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Greaves & Connolly
Italy And The Great War
Lord Fitt

The End Of The Co-Op?
(Back page: Labour Comment)

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Past And Present

The war in Northern Ireland is back where it started. In 1969 there was no Provisional IRA, but there was an Ulster Volunteer Force. This fact is much forgotten. An *Irish Times* dateline published after the July Statement of the IRA was entitled, *The IRA From The Start Of The Troubles To 1994 Ceasefire*. It started from 5th October 1968, when a Civil Rights march was attacked in Derry. But the Provisional IRA did not come into existence until 14 months later, in December 1969. And the military activity of the revived UVF had begun a few years before that.

And, now that the Provisional campaign has run its course, the Ulster Volunteer Force is still active, as it was before the Provos were formed. And it has announced that it is the Praetorian Guard of Ulster Unionism (BBC, Newsnight, 31 Aug), and that it is out of the question that it should disarm, still less disband.

There are two kinds of Loyalist military action in progress at the moment. One has the purpose of furthering UVF monopoly by destroying its Loyalist Volunteer Front splinter army. Four people were killed in the course of this action during the past few weeks, and a number of families were driven out of their homes in a number of housing estates while the new police force (the Police Service of Northern Ireland) looked on.

The other form of Loyalist military action is for the openly declared purpose of ethnic cleansing. Members of immigrant racial minorities are driven out and Catholic families

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The Celtic Ant

We are all supposed to be cogitating on the future of the EU at the moment as a prelude to whatever next grand plan we will be presented with in a year or so. The *Irish Times* published a series of articles in August on the issue to help our reflections along. It also posed a whole series of questions in an editorial introducing the debate:

“What is the European Union 48 years after its foundation? What new visions and narratives should animate its leaders and peoples for a new generation? Where are the EU’s boundaries and borders? What powers should it have and how should they be exercised? How should it relate to the member states, their parliaments and citizens? What role can it play in a world where the United States has military preponderance but diminishing political and moral appeal and in which China and India are strongly emerging competitors? Was it appropriate to call a consolidating treaty a constitution? How can national and European identities be united or combined so that sacrifices or commitments can be demanded from citizens—and should they be? ...It deserves to be addressed in a non-dogmatic, reflective spirit rather than a narrowly partisan one at this stage of the process. Contributors raise many issues that were inadequately dealt with in the debates surrounding the constitution—or may not have been properly tackled at all. They are not confined to the campaigning arguments for and against the document, although the series has several contributions from each of these positions” (1.8.05).

Bertie Ahern was the first to provide

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are being cleared out of areas which are designated as inherently and exclusively Protestant. The police have offered vulnerable families in these areas smoke alarms and fire blankets, so that they might protect themselves if they stay on in defiance of the order to move out, and have left it at that.

The centre of the ethnic cleansing campaign at the moment is Ahoghill in Co. Antrim. Ahoghill is where the 1859 Revival began. It will be interesting to see how the 150th anniversary will be marked in a few years' time.

The revisionist historians who are engaged in a well-funded mission to straighten out Irish history have paid little or no attention to the 1859 Revival. It was a great upsurge of what we now call fundamentalism. It was a reassertion of the ideas and impulses which had made Protestant Christianity a force in the world once Calvin had given it shape and direction, but which had fallen into confusion in Ulster in the 18th century under the influence of Scottish philosophy and Irish politics.

The 1859 Revival swept like wildfire through Antrim and Down, uniting Protestants across denominational lines on the basis of the original Reformationist enthusiasms. It was not a political movement, but it had profound political consequences. It de-politicised Protestant Ulster, rendering it incapable of making

the pragmatic calculations and accommodations which would have allowed for an evolutionary development in Irish affairs.

In our efforts over twenty years to bring Northern Ireland within the sphere of the democracy of the British state, the insuperable obstacle that we encountered was the essentially apolitical character of Protestant Ulster at its core. We convinced a number of individuals of the political validity of the case that we made, but they found that they could do nothing about it because the culture of the Ahoghill revival decreed that politics was not a proper activity for Christians.

The strangeness of Protestant Ulster in the 20th century was that it lived in a medium of actual Christian belief. This gave rise to a very attractive mode of conduct in commercial affairs. Nothing like it is encountered in the rest of Ireland or the rest of Britain. But what it gave rise to in political affairs is what we have got.

The Revival coincided with the glory days of the British Empire as an arena of Christian endeavour. The Empire had been opened to Christian missionary activity following the re-admission to Parliament of the Puritan middle class in 1832. Revivalist Ulster revelled in the Christianising activities of the Empire, and in the "*Greater Britain*" project which accompanied it. It could do that without

appearing to engage in anything political. Greater Britain took on for it the character of a force of Providence.

But then the Empire went astray. Greater Britain evaporated in the course of the 1st World War. The empire expanded instead of consolidating, and began to fall apart. The falling apart began in Ireland. Revivalist Ulster was deprived of its Providential sphere of action, and reverted to its 1649 status of being a corner of Ireland (Milton's words), in conflict with Ireland and suspicious of England. If politicians and historians had kept these basic facts of the situation before the public mind, Catholics might have thought as carefully before going to live there as would be prudent before going to live in Mecca.

The police denied in the first instance that the attacks on Catholics in Ahoghill were sectarian. The denial took a strange form:

"Sinn Fein has claimed paramilitaries are trying to ethnically cleanse Ahoghill but Mr. Leighton [Deputy Chief Constable] said he did not think this was the case. 'It's much more serious than ethnic cleansing. There is real hatred between communities in Northern Ireland'." (Irish News, 18 Aug.)

His reasoning was that the attacks on Catholics were not instigated by Loyalist organisations, but were entirely spontaneous actions by local Protestants. It was an interesting way of putting it.

Mr. Leighton also said, in the same connection:

"Northern Ireland has suffered for too long from 'the dogs in the street know who did it'. The dogs in the street don't get into the witness box and don't make good witnesses" (ibid).

That is presumably why they weren't required to bark out their evidence in a prosecution of Adams and McGuinness for the Northern Bank Robbery. We were assured at the time that the 'dogs in the street' knew that they did it. They told the Chief Constable and the Taoiseach so. And Lord Alderdyce's "Independent Monitoring Commission" took their word for it. And even Brian Feeney was convinced by them. Affairs of state have been regularly conducted on their say-so. What had they done recently to cause the Deputy Chief Constable to disparage them? As far as we can see they are as capable of saying "Woof! woof!" to order as they ever were.

And a couple of days later Mr. Leighton regained his faith in canine informants:

"The deputy chief constable has made

an apparent U-turn and confirmed that all attacks on Catholics in a Co. Antrim village were sectarian”.

He said so in a letter to Ballymena SDLP Councillor Declan O’Loan, who chairs the Ballymena District Policing Partnership (IN 20 Aug).

The *Irish Times* gave very muted coverage to the Ahoghill affair, and the only Southern politician who spoke out on the matter, as far as we noticed, was Liz MacManus, deputy leader of the Labour Party, who urged Unionist politicians to do something about it. MacManus is of the ‘Stickie’ tendency which controls the Labour Party, but she has not recently been acting in an entirely Stickie spirit. She was also the only politician who made an issue of a trial currently being conducted in England, under some kind of extra-territorial law, of a man charged with committing murder in Ireland. Her demand for explanations was reported in considerable detail in the *Irish (nee Cork) Examiner*. It was reported far less clearly in the *Irish Times*, whose coverage of this unusual trial is heavily muffled.

Mr. Leighton’s imagery was also recently used by Mr. Raymond McCord, whose son was killed by Loyalists and who is trying to get a proper investigation of the matter. After a 15-year old Catholic boy, Thomas Devlin, was stabbed to death, he claimed that the ‘dogs in the street’ knew that UVF members had been responsible (IN 15 Aug). The police, however, played down the loyalist angle, saying merely that it was not ‘ruling out’ sectarian motivation in this killing. The view in the Catholic community of a number of incidents over the Summer is that the police have been treating Loyalist violence with kid gloves whilst using strong measures to curb Catholic unrest. Another example of this occurred just as this magazine was going to press. When there was rioting in Woodvale after two Loyalist drinking clubs were shut down by the police, a cordon was erected around the area, and the riot was allowed to play itself out. It is felt that, if Catholics had been rioting, plastic bullets would have been used. In addition, there is dissatisfaction at the way in which the police are carrying out their criminal duties, with undue delays in following up leads and taking action in serious cases. The PSNI approach is undermining the position of the SDLP, which is seen as supporting a poorly conducted and apparently biased policing service.

Ruth Dudley Edwards, whose *Sunday*

Na Creatuiri Bochta Gallda

Is e seo dan a chum me le deanaigh ar abhar athsgrudaithe staire na hEireann agus nosanna nua na haighe ghallda ata ag teacht in Eirinn le deanaigh.

Cad a dheanfaidhmuid feasta gan oiglaigh,
O cuireadh na gunnaigh faoi chlar?
An bhfuil tracht ar O Duibhir I gCill Manntain
Na’r Choilean I mBeal Atha na mBlath?
Na laochraí a sheasuigh an la linn
Nuair a thuirling Clann Luther ar tra;
Thug omos a’s dilseacht do’n Phapa
Agus drochmheas do’n Eiriceach thall.

Cad a dheanfaidhmuid feasta gan sagairt?
Nil fonn ar na stocaigh do’n chleir.
Ta call aca laithreach sa chulghort
Le gioraigh tointarnocht’ san fhear.
Ce leighfidh an Leabhar duinn De Domhnaigh
‘dTigh’n Aifrinn ar leitir an chnuic?
Ce maithfidh sa bhocsa ar bpeacaigh?
“ Abair Paidir a’s Deichniur, a mhic! “

Cad a dheanfaidhmuid feasta gan eigse?
Nil rann anois sgríobhtha fiu faic.
Beowulf I reim imBeal Ath’ Aoidh
A Pheist dortadh orainn cnuic caic.
Shakespear le “Fwat ish my nation?”
Broim Beckett, yuc Yeatsach comh maith
Slog siar iad sa scornach go doimhin,
Bronnfar Nobels anuas ort seacht saith.

Cad a dheanfaidhmuid feasta gan fíorghaeil?
Síol Eibhir a dibirt thar lear
An Glas Gort a dingeadh le bruscair
O Mhalainn go Conndae a’ Chlar.
Slán le fear bainte na mona!
Slán leis an fhear chuireas tuighe!
Slán le fear silte na heorna...
A’s cead slán leatsa, Eire, a chroidhe.

Liam Mhic I Shearcaigh ©

(A translation will appear next month, Ed.)

Independent column is usually devoted to virulent attacks on the IRA, wrote on 21st August, *The Loyalists Are Determined To Spill Blood*. Perhaps the *Sunday Independent* is being shaken in its one-sided anti-republicanism by the attacks on newspaper shops selling its sister-paper, *The Sunday World*. It seems that some of its articles on Loyalist leaders were not liked. But the main reason for Unionist fury is the announcement a couple of days after the IRA Statement of 29th July that the Northern Ireland-based battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment are to be disbanded as they are no longer needed. As these units are the grandsons of the B-Specials, it is felt that elements of Protestant security are disappearing. And the unkindest cut of all is that this is being done with the Democratic Unionist Party being the major community party. It was this sort of thing

that Dr. Paisley was put in to prevent. Perhaps that is why there is talk of *Praetorian Guard* now. The Loyalists are to guard the Constitution.

Judging from the major Irish papers, the Peace Process was imperilled by the return of the ‘Colombia Three’, which was widely report on 6th August. The *Sunday Independent* carried out a spurious phone poll, which enabled it to write: *9 Out Of 10 Say ‘Lock Them Up’*, while the *Irish Times* carried a lying article by the Colombian Vice President, but no article setting the record straight about State-sponsored violence in Colombia. The *Daily Ireland* captured the view coming from Government with its lead, *Hunt Them Down Demand From PDs* (9.8.05). If Fianna Fail was unhappy with the view of its dominant partners, it did not show.

Fine Gael took up the cry, trailed by Labour seeking clarification. It was all a good excuse to beat Sinn Fein and not to look at what is really happening in the Six Counties.

Another Northern Ireland policeman has been in the political news recently: Colin Cramphorn, the last Deputy Chief Constable of the RUC, and now Chief Constable of West Yorkshire. He told the *Yorkshire Evening Post* after the July IRA statement:

“This is not the end of the IRA, it is the beginning of another era of it.”

This is reported by Frank Millar, formerly Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Party and now London Editor of *The Irish Times*. According to Millar:

“He does not see the present process providing a smooth transition to a “normal democracy” “I think in about 15 or so years we will see the unification of Ireland. And it will be like Sicily”.”
(*IT 13 Aug*).

Certainly there will not be a smooth transition to normal democracy. But what makes it certain is that normal democracy is not a possibility of the Northern Ireland Constitutional structure. This is something that Millar once understood. He even led a Unionist delegation to Downing Street and put it to Mrs. Thatcher. He came out of Downing St. fuming and told the television that Thatcher had absolutely ruled out the admission of Northern Ireland to the democracy of the state. But, angry though he was, he took her word for it and gave up the struggle. A few months later he lost his job as UUP Secretary in some internal party conflict which we cannot quite recall and was given a job with the *Irish Times*. And the *Poliburo* which conducts the *Irish Times* has never allowed the view of things developed by this journal to be expressed in it. But Cramphorn’s suggestion that what the IRA is doing now is a repetition of what it did in 1923 is grist to its mill; as is his assertion that recent Republican actions follow from the World Trade Centre incident, rather than from the Good Friday Agreement.

What happened in 1922-23 was that anti-Treaty Republicans were defeated in a war instigated by Britain for the enforcement of a Treaty which it presented as an ultimatum, the penalty for rejection being “*immediate and terrible war*”. Those who submitted to the Treaty won an election on the same terms. An election held on those terms would not be recognised as democratically valid today, except by someone with a special interest in doing so. And Fianna Fail never accepted

those Treaty elections held under duress as valid—at least not until it made Dr. Mansergh its ideologist and he did so.

Cramphorn says the message in 1923 was, “*Lay down your arms to fight another day*”. That “*other day*” came in 1932 when the electorate regained their republican equilibrium and elected the Anti-Treatyites. The presence of the IRA, as a counter to the Free State military force ensured a peaceful transition to anti-Treaty democracy. ■

Editorial Notes

The IRA Ceasefire took effect from 4 pm on 28th July 2005, not the 29th as stated in the last issue of this magazine.

The *Irish Times* corrected its report of 22nd July about the Brazilian shot by British police at Stockwell Underground Station on 25th July with a front-page lead, *Apology For Family Of Brazilian Shot By Mistake*.

In Michael Stack’s column last month, there was reference to two British Intelligence formations, Cobra and JTAC. The acronyms mean Cabinet Office Briefing Room A and Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (MI5).

Lord Fitt

The late Lord Fitt resigned from the leadership of the Social Democratic & Labour Party, and from membership of it, a quarter of a century ago. If he had retired from all political activity relating to Northern Ireland at the same time, on the ground that what he helped to start forty years ago was something he could no longer live with, one might sympathise with his predicament. But he did not retire. He entered the aristocratic chamber of the Legislature, and periodically uttered the anathemas that were expected of him.

Vincent Browne, perhaps feeling that he has overdone the politics of reality in recent months, devoted his *Irish Times* column to “*praise of valiant Gerry Fitt*” on 31st August. Not once referring to him by his aristocratic title, Browne praises him for bringing “*international attention to the corruption at the heart of the old Stormont state*”; and for then bringing attention to “*a new and more vicious injustice, the campaign of murder, maiming and mayhem of the IRA*”. And he comments:

“Had Gerry Fitt’s politics been given time to mobilise, might not thousands of lives [have?] been saved?”

Thousands of lives might have been saved if a number of people in positions of authority in London, Belfast, and Dublin had acted differently. But we cannot see now, any more than we could see then, what politics Fitt had that could mobilise people in any way other than the way they were mobilised. Such politics as he had went into the mobilisation that actually occurred. And, when that mobilisation began to take a turn of which he disapproved—a point that is not easy to pin down—he failed utterly to make his disapproval effective. He had nothing to say, beyond expressing disapproval, which

might have diverted people into a different course of action.

He called himself Republican Labour at the start. And around 1966 he regularly threatened Stormont with the IRA if it did not hurry up and deliver the reforms he was demanding. An apologist might say that he was only making a prediction and this prediction turned out to be accurate. But, when he said it, it always sounded like an exhortation, and it usually elicited a loud cheer. He knew what he was doing when he raised the spectre of the IRA in this manner. And we cannot recall that he ever tried to lay that spectre at the critical time—that he ever said: The necessary reforms have been achieved and now is the time to settle down within the Stormont apparatus.

“*One man, one vote*” was introduced in 1969, the B Specials were disbanded, and the Derry gerrymander was stopped. These were the reform demands. But Fitt did not say that the Civil Rights demands had been met and that Northern Ireland was now OK.

The following year he took part in the formation of the SDLP and became its leader. The SDLP had two incompatible aims: British social reform and the ending of Partition. We put it to Fitt that these two reforms could not be pursued together in practical politics, but he would not chose between them.

In early July 1971 Brian Faulkner (as Stormont Prime Minister) made him an offer at a meeting of the Stormont Parliament which on the spur of the moment he not see how to refuse. But a few weeks later he withdrew the SDLP from Stormont, using the excuse of a shooting by the British Army in Derry for which the

Northern Ireland Government bore no responsibility. If he had delayed for a few weeks longer, he might have had the better excuse of Internment, and he did in fact pretend that Internment was the reason for rejecting Stormont and setting up the Alternative Assembly at Dungannon.

A couple of years of fantasy politics followed. As the war raged with great intensity, the SDLP played hard to get. Then, in the Autumn of 1973, Prime Minister Ted Heath lit a fire under the party with the suggestion that he would incorporate Northern Ireland into the British State if the SDLP kept up its refusal to negotiate within existing structures. This brought Fitt back to the conference table, and in January 1974 he became Deputy Prime Minister of Northern Ireland under Faulkner in a power-sharing arrangement that was semi-voluntary, combined with an elaborate Council of Ireland. The understanding among Unionists was that the Dublin Government (with C.C. O'Brien and Garret FitzGerald to the fore) had agreed to amend the sovereignty clauses in the Irish Constitution. In March 1974 Dublin declared formally that this was not the case, and that the assertion of sovereignty over the North remained in place. This led to a strong Unionist demand for the postponement of the establishment of the Council of Ireland pending a resolution of the sovereignty issue. The SDLP refused to consider postponement, and was supported in this stance by the Dublin Government and the new Labour Government in London. The Strike (or "*Constitutional Stoppage*") against the Council was launched in May and became general throughout the Northern Protestant community. Fitt declared that it was a Fascist Counter-revolution and must be put down by force. But the dog it was that died. The best attempt at cross-community devolved government that there has been was sacrificed to a delusion by the SDLP under Fitt's leadership.

Fitt hung on in the leadership for about five years longer, and then resigned from the party and entered the House of Lords.

During the mid-70s he would agree privately with what we were attempting to do, but he refused absolutely to say anything publicly about it. And his story was that he was straitjacketed by "*the countrymen*" in the SDLP. That meant John Hume. But the truth is that, insofar as Fitt had a political position different from Hume's, he held it only in the bar of the Europa Hotel, and all it was capable of mobilising was a pint.

Professor Bew expressed regret on Radio Eireann some years ago for having taken part in the Civil Rights agitation of 1968-69, because of what it led to. But Bew's participation made no difference to the course of events. Fitt was a leader in those years. The course of events would have been different if he had played a different part. In view of the attitude he struck later, it would have been appropriate for him to express remorse for stirring things up, and to apologise to the people he had stirred up for having done so without having any idea of where to lead them, and for then feeling obliged to leave them in the lurch. Instead of doing that, he turned on the people he had stirred up, and denounced them to order whenever the BBC required him to.

Expressions of remorse are now demanded of the Provos. Vincent Browne demands them whenever he gets one of them on his programme. But the Provos are a consequence of the state of affairs that Fitt helped to bring about.

Vincent Browne, demonstrating how little he has learned since he was Northern correspondent of the *Irish Press* in the early seventies, says that Fitt's career would have been a success if he had done nothing else but bring "*Westminster and international attention to the corruption at the heart of the old Stormont state*".

Commentators in the Republic have a mania about corruption these days. But mere corruption would not warrant an all-out agitation to undermine a State. Indeed a state without corruption (as the word is currently used) is an impossibility.

What was wrong with Stormont was its essential structure. And nobody needed to draw Westminster's attention to that because Westminster devised it.

And Stormont was not a state, but a region of a State, an area for which a peculiar form of government had been devised which could only function through the conflict of communities, with the larger Protestant community exerting dominance over the smaller Catholic community. It is inconceivable that the British statesmen who set it up did not know what they were setting up.

The routine of Protestant communal dominance maintained a semblance of order for close on half a century. It trivialises the situation to describe that routine as corruption. Corruption has the implication of deviancy. But the way the

North was governed under Craigavon and Brookeborough was not deviant. They operated the structure according to the logic of the structure. It would have been deviant if the North had existed within the politics of the British state—but in that case it would not have existed.

Fitt understood all of this in private, but in public he would not take a stand on it. And, when he broke with the SDLP and entered the Lords, he regularly denounced people for not behaving normally in what he knew was a thoroughly abnormal framework of state.

Browne's view seems to imply that structures of state do not influence conduct. People can be good on individual grounds, regardless of the way public life is organised. Public peace and well-being is an outcome of individual goodness, and disorder therefore an outcome of individual proclivity to evil. On this view it scarcely matters how the state is organised. But that is a view that is hardly supported by the history of the world, especially not in recent times. And it is no more supported by the history of the 26 Counties than of anywhere else. Political life in democracies proceeds through conflict, and if the conflict which democracy encourages is not connected with the governing of the state in a way that gives the active political minority a realistic prospect of power, then it is a pseudo-democracy which can only give rise to trouble. The alternating exercise of power in the state makes democracy functional is power in the state, and supervised local government—in which majorities and minorities must share power—is no substitute.

West Belfast sent Jack Beattie to Westminster 60 years ago with a mandate to become part of the Labour Party. If the Labour Party had not refused him the whip, the subsequent course of events would have been different. Politics in the North would have been connected with power in the state. And the gravitational pull of power in the state would have brought alterations in political life in the 6 Counties. But the Labour whip was refused. Northern Ireland remained locked up in itself. And the make-believe of Stormont politics was borne in on Beattie. Though refused the Whip, he voted with the Labour Government in the post-1945 reforms. The Ulster Unionists then had a kind of external association with the Tory Party and voted against the social welfare reforms, with every appearance of earnest opposition to them. But Beattie was also

a member of the Stormont Parliament, and he saw the Unionists enacting there, after the briefest of intervals, the very legislation which they had opposed vehemently at Westminster.

It might be said that legislation is all that matters, and it doesn't matter who does it. But that is essentially an apolitical view. It was rejected by Beattie, as it had been rejected long before him by Edmund Burke in a famous pamphlet directed against the contention of the Crown that what mattered was "*not men but measures*". Representative government is all about men in the first instance. It works because it gives people the feeling of participation in the exercise of power in the state, rather than because it produces legislative measures which are dispassionately judged to be good.

Beattie demanded admission to the political democracy of the state and was refused. He then applied for membership of the Irish Labour Party and was admitted. But the ILP, though a real political party, was the party of another state. And therein lay the predicament of the Catholic community in the North. (Beattie, a Protestant and a Socialist, was elected largely by Catholic votes.) It was deprived of a democratic political outlet for its energy in the politics of the state, and the Stormont system was nothing more than a system of communal Protestant policing of Catholics. It was compelled by the circumstances imposed on it by the Partitionists to be anti-Partitionist.

These were the circumstances which made Fitt both an Irish Republican and a British Socialist. If Beattie's demand had been conceded, Fitt would probably have been a Junior Minister in Harold Wilson's Government. He was in many respects an archetypal British Labour politician of the old school. But he lived as a Catholic in Northern Ireland, and that made him a Republican as well. He was anti-Partitionist and therefore Republican. He was Catholic and therefore Republican. That is how it appeared to Unionists, who disregarded fine distinctions, and that is substantially how it was. And he called himself Republican Labour.

But he never made an effective combination between these two elements of his position. And, until he removed himself from Northern Ireland to the Lords (with, as Browne puts it, "the sad acceptance of a peerage"), he refused to choose between them. And then he just became "*Fitt the Brit*".

Vincent Browne was clearly shocked by *Daily Ireland's* brisk dismissal of Fitt. Living as a guru in the smug revisionist provincialism of a functional state which has relinquished the moral obligations implicit in its origins, he does not even attempt to envisage the actual conditions of life in the North, does not see the damage done by Fitt to the cause which he stirred up, and cannot imagine why he came to be so well hated. But the sad truth is that Fitt became thoroughly bogus, and remained so for a quarter of a century.

Browne found in *Daily Ireland*—

"an odious triumphalism that reflects the mentality of some of those who call themselves republican".

He knows very little of the North if he thinks this mentality is specific to "*those who call themselves republican*". Such experiences and mentalities are communal and, in the structured absence of any kind of politics other than communal, nothing else is possible on a social scale. Communities experience in the North what the adherents of political parties experience in Britain and Ireland, and moralising about it is only a kind of supercilious posturing.

And Fitt, before he became the Brit, indulged in this "*odious practice*" along with the community which he represented. In more meagre times he gave expression to communal triumphalism when Glasgow Celtic won the European Cup. And in 1974 it was no less evident in the "*Socialist*" wing of the SDLP (Fitt and Paddy Devlin) than amongst "*the countrymen*". And it was around that time that he described the Protestant community as "*a million monsters*" bred from the Plantation of Ulster.

Browne asks what difference there is between the Sunningdale Agreement and the Good Friday Agreement. The difference perhaps does not appear great if one looks only at the measures and disregards the men. But the Sunningdale measure had much less representative force behind it, *vis a vis* the Catholic community, than the GFA. The SDLP, which had fed the insurrectionary movement from July 1971 to 1973 and had then been cajoled and nudged into negotiations by William Whitelaw and Ted Heath, did not carry the community with it as Hume and Sinn Fein did in 1998. The social atmosphere in the Falls in early 1974 was nothing like what it has become since 1998. The community was not "*up*" then, as it is now. (And when communities stand in the place of political parties they

are, like political parties, either triumphalist or despondent.)

And another great difference is that the men in 1974 were not as earnest and resourceful in carrying through the measure to which they had committed themselves—or into which they had been inveigled—as the men of the GFA have been. Fitt and Devlin entered fantasyland in May 1974 and threw away their political hand in order to indulge their delusion of a historic stand against the resurgence of Fascism, instead of manoeuvring to preserve the Sunningdale structures in the North.

Fitt's last political action of consequence is not mentioned by Browne. It was to bring down the Labour Government in Britain and open the door for Thatcher. His Republican and Socialist elements were always tripping each other up. He was at ease as a Socialist supporting the minority Labour Government, but in the end he brought it down. And the reason? That it had increased Northern Ireland representation at Westminster from 12 seats to 18!!

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Newspaper columnists have taken on the role of moralisers in the Republic. Politicians have become little more than hucksters, and the Church has been silenced for the time being, so newspaper columnists tell us how we ought to live. Something similar happened in the Soviet Union around 1930, with consequences that are not auspicious. But that is the phase we are in, and we must live amidst a daily barrage of moralising columns. And, if we take issue with Vincent Browne, it is because he is the only one worth bothering with.

In his column on Fitt he worries about "*the campaign of slaughter*", and when such a campaign is warranted. While he praises Fitt for condemning "*the barbarity of the IRA*", he thinks that condemnation blinded him to "*other injustices*":

"But how about those who now, with the benefit of dispassionate hindsight, remember only the injustices of Stormont and the viciousness and arbitrariness of the British military response to the IRA campaign, and not at all the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the IRA?..."

"Yes, I know, the benefits of hindsight and all that, but at least we might now acknowledge, lest anything like that ever rise again, that the campaign of slaughter was wrong, that there was *no* justification for the taking of a single human life (and I am not saying this from a pacifist

position for I believe that the taking of human life can at times be justified, as, for instance, in apartheid South Africa, where injustice was so grave and politics so hopeless.)”

But this is to go *sub speciae aeternitatis*, and to see some elemental human standard beyond states and their political relationships, and it is at the same time to succumb to a fashion of the moment. Man, however, is a political animal, and politics has little to do with eternal standards. And fashion fluctuates from decade to decade.

Morality might not be synonymous with political authority, but it exists on the basis of the authority of states. There is no moral arbiter in the world beyond the power of the state. We live in the 21st century, for goodness sake. We have left European mediaevalism behind us. The Reformation which abolished the separate moral order and merged the functions of King and Pope happened over four centuries ago and became the dominant Imperial Power two hundred years ago. There has been no replacement for the position that Rome held in the Middle Ages—certainly not the United Nations, which is the instrument of a handful of states.

The way of our world is that an existing structure of political authority sets the parameters of morality within it. This is substantially denied only as between one system of authority and another. Condemnation by one system of authority of the morality which forms part of another system presents itself in general terms, as generally valid and binding, and purports to be derived from something other than the interest of the state which issues the condemnation. But it requires little probing to discover that it is all apologetics and special pleading, and that it depends very much on absence of memory.

Why would indiscriminate slaughter of the Boers in South Africa have been uniquely moral, as Browne suggests? They did not wantonly set up a situation of communal conflict when a better alternative was open to them. The South African State was for generations an integral part of what presented itself as the civilised order of the world. It was particularly active, as part of the British Empire and full of Imperialist enthusiasm, in the wars against Germany, both of which were held by the victors to be wars for the defence of civilisation against a deadly danger—and which were widely accepted as such by virtue of the immense prestige which accrues to the military victor in a world war. And its race distinctions were inherent in the civilisation which it defended.

In 1919 the Versailles Conference refused to adopt a declaration on racial equality proposed by the Japanese. And both Britain and the USA kept up an

unembarrassed white racism for a generation after the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945.

The subversive influence of the Communist third of the world on the civilised world by way of the anti-Imperialist regions gradually undermined the racial values of the West. A situation then developed in which the South African regime was widely held to be illegitimate, and the civilised West subjected it to economic sanctions for fear of otherwise losing Africa to Communism.

Thus a regime which the civilised world had not only considered legitimate, but had treasured as a particularly valued part of itself, became illegitimate not through any changes in itself but through external changes. At that point the Boer community was locked in unavoidable conflict with the Black and Coloured communities. The Anglos, who were no less racist, had the option of returning home (which many thousands of them had only left for the racial Paradise of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia in the preceding generation). But the Boer had no home other than South Africa.

The communal conflict in south Africa must be judged to be necessary, unavoidable, by any reasonable realistic standard located in actual Western values. But the communal conflict in Northern Ireland was entirely unnecessary. There were reasonable practical alternatives to it. But the political structure which could only reproduce communal antagonism was freely chosen for the 6 Counties by the governing authority which set up Northern Ireland, in preference to the democratic structures of the multi-national state which operated elsewhere in the UK. Westminster no doubt had its reasons for this, and it gave priority to those reasons over everything to do with good government in the 6 Counties. Those reasons can only have been to retain leverage in the internal politics of the part of Ireland which it was obliged to let go. But, even if that is disputed, it remains the case that the Northern Ireland predicament, unlike the South African predicament, was freely set up by the governing power in preference to the more reasonable and practical alternative.

Vincent Browne thinks he would have justified indiscriminate slaughter of the Boers. But he had no need to. It didn't happen. The clear and acknowledged absence of democracy did not lead to “*a campaign of slaughter*”, while the perversion of democracy in the North did. And that should not surprise anybody who sees the way of the world.

When Ireland voted to be independent in 1918, it fought a war of independence when the Government ignored the vote, and there can still be heard voices in the

wilderness which justify that war. It is difficult to establish hard objective standards in these things, but one can see grounds for saying that the South was less oppressed and its position was less hopeless in 1919 than that of the Catholic community was in Northern Ireland at any time between 1921 and its going to war in 1970.

If there is a message in all of this, it is that wars are not generated by absolutes, but arise out of the relativities of actual politics in the dynamics of a definite situation. And it was on the battlefield, campaigning against the war, that we concluded that there was sufficient reason for it. That did not lead us to support the war. We kept on trying to achieve the alternative until Unionist conduct made it entirely hopeless. But it led us to reject the ‘*Good and Evil*’ ideology with which the West is tormenting the world today. ■

China's Currency Still Red?

The People's Republic Of China, on Thursday, 21st July 2005, revalued its renminbi (or yuan) currency. This was done under pressure from the US, which likes, not so much ‘a level playing field’ as one sloped in its own favour. America used the WTO (World Trade Organisation) to browbeat China, which wants to become a member of this genuine ‘rich mans club’

On the next day the *Irish Times*, in its *Business This Week* section, carried a report on the matter. It was neutral about the fact that the revaluation is seismic in scale—the British and American papers have grumbled about the Chinese simply making a gesture in this matter.

The Chinese probably *are* making a fairly rude gesture. The capitalist states have proved to be ‘paper tigers’ at the game they invented. The *Irish Times* reports that the Yuan would no longer be pegged to the US\$, but to a “basket” of currencies (which may include the Euro). The US Treasury is peculiarly nervous about the latter. The Americans can feel superior about the EU. After all, without Marshall Aid (‘invented’ by Ernie Bevin), there would be no European Union. Western Europe would be a collection of poverty-stricken national states. Or part of the ‘Soviet Empire’.

No matter about the accuracy of the jibes coming out of Washington about ‘Europe’, it has no hold over China, other than ‘human rights’ infractions. China has been blunt in response to such criticism, pointing out that the Americans (and the British) hardly covered themselves in glory on such matters when China was at their mercy. China made the decision to play the capitalist game without reference to anyone outside China, least of all the Americans.

As the *IT* reports, “*more than half of all finished goods in the world are made in China*”. It does not report that the USA has become dependent on cheap goods from China. For instance, 60+% of footwear sold in the US is made in China; other household

The Celtic Ant

continued

his reflections. The last time Bertie wrote in the *Irish Times* on the issue, about two months ago, he told us that “Europe’s citizens do not need more debate about the future construction of Europe” (27 May 2005) and not to waste our time thinking about it. The future of the EU was self-evident for him: the only thing to do was vote for the Constitution. Well, we know what happened and Bertie has had to put on his thinking cap. Anyway, he was never afraid of that hobgoblin called consistency and his advice now is that the—

“EU economy needs revitalising. ...The roots of this climate of uncertainty, and even fear, lie in the economic area. In the national debates on the European Constitution, voters are expressing fears that their jobs are under threat from low cost producers in the new member states. There are concerns that there will be a race to the bottom and an undermining of social systems. ...Revitalisation of the European economy is the core challenge. The Union simply will not command the loyalty and support of Europe’s citizens if there is a yawning gap between our rhetoric and the reality of people’s daily lives. ...Maintaining the *status quo* in Europe is not an option for the future. Neither is building up protectionist barriers. Both approaches are recipes for stagnation and a steady decline in Europe’s economic and social standing... The rejection by French and Dutch voters of the European Constitution in their recent referendums is a powerful demonstration of the sense of disconnection between what many voters see as important in their daily lives, such as jobs, social security and the fight against crime, and their perception of the European Union. The irony is that the European Constitution greatly strengthens the Union’s capacity to protect and promote Europe’s interests and those of its workers in the global marketplace”(1.8.05).

So the whole issue is an economic one. Let’s all get working and competing like mad and all will be right with Ireland, Europe, and the world. What more could there possibly be to discuss? What else is there to do or talk about and one can almost hear him cry in exasperation, ‘*Wha’more d’yiz want?*’ Bertie does not seem to believe that people engage in economic activity for a purpose and that those few who do so as an end in itself are usually suffering from some sort of neurosis and are in need of some help. Nations which do likewise will sooner or later also need some help. One of the most peculiar legacies of Marxism is a near total acceptance of economic determinism by the traditional opponents of Marxism. They defeated Marxism and adopted its caricature with a vengeance.

The European project was not founded for reasons of economic efficiency and competition with the rest of the world. There is no reason whatsoever why there cannot be the most super-efficient economies and the most thoroughgoing

Louisiana Floods

Introductory Note: Randy Newman is a very political singer/songwriter who made an album in the 70s about Huey Long and Louisiana. Part of Long’s rise to the Governorship as a populist Democrat was central Government failure when there was severe flooding. New Orleans and Baton Rouge weren’t badly affected but by god they got Evangeline (see Edgar Allen Poem of that name). It is worth recalling now the lyrics of of Newman’s song from the album, *Good Old Boys* (Joe Keenan).

Louisiana 1927

What has happened down here is the wind have changed
Clouds roll in from the north and it started to rain
Rained real hard and rained for a real long time
Six feet of water in the streets of Evangeline

The river rose all day
The river rose all night
Some people got lost in the flood
Some people got away alright
The river have busted through cleared down to Plaquemines
Six feet of water in the streets of Evangeline

CHORUS

Louisiana, Louisiana
They’re tyrin’ to wash us away
They’re tryin’ to wash us away
Louisiana, Louisiana
They’re tyrin’ to wash us away
They’re tryin’ to wash us away

President Coolidge came down in a railroad train
With a little fat man with a note-pad in his hand
The President say, “Little fat man isn’t it a shame what the river has done
To this poor crackers land.”

CHORUS

competition between individual nations as there can be with groups of nations like the EU. If the purpose of the EU is reduced to economic efficiency, it means then it has no necessary *raison d’etre* at all, no necessary purpose whatever, and we can all forget about the whole exercise. That is precisely what is happening and it is happening for the reason that Bertie believes is its salvation—total emphasis on economic matters. He is adding fuel to the funeral pyre of the EU.

Bertie is a true representative politician and he reflects the political desert of thought that characterises the Irish political class at present. The nearest thing it has to a vision for Ireland and the world is that of a society busy as bees, competing, hard-working individuals (non-smoking, of course) along the lines of those hyper-efficient anthills that one sees in nature. *Behold the Celtic ant!* But, despite their

wonderful enterprise, ants are no match for the ant-eater when he ambles by.

An elder statesman of Europe and its current Ambassador to the US, John Bruton, made a contribution to the *Irish Times* series:

“What is the EU for? The European Union is an instrument of policy, not a policy in itself; it is a tool rather than an objective. That tool may be used for new, and now unforeseeable, purposes in the future. We cannot, and should not attempt, to prescribe all those purposes in advance in any rigid document.

“The EU can achieve things that individual states are too small to achieve separately. It is also a guarantee of good internal democratic governance and security of member states. This EU “seal of approval” is so valuable that countries are queuing up to sacrifice some sovereignty in order to join the EU. The attractiveness of that EU “seal of approval” is one of the reasons why 13 countries—dictatorships when I entered

political life—are now democratic members of the EU.

“The needs of the 450 million EU citizens converge sufficiently for the EU to function effectively. This is because all of them, even the richest, have a vital interest in maintaining the validity of that seal of approval and in keeping legally enforceable access to one of the largest markets in the world.

“As to the boundaries of the union, I do not think these can be set in stone. In practice, all the citizens of the present EU have some shared history and identity. Some of that shared history goes back 2,000 years and some of it goes back to an EU meeting last week where some difficult problem was solved together by consensus. A shared history and identity is a growing and living thing. Its growth can be hastened, but only to a limited extent.

“The EU should leave the door of membership open, but explain that membership requires a deep, lasting commitment to develop a common history and identity together” (5.8.05).

So the EU is a sort of trademark, a label that one applies for after a country goes democratic. At least he did not have the neck to say that the EU caused these 13 countries to go democratic. So the EU was set up as a political standard-awarding agency for countries! And this is the role it is looking for in order to give it a great purpose and to keep it growing! The whole idea is too ludicrous for words. Mr. Bruton is promoted as one of the EU’s political heavyweights but that is clearly only true in the literal sense. Even Bertie has a vision that beats this.

Then another heavyweight joined in, Peter Sutherland (9.8.05).

I would not be surprised if Peter is having sleepless nights at the moment. His WTO is running into serious trouble as some of the larger nations (Brazil, India and China) wake up to the tricks and double standards that are being applied to them about free trade and protectionism. As a result, the next Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong seems set to go the way of all the others—down the plughole. The WTO only thrives in the little ideological world of Peter and his friends. And now his second great love, his version of the EU, seems set to follow the WTO.

Peter also sees the world through economic determinist eyes. He is very frustrated at the criticisms that the EU is now “Anglo-Saxon”, and free trade based, pointing out that the Treaty of Rome was for free trade:

“But the reality is that the Anglo-Saxon theories allegedly introduced by the constitutional treaty in fact go back to the Treaty of Rome. It was Germany who rightly insisted upon them at the outset and if anything they are expressed in more uncompromising terms in the Treaty of Rome than anywhere else.”

If these theories were the purpose of the project, then Britain should have had no problems in being a member then—but why was it not a member? Why did it oppose the whole project with contempt and set up an alternative—EFTA? Why did the Europeans not invite Britain to join then? Why did the leading European politician reject them ten years later when they first applied to join? Why doesn’t Peter ask himself these questions?

He seems incapable of seeing that this shows that the free trade principles of the Treaty were a means to an end for those that made them. They were not an end in themselves. Any trade policy is just that—a trade policy—to achieve an end. Peter, like Bertie, thinks the means is the end. And they simply do not see what the end was for the founders of the EU.

The British electorate at the moment would clearly prefer to eat grass than vote for whatever economic benefits the EU might bring them. But Peter will not face up to this. All British opposition must be explained away. We are told:

“Unfortunately, according to Eurobarometer polls, the British people are “less attached to Europe” than anyone else.

“Uniquely a minority, only 3 out of 10, apparently believe that the UK benefits from membership and a lower proportion than anywhere else think the EU “a good thing”.

“For many other Europeans this attitude is a very bad thing because it negatively affects Britain’s role and therefore it damages the EU as a result.

“One may draw consolation from the clear reality that British values line up well in political and social attitudes with the rest of Europe. This has been demonstrated among others by the Pew Institute research.

“One may conjecture that the British people are still open to be persuaded on the merits of the European project and indeed it might have been hoped that the opportunity to persuade could have been afforded by a referendum there.”

Why cannot he accept the facts that stand out a mile: Britain is in the EU but not of the EU and was never happy in it and never will be. The reason is simple. The EU project was designed to curtail and eliminate Britain’s balance-of-power

strategy in Europe, the strategy that that kept Europe divided and Britain Great for centuries. It was an attempt to change this situation and thereby alter the future history of Britain and Europe. Peter should really read some elementary pre-revisionist history book and he will clearly learn some things about the real world that are as relevant now as they were when written.

He asks: “*How is it that “the Brussels bureaucrats” can be, at the one time, demonised as free market ayatollahs in France and sometimes in Germany and yet in the United Kingdom they are considered as interfering busybodies determined to disrupt the market?*”

The answer is: because the issue is not about free or unfree markets—it is about Britain and Europe and all policies are good, bad, or indifferent in that context. Peter must really try to get head round that.

As “*president of The Federal Trust, a London-based think tank that studies the interactions between regional, national, European and global levels of government*”, he should put this matter on the agenda of their next meeting.

So what is Peter to do?

“It is time to get the show back on the road. Perhaps this crisis can still be considered as a salutary one but only if we learn from it. We can learn above all that if there is a disconnection between the people and the European Union the main culprits are to be found at home banging a jingoistic drum.”

This can only mean that it is Anthony Coughlan banging away on his Gestetner for over 30 years that has brought the EU to the state it’s in. What a compliment to him! And what an excuse for an analysis!

Jack Lane

China’s Currency continued

goods and clothes are in the same category. Is it any wonder they grumbled about China’s ‘under-valued’ currency?

Ireland does a roaring trade with China: it has “*risen by over 1,000 per cent in the last six years*”, and was “*worth Euro 4 billion in 2004*” (thirty years ago the Irish budget dealt in the hundreds or even tens of thousands of pounds—where is the statue to C.J. Haughey?).

The *IT*, illustrated this story with a photograph captioned, “*customer checks 100 yuan notes at an ATM in Beijing yesterday...*”. The (suspiciously crisp-looking) notes bear a portrait of one Mao Tse-tung (or Mao Zedong). Clearly China, on going on its big capitalist adventure, had and has no intention of cutting itself off from its past.

How different, how very different, from the ‘Celtic Tiger’.

Seán McGouran

Shorts

from

the Long Fellow

CRIME IRELAND

All credit must go to Tommie Graham, the editor of *History Ireland*, for facilitating the debate on Peter Hart's book *The IRA And Its Enemies*. But what are we to make of Hart's defence in the July/August edition of *History Ireland*? Instead of answering his critics he indulges in a homily on the evils of violence. Incredibly, he compares the IRA in the 1919-1921 war with the US Army in Iraq! Individual acts of violence are examined in isolation from their political and social context. The psychological antecedents of the perpetrators are investigated and then judgement is pronounced. The war of independence was not a "war" (an outbreak of crime perhaps?). He believes that those who "kill others... should be scrutinised very carefully indeed".

But unfortunately, those who accuse cannot be scrutinised at all. He has refused to identify the participants in the Kilmichael Ambush who allegedly claim that there was no false surrender even though these anonymous participants have long ago shuffled off this mortal coil.

It is time that *History Ireland* made an editorial comment on the infantile outpourings of this Canadian moralist.

THE "DOC"

The tragedy of Sean Doherty was that he was a small time politician who got out of his depth. When he was found out he couldn't retire gracefully. He took *Irish Times* journalist John Waters too seriously and assumed that there was some significance to his political demise. There wasn't. But for nearly ten years Doherty hinted darkly that he had a story to tell. After revealing a tit bit on a light entertainment programme he panicked and went slobbering into the arms of PR consultant Terry Prone whose husband was working for Albert Reynolds.

Prone convinced Doherty to tell a different story to what he had intended and he knifed Haughey allowing Reynolds to become Taoiseach. But why blame Prone? Doherty couldn't be trusted to tell a bigger story because he had no sense of perspective. He was small time.

His political friends must have cringed when they read Bruce Arnold's glowing obituary.

HARNEY BOOTS PHARMACISTS

You have to read *The Irish Times* very closely to get the real story. If you blink you could miss it and sometimes the real story isn't there.

Mark Hennessy under the headline *Harney Lifts Restrictions On Pharmacists* reports:

"Irish pharmacists who trained abroad will be able to run pharmacies in the Republic of Ireland following the decision by Minister for Health and Children Mary Harney to lift restrictions" (*The Irish Times*, 1.7.05).

And what could be more reasonable than that? But then in the fourth paragraph there is a small opinion piece which seems to indicate that there is more to the story than the headline and first paragraph indicated:

"However, the changes announced by Ms Harney, which have been the subject of major lobbying by pharmacists, will do little to boost competition in the sector, one of the most expensive in Europe. In particular she has refused to accept one of the key recommendations of the Pharmacy Review Group, which proposed that no chemist chain should own more than 8 per cent of the shops in any health board area."

So she is going against the recommendations of the Pharmacy Review Group and the pharmacist 'lobby' because she wants to boost competition, you understand.

The next paragraph opens with:

"All new pharmacists, whether Irish, or not will have to pass linguistic and "forensic competence tests, the Department of Health said last night."

So it's not just Irish pharmacists who trained abroad who will be able to run pharmacies as the first paragraph indicated, it's all foreigners. There follows a few more paragraphs of quotations from Harney's Department, but it is only in the last two paragraphs that we get to the nub of the issue:

"Expressing 'deep disappointment', the Irish Pharmaceutical Union said Ms Harney's failure to regulate the ownership of Irish chemist shops would hasten the end of local shops. 'The reality is that the only people who will benefit are big business who the Government seems determined to facilitate in buying up the sector' said Karl Hilton, president of the Pharmaceutical Union of Ireland.

" 'A pharmacist in Newry, or anyone else from Newry, can come down here and open up a shop, or a chain of shops tomorrow morning, but a pharmacist from the Republic cannot go the other way,' said general secretary of the IPU Seamus Feely last night."

It took a while, but now I understand. Harney thinks we need more Boots branches in Ireland.

THE LOONEY RIGHT

This magazine has already commented on the Competition Authority's damaging interference in the affairs of the Credit Unions (see December, 2004 Irish Political Review). It has now decided to get involved in the health service (*The Irish Times*, 6/6/05).

The State-financed Competition Authority is a sort of national equivalent of the World Trade Organisation. Its job is to ensure that the economy serves the capitalist interest. If an individual or organisation infringes "competition law" it doesn't hesitate to take legal action. The Irish Hospital Consultants Association (IHCA) is the latest target. Every year the IHCA, on behalf of its members, negotiates with the VHI the fees for consultants. The agreements are accepted by the other insurers in the market and 90% of consultants. It brings certainty and stability to the market and insurance companies can anticipate costs. Before there was chaos and the VHI had no idea what bills it would receive.

So the Competition Authority wants to go back to the old system. In the interests of the 'consumer', the VHI and perhaps the other insurers will have to negotiate individually with each consultant. Perhaps the Competition Authority wants the patients to negotiate individually with each consultant just before they enter the surgery for their heart by-pass operation. Why not? One of the benefits of the 'collective' agreement was that patients did not receive a 'top up' bill from consultants over and above what the VHI paid them. Presumably, if the Competition Authority has its way that old practice can be resumed.

Maybe I'm being unfair in saying that the Competition Authority acts in the capitalist interest. What it's doing in the health service is in nobody's interest, it is ideological lunacy.

MORE LOONEY TUNES

Last June Professor Brendan Drumm was appointed Chief Executive of the Health Service Executive. Apparently, Mary Harney is impressed by his ideas for reform.

What those ideas are is difficult to say because *The Irish Times* interview (18.6.05) with him is more in the nature of a 'Hello magazine' type description of the nail biting negotiations of his contract. He will be on a basic salary of 320,000 euros with a potential bonus of another 80,000.

Despite the generous salary it seems that nobody wants to be associated with the shambles that Mary Harney is presiding

over. According to Drumm, health service staff are “demoralised”. How morale will be improved by Drumm’s proposal to bring in his own ‘cabinet’ with him is not explained. An extra one million euros a year has been set aside for his 5 man team.

Included in the Drumm cabinet will be a business strategist (“how can we make money out people’s illnesses?”), and a “communications consultant”. Normally, this column would scoff at such appointments, but maybe he needs all the

help he can get.

The picture accompanying the interview shows Drumm with his arms outstretched in an imploring gesture. He is wearing a tie with the well known cartoon characters “Tweetybird”, “Sylvester the Cat”, “Daffy duck” and “Bugs Bunny” among others. It’s difficult to know what his communications consultant had in mind. “What’s up doc?”

Ehhh, that’s all folks! ■

Greaves And Connolly

I went to a meeting of the Desmond Greaves Summer School in Dublin on August 27th. It was the first meeting connected with Greaves or the Connolly Association that I had attended since the 1960s. Greaves did not welcome discussion or questions, and I had no wish to disrupt his devout get-togethers of the faithful few, so I kept well clear of him. There were matters relating to the real world, particularly with regard to Northern Ireland, that needed to be worked out, and it was not in association with Greaves that this could be done. His vocation was to convey the Moscow Line, as interpreted by the British Communist Party, to Ireland. This was done in the name of James Connolly. The Connolly Association in England was taken in hand by the Communist Party in the 1940s and Greaves was put in control of it. He made it a guiding principle that the Irish Government should not be criticised on Socialist grounds where the English could hear. He compared the national difference between the Irish and the English to the difference between cats and dogs. He devised a scheme to circumvent the Unionist working class by means of resolutions adopted by unrepresentative Trades Councils and Union Executives to make it appear that there was widespread consent to Irish unity which was being held in check by a reactionary Unionist ruling class. He presented Connolly as a latent Leninist. And he directed the Irish Left into a hostility to the European Union which accorded with Moscow’s interest, but made no rational sense in Ireland. The Power which was intent on curbing Irish national development was not Europe but Britain, and the anti-European line threw the Irish Left into alliance with Britain. This disorientating anti-Europeanism has been carried on by Greaves’ heirs down to the present, even though the Soviet regime

in which it originated has long gone.

The meeting of the Summer School I attended was on the subject of Greaves as a historian. It was chaired by Kevin Mc Corry, who was prominent in the Civil Rights agitation in the North back around 1970, and it was addressed by Brian Hanley and Mary Cullen, both of whom are academic historians. While praising him in general, both of them questioned his dismissal of the pretensions of academic history, his assertion that history is always written with a bias, and his failure to give any references in his biography of Liam Mellows. Anthony Coughlan, who seems to be his literary executor, said in reply to the latter point that Greaves’ attitude was that the academic historians might work it out for themselves if they had a mind to, but he wasn’t going to do their work for them. Which I thought was fair enough. The academic historians might carp but they did not produce. I can think of nothing of value that came out of the history departments of the Universities on the subjects which Greaves was investigating, or on any other subjects. The revisionist historians of later times inserted themselves into a vacuum.

Hanley was tentatively critical of Greaves’ treatment of Connolly as a Marxist whose position on the 1914 War was of a kind with Lenin’s and who was working his way towards Leninism. He said that Connolly eulogised Imperial Germany as a high civilisation which was effective because it was progressive; that his European counterpart was Pilsudski; that he justified German repression in Belgium as the fault of the Belgians; and that in 1914-16 he was not maturing into Leninism, and his participation in the Easter Rising was an act of despair.

(The last point, that Connolly took part in the Rising as an act of despair, echoes the view of Robert Lynd, whose Introduction to the 1916 reprint of *Labour In Irish History* was included in Communist Party editions of the work down to the 1980s. Lynd was one of the foremost war propagandists of the British press in the Autumn of 1914, and it must be presumed that his misrepresentation of Connolly as having lost his bearings under the pressure of the War was calculating and deliberate. It is unimaginable that he did not know that Connolly was a propagandist on the other side. His Introduction was British war propaganda designed to explain Connolly away as a bewildered man and to reduce him to the status of an icon. And, whether it suited the Communist Party to have it thus, or it just reprinted Lynd’s Introduction without reading it, I would not care to guess.)

Going on early experience of the Connolly Association and the atmosphere which Greaves generated around him, I decided to take no part in the discussion. The audience appeared to consist chiefly of old familiars of the Greaves circle, of which I only recognised Roy Johnston. None of them addressed the matters of Pilsudski and Germany raised by Hanley, but towards the end somebody who was not of the circle said that, if it was the case that Greaves misrepresented Connolly’s position on the War, how could he be trusted on anything else? Anthony Coughlan responded that, when Connolly went to war, it was natural that he should have some dealings with his enemy’s enemy. Jack Lane disagreed with this, saying Connolly’s admiration for Pilsudski was of long-standing, and that his relationship with Germany was not a mere military alliance but was a thoughtful and worked-out political position. And he thought that, instead of evading or apologising for Connolly’s position on the War, it should be accepted as the right position.

Coughlan did not comment on this, but it was too much for the speaker who had raised the matter. Hanley said he didn’t necessarily think the world would have been a better place if Germany had won the War. Look at South-West Africa, for example.

This comment must have been disillusioning for anybody who had been impressed by Hanley’s strictures on Greaves for his Cavalier attitude towards academic historians. Surely, if the critical pretensions of academic history are to be taken seriously, it should, when it raises a matter like this, present a well-founded

opinion on it, either in confirmation of Connolly's view or in refutation of it. But it looked to me as if Hanley had raised the matter as a kind of radical revisionist gesture, taking it for granted that all right-thinking people must see Connolly's position on the war as wrong, and that he was disconcerted when somebody, instead of arguing that it was not really Connolly's position, said that of course it was his position, and it was right.

There are two quite distinct parts to Connolly's position on the War: his account of its origins, and his support for Germany on socialist grounds.

Whether the world would be a better place if Germany had won the war than it was when Greater Britain, France and the USA won it is something that can never be demonstrated, either critically or otherwise. All we can know for certain is the consequences of the British victory, which were dire.

The war was actually won by the United States. The Tsarist ally crumbled in 1917 and Britain and France had no hope of winning. The United States had for years been supporting both of them with finance and war material and in 1918 it sent the Army to Europe, which won the war. It entered the war on the basis of President Wilson's *14 Points*, which the British Government did not reject at the time. But, once Germany was defeated, it gave Wilson the run-around and sent him home defeated, with his programme in ruins, and Congress refusing to accept the Versailles Treaty. And then Britain subverted the French attempt to make a European settlement which would probably have ensured some generations of peace by disabling Germany. It co-operated with France in humiliating Germany but refused to disable it because balance-of-power strategy decreed that it needed a strong Germany in order to prevent French hegemony.

The Italian Prime Minister, Francesco Nitti, who was a pre-war admirer of Britain, was appalled by what he saw of British post-war conduct at close quarters, and he publicly expressed the opinion that the European situation would not have been worse if Germany had won. And Nitti was about as close to being a well-informed and dispassionate observer as there was to be found among the belligerents.

I cannot see that South-West Africa was an issue in the War. The Herrero massacres had occurred a generation before the War as far as I recall, and the colony was conquered by South Africa

early on in the war. Much more to the point is German East Africa where the British were held at bay to the end of the War by a small German force, cut off from Germany by the Royal Navy, which organised an Army of Africans. The German General, Lettow-Vorbeck, was honoured by his African colleagues a couple of generations later, following the retreat of the British Empire.

But the consequences of a German victory can only be a matter of speculation. It should, however, be possible even for a well-trained academic historian in revisionist Ireland to form a well-founded opinion on Connolly's view of the cause of the Great War. Even if they are all irrevocably committed by higher considerations to the view that it would have been a catastrophe for the world if Britain had lost the War, surely they could still apply their critical faculties dispassionately to the question of who started it? After all, Bernard Shaw, who was as much a British warmonger as Robert Lynd, could still be of the opinion that Britain started it.

But perhaps he couldn't have taken that view if he had been an academic

historian.

Anyway Hanley did not appear to have an opinion on this rather serious matter, whose consequences are still working themselves out.

If the revisionists had taken on great issues like this, which nationalist historians evaded for half a century, they would have done something useful for the world. But the world is not their concern. They are only British provincials coping with an Irish aberration and trying to get things back to the *status quo ante*. And their mental horizon is set by Britain.

I was very surprised to feel, while listening to Hanley, that there was something to be said for Greaves after all.

Brendan Clifford

Connolly's view of Germany is detailed in *Connolly And German Socialism*, which was first published in 1982 under the title, *Connolly Cut-Outs*.

Connolly And German Socialism
by *Brendan Clifford*.

80pp.

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Connolly Column

Address by Manus O'Riordan on the launch of a new expanded edition of the classic history by his father, Michael O'Riordan, *Connolly Column, The Story Of The Irishmen Who Fought For The Spanish Republic*, at the Imperial War Museum, London, 12th March 2005

Chairperson and Friends,

My name is Manus O'Riordan and I am the Irish representative on the executive of the International Brigade Memorial Trust. I am indeed honoured to be here today representing my father, Irish International Brigader Michael O'Riordan, at this London launch of his book, *Connolly Column*. I am particularly honoured that chairing these proceedings is my father's comrade-in-arms from the 1938 Battle of the Ebro, the President of the IBMT, Jack James Larkin Jones. Among other British International Brigade veterans I am pleased to see present, I note that today we intend celebrating the 90th birthday of Sam Lesser, to whom I say *biz hundert un tzvantzik!* (May you live to be 120!).

It is furthermore a special honour to be in the presence of that other remaining Irish International Brigader Bob Doyle, now the sole Irish survivor of the Fascist concentration camp of San Pedro de

Cardeña, where he was imprisoned for a year following his capture along with his fellow-Dubliner the late Maurice Levitas and their commander-in-chief Frank Ryan. I am delighted that two members of the Levitas family are able to be present here today, Morry's sister Toby and his daughter Diana. And I also welcome Deirdre and Lynette, daughter and granddaughter of the Reverend Robert M. Hilliard, a Church of Ireland Pastor who was both an Irish Republican and an internationalist, and who gave his life in defence of the Spanish Republic at the 1937 Battle of Jarama.

Friends,

Six weeks ago saw ceremonies commemorating the victims of the Nazi Holocaust, as well as marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army. Among the press photographs from such ceremonies that were transmitted around the world was that of a

German Jewish ex-inmate, Kurt Goldstein, who is the Honorary President of the International Auschwitz Committee, as he finally allowed himself to weep on completing a commemorative address delivered with all the self-discipline and strength of character we know him to possess. For we ourselves also know Kurt Goldstein as our own comrade, one of those International Brigaders who had the foresight, conviction, commitment and courage to see that if Hitler was to be stopped, the war against fascism needed to be fought in Spain.

International Brigaders would themselves become targets and victims of the Holocaust, while many others would lose close relatives. The Irish Jewish International Brigader Maurice Levitas, whose obituary is carried as an appendix in this new edition of *Connolly Column*, was to lose his maternal aunt, together with her husband and two sons, in the Riga Holocaust; Morry's paternal aunt and all of her family were burned to death in the synagogue of the Lithuanian shtetl of Akmeyan; while his paternal uncle, whom he had visited *both en route* to and on his return from the Spanish War, was shot dead by the Gestapo right outside his own Paris home. And yet, for the very reason that Maurice Levitas had the audacity to try and prevent the triumph of fascism by taking up arms against it in Spain in 1938, he was discriminated against by the British Establishment, and debarred from joining the British Army when he wished to continue the fight against Hitler, having been judged and condemned as a "premature" anti-fascist. Forced to remain in London working as a plumber and denied the opportunity to put the military experience he had already acquired in Spain to good use, it was only in 1942 that Morry was finally permitted to enlist in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

As we head towards celebrations in May to mark the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe, it is incumbent upon us to reflect upon and learn from the lessons of history. For neither fascism nor the Holocaust sprang out of thin air. Nor had there been only one set of appeasers indulging the roots of such evils. During one period of warfare, when more than 100,000 Jews in the Ukraine and Russia had already been massacred, including the complete annihilation of one whole community of 1,500 souls, the Prime Minister of a country closely allied with their mass murderers began to express some qualms of conscience. Writing to his Secretary of War, who had been the

principal architect of that axis of evil, he voiced a certain amount of concern about "the treatment of Jews by your friends". But that same warmongering Minister, in the course of his reply, proceeded to justify those very massacres with the words: "There is a very bitter feeling throughout Russia against the Jews, who are regarded as the main instigators of the ruin of the Empire ... This feeling is shared by ... the army of the Don under Denikin". No, we are not talking of 1941, but of 1919, and that apologist for genocidal "ethnic cleansing" had been none other than Sir Winston Churchill.

And neither was 1939 the year in which fascism first waged war outside the boundaries of where it had come to power. Many years beforehand fascism had in fact already waged such wars on three different continents. Moreover, in the case of each of those wars, Churchill had been very much in favour of the fascist side: Japan against China, Italy against Abyssinia and Franco's revolt, supported by the intervention of the Hitler-Mussolini Axis, aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic. In September 1936 Churchill would justify his support of Spanish fascism with the words: "I am thankful that the Spanish Nationalists are making progress ... Better if the Communists are crushed". And since we are meeting today in the Imperial War Museum, it is worth noting an article on the Spanish Anti-fascist War in the "Army Quarterly" in October 1940, an article published under the Churchill regime and not that of Chamberlain. While recognising that the Spanish Republic had won the support of the vast majority of the population and that it was indeed the British-French embargo on arms for that Republic that had enabled Franco to triumph with massive military aid from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, that article derisively referred to the Republic as "the Reds", and unashamedly persisted in justifying a British policy that had resulted in the strangulation of the very first democracy that had dared to fight back against the onward march of fascism.

Nobody can ever take away from the inspirational leadership that Churchill gave to Britain itself during the course of the Second World War. But in these coming months of commemorative celebration it falls to bodies like the International Brigade Memorial Trust to set the record straight on appeasement, especially by honouring all those International Brigaders whom we are

indeed proud to call, not "premature", but farsighted anti-fascists. As our IBMT anthem so rightly proclaims:

"We are proud of our British Battalion
And the fight for Madrid that it made".

My father's book *Connolly Column* tells the story of the Irish International Brigaders who fought in both the British and American Battalions, and in particular the story of their leader Frank Ryan, who had written that he was fighting against Fascism in Spain in order to prevent it triumphing in Ireland itself. In recent years various revisionist academics in both Britain and Ireland have sought to slander Ryan's reputation. He has been called a collaborator by Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast, and a ruthless desperado and National Socialist (by which he means Nazi) by Robert Stradling of Cardiff University, while Roy Foster of Oxford University is more effete in his manner of expression, but effectively makes the same allegation with a snide reference to "the influence of Germany" on the career of Frank Ryan. A new appendix in this book makes use of the most up-to-date releases of British and German intelligence files in order to vindicate Ryan's reputation and good character. And, since going to press, further documentation has now come to light showing that it was none other than the British Government's own representative to the Franco junta in Burgos who had most strenuously agitated and pressed for a fascist execution of Ryan.

Seventy of Frank Ryan's Irish anti-fascist volunteers were to be killed in action throughout the length and breadth of Spain, 19 of them at the Battle of Jarama alone. In 1994 the late Peter O'Connor, the very last of Jarama's Irish survivors, would speak in their honour at commemorative ceremonies to mark the unveiling of a memorial over the mass grave of anti-fascist fighters in the Jarama valley's cemetery of Morata de Tajuña. In 1942 Peter had again left Ireland, with the objective of assisting war production in Britain. He was, however, prevented from entering this country when stopped by Special Branch detectives and questioned about his activities in both Ireland and Spain. Making no secret of the fact that he was an Irish Republican, but one who had completely broken with the IRA in 1934, Peter would further recount: "I told them ... as I was an anti-fascist and they were at war with German fascism, they need have no fear of me. Maybe I was too much of an anti-fascist for the establishment; they gave me short shrift and I was put on the

next boat home”.

The International Brigades united all that was best in the world under the common banner of humanity, irrespective of differences of creed or race. And it did the same in Ireland itself. The County Tyrone Catholic-born poet Charlie Donnelly had already fought against Eoin O’Duffy’s Blueshirt fascism on the streets of Dublin, and against Oswald Mosley’s Blackshirt fascism on the streets of London. When he was killed in the Battle of Jarama while fighting against fascism in Spain, fellow Irish poets from all traditions paid tribute to him in verses of their own. The Catholic poet Blanaid Salkeld coupled Donnelly’s name with that of another Jarama casualty, the Irish Protestant Republican, Rev. Bob Hilliard. The Dublin Jewish poet Leslie Daiken

grouped Donnelly with that great Spanish poet who had been murdered by the fascists, Federico Garcia Lorca, as well as with English poets Christopher Caudwell and John Cornford who had also fallen in the ranks of the International Brigades. And the Irish Protestant poet Ewart Milne, who served as an ambulance driver in Republican Spain, coupled Donnelly’s name with that of another friend, the German Jewish ambulance driver Izzy Kupchik. The latter’s death had been witnessed and described by George Green in correspondence with his wife Nan, and I am pleased that today’s launch of *Connolly Column* is so closely associated with the simultaneous launch of Nan Green’s own evocative memoirs, *A Chronicle Of Small Beer*. ■

The allies still expected the new Pope, Benedict XV, to become an ardent partisan and join in their crusade against Germany by issuing propaganda on their behalf. But the Pope declined to join their crusade.

In June 1915 a French journalist was granted an interview with Pope Benedict. This was subsequently published in the French paper *La Liberte* (and was reproduced in the *Catholic Bulletin* April 1930). This interview seemed to be largely concerned with attempting to get the Vatican to enter the politics of condemnation—against the German/Austrian side, alone, of course. It was felt that the Papacy should enlist its services as a propaganda organ of the allies in the crusade of Good against Evil.

The Vatican subsequently disputed some of the recording detail of the interview with the journalist, Monsieur Latapie, and declined to do interviews afterwards. But the content is illustrative of the allied design on the Papacy and Benedict’s resistance to it:

Benedict: “In the beginning of my Pontificate, I addressed to the whole world a letter in favour of peace, in which I earnestly begged and exhorted those ruling the destinies of nations to make up their differences and turn their energies to the welfare of mankind. I proposed a truce for Christmas Day; I laboured to effect an exchange of prisoners... I reprobated injustice of every sort, but I added that it would be neither useful nor prudent to mix up the Pontifical authority in disputes with the belligerents.

Latapie: “But it is a matter of crimes, not of disputes.”

Benedict: “Would you have me denounce every individual crime that is committed? Every one of your charges calls forth a counter-charge from the Germans. One cannot set up a permanent criminal court here, nor even hold an investigation, under the circumstances...”

Latapie: “But does not all the world know that numerous Belgian and French priests were made hostages and shot?”

Benedict: “I have had from the Austrian bishops a statement to the effect that the Russian army also had made Catholic priests hostages, and on one occasion had compelled 1,500 Jews to form a living wall between themselves and the enemy’s fire. The... Italian army has already taken eighteen Austrian priests as hostages...”

Latapie: “But the burning of Louvain? And the bombardment of Rheims?”

Benedict: “The Germans reply that their troops had been first fired on, and they declare that there was an observation post on the turrets of the cathedral in

The Irish Catholic And Benedict XV

Part Two

Italy And The Great War

The *Irish Catholic* continued its review of *Benedict XV And World War I* in its edition of 25th April 2005. This time, however, it enlisted the services of more intellectual weight in the shape of the Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Oliver Rafferty, at Maynooth.

Rafferty blames the lack of Vatican influence on the belligerents at the start of the Great War on Pius X’s (1903-14) efforts against the Modernists (including Benedict) in the Church:

“Part of the problem was that under Pope Pius X the political authority of the Papacy had, among non-Catholic powers, dropped to a very low ebb. This was partly as a result of the Modernist crisis, when the Vatican’s apparent rejection of attempts to reconcile Catholicism and a certain type of scientific inquiry, left many independent observers agog. The methods employed to stifle debate in the Church weakened the Church’s moral authority in a world now tearing itself apart by war. At one level, therefore the Holy See could not possibly hope to influence the activities of either the Central Powers or the Allies.”

This view is very much in conflict with what Francesco Nitti had to say about the influence of the Vatican (toward the end of Pius’s Pontificate in 1911). On the eve of the Great War the Pope, argued Nitti, was free for the first time to pursue a principled policy in line with Catholic moral doctrine. This was because the Vatican, having been reduced to a church

by Italian nationalists, no longer had state interests to balance up with Catholic policy. At this very time the Papacy also was becoming more influential in Europe, because the Catholic masses were becoming more powerful as democracy developed and the power of the oligarchies declined.

One also wonders what effect the conflict between Traditionalists and Modernists within the Roman Church had on Britain’s decision to wage war in August 1914—the thing that made the European war a Great War—and how a Modernist in the Vatican may have persuaded Edward Grey otherwise? That is also leaving aside the anti-Catholic Governments of the other main belligerents, Russia, Germany and France.

It was not the Vatican’s effect on rulers and a government that was a concern for the belligerents—it was its potential moral effect on the masses that were needed as cannon fodder in the first mass democratic war. And particularly by the *Entente*, whose masses—unlike those of Germany, and Austria/Hungary—were being enlisted in a crusade inspired by propaganda of a highly moralistic kind.

The Vatican had immense potential moral force in this situation so the *Entente* set about narrowing the parameters within which the Pope operated so that the Holy See possessed as little real power or influence on the masses as possible.

Rheims...”

Latapie: “But the Lusitania? Here we have innocent victims not belligerents?”

Benedict: “But do you think that a [British—P.W.] blockade closing round two Empires and condemning millions of innocent human beings to starvation is inspired by very humane feelings?...”

Latapie: “Holy Father, we were painfully impressed in France when we learned that the Holy See was endeavouring to keep Italy neutral. Did this not amount to promoting the designs of German neutrality?”

Benedict: “I decidedly admit we were neutralists... We desired peace... because we wish peace to reign among men... we wished to spare this country, which we love, the sufferings of war... Finally, we do not wish to conceal the fact that we are mindful of the interests of the Holy See. War imperils those interests...”

Latapie: “Is the Pope not free? In virtue of the Law of Guarantees, can he not freely exercise his mission?”

Benedict: “...We hear a bell of but one tone. Our relations with the enemy nations of Italy have been practically suppressed. Their accredited representatives have had to leave Italy. We have confidence in the present government but we dread to see ourselves exposed to the uncertainties of Italian politics. Rome is a hotbed of perpetual ferment. Do you imagine it would be absurd to fear that revolution may have its day? How will they behave in case of victory? ...Do you now understand we were opposed with all our might to the ending of Italian neutrality?”

The British and French wanted the Pope to aid their secular crusade by condemning particular, i.e. German, wrongs in his capacity as supreme judge in matters of morals. But in the days before the “*war for small nations*”, when small nations had had their day and the love of them was not a concern, as at the time of the war on the Boer Republics, the Vatican’s condemnations would surely not have been welcomed.

This secular crusade for Good against Evil depended much on propaganda being believed by neutral nations. But the Pope, the supreme arbiter in the world over issues of good and evil, at least as far as the Catholic democracies were concerned, did not give his *imprimatur* to the crusade of good over evil and characterised the war as one, instead, of Evil versus Evil. So the moral standing of the crusade, which was everything to a crusade that sought to enlist a sceptical world in its ranks, was incomplete. The Italian masses were therefore unavailable as cannon fodder.

To counteract the moral authority of the Papacy on the Catholic masses the *Entente* by-passed the Italian democracy, to make secret deals amongst the oligarchic elite, and set peaceful Italy into turmoil, undermining the Pope’s freedom of action.

The British naval attack on the Dardanelles in early 1915 had a dual purpose. It was meant as an assault on the Ottoman Turks *and* as a demonstration of ‘shock and awe’ that would impress and persuade Italy into the war.

By attacking the Dardanelles England was sending out a signal to those who were keeping out of the war that it was intent on a reordering of the Middle East and the Balkan regions when it had won the war. And it would be rewarding its friends with the scraps of victory at the expense of its enemies, and the neutrals, when it got round to distributing the spoils. (Dr. E.J. Dillon’s columns from Italy for the *Daily Telegraph* during 1914-5 reveal British strategy implicitly.)

It was one of the fundamentals of pre-war British foreign policy, after its re-orientation towards regarding Germany rather than France as enemy no. 1, to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance, so that Germany could be isolated and encircled. Italy had been a member of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria since 1882. It had joined Germany to gain Bismarck’s protection against France and had achieved much of its political stability and economic development in alliance with Germany prior to 1914. But when war broke out Italy decided not to fight alongside its allies, because through a clause in the Triple Alliance she was not required to do so if Great Britain was in the field against them. Italy had also made a secret agreement with France in 1902 to the effect that it would enter no war against France.

But Italian neutrality was not enough for England. From the start of the war Britain set to work to entice the Italians into the ranks of the *Entente* and against their former allies so that Germany and Austria could be encircled.

It was in the British interest to expand and escalate the war it had entered into to destroy Germany as much as possible, just as it was in the interests of Germany to keep it limited to as few belligerents as possible, and let peaceful nations be. In this sense the Papacy appeared to be pro-German since it desired to limit the effects of the war and bring it to a fast and peaceful resolution.

England had to apply its entire military, propagandist, financial, and diplomatic resources to get Italy into the war, as it was generally believed by the majority of Italians that nothing good would come of participation in the slaughter. But Britain had control of the Press Agencies, which determined what appeared in the Italian newspapers. And vast amounts were spent in this matter.

E.J. Dillon described very well, from the British perspective, the situation in Italy in his 1916 book *Ourselves And Germany*:

“At first all Italy was opposed to belligerency. Deliberate reason, irrational prejudice, religious sentiment, political calculation, economic interests and military considerations all tended to confirm the population in its resolve to keep out of the sanguinary struggle. The Vatican, its organs and agents, brought all their resources to bear upon devout Catholics, whose name is legion and whose immediate aim was the maintenance of peace with the Central empires.” (*Ourselves And Germany*, pp190-1.)

The lever used by the Allies to bring Italy into the war was the “*irredenta*”. Some Italian nationalists were in favour of joining the war on the side of France and England in order that “*Italia irredenta*” would be redeemed. The “*irredenta*,” or unredeemed, was the territory between the Northern boundary of Italy and the Alps, including the Trentino and Tyrol regions, and a stretch of land between Eastern shore of the Adriatic and the mountains behind it, now part of the Croatian State, known as Dalmatia. Mazzini had defined these territories as Italian, although they lay outside of the frontiers of the Italian State formed in 1870. They had remained part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire when the Italian State was formed, and were composed of a mixed nationality. Italian was the language of the majority, but the regions also included large numbers of Germans and Croats. The Irredentist view was that the incorporation of these regions within the Italian State would complete the *Risorgimento*. Prior to the war, the Italian desire to redeem the “*irredenta*” seemed to have declined and Italians had put their minds to other matters. But there was still a strong irredentist undercurrent in Italy and the *Entente* applied their efforts into encouraging it as a means to lever Italy into the war on their side.

The major centre of opposition to Italian participation in the war was, as Dillon noted, the Vatican. Benedict XV,

who had become Pope at the start of the war, had declared for neutrality and this was very important because it effectively countered, from the highest authority, the Nationalists' Catholic moral propaganda in favour of "*Catholic Belgium*", which aimed to get Italy to join the war.

The Vatican had been in conflict with the Italian State since its foundation. In 1870 Italian nationalists availed of the Pope's loss of French protection—when Napoleon III withdrew his army to attack Prussia—and occupied the Papal States. The Laws of the Guarantee of 1871 imposed on the Pope the rights of a sovereign without territory, declaring the Papal residences the property of the Italian State. In response to the ending of the Vatican's independence Pius IX and his successors refused to go outside the Vatican (until Mussolini settled the conflict in 1929 by accepting Pius XI as sovereign of his own state and territory) and forbade Catholics to take part in elections to the Italian legislature.

But in the years leading up to the Great War a kind of functional compromise had been worked out which produced a patriotic clergy and a national Catholicism with Catholics participating in national politics as Italians. And Italy's decision to remain neutral at the start of the war undoubtedly brought Church and State closer together. Giolitti, the pre-war Italian Prime Minister, had remarked that the Roman Question was dead.

In 1915, with the war not progressing as well as the Liberal Imperialists imagined it would, it was decided to step up efforts to throw the Italian democracy into the melting pot to aid the British interest.

Dillon described the important obstacle the Vatican presented to the British design in his 1915 book, *From The Triple To The Quadruple Alliance*:

"On the outbreak of the war the Allied Powers were practically unrepresented at the Vatican. The Belgian Minister, a venerable old man whose diplomatic career was drawing to a close, wielded no influence there. Russia's representative, M. Nelidoff, was tolerated, but in his quality of schismatic and spokesman of a nation of proselytizing schematics whose aim is supposed to be the crushing out of Catholicism in the Tsardom, his voice carried no weight. Great Britain as a Protestant State and France as an anti-Catholic Republic, were without envoys. The Teutons on the contrary, were in force... Moreover the great power in

Europe which identifies itself with Catholicism is the Hapsburg Monarchy. Within the boundaries of this State the Church and its institutions have free scope for their activity and are efficiently protected by the strong arm of secular power. And so long as Austria endures, the Church may continue to thrive and dream of better things in retrospect and prospect, but with the disappearance of the Hapsburg Monarchy from the rank of the Great Powers, the last stronghold of Catholicism among European States will have passed into the hands of an enemy." (pp187-8.)

Sir Henry Howard, from the old English gentry Catholic family, arrived in Rome in January 1915 as Envoy Extraordinary of the British Embassy (temporary) to mount a diplomatic assault at the Vatican. But at the same time, Britain played a double game.

Benedict found his freedom of action drastically curtailed as British pressure grew on the Italian Government. The Italians intrigued hard to prevent the Vatican from getting any increase in international prestige and profile from opposing the war. They also continuously opposed Benedict's humanitarian gestures—such as donations of relief to suffering civilians on both sides and the organisation of prisoner releases—putting practical difficulties in the way of many of his initiatives.

The Pope became very much a prisoner within the Vatican's walls and was at the mercy of Italy's anti-clerical and Masonic politicians. The Italian High Command and the Censorship Office broke all the, primitive, Vatican codes and intercepted its telegraph traffic. The security of the Vatican's diplomatic mail was constantly violated. The Italian police effectively spied on the Pope and Curia without hindrance. At one point it was suggested the Pope move to Spain as fears for his safety grew but Benedict resisted such a suggestion.

Benedict's strenuous efforts to keep Italy from joining the war were thwarted in April 1915 when a secret agreement was concluded between Britain, France and Russia, as part of the bribe to get Italy to join "*the war for small nations*".

Under this Treaty Italy was to have Trentino, Istria, Dalmatia, and some islands off Greece to make the Adriatic an Italian waterway. It also was to receive colonies in Asia and Africa and fifty million pounds to fight the war. Under the Secret Treaties Russia was to get the

Straits, Constantinople, and adjacent districts. France was to get Alsace-Lorraine and the left bank of the Rhine. Britain was to be rewarded by the destruction of the German navy, merchant marine, and its small colonies. Altogether, the Allies were to destroy the "*economic power of Germany*".

The fifteenth article of the Treaty provided that these three Powers "*will support Italy in opposing any and every diplomatic step on the part of the representatives of the Holy See for the conclusion of peace or in regard to questions arising out of the present war*".

The Treaty, known as the *Treaty of London*, was kept secret until the Bolsheviks took power in Russia and revealed the Secret Treaties of the Allies. These proved that the *Entente* propaganda about the aims of their war—"*the war for small nations*"—was no more valid than the assertions made about the events of the Summer of 1914.

The Treaty of London made sure that Britain and its allies would not only share the spoils but also dictate a moral judgement over the vanquished at the end of the war. The Vatican would not have a voice or influence on the type of Europe set up upon an *Entente* victory. There would be no moral restraint on the victors on what they would do to Germany, Austria/Hungary, and Turkey.

Oddly enough Catholic Ireland, although not party to the secret deal, helped bring it about.

There was awareness within the Irish Party leadership that Catholic Ireland held a uniquely pivotal position in the British plan to entice Italy into the war. Redmondite Ireland went along with the British policy and aided it with the object of securing Home Rule at the end of the war.

Redmondite Ireland helped in the creation of a climate in Europe within which it was almost impossible to allow the continued existence of neutrals. It actively assisted in Italy's enticement by sending a strong delegation to Paris to put on a show of Catholic solidarity as the Italian Government signed up to the crusade. It did this to communicate the impression to Catholic Italy on the eve of its announcement of hostilities that the Freemason Government in France, that had once boasted it would "*put out the lights of heaven*", had, with France's participation in the blood-sacrifice at the front, returned to the old faith.

Our current historians, who rant against the bloodshed of the Easter Rising, have no problem with Ireland helping to extend and escalate the war and encourage Italy's participation in it. Italy lost 500,000 men and 1,000,000 wounded as a result of joining the crusade against Germany and Austria/Hungary. And its political system was broken up into its elements as a consequence—and the result was Mussolini.

The English historian and propagandist, R.W. Seton-Watson in his 1938 book, *Britain And The Dictators*, described the relationship between the Treaty of London, the Great War, Versailles, and the post-war Fascist takeover by Mussolini. In his account he is keen to dismiss Italian rights to the spoils of war promised by England:

“This Treaty was of capital importance for the whole future settlement: for on the one hand it violated those rights and interests of small nations to which the Allied Statesmen had paid repeated and emphatic lip-service, while on the other hand it tied their hands towards Italy, and when in due course events made exact fulfillment impossible, gave her an obvious grievance and a strong legal case... No one, indeed, could read the text of the Treaty without realising that it was quite irreconcilable with the public definition of peace terms issued by the Allies in answer to President Wilson's inquiries in December 1916. At the same time it is important to note that the real motive force of Italy's entry into the war was not the tortuous diplomacy of Sonnino... but the spontaneous outburst of popular feeling in Italy, voiced by three such different figures as D'Annunzio, Bissolati and Mussolini (who had shaken off his Socialist and Syndicate antecedents and was making of the Popolo d'Italia the organ of ultra-radical opinion). But this made it all the more deplorable that, behind the back of opinion in all countries, a discreditable bargain should have been concluded which was never legally annulled, and which, at a moment when national hysteria and territorial greed were throwing their shadow over the high professions of idealism at the Peace Congress, could be represented as Italy's hardly earned reward and just rights, of which unscrupulous allies were seeking to rob her...”

“On a pure basis of nationality and self-determination, Italy had no case whatever against either Yugoslavia or Greece: and the Treaty of London was in many respects the most immediately Imperialistic of the whole bunch of secret conventions. But for this the allies were equally, if not more, to blame: they had undertaken commitments which could

not be reconciled with their public pledges... Thus the Italian people emerged from the Great War in a mood of cynical disillusionment and scarcely less exhausted than the beaten foe.

“There can be no doubt that Italy's discomfiture in the field of foreign policy increased the neurasthenia from which the masses were suffering, as the result of so gigantic an effort... Parliamentary Government never recovered from the fatal eclipse of May 1915, when war was forced upon the Government at the insistence of ‘the street’ (la Piazza), in the teeth of a strong majority among the Deputies. Mussolini denounced Parliament as ‘the bubonic plague which is poisoning the nation's blood, and needs to be extirpated’, now set himself to organise a movement in every village and at every street corner that would meet violence with violence, a revolt from the Left by a revolution from the Right—this a revolution based upon rigid discipline and upon the assumption that Democracy and Liberalism are played out and must be replaced by some new and more abiding political force...”

“If from the very first Mussolini insisted on the revolutionary character of his movement, he really secured power at the supreme crisis by a process not altogether dissimilar from that which brought Italy into the war in 1915” (pp147-57).

The way in which Italy went to war in May 1915 had the effect of seriously undermining constitutional politics in the country. Parliament was proved not to be sovereign since the will of the people was taken to be the popular expression on the streets. It was a precedent that was to be taken up again in Mussolini's march on Rome and coming to power in 1922. As Sir Charles Petrie commented in his *Lords Of The Inland Sea*, it “proved to be the beginning of the end of the Liberal regime in Italy... Parliament was not necessarily synonymous with Italy” (p19).

The enticement of Italy into the war, aided by Redmondite Ireland, coupled with the Treaty of London and its subversion by England after the war was over, had disastrous political effects in Italy—and ultimately for Europe, and the British Empire.

The only person who does not bear responsibility for the state of post-war Europe and its descent into another catastrophic conflict was Benedict XV who struggled vainly against Britain to prevent the chain of events that occurred from happening. (To be continued)

Pat Walsh

Justice For Captain Kelly

*An Open Letter to Michael
McDowell TD, Minister of Justice*
21 August 2005

Dear Mr. McDowell,

I have been instructed by the October Fifth Association, a national and global network of 1968 Civil Rights, veterans and supporters, to write to you on the above campaign. It is an initiative undertaken by concerned veterans, in the weeks following the sad passing of former Irish Army intelligence officer, Capt. James J. Kelly (1929-2003), who was one of the co-accused in the high-profile Arms Trial of 1970.

Although he and his co-accused were acquitted, several matters, relating not only to Capt. Kelly, have been left to fester, without official resolution, to an extent which we consider to be our nation's shame. Therefore, this letter, to you personally, and other known interested recipients who have visited our website: www.captainkelly.org or communicated by other means.

I personally, on an entirely voluntary basis, as hon. Secretary, have spent many months in research. Thereby, I have discovered various facts which are most disturbing. I am, and many other people, are totally convinced that Capt. J.J. Kelly was made a scapegoat. He and his family suffered greatly as a direct result of carrying out his official duties, sanctioned by the then Taoiseach and his Cabinet, regardless of later denials, and what can only be described as a selfish “cover-up”.

We are thankful that God spared him long enough to see with his own eyes, in 2001, documents, many marked ‘Secret’ which confirmed his own suspicions, after such were made freely available in our National Archives. Alas, his poor health drained him of the energy necessary to pursue his 30+ years struggle for Truth and Justice.

On his death on July 16th 2003, no doubt others may have wished that certain issues would be buried with him amongst the historic patriot graves in Glasnevin Cemetery. Maybe that might have been so, but his cries for Truth and Justice continued to be heard, and we to-day feel highly honoured to take up that standard, on his behalf, and that of his seriously-ill widow, family, friends in the Irish Army, and many more, world-wide, besides.

My research reveals:

* The original transcript of the Trial has gone “missing”, and may never have been lodged with the National Archives, or was removed before the 30-year ‘State Secrets’ embargo elapsed, in 2001.

* That the entire trial was recorded on

tape, paid for by the Department of Finance, and that this too has gone "missing", as the tapes are not at the National Archives, where they should be for public inspection and possible further investigation. Were these also removed immediately before the embargo elapsed? Who authorised such a removal, and in whose interests was such action taken? Certainly not in the interests of Capt. Kelly or his long-suffering family circle!

That around 20% of a statement, written by Capt. Kelly, his immediate superior, Col. Hefferon, who was not on trial, was deliberately deleted, and although a pivotal document, was never fully presented in open court. I use the word "deliberately", as this was not a matter of a "last page" going "missing", rather, the deletions were made to key paragraphs, throughout Col. Hefferon's personal statement of fact.

The late Col. Hefferon, at the close of the Trial made it known to Capt. Kelly, that what eventually was presented, was rather "selective", and the names of key players in this affair, were obviously removed. The original statement of Col. Hefferon can be viewed at the National Archives, should you care to question what I state herein.

It is also of interest to note that the Colonel, was ordered to prepare a statement for the Trial. He was subsequently blocked from entering his office, to view his own files. What he wrote was based on his memory, which must surely have been very sharp indeed to have warranted 20% of the statement being deliberately deleted. This was not some young typist's error, but quite obviously occurred because what was written did not please certain people, at the very highest levels of the State. That is something that should concern every Irish citizen, not least a Minister for Justice, An Taoiseach and Cabinet Ministers, the Attorney General, Mr. Rory Brady, An Garda Síochána and the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, regardless of the personalities, or the current politics, involved in a coalition government. A copy of this letter will be mailed to all of the afore-mentioned, and others who have expressed an interest in our campaign for Truth and Justice—the supposed pillars of any, and every, democratic republic.

There are many other points that I could add, but I feel it would be best to offer to send you, in your capacity as Minister of Justice, a dossier, which includes original Irish Army documents, previously stamped "Secret", *Et al.*, in addition to DVDs based on two programmes produced by RTE's *Prime Time*

Allied Bombing Of France Towards The End Of World War II

The following letter failed to find publication in *The Irish Times*

Desmond Fennell (10th inst) writes of Hiroshima that "The agreed morality and law of the West at the time forbade any deliberate act of indiscriminate massacre and held such an act to be a grievous sin and a heinous crime. This ethical and legal principle admitted of no exception, no possible justifying circumstances or motives."

Dear Desmond, would that it were so! Recently, perusing my Lonely Planet for France while there on hols, I was suddenly seized of an entry, for a south western coastal town and resort, Royan. The entry informed me that Royan had been "flattened by allied bombing in early 1945 and rebuilt after the war..."

Sorry? Early 1945? But were not the allies, from east and west at that point racing deep into Germany? Was not the war at this point virtually over? What had the Atlantic south west to do with the capture of Berlin? There had to be a mistake, a printing error! But it turned out, no.

There were two very big raids on Royan, a 19th century beach resort and reputedly the home of sunbathing, in early 1945: one in January (night of 4/5) by RAF Bomber Command and the second in April by the 8th USAAF. Together they "flattened" the resort, wiped it off the map. The explanation for this concerted action was the presence in the Bordeaux/Royan area of a pocket of German troops stranded after the German withdrawal from France. The January raid by the RAF (350+ planes dropping more than 1,500 tonnes of high explosive) destroyed most of the town, resulted in many hundreds of civilian casualties and little cost to the Germans: none of their defences were destroyed.

The April raid by the USAAF was carried out over three days (April 14, 15 and 16) deploying a force of more than 1,300 bombers with for obvious reasons no fighter escort necessary. On at least two of those days (April 15 and 16), the bomb load comprised napalm bombs, it is said to have been the first use in Europe of napalm and it was against a civilian population. What little had been left by the RAF was incinerated by the USAAF. Again the cost to the Germans was negligible although they did surrender two days later however by then the war was practically over and Hitler would be dead in days. In January and April it was known that the town had not been depopulated of civilians and yet the raids went ahead. The role of the Free French military authorities in all of this is also highly questionable.

We know something of all of this because of the outrage following the RAF attack and the presence in the American raid of a then bombardier and now retired academic but active political radical, Howard Ziff. Ziff (and indeed other crew men) wrote about Royan after they discovered what those strange bombs (no smoking in flight) actually were that they carried on those raids.

Was this a one-off? No: we now also know about the sustained firebombing of civilian centres in Japan and Germany. We have the remarkable testimony of Robert MacNamara in *The Fog of War*. And we also know it from the story of the late William Douglas Home, the playwright and younger brother of the later to be British PM, Sir Alec Douglas-Home. He refused in September 1944 to participate in the assault on Le Havre after the allies turned down a German request for a ceasefire to allow civilian evacuation. He justified his refusal to obey orders on the ground that participation in the assault would make him guilty of a war crime. When he publicised this in the press, he was court-martialled, stripped of his rank and sentenced to a year's hard labour, first at Wormwood Scrubs and then at Wakefield. He defended his conduct ever after, though his eventual appeal for a review of the case failed in 1991.

So Desmond, there were exceptions, unfortunately plenty.

F. O'Raghallaigh (submitted to IT for publication, 11 August 2005)

Editorial Note: As far as we know Royan is among a number of French towns bombed in this way towards the end of the Second World War. Information about the matter is to be had, not from English history books, but from travel guidebooks.

team, in 2001. Other *prima facie* evidence available, strongly supports the contention that these matters can not simply be swept under the Establishment's carpets, or totally ignored for one convenience or another.

It is our hope that after considering the dossier, assuming that you will take up my offer to study such, that you too will come to the realization, that this is "*An extraordinary story of injustice*", to quote Tony Benn, a former Labour MP and Minister. The historian and commentator, Tim Pat Coogan, Glengearry, Co. Dublin, in his communions with us, wrote, "*This man*

[Capt. Kelly] is the Irish Dreyfus. His name should be cleared". Kevin McNamara MP, writing from the House of Commons echoed our own feelings on these issues: "*We cannot erase the past but that should not prevent our striving for Justice for those whose reputation has been cruelly besmirched. Captain Kelly deserves Justice, even if he cannot be here to see it.*" Yours truly,

Fionnbarra O Dochartaigh, BA [Hons.], A son and nephew of decorated Tan War Veterans; Co-founder, N. Ireland Civil Rights Assoc. [1967]; CKJ Campaign Manager; Email: oct5th_vets68@hotmail.com

A Know-nothing Review:

Brendan O Cathaoir On *The Catholic Bulletin*

Brian Murphy's *The Catholic Bulletin And Republican Ireland: With Special Reference To J.J. O'Kelly ('Sceilg')* was sent to the *Irish Times* for review. It beats me why such things are done. The *Irish Times* is a paper with a political mission, and it is controlled by an Oath-bound political Directorate. Its mission is now, as it has been ever since 1921, to restrict as much as it possibly can the development of nationalist Ireland away from the English mother-country. And that mission most definitely does not include publishing informative reviews of a journal which contributed substantially to that development.

Books on Irish affairs are rarely reviewed by the *Irish Times* unless they either contribute to eroding the Irish national development, or a report of them can be made to contribute to that erosion. A review of Murphy's book was published for the latter reason on 23rd July. The reviewer was Brendan O Cathaoir, of whom I know nothing beyond this review—which is sufficient as it is a Know-nothing piece. Here it is in its entirety:

"JJ O'Kelly ('Sceilg') was a man of high but narrow intelligence. He was a Gaelic evangelist, Sinn Féin ideologue, and editor of the *Catholic Bulletin*. He formed part of the Sinn Féin rump which entrusted the grail of the republic to the IRA army council in 1938. Two years later O'Kelly was praising Hitler for freeing Germany from the "heel" of the "Jewish white slave traffic". The weed of anti-Semitism had been nurtured earlier. In 1916 the *Bulletin* promoted a series of articles alleging ritual killings with a poster which read "Murder by Jews". The publication of Murphy's research is a reminder that it is time for republican militarism to go away."

Murphy's book was written as a Thesis at University College, Dublin 20 years ago. Another Thesis on an overlapping subject was produced at UCD about the same time: *Language And Religion: The Quest For Identity In The Irish Free State 1922-30*, by Margaret O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan's dismissive view of the *Catholic Bulletin*, depicting it as matter for ridicule, has been made orthodox for revisionism by Roy Foster. She writes:

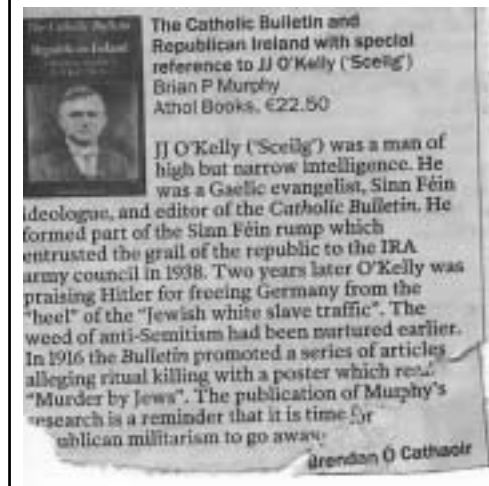
"The *Catholic Bulletin* which appears to have acquired a historical curiosity value—perhaps because of its extremism and bombastic pedantry—far in excess of its actual significance at the time is a publication that can be viewed as representing merely the most hysterical and distorted fringe of the tradition from which it came. It does however provide a key to an understanding of the sense of cultural inferiority that disoriented and confused many Irishmen..."

"In effect it represents a magnified and corrupted monument to the basest insecurity of the post-colonial society in pursuit of identity" (pp136 & 138).

I think the best description of that is wrong-headed, which is I suppose an advance on O Cathaoir's Know-nothingism. (Is Know-nothingism an understood term these days? I bring it with me from the backwardness of the old, self-confident rural Ireland that both O'Callaghan and O Cathaoir transcended in their elevation to the Anglosphere (a word which I first heard a couple of days ago in John O'Sullivan's exposition of the virtues of Imperialism on BBC radio). It comes from American politics around the time of the Civil War.

I first heard of the *Catholic Bulletin* about 40 years ago when, in search of information on something else entirely, I was directed to a Repository—a shop

Below is O Cathaoir's review, the same size as appeared in *The Irish Times* (23.7.05)



selling graven images and superstitious relics—around the corner from the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin. The proprietor, MacGiolla Phadraig, told me what I wanted to know, and then engaged me in a long conversation about the dynamic of Irish political affairs in the 1930s. He said I would never get to understand it through Marxist sources and should read the *Catholic Bulletin*. I was not inclined to read anything with 'Catholic' in the title, but MacGiolla Phadraig was an impressive individual and I did so. I found it at least equal in quality to the very best English political magazines. It ceased publication at the end of 1939 and has never had a replacement. I learned things from English Imperialist magazines even though I could never be an Imperialist, and I learned things from the *Catholic Bulletin*, even though I found when I was very young that I could never be a Catholic.

Murphy's book, which deals with the early years of the *Bulletin*, is travestied by O Cathaoir. I am familiar only with its last decade—its series on *Irish Fascism* when Fine Gael declared itself Fascist, for example. O Cathaoir's Know-nothing gibberish would be a suitable entry-point for a treatment of the early 1930s to supplement Dr. Pat Walsh's treatment of the late 1930s in a pamphlet of *Catholic Bulletin* extracts.

Brendan Clifford

PS: I was informed much later by Manus O'Riordan that MacGiolla Phadraig, from amidst his plaster saints, produced satirical anti-Fascist verses in ridicule of the Volunteers which Fine Gael sent to fight for Franco.

The Catholic Bulletin And Republican Ireland with special reference to J.J. O'Kelly ('Sceilg') by

Dr. Brian P. Murphy *osb.*

314pp, Illus. Bibliog. Index. ISBN 1 0 85034 108 6. Athol Books, 2005

Euro 22.50, Sterling 18 postfree

The Politics Of Pre-War Europe: *The Catholic Bulletin on Peace, War And Neutrality, 1937-1939.*

Introduction: *Pat Walsh.*

92pp. ISBN 874157 06 5.

A Belfast Magazine. November 2004.

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Green (not RED) Sticky Bile About Haughey

The *Sunday World's* 'Ulster edition' does not carry a Readers' Letters' column, much less page. Even if it had, Hugh Jordan's rant in the edition of 10th July might have passed over the heads of many SW readers. This is partly because he was writing about a programme shown on RTÉ television, about the career of Charlie Haughey. Jordan seemed to be implying in this piece that the hagiographical series on Dessie O'Malley shown some time previously was acceptable. O'Malley, the founder of the PDs (Progressive Democrats), apparently for reasons of injured vanity, has been implicated in the Goldman Sachs scandal (suppressed by the spineless 'Irish' media), and in the importation of arms for Catholics in the North in 1969.

O'Malley, whose PD party attracted a number of 'law and order' Fine Gaelers, has always allowed Haughey, (Neil Blaney, and Kevin Boland) to carry the can on that matter. Though it is obvious to anyone who chooses to think about the matter for even a few seconds that the whole Oireachtas (Government, Opposition, Lower House, Senate, Presidency) as well as the Defence Forces and most of the diplomats were implicated in the matter. Even Garret the Good (at what?) was in on the act—it could not have happened if Fine Gael and Labour, the Opposition parties had not agreed not to look too closely at what the Government (Fianna Fáil) was doing about (and in) Northern Ireland.

The title of the SW item is *Haughey Was No Peacemaker*, based on the assertion that Haughey helped to facilitate the Peace Process—his successor as Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, took the matter in hand and prioritised it. But Jordan clings to the 'Haughey as embodiment of evil' theory put forward by the Sticky-'revisionist' West Brit media. He also uses the proliferation of Tribunals as a stick to beat Haughey with. The fact that this bonanza for lawyers has done a grave disservice to the democratic process in the Republic, but has led to very little in the way of proving malpractice—especially on Haughey's own part—is not mentioned.

Jordan, inevitably, writes of Haughey that he "*helped set up the Provos*"—the tired old Sticky jibe against Fianna Fáil—

on tax free earnings. Liberty Hall and many other Trade Union buildings were enabled to be built out of tax free funds.

Similarly, mutual life assurance companies did not suffer tax or suffered minimal tax which enabled very substantial capital bases to be established.

Only the income/profits derived from members was exempt from tax. Other income such as dividends or interest from invested capital and rents from properties was taxable.

The tax exemptions enabled relatively large pools of capital to be built up which greatly strengthened the Irish economy at a time when it was needed because of the weak financial situation after so much capital had been destroyed or wasted in two world wars.

"FARMER AND BUSINESSMAN"

The big question is: are the farmers men of capital or men of labour? This question was posed by Emmet O'Connell a few years ago.

"The rural-urban divide that farmers now decry was ploughed, harrowed, and seeded by their own leadership, with only the occasional—very occasional—exception.

"And herein lies the basic quandary for farmers: are they men of property, part and parcel of the capitalist class, income poor (for most) but asset rich for all? Or are they stewards of the land, earning their bread by the sweat of their brow?"

"The Irish farmer, by allowing direct payments from Brussels to be tied to land ownership and production to be limited by quotas (milk quota, suckler cow quota, sheep quota, tillage quota via area aid quota), has made a major error." (Emmett O'Connell, Farmer and Businessman, Sun. Business Post, 15.11.1998.)

FF was fishing in troubled Northern waters after the debacle of August 1969. Far from 'setting up' the Provisionals, money from the Dublin Government was shared between the groups that became the 'Official' and 'Provisional' IRAs, as well as the Catholic Defence Leagues of physically isolated Short Strand and the New Lodge Road areas.

It is interesting that a Northern Ireland Sticky blurted out undiluted Sticky bile of over thirty years' vintage, rather than the comparatively refined venom of the South's media, about Fianna Fáil.

Haughey is on the receiving end

Of course, there is a price for everything! And it wasn't just the farmers. The state's entire infrastructure has been overhauled and refurbished, at huge expense to German and French workers, and cheap Asian labour, and all the while the native entrepreneurs were stashing their new found wealth offshore and gaining a reputation as the foremost speculators in property in the UK, the old Eastern Europe, South Africa, without creating a single job for their own.

Their media mouthpieces have found new courage and every day you open the daily papers they celebrate each misfortune that befalls the Euro and predict its demise.

"Farmers now and in the future need all the help and support they can get from every other element in the community. The farmer vote is getting smaller and the urban vote, urban influence and above all urban economic power is getting stronger every day."

(Lt.-Gen. M.J. Costello, Irish Farming News, January, 1986).

Every day that passes, the state replicates the culture and customs of Albion and its first cousin across the Atlantic. Not an aspect of our way of life is exempt: transport, health and education. Now it seems that farming is next in line: sugar, potatoes could be on the way out as a profitable commodity for farmers. If the mad surge of expansionism continues, we'll end up in an urban jungle like England, ultimately importing the greater part of our foodstuffs.

Even now, the co-ops and their farmer members are becoming more and more reliant on property and outside investment for the greater part of their financial return. As the urban octopus spreads his tentacles wider into the countryside, the role of the farmer diminishes as a provider of daily sustenance.

because he proved to be the most capable person from the 'Arms Trial' era. He survived the Trial and went on to lead his party, then the Government, through dangerous, exciting and 'historical' times, which have changed the Republic for keeps. Haughey balanced the books after the mess Jack Lynch left behind, got the huge subvention (≈8 billion) from the EU (aka the Unknown German Taxpayer), introduced the National Agreements, in which the Trade Unions were treated as equal partners to the bosses' organisations, and the Government: the list could be extended for pages.

Seán McGouran

Co-Op continued

others in undermining the position of farmers.

“Sensible farmers now justifiably see themselves in an industry under pressure on all fronts and but for the flawed EU financial assistance model, most of them would be unable to put food on the table. When asked by farmers about their future, my instinct is to tell them to sell up and get out of an industry that is dying on its feet.

“The reality for farmers is that they produce a primary commodity, tiny on a global scale, having no pricing power, have relatively high production costs, and have seen a massive increase in all input costs over recent years.

“As somebody who has worked in the fund management industry, it struck me and still strikes me as very odd that those farmers in favour of the merger [Glanbia, Editor] at the time failed to recognise one of the basic laws of fund management, particularly as it would relate to a food co-operative turned Plc.

“Basically, anything that a food Plc such as Glanbia would do to screw the farmer suppliers, the better it would be for profitability and for the share price, and the more applause the company would earn from fund managers. By definition what is bad for the farmer suppliers to Glanbia is good for the company.

“Whatever hope the farmers in the Waterford area had when they had some control over the product they produce, they lost it all when they handed it over to the board of a Plc who are more interested in growing salaries and keeping fund managers on side, than with placating farmer suppliers.” (Irish Examiner, 10.6.2005.)

Labour Comment should send a copy of Jim Power’s article to Oliver McDonnell, the facts of barbaric economic life are all there, and Jim was “born and reared on a farm”.

So the Trade Union movement, “along with many others”, played a successful part in “undermining the position of farmers”. What a load of cobblers. Anyone with an objective eye, can almost witness a parallel decline in both the influence of the farming community and the Trade Union movement. What is even more apparent in the Brave New Global era is the rampant demise of voluntarism and its discouragement in every aspect of life, nothing is done out of love anymore—any endeavour that’s unpaid just cannot be of any value!

In fact, when the present writer set out to do his monthly tract for this journal, the

original aim was to write on the Bi-Annual Conference of the ICTU held in Belfast on June 21-24, 2005. So little of significance or inspiration occurred on the banks of the Lagan that, when it was announced that IAWS Co-op was going private, the writer was compelled as a socialist and Trade Unionist to express a view on what he believed is a development that will contribute little to the well-being of our society and incur the surrender and loss of what is still a practical and noble principle—Co-Operativism!

Labour Comment has no hang-up, either, in relation to the contribution of farmers and their families. We accept as well, that the Co-ops in the main were good employers and had no difficulties in recognising the Trade Union rights of thousands of their workforce.

ROLE OF CO-OPS

The contribution of co-operatives to the economy in exports, employment, industrial activity and development of rural areas is substantial.

Co-operatives in Ireland play a major role in the economy, contributing to almost 50% of our total food exports. Food exports make up over 40% of Ireland’s net export.

The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society is the umbrella body of the co-ops which is directed and controlled by a National Council elected by the 150 member co-ops representing an individual membership of 150,000 people.

ICOS is one of the Social Partners and is a party to the current Sustaining Progress agreement, indeed it has been party to all the National Programmes since the first Programme for National Recovery in 1987.

Despite the high profile plcs like Glanbia, Kerry, Lakeland and Donegal, the great majority of creameries operate on the co-op principle alone.

BENEFITS OF CO-OPS

Co-operatives have a long and successful tradition both in Ireland and around the world. Although the precise advantages of each co-operative can vary depending on the organisation and the needs of its members, several benefits are common to all:

* The main advantage is the limited liability of the incorporated company (i.e. the liability of the individual members to their share capital). This means the individual shareholders liability is limited to the amount he/she has invested in the company.

* It provides for continuity of existence. Unlike a sole proprietorship, a

corporation has an unlimited life span, provided it makes its annual return to the Registrar and provided it remains solvent. The corporation will continue to exist even if the shareholders die or leave the business, or if the ownership of the business changes.

* Corporations also have more ability to raise money, which may make it easier for your business to grow and develop. It is a ‘body corporate’, with the ability to act in its own right, to sue and to be sued, to make contracts, to give credit and to borrow money.

CO-OPS AND TAXATION

Under the Income Tax Act, 1918 (which until 1967 Income Tax Act was the basic taxing statute in Ireland) exemption from tax was granted to Friendly Societies, Trade Unions, Clubs, Savings Banks and Industrial and Provident Societies.

In the case of mutual and professional societies, clubs and associations which were not founded for the making of commercial profits, taxes were not assessed on any surpluses they might make, on the basis that a person cannot make profit out of himself or herself. That is provided any trading was among themselves only.

However, profits made from trading with non-members was not exempt.

Most agricultural co-operative societies and livestock marts were incorporated under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1893. They usually paid very little tax because most of their trading was between fellow members.

There was a formula used to find the taxable profits and this formula was based on the proportion of profits attributable to trading with non-members by multiplying the profits by a factor which was the sale/purchases to or from non-members divided by the total overall sales/purchases.

Also, under Finance Act, 1927, Section 8, the profits of societies formed for the promotion of Gaelic football, hurling and handball are statutorily exempt from tax in so far as the Revenue Commissioners are satisfied that the profits are applied for the promotion of those Gaelic games. This provision greatly helped to build up and strengthen the capital base of the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Likewise, societies like Cork Mutual Benefit Building Society, Irish Permanent Building Society, Educational Building Society, etc. were all enabled to build up their own and their members capital base

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Co-Op continued

worth around 125 million Euros, Co-op members are in for another 'killing'.

In the meantime, IAWS Co-op (One51) will probably go on making money from anything from newspapers to ports to broadband and property, especially property. Anything, it would seem but primary production.

"PLCS THE WORST MISTAKE"

But it is not all sunshine and roses, oh, No!

"Turning co-ops into plcs the worst mistake we ever made" was the cry of Oliver McDonnell (Irish Independent, 24.5.2005). McDonnell is a working farmer and writes a weekly column for the Irish Independent farming supplement each week.

"I attended the agm of Glanbia plc last week and I have never come across the levels of frustration prevalent among dairy farmers at this present time. The second thing which shocked me even more was the fact that the Glanbia management had included "our" decoupling payments into their accounts in their calculations and their paperwork along with discounting in an effort to prove to us that it was necessary for them to introduce such a huge reduction in the price paid for milk.

"This is what I call a huge indictment on farmers and on farming today. We are monitored and spied upon at every level and any privacy we ever had has ceased to exist. Everything we have, everything we possess and every resource at our disposal is currently orientated towards producing milk for an ungrateful processing industry whose only aim is to fleece their supplier and to deplete the source of supply in the name of profit for themselves. They will do anything and everything they can in the name of profit and we have no voice.

"The aggression and dictatorship prevailing among those who govern the processing industry (at least in that which I supply) knows no bounds. The leading Plc/Co-op in this country is at the bottom of the milk price ladder. Irish farmers are paying a very high price for the exorbitant profit levels in Glanbia of over 80 million Euros as we see it.

"They can buy businesses and industries in many countries all over the world but they cannot pay their own indigenous suppliers. I cannot speak for suppliers in other countries. We have a situation whereby our milk processors are getting richer and richer while we their suppliers are getting poorer and poorer. They are gaining in strength

paying off their debts and increasing their business outlets while we struggle all the hours God sends to meet our commitments.

"Life has changed and business has changed and not for the better. Just a short few years ago we as farmers had a good relationship with our milk processors. But not any more. There is too much aggression on their side and too much anger on our side. Even our proposal of no confidence in the board was deemed illegal.

"Glanbia are of a one-track mind at the present time. They are focussed on driving forward, increasing business and increasing profits. *And I have no problem with these objectives* [emphasis added, Editor]. They are as they should be. The problem lies with their methods and their attitudes and the fact that they are determined to walk all over us and to hell with the cost in human or financial terms.

"The processors and the superstores in this country are enjoying phenomenal profits. We are the second most expensive country in Europe. The consumer is spending more than ever on the weekly shop and the producer—the first link on the chain—struggles to survive.

"We have not had an increase in milk price in real terms for more than 20 years.

"The horse has well and truly bolted now but it is a sorry day that we ever signed up to turn our co-ops into plcs. Co-ops worked for the farmers and in the farmers interests. Plcs work for the shareholders and in their own interests only." (Irish Independent, 24.5.2005.)

He loves the sea, but doesn't want to get wet!

Oliver McDonnell doesn't object to Glanbia's craving for increased profits. It's their "*methods and their attitudes*". Is he for real? Does he sincerely believe this? If he does, he must be the most naive farmer in Leinster! Perhaps the "*lords of the land*" have had it too easy for too long. Now the 'chicks are coming home to roost'.

THE CO-OP PRINCIPLE!

In 1989, the then Director of the Centre for Co-operative studies at University College, Cork (UCC) Professor Denis Lucey pointed out that—

"everyone is happy in the dairy industry while profits remain at their present healthy levels, guaranteeing good returns to farmers and investors.

"But the expected weakening of dairy product markets could create tension in the plc/co-ops, Kerry, Avonmore and Waterford.

"All three raised substantial sums of money by adopting the plc mechanism,

and they have formed ambitious plans to become major internationally effective food firms, Professor Lucey told the International Co-operative Alliance in Italy that year.

But he raised several questions about the long term future of the new business organisations, which are seen by co-operation experts around the world as innovative, if not experimental and that was putting it diplomatically.

"If a tension emerges between short terms profitability and milk payments to farmers, will management and Board focus more on the investor?"

"Does the 51-49 per cent share holding provide, in practice, the guarantee which the formal procedures imply or, in other words, could an institutional investor holding a large bloc of shares exert a significant influence on the orientation of the organisation?"

Professor Lucey also raised the question which is uppermost in farmers' minds.

"What pattern of milk payments will emerge? Who will be leaders and followers in changing milk payments to farmers?"

Co-ops and Plc's are fundamentally different, "night and day", Professor Lucey told the *Farm Examiner*.

As far as UCC Centre was concerned, the ultimate test for the three 'public' dairies will be if their farmer users are better off.

Going Plc has been an indictment of the co-operative structures, Professor Lucey stated.

JIM POWER ROMANCES!

Jim Power is chief economist at Friends First, the building society. He comments regularly in the daily press. He is no friend of the trade union movement but he has sympathy for the farmers!

"Having been born and reared on a farm, I have done my utmost over the years to maintain as much interest as possible in things farming.

"It is not easy, because such is the fall from grace that farming has suffered over the past couple of decades, that it rarely warrants any mention in the numerous economic reports that are produced in this economy on a regular basis.

"Farming accounts for a relatively small part of the overall economy and employment in the industry is declining on a consistent basis. Unlike the 1970s and 1980s, we never now hear trade unionists complaining about the privileged position of farmers in society.

"These trade unionists must be happy that after years of bitching, they have played a successful part along with many

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Co-Op continued

Euros up front, to be followed by earn-outs of over 26 million Euros over the following three years, is set to conclude in late summer.

“The standoff between SWS board and management over the sale of certain assets to I.A.W.S. Co-op is over and the deal is moving towards conclusion.” (Irish Examiner, 16.8.05.)

On future funding, Mr. Philip Lynch, Managing Director, said he saw no problems raising the levels of cash required to drive the combined fortunes of IAWS Co-op and SWS forward. After the conversion to a public limited company “we can borrow all the money we want because we have good projects. When we get member approval to convert we will have the wherewithal to raise capital.” (Irish Examiner, 15.7.2005.)

“Everything out there in that sector is for sale”, Mr. Lynch said, adding that One51 could comfortably spend “a couple of hundred million” if the right deal came along.

The July 14, 2005 meeting of IAWS Co-op also approved a motion to keep at least 12 million Euros within the society and use this to found a charitable trust.

The trust will focus on self-help initiatives and educational causes at home and abroad, with an emphasis on underprivileged people. Its establishment is designed to reflect the original ‘self-help’ aims of the society and its first Chairman, Horace Plunkett.

It is important for readers to note that IAWS plc (public limited company) was a pup of the IAWS Co-op. Today, they are absolutely two distinct companies.

IAWS plc was floated on the Dublin and London stock exchanges in 1988 and specialises in convenience food and is a top profit performer in food stocks.

Most recently, it has expanded into the growing foodservice market through four branded concept offerings: Cuisine de France, Delice de France, Pierre’s and La Brea. The group employs 2,500 people, with sales of 1.25 billion Euros and operating profit of 84.4 million Euros for the year ended July, 2003.

Ironically, Philip Lynch, for a time, was chief executive of both companies—the IAWS Co-op and the privatised IAWS plc. Having quit IAWS plc in late 2003, Mr. Lynch turned his attentions to developing the Co-op again with the intent to float it at the earliest opportunity.

In late May, 2005, IAWS Co-op went about ending its links with IAWS plc, when it sold off a million shares that raised 12 million Euros.

The Co-op still has a further 11 million shares in the plc, which represent almost 9% of the company. It is expected to distribute these shares among its own shareholders in the coming months. A pay-out which could be worth in excess of 125 million Euros to IAWS Co-op members.

Is it a Co-op or a ‘body corporate’ they want—or do the farmers want it both ways? When IAWS became IAWS plc in 1988, the apostate was not excommunicated. In fact, the IAWS Co-op became the biggest shareholders in the new plc.

In 2003, IAWS Co-op had net assets of 104 million Euros plus a 17% stake in the IAWS plc which at the time was worth nearly 200 million Euros.

WHO IS IAWS CO-OP?

The Co-op’s shares are owned by around 35 other co-ops throughout Ireland, North and South. There is also one co-op in Britain which has shares.

The big co-ops of Kerry, Glanbia, Dairygold, NCF, Lakeland and a couple of the big Cork co-ops together own more than 50% of the shares.

There is a sizeable number of small co-ops around the country that also have shares. Kerry’s shareholding was boosted through its takeover of Golden Vale, but because of the machinations of the way the society works, shareholdings and control, are two different things.

The Board consists of ten Directors who run for re-election every four years. The bigger co-ops have around 10 votes each in that election process, smaller ones have around six votes.

But once the Board is elected, irrespective of the number of shares behind each member, it is one Director, one vote around the table.

“The sale of property and shares helped hike up profits at the IAWS Co-op by 166% last year. Accounts for the company show pre-tax profits for the 16 months to the end of last December were 65.5 million Euros, compared with 24.9 million Euros in the year to end August 2003.” (Irish Examiner, 12.8.2005.)

The assets and investments of the co-op are tremendously varied. Yet there are common threads running through them.

For example, in terms of actual businesses, the IAWS Co-op (One51), owns meat rendering companies, Monery By-Products in Ballinsloe, Co. Galway

and Premier Proteins. It has a 45% stake in French fertiliser company, Cedest Engrais.

It also has a stake in a Cork-based Malting Company of Ireland, where its partners are Dairygold and Glanbia. IAWS Co-op also owns the Dublin-based Irish Pride bread business.

IAWS Co-op also owns a variety of property interests, it has extensive property along the quays in Waterford city and in Cork. In the last 18 months, it has sold the famous Boland’s Mill property on Dublin’s Barrow Street.

One of the most interesting aspects of the co-op’s operations was its investment policy. It invested around 100,000 Euros in *Ireland On Sunday* when the newspaper first started.

The Co-op made a tidy profit when the newspaper was then sold to Scottish Radio Holdings in 2003, IAWS Co-op then took an eight per cent stake in the *Dublin Daily* newspaper, investing 200,000 Euros. This investment proved to be less successful, and the paper collapsed at the end of the summer of 2003, just months after its launch.

IAWS Co-op (One51) has a 50% stake in Greenore Port in Co. Louth. Earlier in 2003, it emerged that the Co-op had invested in a broadband technology venture, partnering with a Canadian company called Axia NetMedia Corporation.

Aside from a diverse investment portfolio, the Co-op’s biggest function in recent years has been its role in putting money directly in the hands of its members.

Since 1996, two major share distributions have taken place.

Around 250 million euros has been distributed directly to the Co-op’s members and its remaining stake in the privatised IAWS plc is worth close to another 125 million Euros.

This 250 million Euros has been extremely useful for some of the co-ops in recent years.

For example, Dairygold made six million Euros in 2002 from the sale of IAWS shares which had been distributed from the co-op. This six million Euros was the difference between the co-op showing a profit or a loss for 2002. Lakeland Co-op cashed in around 20 million to 25 million Euros from the 1996 and 2002 allocations, providing it with funding that enabled it to deliver on its expansion plans.

And with the anticipated sale of its further 11 million shares, almost nine per cent of IAWS plc and estimated to be

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The 108-year existence of the IAWS Co-Op came to an end yesterday. Its members voted to ditch its co-operative status and pay back 125 million Euros to its members in a process that will see it float on the stock market.” (Irish Independent-18.7.2005).

“We shouldn’t lament the end of the I.A.W.S. society. It has served its purpose and things have moved on.” (Richard Curran, Irish Independent, 18.7.2005).

The End Of The Co-Op?

What would Horace Plunkett make of it all?

What would he make of the new wave of native capitalist entrepreneurs, the grandchildren of those whom he admonished and told them that their want of industrial success was largely due to their Catholic faith?

But, above all, what would the author of *Ireland In The New Century* (1904) think of the decision after 108-years of the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Co-Op to ditch its co-operative status and float the society on the stock market?

Most likely he would have supported such a move! To him the co-op principle was the means to an end—efficiency. Plunkett, the son of Baron Dunsany, was a liberal Unionist MP for South Dublin. As an imperialist, he realised the more efficient Irish agriculture became, the cheaper its commodities became for the British market.

I bet his old antagonist, Father Michael O’Riordan, author of *Catholicity And Progress In Ireland*, would once again challenge Plunkett’s view, as he challenged *Ireland In The New Century*. And *Labour Comment* might just agree with him.

BODY CORPORATE

On July 14, 2005, IAWS Co-op voted overwhelmingly to change its status, paving the way for a stock market flotation.

The ultimate step in the separation will be when IAWS Co-op (One51) transfers its remaining stake in IAWS plc directly to its co-op shareholders, thereby ensuring them a further windfall. At current prices, the value of the windfalls handed over to the co-ops would then hit around 520 million Euros.

The new company is expected to have a valuation of around 400 million Euros when it comes to the Dublin market, a

move which is expected next year.

This was an historic move for the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society, ending its 100 years plus status as a co-operative body, breaking from the co-operative structure it embraced when it was first set up in 1897 by Plunkett, Anderson, Finlay and colleagues.

The name of the group has been changed to “One51” to sustain the link with 151 Thomas Street, where the company has operated from since it was set up in 1897.

The decision was taken at a Special General Meeting of the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society (‘The Co-op’). It approved six separate resolutions proposing amendments to the current rules of the Co-op.

The society made the first move towards its new status as a body corporate, when its more than 40 co-operative members voted unanimously for the change and the new name.

The main change involves the transfer of key assets to the company structure, which will subsequently float on the Irish Stock Exchange.

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ONE51

As part of this process, assets with a value in the region of 230 million Euros will transfer to the new company, One51, later this year, the members approved a resolution granting them 11 million shares in IAWS plc (a distinct company) later in the year.

“This windfall gain is worth over 125 million Euros to members and is a follow-on from similar allocations in 1996 and 2002, which were worth circa 400 million Euros to members.” (Irish Independent, 15.7.2005).

Over the past 18 months, IAWS Co-op has been changing from a relatively dormant company to one which is actively seeking investment opportunities primarily in the waste and energy areas.

The Co-op has built a 26% stake in NTR, the operators of the national toll road, with interests also in waste management and wind energy.

“The I.A.W.S. Co-op has taken a controlling interest in Techrec Ireland.

“This is a new company set up to recycle electrical and electronic equipment. Total investment is Five Million Euros and I.A.W.S.—soon to be One51—is understood to have put up over 2.5 Million Euros of the total figure.” (Irish Examiner, 17.8.2005.)

This investment follows the recent introduction of WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) disposal regulations into the Republic and could prove a boon for One51 as it will be the first automated plant in Ireland capable of handling this important waste stream.

IAWS Co-op is already involved in negotiations to take over South Western Services (SWS). The deal involving the Bandon, Co. Cork-based SWS group, for which the Co-op offered 42.5 million

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