws should apply.

### Dublin Trade Union Demonstration

According to the *Irish Independent*, 5,000 workers took to the streets of Dublin on 3rd November 2005, to protest at plans to replace Irish Ferries' workers with cheaper foreign labour.

The report by Gerald Flynn, Industrial Correspondent, sarcastically referred to "mainly middle-aged workers, marched through the streets of the capital wearing bright orange and yellow high-visibility jackets". I know there is a law against ageism, it looks as if we may have to secure one on 'middle-ageism'. I have never seen the *Irish Independent* refer to IFA marches in these terms.

Earlier in the week, Mr. Flynn mentioned that unions had not specified "*if they want members to leave work to support their action*" (1.11.2005). He then recalled a previous SIPTU demonstration, nearly four years ago: a demand for a minimum of three weeks' statutory redundancy when fewer than 2,000 people took part.

"This time the organisers would need up to 10,000 participants—just one in fifty of their members—to show broad-based support for their campaign."

On the following day, November 2, 2005, he had a headline: "Unions split down middle over planned protest rally to the Dail". "Although the march has the backing of 15 of the largest trade unions, it is not being supported by the Seaman's Union of Ireland (SUI).

Yet on the day of the march, the demonstration was addressed by the General Secretary of the SUI: "*Seaman's*

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## Partnership? continued

that's not the type of country we stand for... 'Nobody in the business community has come out to take a moral stance on the exploitation of workers.'

"Business organisations had queued up, however, to condemn the workers in An Post who were threatening to strike from next week. These workers, said Mr. Begg, had acted in full accordance with the terms of *Sustaining Progress*." Mr. Begg said the "light touch" labour market regulation currently in place was no longer sustainable in the context of the opening of the Irish labour market to citizens of the new EU states.

"None of the leaders of the 40 unions represented chose to address the conference, which ended after just 30 minutes, reflecting a growing sense of confusion in senior union ranks," according to the Irish Independent, 26.10.2005.

"In a repeat of the last pay negotiations in April, 2004, SIPTU, as the largest union, has effectively dictated the Congress position, much to the annoyance of some public service union bosses." (ibid).

Last year SIPTU forced a seven-week delay in pay talks over the restructuring of Aer Rianta and protection of employment standards in areas like cleaning, catering, the construction industry and security services.

SIPTU has 77 votes out of 399—just under 20%—of the votes at any ICTU conference.

"Only last Thursday, Congress President Peter McLoone, whose union has 34 votes, said that entering a new national agreement with employers and the Government was 'capable of delivering an agreed framework to prevent a 'race to the bottom' of pay and working conditions.'" (Irish Independent, 25.10.2005).

### SIPTU DELEGATE CONFERENCE

At the SIPTU Delegate Conference, over 430 delegates were—

"handed copies of a letter from Taoiseach Bertie Ahern sent over the weekend to assuage union leaders' fears of further 'social dumping'.

"He wrote that 'we do not want to see people building competitive advantage based on poor wages, casualisation of labour, low health and safety standards in any new talks.'" (Irish Independent, 25.10.2005).

SIPTU President, Jack O'Connor said the union would need further details explaining how the Government would implement any of the measures Mr. Ahern

spoke of.

"I believe that the Taoiseach meant what he said when he drafted that letter. I believe that he meant what he said when he condemned the action of Irish Ferries proposed to take. But I think that the Government and the Taoiseach are presented with a challenge into how they can give practical effect to their public statements," he said.

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

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

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

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

While Mr. Ahern responded by saying partnership was impossible without SIPTU, Mr. O'Connor said the cause of workers' rights would be far more difficult to achieve outside partnership. *"It is our analysis that partnership is the best way to do it... We're not going to say that it's impossible to do it otherwise but it's very very difficult indeed."*

Before their National Delegate meeting in Cork on 3rd October 2005, there was a lot of annoyance among SIPTU's National Executive over what was considered pressure by Congress President Peter McLoone to secure a vote in favour of entering talks on a successor to *Sustaining Progress*.

Mr. McLoone, who heads up the rival IMPACT public service union advised union members that *"a new national agreement could be a vehicle for stopping a 'race to the bottom' in pay and working conditions in an increasingly global economy"*.

He warned rival unions *"not to talk themselves out of a deal before discussions even begin"* which was interpreted by some senior SIPTU members as interference in their deliberations.

SIPTU has the largest public sector base, although about two-thirds of its membership are in the private sector.

### BENCHMARKING

"A subsequent paper by O'Leary, Rory McElligott and Gerry Boyle, Public-Private Wage Differentials in Ireland, 1994-2001, concluded that pre-benchmarking public pay levels were

actually 11% higher than those in the private sector. A more recent statement by the Irish Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Association, ISME, asserted that public-sector pay was now 41% higher than private-sector pay.

"IMPACT, a leading public-sector union, has criticised the comparison. The figures in the second O'Leary paper, they argue, compare apples and oranges in that they compare public-sector workers with workers in industry. Public servants are better educated and more capable than industrial workers and should earn more than them, according to IMPACT. Better to compare public-service pay with more educated workers in the private sector, they say." (Irish Times, 18.10.2005).

*"One for all, all for One"*. How are you, Brothers, sorry, Half-Brothers. Some are more equal than others!

### IMMIGRATION

"O'Connor believes the root of the problem lies in the government's decision to adopt an open border strategy from day one with the new EU accession states without the same level of regulation and enforcement that other countries such as Sweden, which have similar policies. 'We welcome that decision because we need to build this economy and it's not possible without a high degree of migrant labour, but if you're to do that, then the corollary is a level of regulation and enforcement that is equal in dimension,' said O'Connor.

"Only two other countries did this—Britain and Sweden. The effect of that is unique in the history of the developed world as it brings about a situation where countries with a population of more than 75 million are feeding into a labour market of three countries with a total population of 60 million." (Jack O'Connor, President, SIPTU, The Sunday Business Post, 30.10.2005). And one country, the Irish Republic has a population of four million people.

It is absolutely incredible that nobody seen this coming. But then you cannot say 'boo' in relation to Immigration here at the moment. Multiculturalism is the in-thing with the chattering classes, they all want their cappuccino served by a Russian or Latvian maid. Of course, none of these people give a damn what wage or conditions these young foreigners receive. To tell the truth, did they ever give a damn about the wages and conditions of their own native workers? They did not.

If one was to take it at face value, or at the word of the media, the opinion shapers: the welcome Immigrants receive is incredible when compared with the manner the same community treated their own emigrants not too many years ago. They

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# No Irish Need Apply?

The very fact that the **Irish Ferries** proposal to replace 500 native crew with foreign seafarers at a third of the current rate of wages is even contemplated, tells you the direction the labour market is heading.

That it now appears to be legally acceptable, that we cannot stop it—even the Dail is powerless—tells how prevalent global thinking has become the norm in property mad Ireland.

“And we have made it very clear that we will not acquiesce with a Race to the Bottom in employment standards, whatever the consequences. The key question is the attitude of the Government. Apart from the Taoiseach’s condemnation of Irish Ferries, he is on record more than once over the past two years declaring he does not wish to see a Race to the Bottom. But is the Government prepared to act? Right now, I cannot assure you, with any degree of confidence, that talks on a new national agreement can result in tangible measures to prevent displacement, curb exploitation or protect employment standards.” (Jack O’Connor, President, SIPTU, Cork, 3.10.2005).

So this is where the Trade Union movement finds itself—after 18 years of ‘partnership’ agreements, ‘the envy of trade unionists throughout Europe’! What was it all for? Was it not in truth a **Pay Deal**, with a social pickle or two thrown in?

In an economy rampant with excessive prices—the only commodity under control is wages! It was an employers’ dream and having provided them with super profits and wealth, they have decided they need us no longer.

Jack O’Connor now admits that the **“Open Door”** for the new accession states on May 1, 2005, is turning out to be an unmitigated disaster for Irish workers. The state doesn’t even have an Immigration policy.

On top of that, the ICTU gave unequivocal support for each EU referendum held, whilst all the while, the globalisers were eroding every progressive social aspect of the European Union.

On the one hand, the Taoiseach dishes out letters of comfort, hither and thither, while his former Finance Minister McCreavy, is trooping around Europe promulgating the **“Irish Ferries”** and **“GAMA”** formulas for a new Europe free of social and industrial constraints—who’s kidding who?

There’s a price for everything. It’s pay-back time for Irish workers. We are now starting to pay for Tiger Ireland’s embracement of a global economy.

At a Special Delegate Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) on October 25, 2005, over 400 delegates deferred a decision on whether to participate in Partnership talks with the Government.

The opposition to social partnership talks comes after months of controversy over the way the Government has handled the disputes over Irish Ferries, Gama Construction and, most recently, An Post.

The decision was unanimous and

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followed a similar decision by the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) the previous day, when all but one of the 450 delegates at a Special SIPTU conference voted in favour of a motion for the union to stay away from negotiations until the Government had offered more *“tangible”* measures to prevent worker displacement and staff exploitation. Jack O’Connor, General President stated that Ireland risks becoming an *“exploiter’s paradise”*.

The SIPTU position arises directly from the row over Irish Ferries’ plan to replace hundreds of unionised seafarers with cheaper labour from Eastern Europe. SIPTU and other unions claim the Irish Ferries move is part of a *‘race to the bottom’* in employment standards which is also being experienced in other sectors, including construction.

SIPTU also argues that Government opposition to the EU Ferries’ Directive and EU legislation to protect agency employees indicated it was not committed to combating *‘social dumping’*.

Addressing the ICTU conference, General Secretary David Begg criticised the business community for its *‘ambivalent’* stance on the issue. Employers, he said, put such a priority on competitiveness that it seemed almost anything else was acceptable.

*“This begs one to ask the question: is there no threshold of decency below which the objectives of competitiveness will not drag us?”* He questioned why apparently no one in the business sector had felt a *‘moral obligation’* to deprecate what was happening at Irish Ferries or to deplore the displacement of workers in other areas of the economy.

“Nobody in the business community was willing to come out and say, ‘No,