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Home And Colonial

A couple of Jewish soldiers were captured by Hizbollah in a tit-for-tat 'kidnapping'. Israel, which is a conquering Army more than it is anything else, responded with a prolonged bombardment of the infrastructure of the Lebanese state. Washington said that was OK. A British Jewish nationalist activist said on British television that Jewish lives were more valuable than Arab lives and nobody disagreed. David Quinn, former Editor of the *Irish Catholic*, said it was time the Palestinians were put down. The Pope (denounced as a Nazi by sexy choirgirl, Charlotte Church) maintains a studied silence on Israeli actions—unlike his predecessor. And a Jew, writing in the *Washington Post*, begins an article with these words:

"The greatest mistake Israel could make is to forget that Israel itself is a mistake" (Richard Cohen, *Hunker Down With History*, 18.7.06).

Cohen distinguishes his position from that of President Ahmadinejad by saying that the President regards the mistake as a crime, while it is his view that "*no one is culpable*". Of course Washington and Teheran have radically different viewpoints on the matter. Teheran faces the possibility of being bombed by Washington, or on its authority, as a direct consequence of this mistake.

If the thing was to be done over again, would even the maddest Biblical Neocon be in favour of doing it? Would *anybody* do it?

It could not do itself. Israel, unlike other states, is not the self-created product of its own nationalism. Jewish nationalism did not have the power to create a national state anywhere, except perhaps Eastern Europe, where there was a fairly extensive territorially-based Jewish population before the Great War—certainly not in Palestine.

The Jewish State in Palestine was a British Imperial construction, conceived in the first instance as a colony which would give a foundation for British hegemony in the Middle East. The Jews were to do for the Empire east of the Mediterranean what the Irish did in Australia, at least to the extent of providing bulk.

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To Be Or IRB ?

Part 1:

Muriel McSwiney on 1916

I must confess that I have recently become convinced that Peter Hart is dead right about Tom. I am even tempted to half agree with a statement by Eoghan Harris in the *Sunday Independent* of 9th July that Hart "*is an academic Canadian historian with no Cork connections and with*

absolutely no axe to grind". Other than being a natural conservative committed to the *status quo* of the reigning regime of whatever character—and that characteristic in itself does have its own consequences for the writing of bad history—I would agree that Hart holds to no particular partisan political agenda that he pursues with any degree of consistency. He is not ideologically driven. Rather is he an academic puller of political stunts. The politics that drive him are not those of party, but rather the internal politics of the academic institutions themselves, whose future decisions on the awarding of Chairs or other departmental positions are likely

Keeping Loyalists On Board

Recent moves by the NIO to commit £3.5m to Loyalist groupings such as the Ulster Political Research Group (UPRG) to ensure that paramilitary murals are replaced with cultural murals (a fair proportion of which are aimed at commemorating the slaughter at the Somme) are—if the UPRG are to be believed—the first instalment in a package of some £30m to Loyalist districts—a down payment to ensure that Loyalists are kept 'on board' in the run up to November 24 deadline to restore devolution, and after.

Why bother? It is known that Loyalists have no political mandate and a limited political worldview. The UDA for instance, have rejected the absorbing of Northern Ireland within British politics—the extension, *de facto*, of the British constitution to Northern Ireland. They obviously reject Irish politics; they rejected Ulster independence; they rejected voluntary power sharing; they rejected the confessional Assembly and enforced Executive power sharing under the 1998 Agreement, at the same time getting rid of the most presentable politicians (Gary McMichael and Davy Adams) that the UDA had ever produced.

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to be based on a correlation between new sources of funding and the apparent 'prestige' of being associated with sensation-creating 'fresh thinking' and research.

But, because he has no inclination to be known for espousing any particular philosophy of history, Peter Hart is also a revisionist unwilling to ever revise himself. Covering his ass in the name of the game. No capacity to own up and admit that—in his excitement at stumbling across a hitherto unpublished but apparently 'authentic' document, or else 'scooping' an interview with an apparently real live 'witness' to a historic event—he

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Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney**:
Social Partnership: 10 Year Plan

There was of course a Jewish nationalist movement in being before the Balfour Declaration. It had its rationale in the rise of nationalist movements all over Europe (often with British encouragement) into which the Jews did not fit. But, because of its fixation on Palestine, it lacked a realisable object—until Britain took it in hand in 1917.

The slogan of "*a land without people for a people without a land*" was sometimes used in connection with the project. But Palestine was far from being a land without people. It has been peopled from time immemorial. The project therefore was one of displacement of the native population to make space for colonists, as had been done in North America, and as had been seriously considered in Ireland in the time of Elizabeth.

The Home Rule movement was in alliance with the British Empire in the Great War when the project was launched late in 1917. But it does not seem that Redmondite Ireland uttered any protest against what was done in its name, as one of the British peoples in the Great War, by the Balfour Declaration.

The Jewish Palestine project was close to the heart of Liberal Imperialist England, of which Redmondism had become a mere adjunct. And Manchester, where the *Guardian* was published, seems to have been its point of origin.

The *Manchester Guardian* journalist, Herbert Sidebotham, wrote a book about it while the Balfour Declaration was being negotiated, and published it early in 1918. He reviewed the history of Jewish States in Palestine, and then wrote as follows in his conclusion:

"It matters very little whether the new Jewish State is under the sovereignty of Great Britain or under international sovereignty administered by Great Britain; in either case the same result should follow to ourselves and to the Jews. The British Empire will have in time a powerful buffer-state between itself and possible enemies. On the north side of Palestine will be a French Protectorate in Syria which will act as a secondary buffer... On the East we shall have a new and, it is to be hoped, liberalizing Arabian Empire, the natural enemy of Turkey...; and Persia, no longer dominated by the ambition of the Russian regime, will revive some of its former glory alike in politics, letters and in the arts. Our Indian Empire will thus be protected... by a group of Powers friendly to each other and to us, and indeed some of them owing their very existence to us..."

"The appearance of a self-governing dominion in the Mediterranean will exercise an influence on the structure of the British Empire... The East has hitherto been the home of the Imperial as distinguished from its Colonial System of Great Britain. A new Jewish State arising in Palestine will break down this distinction... The Eastern Mediterranean

will be endowed with a new racial and political type...

"In this new Eastern world the political and the commercial Jew will be the chief fact, and the possession of a State of his own will break the fetters that have hitherto cramped his genius..."

"The colonists of Palestine, though most of them no doubt will come from Russia, will be drawn in a greater or lesser degree from all the nations of the world. It is impossible to imagine a nation so constituted ever becoming a disturber of the peace... or an aggressor on the rights of his neighbours... Its influence will make for peace and unity... for it is not to be supposed that the new Jewish State in Palestine will be a State disconnected from the countries out of which its population is drawn..."

"A Jewish State that is a dominion of the British Empire or is under international guarantee would be saved from the dangers that ruined it in the past. Of these its powerful foreign enemies were not perhaps the most fatal to its welfare. It is a hard thing to say, but had the Jewish State under the Romans been faithful to the policy of Herod there is no reason whatever why it should have been destroyed by Rome... The Jewish nation in Palestine began as a theocracy, continued as a kingdom, and after the return from the Captivity became once more a theocracy, though a theocracy more bigoted than the old, surrounded by still more powerful enemies, and in consequence narrower and more intolerant. The period of the Maccabees in which the Jewish State attained its greatest military glory was politically the most unprogressive. Its numerical weakness and its internal dissensions between the Hellenizing and the Nationalist parties drove it into a policy of religious persecution and bigotry. The treatment of its Arab neighbours by the revived Jewish State was possessed by a cruelty only possible to religious bigots. The same spirit of fanaticism, the same clerical hatred of compromise, ruined the chances of a second restoration under the Roman Empire. In this respect there is not the smallest chance of history repeating itself. The attitude of the Jews on the question of Church and State is now definitely Erastian..."

"The other two causes of the failure in the past were military and economic... They would be fatal even now to any attempt on the part of the Jewish State to stand alone. Without a protecting Power a Jewish Palestine would not be strong enough to resist its powerful neighbours... Under a strong Protectorate, on the other hand, ... Palestine would be free from these drawbacks... With a strong frontier towards the north and on the side of the desert, Palestine would

become the Belgium of the East... She holds the doors between two continents...

"England's position in Egypt makes her the ideal protector of the new Palestine... As protector of Palestine, she could wish for no higher privilege than that of keeper of the world's conscience to a great and sorely tried people" (*England And Palestine* by Herbert Sidebotham, Constable; written in 1917, Preface dated January 1918; extracts are from the concluding chapter).

The very thing that Sidebotham warned against became the thing that happened.

Britain, having won its greatest Imperial war, suffered a collapse of Imperial will. The collapse disguised itself as democracy—or democracy brought about the collapse—it amounts to the same thing. Democratised Imperialism decided to break up the Arab Middle East into a series of spurious nation-states and maintain British hegemony by stimulating and manipulating nationalist antagonisms. The "*Arab Empire*" was killed at birth. Palestine, which was part of Syria, was cut off from it. Jewish migration was funnelled in, and the Jewish Agency was recognised as a state institution while the Arab majority was curbed. At the outset the Arab leaders who had made an alliance with Britain in 1916 were persuaded to agree to a "*Jewish Home*" in Palestine, but they added a clause to the Agreement making it conditional on the rest of the Middle East being recognised as an Arab State. Since Britain and France suppressed all attempts to form the Arab State, the Agreement was null and void.

The extensive Jewish colonisation under British authority naturally led to Arab resistance, culminating in a general revolt in 1936.

Britain suppressed the revolt with its customary methods, but then, finding itself contemplating a second war on Germany, and not wishing to drive the Arab world into the arms of Germany, tried to call off its Zionist project. In 1939 the National Government published a White Paper scaling down Jewish immigration and setting an absolute number of further immigrants, after which Jewish immigration could only be by agreement with the Arabs. But it was too late.

The British Labour Party had become thoroughly Zionist by this time. On the Labour Left, Michael Foot and Richard Crossman published a pamphlet denouncing the White Paper as a Second

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Protestants During The War Of Independence

This letter by Dr. Brian P. Murphy osb

was submitted to the Irish Examiner, c. 17 July and has not been published.

"May I make a response to Robin Bury's letter of 10 July on the subject of Protestants during the War of Independence. The issue is important; it is also complex. In tackling it one is reminded of the saying of an American writer, possibly Mark Twain, that no matter how complex an issue is, when you examine it in detail, it becomes even more complex. Mr Bury cites two sources from 1921, *The Witness* and the Irish Registration Bureau, to show that Protestants were forced to abandon their homes and to leave Ireland. The impression created is that Irish republicans, and Dail Eireann, which was attempting to act as the Government of the Irish Republic, were hostile to the Protestant community. Certain questions arise from this observation.

"How does Mr Bury reconcile his observation with the following facts: firstly, that, in August 1919, Dail Eireann appointed Robert Barton, a Protestant landowner from county Wicklow, as Minister for Agriculture? secondly, that, in December 1919, Barton selected two other Protestants, Erskine Childers and Lionel Smith Gordon, to be directors of a National Land Bank? thirdly, that Dail Eireann worked harmoniously with the Co-operative movement of Sir Horace Plunkett and George Russell, both of whom were Protestants? and, fourthly, that many Protestant landowners were content with the justice they received, even in disputes over land, in the courts of Dail Eireann?

"Far from being hostile to Protestants, the evidence clearly indicates that Dail Eireann was prepared to place its programme for land reform in their hands. Just as clearly the evidence indicates that the British Government opposed this policy of renewal with all the powers at its disposal: firstly, Robert Barton was arrested in January 1920 and deported, under the powers of the Defence of the Realm Act; secondly, efforts were made to seize the assets of the National Land Bank and of the Dail Eireann Loan fund; thirdly, over forty Co-operative creameries were burnt down, or badly damaged, in reprisal measures by the Crown Forces between April 1920 and the end of the year; and, fourthly, measures were taken to prevent the Dail Courts from meeting. In fact, all of the four initiatives that were designed to renew the country and to bring all classes and creeds together were specifically targeted by the British administration in Ireland.

"A compelling case may be made to show that the extremely harsh conditions of the period, to which Mr Bury rightly refers, were largely caused by the actions of the Crown Forces. The Irish White Cross Society, founded on 1 February 1921, stated bluntly that 'the systematic destruction of industry was one of the objects of the terror.' It was in no doubt that the 'terror' was caused by the Crown Forces and it declared that the Society's aim was 'to cope with the distress and destitution resulting in Ireland from the war.'

"The Society listed the burning of individual houses, the banning of fairs, the sacking of towns and the destruction of creameries as particularly injurious to community life. For example, it reported that the destruction of a hosiery factory in Balbriggan (sacked in September 1920) put c.420 people out of work; and that the burning of Cork (11/12 December 1920) destroyed some 45 business premises, caused £2,000,000 damage and put c.4,000 people on relief. The indirect effects of such actions were clearly spelt out: the loss of jobs meant not only distress for the families concerned but also less money in circulation to maintain small businesses and shops. On another level the Society reported that c.10,000 Catholics were expelled from their jobs and many had their homes burnt in Belfast (July 1920), with a further burning of some 160 Catholic homes in July 1921.

"One could hardly find a more objective voice on the matter than that provided by the Society. The very composition of the Society illustrates that Protestants and Catholics were prepared, as their Appeal of 26 February 1921 put it, 'to forget their differences, religious and political alike, and to bend all their energies to a constructive effort for the preservation of their country.' The names of Catholic bishops were united with those of Church of Ireland bishops. Methodists and Quakers were also among its members, as was the Chief Rabbi of Dublin. The names of Erskine Childers, his wife, Molly, Lionel Smith Gordon, James Douglas, George Russell, Sir Horace Plunkett, Mrs Despard, Dr Kathleen Lynn and Dorothy Macardle, none of whom were Catholics, were listed on various committees. Moreover, they joined the Society knowing that Michael Collins

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Munich. That is to say, it compared the stopping of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine at the expense of the native Arab population with the handing over of a chunk of Czechoslovakia to Nazi Germany.

The Jewish nationalist movement co-operated with Britain in the war against Germany, and gained the military expertise which enabled it to launch an effective terrorist war on Britain in 1945.

The leading British Zionist propagandist, Melanie Phillips (who writes for the *Daily Mail* and the *Jewish Chronicle*) and is a regular performer on the BBC, recently condemned the British tendency to give in to terrorism. She gave a couple of doubtful examples of this, but did not give the clearest example—the capitulation to the Jewish terrorism in Palestine. In the face of incidents like the massacre at the King David Hotel, Britain declared that it would no longer govern Palestine. It had set the Jewish colonisation in motion on the basis that Imperial power would be exercised to keep it functional within some semblance of order. Then it surrendered to a comparatively brief spurt of Jewish terrorism, knowing very well what the consequences would be for the Palestinians.

Formally this failure of nerve took the form of relinquishing its League of Nations 'Mandate' to the United Nations. But that was make-believe. It had inaugurated the Zionist project entirely on its own responsibility in 1917, before there was any League. And, when abdicating responsibility in 1947, in the form of handing the matter over to the United Nations, it ensured that the Security Council could not deal with it. And so it was referred to the General Assembly, which had no authority and no power of action. It could only pass motions. The motion to set up a Jewish State in Palestine was carried by the USA and USSR, with their client states, supported by the British Dominions (with Britain itself abstaining), and by the handful of European states which were then members of the UN. It was opposed by every state in the Middle East.

And the motion set boundaries for the Jewish State which were overrun by it within a year and have rarely been mentioned since.

Cohen's insistence that this was "*an honest mistake, a well-intentioned mistake, a mistake for which no one is culpable*", is absurd. It was a deliberate act committed by Britain. If the President of Iran has

described it as criminal, one can see his point, particularly with regard to the abdication of governing responsibility in 1947—which was done by a Labour Government, with the Labour Left making the running.

That was the best Government there has ever been in Britain in many respects, as far as internal affairs went. But for the victims of British foreign policy it has never made any difference which party was in office, or whether the regime was aristocratic or democratic—the former being, if anything, rather better than the latter.

Daily Mail writer Ruth Dudley Edwards, who is the official historian of the ultimate British Establishment journal, *The Economist*, likes to dabble in Irish affairs as well, for old' times' sake. On 23rd July she contributed an article to the *Sunday Independent* with the title, *Muslim Brotherhood Convinced The West Has No Heart For Battle*. She says that she—

"briefly feared that they [the Israelis] might be reacting disproportionately. Since then I've recovered my wits. Yes, the suffering and the destruction is terrible but the alternative is worse. The issue of whether Israel should ever have come into being is not one I'm prepared to argue about. It's there, and the only hope for the Middle East is that Arab states should acknowledge Israel's right to exist, allow it to withdraw from contentious territory knowing it will be safe from heavily-armed crazies and let the world get going on trying to give the poor Palestinians some kind of life. But this isn't what's going to happen. Attacks on Israel are merely a small part of what global Islamism is about."

Edwards purports to be a historian, and has said she is not a journalist. But Irish nationalists who become British through ambition or inferiority complex can only be journalistic propagandists on the jingoistic wing of Imperialism. They lack the ballast to sustain a position on the other wing. And so Edwards, the would-be historian, will not discuss the history of the matter—presumably she senses that the establishment of Israel is indefensible on any terms she is prepared to state—and she treats the history of the matter as being somehow disconnected from its present condition—as if there was not a continuum from the founding outburst of Jewish-nationalist terrorism in 1945 down to the present day.

Zionism is essentially Biblical. And the Bible did not give the West Bank to "*the poor Palestinians*" any more than it

gave them Gallilee—less so in fact. And there has never been a Zionist Party which sets its sights on anything less than regaining what the Lord told Moses he could have. That Lord had little concern for the poor Palestinians. Joshua had strict instructions about what should be done to them.

If the "*poor Palestinians*" are quiescent (as they have been at times) their territory is colonised under one pretext. If they resist, it is colonised under another.

The title of David Quinn's article referred to earlier is *High Time We Brought The Palestinians To Book* (*Irish Independent* 20.7.06). Isn't that precisely what is being done?—the book being the *Book Of Joshua*.

And "*we*" have finally signed up for the great work. At least the Government has by its celebration of the Somme as a great battle in the Great War which leaves us the powder-keg of the Middle East as its heritage. And the *Irish Independent* (Editorial, 1.7.06) praises the Government for ceasing to do its own thing, and falling into line with the power structure of the world:

"The Somme and British identity are all part of us.

"British history has been shaped by war. The country's power in the world was spread by battle, and sustained and extended by the use of war or the threat of war.

"Out of this there grew a concept of war as 'glorious'.

"It is unfashionable now to think of war in that way... But this turning away from unfashionable concepts in respects of armies and heroism, of death and sacrifice, is a recent part of modern memory.

"It is sustained in many ways, one of them being the rather crude interpretation of the Battle of the Somme as some kind of ghastly mistake by the generals who set it in motion, and sacrificed tens of thousands of men in a largely futile engagement.

"Yet it was in keeping with the larger landscape of the war on that and other fronts and it was undoubtedly in keeping with what was to follow in the wars... that have been an unbroken constant of power and politics since that time...

"Those who survived the Somme are singular in claiming that they would do it again, in exactly the same way, if the circumstances demanded it. And the circumstances were justified then and later on many grounds, some of them entirely legitimate, some exaggerated and false.

"The legitimate motive, like it or not,

is self-interest. Britain, at the precise time when Irish moves towards independence were about to lead to the 1916 Rising, was the greatest power in the world, with a dominant navy and a far-flung empire.

"Its concerns with the balance of power, the control of Germany, the containment of Russia, the alignment of allies in defence of itself, as well as the longer-term threats of nationalism, were entirely legitimate reasons for conflict.

They remained so long after the Somme. The Somme changed nothing except tactics and strategy.

"The First World War did change more than that, and did so in a compelling way that changed the balance of power fundamentally.

"In 1900, Lord Salisbury, three times Britain's Prime Minister, explained the necessity of being hated if you want to retain power.

"By the Treaty of Versailles British greatness had slipped and another force, the United States, was beginning the slow process towards becoming the most powerful and the most hated nation in the world.

"Hitler interrupted that transition, and once again the justification for warfare plunged much of the world into a conflict with far greater numbers of casualties... but with an outcome that sustained the doubtful concept of 'glorious war' in the minds of those who fought it and the experience of those who were, in the end, protected by it.

"Ireland was protected. We owed a debt to the British which were undoubtedly churlish about acknowledging. This churlishness was a product of many things.

"There was Partition which soured relations, neutrality which divided North and South even more...

"There were economic differences...

"Every level in Irish society owed debts to the British for employment...

"The dominant position of the Roman Catholic Church... created a hopelessly distorted view of a special kind of 'purity'...

"Much of the detail is shameful political and social history.

"Our education system wrote out of existence the world that suffered at Flanders, fought at the Somme...

"And Britain went on giving employment, allowing immigration..., welcoming... Irish writers and artists in institutions like the BBC...

"When all of this headed us towards European membership and the beginnings of an economic miracle, what happened?

"With the connivance of politicians in the South we were plunged into thirty years of conflict, violence, terrorism and death.

The IRA savagery got us nowhere.

"It failed... and we are back where we started, with Partition, with the unionists raw, noisy and triumphant, and Sinn Fein-IRA struggling to discover a new formula...

"And now at last we have recognised the Somme, at least in one formula, that of Irishmen having been unwillingly involved, sacrificed needlessly on the anvil of power.

"We are part-way there. It is remarkable how swift and how recent have been the processes of reconciliation between Ireland and Britain...

"What we failed, as a country, to do in the relationship with Britain, during the First World War, in the period between the wars and then in the post-war era, we have accomplished with the United States in their pursuit of international objectives.

"With what ease have we moved into the international accords required by the US global strategy against terrorism.

"What positive and willing clients we are now for a role that is pan-American and pan-European."

Presumably the newly-appointed *Irish Independent* Editor, Gerard O'Reagan (a former Editor of the *Star*), was present at a meeting of Sir Anthony O'Reilly's *International Advisory Board Of Independent News And Media* at which British Chancellor and would-be Imperial leader Gordon Brown was a special guest, see *Sunday Independent* 2.7.06. (Vincent Doyle, the retiring Editor, was not exactly an O'Reilly man.) *The Irish Independent*, by far the biggest selling Irish daily newspaper, is certainly back where it started—or at least where it was in 1914 when it acclaimed the first British invasion of Mesopotamia in November 1914 as making the Great War launched by Britain in August into a war of universal liberation. And it now sees Ireland's facilitation of what by our reckoning is the fifth British invasion of the region as signifying the

arrival of Ireland at a state of maturity in which it accepts things as they are and is happy to play fourth or fifth fiddle to the dominant Great Power.

But, in the North, are we really "*back where we started*"?

The "*we*" here is a doubtful entity in the pages of the *Independent*. There was a time—in the decades when James Kelly was its man in Belfast—when the Fine Gael middle class and the Northern Catholic community were embraced in a common "*we*". But those days have gone. The *Independent's* "**we**" is now exclusive of the Northern Catholics and it rather holds them in contempt. And, while the *Independent* has reason to feel that all its schemes for the North have come to nothing—abrasive and ill-considered schemes that they were there are very few Northern Catholics who would now say "*we are back where we started*". And the Protestant community is painfully aware that it is now somewhere else. And the Republic's postage stamp glorifying the slaughter at the Somme is small comfort to them.

As to the British protection referred to: it protected Ireland in both World Wars from dangers which only existed because it chose to launch those wars : and insofar as it protected Ireland it only did so in the course of protecting itself. And as to economic gratitude, it took Irish agricultural produce and Irish labour only because it needed them. In the 1950s it was too affluent to do its own manual work, as is largely the case with Ireland today. The concept of gratitude is misplaced in relationships of that kind.

Editorial Note: The Jewish activist mentioned in the first paragraph is Maureen Lipman on the *Andrew Neill Show*, 13th July 2006. Full story at: <http://www.redress.btinternet.co.uk/caabu2.htm>

Protestants During The War Of Independence

concluded was named as a Trustee. Remarkably, most of them must also have known that he was listed as a wanted man and that his photograph had appeared in *Hue and Cry*, the police gazette of December 1920.

"In this context certain questions arise for Mr Bury's interpretation of the period. The issue is, indeed, complex but the record of Dail Eireann and the evidence derived from the National Land Bank, the Co-operative Movement and the Irish White Cross Society support an historical narrative that tells a story of religious accord (leaving aside the situation in parts of Ulster) rather than sectarian conflict. The same sources indicate that the departure of 40,000 Protestants, who left Ireland between the years 1920-1924, may well have been occasioned, in no small measure, by the actions of the Crown Forces in undermining the economic structure of the country in which they had enjoyed a predominant position.

"Time, and space, prevent a response to other parts of Mr Bury's letter. May I note briefly that his reference to W.T. Cosgrave's statement in the Dail for June 1922 does not appear in the Minute Book; and that his reliance on Peter Hart weakens his case, rather than enhances it, owing to Hart's highly selective use of the official British *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland* on the matter of sectarianism."

Keeping Loyalists On Board

continued

Within working class areas, paramilitaries are widely detested by ordinary working people—seen as criminal leeches. All concerned, from Peter Hain to Sir Hugh Orde, from the Assets Recovery Agency to the IMC are agreed that the UDA remains deeply engaged in all manner of criminality. The one opportunity working people have to punish paramilitaries—at the ballot box—is always taken. There would be widespread relief (and quiet support) for steady repression aimed at 'rolling up' Loyalist paramilitants. Being policed in ever decreasing circles should be the steady aim of the Government in regard to Loyalists.

So why is the NIO involved in bribing Loyalism to 'keep them on board'?

The Loyalist line on this is the least believable.

"The Ulster Defence Association has asked the British and Irish governments for £30m to help it disband....the organisation wants the money to help 'retire' its thousands of activists."

According to one UDA source

"The £3.5m is only the start. The UDA are seeking the money to create jobs for its members and supporters across the province. You can't have a load of unemployed paramilitaries running about without any stake in their communities, but the truth is it will be unemployed, disbanded UDA men who will get the cash" (Observer 16 July).

It should be said that there are no shortage of jobs in Northern Ireland at present. Unemployment is at an all time low. Without migrant labour whole segments of the economy—such as tourism, hotel and catering, food processing and health care—would collapse. All these jobs, and more, would be open to "UDA men". And, failing that, there are vacancies a-plenty within the British armed services—short of labour in the many democratic, liberal humanitarian and new imperial struggles it is currently engaged in across the globe.

No, what is important then to the NIO is that funding is put in place to retain some semblance of command structure within Loyalist paramilitarism, for fear of what might fall out if matters were not 'managed'. Security force agents within

Loyalist paramilitarism are often highly combustible 'assets'—assets that will need to be nursed to a safe landing over time.

Consider the following three factors:

1. Loyalist Weapons and Decommissioning:

There is a fear of a Loyalist backlash depending on the hue of 'joint stewardship'. There has been no Loyalist decommissioning. Much of the weaponry in the possession of Loyalists is weaponry ushered in with security force assistance, notably the South African consignment delivered in 1986. It should be well known what 'gear' Loyalist groupings have. UVF and UDA have indicated that decommissioning is not on the agenda, and won't be until after November 24th and any announcement on the shape of 'joint stewardship'.

2. Security Force direction within Loyalism:

Loyalists are either heavily compromised by security force infiltration or actively directed by the security forces. The Raymond McCord case, in regard to the UVF, threatens—once again—to blow this issue centre stage. The central charge is that Special Branch directed the activities of the UVF in Mount Vernon, North Belfast—a UVF gang which murdered up

Lebanon Is Made To Pay

Israel, the US and key Arab regimes are now determined to crush the widely popular Hizbullah

by

Charles Harb

The story reported in much of the western media in the past few days has painted a straightforward picture: Hizbullah's militants suddenly decided to launch an attack against Israel, killed some of its soldiers, kidnapped two, and has bombed Israeli cities. Israel, acting on its right to self-defence, retaliated by bombing the "infrastructure of terror" in Lebanon. The crisis will end when Israel's terms are implemented: the kidnapped soldiers are returned, Hizbullah is disarmed, and the Lebanese army protects Israel's northern border. This narrative borders on the dangerously naive.

Since Israel's 1996 massacre of Lebanese refugees at Qana in Lebanon, and the end of the 22-year Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000, an agreement between the various parties—sponsored by France, the US, and the UN—has reflected the "balance of terror": Israel would refrain from bombing Lebanese civilian structures, and Hizbullah would not bomb civilian structures in northern Israel.

Although several military operations by the Israelis and by Hizbullah have occurred since 2000, neither side has violated this understanding. In 2004, Hizbullah secured the release of some prisoners held captive in Israeli jails in an exchange with Israel. And Hizbullah's military operation last week falls squarely within that framework.

Israel's immediate reaction broke the established rules of the game by bombing civilian structures across Lebanon, imposing a land, air and sea blockade, terrorising the population, and killing more than 100 civilians in a disproportionate display of power not seen since 1982. Hizbullah then retaliated by bombing northern Israel, in line with the "balance of terror" equations, and the escalation of the conflict has spiralled.

Israel's significant policy shift is linked to domestic politics, psychological factors and power plays. The wider geostrategic implications are more important than the operational details. For the first time in recent history, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli and US interests now converge in an implicit alliance to quell Hizbullah. Reactions by these states in the past few days have been strongly indicative of such a stance, from the Saudi statement implicitly condemning Hizbullah, to the US president's explicit refusal to "rein in" Israel.

US rhetoric last year about spreading "democracy and freedom" in the Middle East was ended when the administration realised that the outcome might lead to governments more in tune with national interests than American ones. The complacent reaction by US (and, to some extent, European) officials to the widespread election fraud and repression in Egypt as well as the open war on the democratically elected Palestinian government reflect this change. The question is increasingly whether entire populations are being punished for making the "wrong" democratic choices.

The Islamic-led resistance movements are

now the only credible forces resisting the US occupation forces in Iraq, the Israeli occupation forces in Palestine, and the dictatorial regimes in the Middle East. They have come of age, and are ready to fill the void left by Arab nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s. Attempts to divide the movement along sectarian and geographic lines have been given significant airtime in the media, but do not seem to fully reflect the reality on the ground. The Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and Hizbullah are far from being the fanatics some in the west would like to believe they are. They have displayed an increasingly complex and pragmatic discourse, moderated over time and appealing to wider sections of Arab public opinion.

Hizbullah is at a crossroads. It faces a massive Israeli onslaught, hostile international media and Arab regimes, and a potentially hostile Lebanese government. On the other hand, it has broad support among the Arab population across the region. As one Lebanese analyst argued, Hizbullah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, will either come out of this a hero the like of which the Arab world hasn't seen since Nasser or he will have to step down.

What is happening in Lebanon is a tragedy for a people who have been made to suffer a great deal in the past three decades. A tiny country with a war-weary population and great pride is being made to pay once more for the incompetence of Arab rulers, the arrogance of a superpower and the self-righteousness of the Israeli state.

From *Guardian* 17.7.2006
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to 15 innocents with full and prior knowledge of Branch handlers. Amongst the ancillary considerations is whether the UVF Shankill Road-based central leadership has—for more than twenty years—been working for and under the direction of the security services. This allegation has been set out in Jane Winter's *British Irish Rights Watch* report on the matter, on the basis of which Labour Party leader, Pat Rabbitte TD raised the matter in the Dail. It is instructive that the report of the Police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan, has not yet been published. Its publication has been imminent, or "expected within a week" for many months now. Press reports have indicated that Mrs O'Loan has investigated Mr McCord's complaints (about the defective police 'investigation' into the murder by the UVF/Special Branch of his son Raymond Jnr.) with a 'straight bat' and that the DPP will be faced with a recommendation for many (rumoured to be in double figures) Special Branch prosecutions. It is understood that the British believed this matter could be brushed under the carpet by rolling provision to absolve Security Force personnel from prosecution within the legislation proposed to deal with 'On the Runs'. This tactic failed and the legislation was withdrawn.

Faced with Mrs O'Loan's determination to produce a proper investigation, the McCord case is causing awkwardness on the British side. It is, however, barely conceivable that the British side will allow its operatives to be thrown to the wolves on this matter—and on this scale.

If the UVF is heavily compromised, the UDA is already is an unstable cocktail of competing criminal fiefdoms which must be considered altogether too volatile to be left to its own devices, or vices.

3. Loyalists Urging Paisley to deal:

Loyalists are increasingly being prodded to encourage Paisley and the DUP that there will be no impediment to the DUP signing up with Sinn Fein.

"Loyalist eyes are fixed on the November 24 deadline at Stormont and their concern is the shape of a British-Irish political arrangement if Ian Paisley is unable or unwilling to do a deal. Inside the Loyalist community, at the very top of the paramilitary organisations, source after source will tell you that the DUP leader has nothing to fear from them if he does the deal with Sinn Fein. Indeed they are almost willing him towards that day in order to avoid the 'Plan B' alternative" (Brian Rowan, Belfast Telegraph 18 July).

JOINT STEWARDSHIP

In addition to meeting with NIO Ministers, UDA Loyalists have met with the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, to seek reassurances on the shape of any post-November 24 British / Irish settlement. Mr. Ahern stressed that the Good Friday Agreement remained the template for

progress.

Civil servants are currently working on the shape of joint stewardship. The shape that joint stewardship might potentially take after 24 November could include:

- * Increased British Irish inter-governmental conference activity and an expanded British Irish secretariat
- * A review of EU funding programmes, such as an island wide fund to replace the 'PEACE' funds, and including the involvement of the seven new Northern 'super councils' in border county collaboration
- * Local Government collaboration in waste disposal, recycling and sub regional area planning can grow organically and pragmatically as far as local political desires can stretch.

- * Increased Irish Government involvement in, for instance health (cross border hospital and medical commissioning) agriculture, higher education and justice issues (an island wide Criminal Assets Bureau is one potential target). Some aspects of this collaboration may require an additional British Irish Act which, it is understood, is being contemplated

In short, the extent of joint stewardship is limited only to the degree that Loyalist paramilitarism is capable of causing disruption. And given that we know that Loyalist paramilitarism has no politics or worldview of its own—the worldview that Loyalist disruption will serve is that of the agents and the spooks at the heart of the British state.

Mark Langhammer

Provo Sommetry

No more do the Brethren hurry when July comes round to pledge their faith in Boyne Water. The Green Grassy Slopes where King Billy and Schomberg fought for their freedom, religion and laws have fallen out of fashion. In recent years OrangeFest has become a Summer Celebration of more recent Imperial Slaughters. The great world butchering in France and Belgium in 1914-18.

And so those of a Provisional dispensation with the knack of reaching out to the Brethren have had to follow our Silly Billys into trenches, rooting about in Picardy for tricoloured Poppies and proof that the men Haig hoodwinked and Kitchener konned were Brothers in the same Blood—the grandest wee Kraut killers ever a Flanders sun shone on and all of them Irish.

Take Jim Gibney by way of example and him reaching out in exemplary fashion in the *Irish News* and it being the Thursday before the eleventh bonfires and the twelfth marches. Take Jim Gibney in the spirit of his revisionism...

"This year marks the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising and the Battle of the Somme, two hugely significant events in our history..."

"The First World War was an imperialist conflagration which claimed the lives of more than five million soldiers with 23 million casualties. The scale of human loss is incomprehensible. It was a pointless and futile war.

"Many caught up in it were poor hapless individuals. The war claimed some 35,000 Irish soldiers—lost in a vast, impersonal killing machine, oiled by the delusions of squabbling monarchs and generals..."

"Last Saturday the Irish government held a commemoration at Islandbridge in Dublin in memory of the war dead and in the chamber of Belfast City Hall a minute's silence was observed. Sinn Féin attended both ceremonies.

"On the surface such a gesture from Sinn Féin might not be considered significant but it is. It has taken republicans almost 90 years to revisit the Somme with a fresh eye..."

"It is not easy for republicans and nationalists to open their minds to the First World War..."

"But there is distance, in time, and new politics from the peace process is creating new thinking.

"New thinking which should also extend to unionists and their attitude, thus far hostile, to the Easter Rising and the volunteers who fought and died in it.

"We now have a context in which republicans and nationalists can look afresh at the First World War and in particular the Battle of the Somme.

"The enormity of the loss of the lives of Irishmen alone demands it.

"It would indeed be ironic if a war as devastating and divisive as the First World War now brought together nationalists and unionists to com-

memorate Irishmen who lost their lives 90 years ago.

"Ironic but not impossible."

Not in the least bit acceptable either. Not acceptable as history. Not acceptable as politics.

There is no sense in which Easter Week balances the Somme. The signatories to the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic held to a very different view. This is what they themselves said of the context in which they rose against the Great Satan of their time, the Bloody British Empire:

"Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory."

For those gallant allies in Europe, Germany and Austria, the First World War was not as Gibney has it "*a pointless and futile war*". For them it was a desperate struggle for survival against overwhelming odds.

For Germany the war ended in total defeat. And what is merely pointless or futile about total defeat?

It was the English who considered their first world slaughter of the twentieth century to be pointless and futile. Pointless because though they defeated their immediate targets it was at the cost of bankruptcy. Futile because the war ended in a new American supremacy. And so Gibney as a matter of course takes the English view of the First World War.

It might have been interesting to learn on what grounds Gibney rejected the view of the First World War taken by the revolutionaries who rose against the empire which launched it to found an Irish Republic. Interesting to us perhaps, but not to the Brethren for whom he was writing. Because the Brethren weren't interested in hearing any Fenian nonsense Gibney didn't bother them with any.

The Brethren have taken to the Somme in recent years because the imperial spirit is awake again and moving on the face of

England's waters. England is busy in the world again and busily restating its case on all those matters it has disputed there in the past. The spirit of sacrifice of the 36th (Ulster) Division (as Gibney for some reason of pedantry perhaps, or prudence, calls the Ulster Volunteer Force) is a timely spirit that calls to others of the League of Empire Loyalists who are cheerleading new slaughters. Those new slaughters are occurring today in lands, Iraq and Afghanistan, where England was busy slaughtering of old. And a leading Shinner

crowds about commemorating that spirit! Call it a spirit of sacrifice or the spirit of slaughter. Just tell us Jim Gibney, Why?

So the Brethren will reciprocate by in some way commemorating the Easter Rising? Never mind that there is absolutely no prospect of that ever happening, now that Jim Gibney has put his own spirit of revisionism to Easter Week there's nothing left of the Provo view of it that Connolly or Pearse could recognise.

Joe Keenan

Redmond on Armed Struggle

The following letter appeared in *Village* magazine on 7th July

I thank Pierce Martin for bracketing me with Casement and Connolly but must—aw shucks—decline the compliment. After centuries of strife, warfare and turmoil at home and abroad, that part of Ireland which managed to disconnect itself from Britain has evaded further war and conquest for almost a century; which must be a vindication of Casement and Connolly.

Regarding German Imperial tyranny, consider what Redmond himself wrote on this subject in an article in *Reynold's Newspaper*, 11 November 1911:

"There are twenty-five States in the German Empire, every one of them with its own Parliament and Executive, with full control over all local as distinct from Imperial affairs. ... Some States have a double chamber system, but in all of them local affairs are transacted quite independently of the German Imperial Parliament."

The German Empire was what is now called Germany, a union of Protestant and Catholic states with a shared language and culture. While Sinn Fein looked towards the voluntary relationship between Hungary and Austria in the other great peaceful combination in Central Europe, Redmond compared the German Imperial Parliament favourably with the British Imperial Parliament which administered the starvation and extermination of conquered peoples around the globe:

"Unlike the case of Westminster, side by side with the [German] Imperial

Parliament or Reichstag there stands in Berlin the Prussian Parliament with two Houses, and a separate Constitution, in many respects modelled upon the British Parliament, but dealing with only Prussian local affairs, yet unable to interfere (as our English assembly can) with the internal affairs of other States, like, say, Bavaria or Wurtemberg."

On the question of resistance to the British conquest of Ireland, in his Mansion House speech of 4 September 1907 Redmond said:

"We demand self-government as a right. ... We regard [the Act of Union] as our fathers regarded it before us, as a great criminal act of usurpation carried by violence and fraud. ... Resistance to [it is] a sacred duty; and the methods of resistance will remain for us merely a question of expediency. There are men today, perfectly honourable and honest men, for whose convictions I have the utmost respect, who think that the method we ought to adopt is force of arms. Such resistance I say here, as I have said more than once upon the floor of the House of Commons, would be perfectly justifiable if it were possible. But it is not, under present circumstances, possible, and I thank God there are other means at our hands."

Perhaps Redmond had in mind the peaceful separation of Norway from Sweden when the people of Norway voted for this in 1903. (In the course of the 19th century, Norway became increasingly disenchanted with rule by Sweden. Norway had come under Swedish control when Norway's ally, Denmark, succumbed to Britain's January 1814 bombardment which flattened the ancient University of Copenhagen and killed over 2000 civilians.) But when Britain over-ruled the Irish vote for independence in 1918, Redmond was proved wrong and Casement and Connolly were proved right.

Pat Muldowney

Envoi Corrections

Please note the following errata to the new AHS book on Roy Foster

p9, last line of 2nd paragraph: title should read, *No Man's Man*

p36, quotation, para 2: line 6, 'guilty' should read 'gently'; line 7, 'mere' should read 'more'; line 8, 'then' should read 'than'

p40, para 3: 'in Millstreet' should read 'in Kanturk and Millstreet'

p83, quotation, last line of para 1: 'strongly' should read 'strangely'

Shorts

from

the *Long Fellow*

LEBANON

In June of last year this column said:

"If Beirut explodes again let no one have any doubts as to who bears the responsibility."

The seeds of the current conflict were sown long before the Hezbollah abducted two Israeli soldiers; that only provided a pretext for the implementation of the USA's political objectives in the region. As Saddam Hussein found out, the US is not prepared to tolerate a strong independent state in the Middle East and now that Hussein has been deposed Washington has its eyes on Tehran.

The groundwork for the invasion is being laid by the weakening of Iran's allies in the region: the Hezbollah and Syria. The current phase of the struggle began with the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in February of last year. Responsibility for the killing was laid at Syria's door, but it was never explained how Syria's interests were served by this act. The EU conducted an investigation and a leaked draft report pointed the finger of suspicion at Syria. But no conclusive evidence was provided to support this and it later emerged that the sources of the allegations were unreliable.

However, the US and France (much to her shame) managed to mobilise international opinion for a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon despite street protests in Beirut of over a half a million by supporters of the Hezbollah. And so the delicate balance of forces in the Lebanon, which had brought many years of peace, was destroyed.

Condoleeza Rice has let the cat out of the bag by saying that she does not want peace if it means a return to the *status quo ante*.

But at the time of writing it looks like the Israelis in South Lebanon, like the Americans in Iraq, are not having things all their own way.

This column expresses its solidarity with the heroic resistance of the Hezbollah against American and Israeli imperialism.

NEWSTALK 106

The best coverage of the conflict has come from Newstalk 106's morning show. It has had contributors which have included the distinguished journalist Robert Fisk; a former Editor of the *Jerusalem Post*; a spokesman from *Arab Media Watch*; a former head of Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence organisation; and an outraged

Irish worker returning from Lebanon who was shocked at the Israelis' indiscriminate bombing.

The former Editor of the *Jerusalem Post*'s response to the outraged Irish worker was that he envied such a person returning to a peaceful country like Ireland whose neighbours did not wish its destruction. But Israel thrives on its victimhood. Last June, when the head of the PLO Mahmoud Abbas proposed a referendum on recognising the state of Israel, the Israeli army literally torpedoed such an initiative by bombing a beach in the Gaza Strip, killing ten people; including three children aged 4 months, three years and ten years of age.

RTE'S WORLD CUP COVERAGE

Fortunately there is more to life than war and destruction...

As usual the best coverage of the World Cup came from RTE. But one curious aspect was presenter Bill O hEirlihy's insistence that "*of course we're all up for England*". This seems to be a widespread view among elements of the political and media establishment. I've never heard an ordinary Irish person expressing such a view. According to a *Sunday Tribune* survey of celebrities (or at least well known people) Labour Party leader Pat Rabbitte was also "*up for England*". Even Sinn Fein TD Sean Crowe sounded almost apologetic for not being "*up for England*".

But meanwhile back in the RTE studio former Leeds United and Irish Player Manager John Giles told Bill that not only was he **not** "*up for England*" but he hoped, on the contrary, that England would lose. He went on to explain that if England were to win the World Cup all his ideas about professionalism and preparation for tournaments would have to be abandoned. And, as it turned out, the Giles view of the world was vindicated when England were slaughtered (at least in the penalty shoot out) by a weak Portuguese team.

At the end of the World Cup the RTE pundits were asked to name their most memorable moments of the tournament. Giles, rather conventionally, identified Argentina's brilliant second goal against Mexico as his most memorable. Eamon Dunphy nominated the first Italian goal in the enthralling semi final against Germany. Liam Brady, in a *coup de tete* worthy of the great Zidane, chose the pictures of David Beckham crying after being taken off in the Portuguese match. For him it was a satisfying moment because it showed that all the hype surrounding the English team had counted for nothing.

Yes I know what he means. It would also make one nostalgic for the English "*stiff upper lip*"!

THE KENNY REPORT

I can't remember when the Kenny report on the price of building land was written: certainly, no later than the 1970s. The report, as far as I recall, advocated a 100% tax on the profits of land speculation. Every so often the dust is blown off the report and it is given a fresh airing. Recently, Bertie Ahern commented favourably on the report.

Joe Higgins, the independent socialist TD, also commented on the land speculators. But the problem with Joe is that he often descends into ideological jargon, which detracts from the merit of what he is saying. Any left-wing politician worth his salt should be capable of making politics of this issue by explaining its relevance to ordinary people.

About four years ago I calculated that 42,000 euros of the price of each house in a West Dublin housing estate went to the land speculators. The mere act by the Local Authority of changing land from agricultural to residential land had given this windfall gain. If that was the case four years ago the amount must be far greater now. If potential first-time buyers could understand how much of their mortgage payments was due to the land speculation element of the price of the house, a lot of interest in the issue would be generated.

When it is considered the millions that have been made out of the decisions of Local Government it is amazing, not that there has been so much corruption, but that there has been so little.

Of course, there is a massive interest in preserving the *status quo* from those who have just scrambled on to the property ladder to the multi millionaires who own numerous properties. But it is about time that the people of no property were given political representation.

McDOWELL TO RESIGN

From the horrors of the Lebanon via the controversies of the World Cup and on to the prosaic world of the Irish property market this column regretfully descends into the pettiness of Progressive Democrat politics.

Following Michael McDowell's most recent spat with Mary Harney, reports in a number of newspapers have indicated that the Justice Minister's supporters have suggested that he might resign from politics if his leadership ambitions are thwarted.

Promises! Promises! ■

To Be Or IRB?

continued

might in fact have been taken for a ride by chancers both high and low. Hart has no capacity to put his hands up and say: "*Wasn't I the right eejit to unquestioningly accept at face value the document I had read as the supposed 'copy' of one whose 'original' cannot be traced, and to accept all that I had been told by anonymous spoofers whose anonymity was in fact their means of guarding against exposure of the fact that they never had a presence at the events they claimed to have personally witnessed? I should indeed now thoroughly revise much of what I've previously written as Gospel on this topic*". To come out with any such refreshingly honest approach to history would only blot Hart's copybook with the academic powers-that-be whom he wishes to impress with a cleverness that is apparently boundless.

The result is that, while never going back on his previous categorical pronouncements, his work is a mass of contradictions whose co-existence with each other apparently does not cost Hart any sleep. Each polar opposite of such a contradiction can quite frequently be equally wrong. But not always. One of Peter Hart's more endearing qualities is that he is an enthusiastic mole intent on burrowing away through a wealth of raw research data and who in the process can in fact often emerge with a number of valuable nuggets of truth, even if his thought processes render him incapable of deriving a coherent and credible set of conclusions from such research in order to provide an overall historical assessment of worth.

So it is that in Harris's July hymn of praise to Hart there is only that one sentence that I might half agree with, insofar as I do not believe that the latter possesses the convictions that are necessary in order to have a political axe to grind of any substance or consistency. It should be clear from everything that I have written re Kilmichael and Dunmanway (*The Irish Times*, 26th December, 2000; *Irish Political Review*, March 2001, *History Ireland*, May-June and September-October 2005) that I remain in thorough disagreement with Hart regarding Tom Barry. Nor indeed does my opening sentence refer to Tom Clarke, because Hart has nothing more meaningful to say of him in his biography of Michael Collins, beyond designating Clarke as "*the godfather of the revived Brotherhood*" (p78). And yet what happened to Clarke during the course of the conspiratorial

politics of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1916 becomes central to an evaluation of the IRB at a subsequent point in time where I have become quite convinced that it is Hart himself, and not any critic of his, who turns out to be dead right in what he writes of quite a different Tom—Tomás MacCurtain.

This article had originally been intended as the one promised as a follow-up in *IPR* April 2006—a comparative analysis of the politics of Eoghan Harris and Muriel MacSwiney in respect of Fascism, arising from his references to her in the *Sunday Independent* of 4th December 2005. But that particular topic will now have to wait. It is what Harris had to say in respect of Tomás MacCurtain in the same article that I now wish to address. In the course of an unpublished letter—which I submitted to the *Sunday Independent* last December 7—I made the following points:

"It is some of the historical issues raised by two columnists—Eoghan Harris and Charles Lysaght—in the *Sunday Independent* of December 4 that I wish to focus on. In reviewing Conal Creedon's television documentary *The Burning of Cork* (RTE, December 1) Charles Lysaght writes of "the killing of the Lord Mayor (and IRA Commander) Tomás MacCurtain", but then goes on to argue that "assassination of IRA suspects made some sense in military terms". Eoghan Harris also writes: "Tomás MacCurtain was both Lord Mayor of Cork and a leading member of the IRA. No hapless victim he... He bore moral blame for the murder of many decent Irishmen in the RIC. Crown forces would see men like MacCurtain as a legitimate target. Historical truth hurts but it is also a moral good".

It is nothing less than Democracy itself, however, that constitutes the historical truth and "*moral good*" that remains completely absent from such a perspective. Máire MacSwiney Brugha (daughter of Muriel and Terence MacSwiney) quite rightly emphasises this value when she writes:

"In the post-First World War election, in December 1918, Sinn Féin had stated in its manifesto that, given support, it would set up an independent government. After winning the election by a substantial majority, the party set about fulfilling its promise. The members gathered in the Mansion House in Dublin to set up the first free Irish Government, which they called Dáil Éireann... To my mind this event had far greater significance than 1916". (*History's Daughter*, pp220-2).

British suppression of Dáil Éireann in September 1919, coupled with the role of the RIC in spearheading the "*Fascist dictation*" that sought to crush the democratic will of the people, led the Irish Government to authorise its own army,

the IRA, to embark on a nationwide assault on RIC barracks in January 1920. It was in Inchigeela, a village within MacCurtain's Brigade area, that Conal Creedon's own grandfather, Connie, had supplied the five barrels of paraffin with which to burn down that police barracks when an exchange of gunfire had reached stalemate, only for that particular IRA attack to be called off on learning that the RIC sergeant had also installed his wife and family within. Connie Creedon was a first cousin of my own Ballingearry grandmother Julia Creed, and I know right well how proud family members are of the stand that he took in that fight for democracy.

But, contrary to Eoghan Harris's assertion, Tomás MacCurtain had not been responsible for the death of a single RIC member at the time of his murder by that same RIC. In March 1920 the RIC had shown their contempt for the democratically elected representatives of the people with an unprovoked beating up of Cork Sinn Féin Alderman W.P. Stockley. In response, some IRA members—in an unauthorised action condemned by MacCurtain—had shot dead an off-duty RIC constable. Within a matter of hours MacCurtain himself had been murdered by the RIC in front of his family. Even the anti-Republican historian Peter Hart has conceded: "*It is certain that MacCurtain did not approve of Murtagh's death ... and he had publicly commiserated with Constable Murtagh's family that very night*" (*The IRA And Its Enemies*, pp78-79).

As a result of MacCurtain's murder, Terence MacSwiney—MacCurtain's successor to both the political and military leadership—was to draw the logical conclusions regarding the forms in which the War of Independence had now to be fought with even greater intensity, when he said that "*just because the police have been such capable servants of the British, we must get rid of them*" (Francis J. Costello, *Enduring The Most: The Life And Death Of Terence MacSwiney*, 120).

When Terence MacSwiney became the second elected Lord Mayor of Cork to be targeted by the British terror machine, his August 1920 arrest was not, however, for any IRA actions on his part, nor even for IRA membership itself. The charge against him—of "*being in possession of a resolution pledging the allegiance of the Cork Corporation to Dáil Éireann*"—underscored the democratic mandate that he was fighting to uphold in the face of "Fascist dictation", as the Auxies' own first commanding officer, General Crozier, was to describe it. As Conal Creedon's documentary explicitly expressed it, the attacks on Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney were British attacks on the

very foundations of democracy in Cork. These, then, are the real historical truths of that 1920 conflict, as well as the "moral good" upheld by both of those martyred Lord Mayors.

* * *

So much for my unpublished letter. But, as can be seen, Harris's line of justification for MacCurtain's murder is in fact contradicted by his hero, Hart. For Hart has argued that at this juncture a separate IRB command structure was operating independently of that IRA of which MacCurtain was Brigade O/C.

The IRB issue cannot be developed further without, of course, going back to the 1916 Rising. It is true that this event would not have proved at all possible but for the conspiratorial politics for which that Brotherhood had been designed. Given the absence of democracy, the Rising could not have been brought to life in any other way than as an attempted *coup d'etat*, as Brendan Clifford has argued. Despite the IRB remaining an all-male body, its post-Rising revival nonetheless owed much to Tom Clarke's widow, Kathleen, setting in motion the mechanisms by which the Brotherhood could mushroom again, as a result of which Michael Collins became Treasurer in 1917 and then President of the Supreme Council in 1919. For such activities Kathleen Clarke was to be severely berated by Cathal Brugha, whom she recalled as arguing against her that "*divided counsels had caused the failure of the Rising, therefore there would be no more divided counsels. In future there would be only one organisation, the Irish Volunteers*" (*Revolutionary Woman—My Fight For Irish Freedom*, p41).

The failure of Cork to rise in 1916 had undoubtedly been a product of the fact that the Irish Volunteer leadership in that city, Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney, had been kept in the dark as regards the ever-shifting IRB conspiracy, notwithstanding their own nominal membership of that Brotherhood. According to Kathleen Clarke, the post-Easter response of Mary MacSwiney was to denounce the executed Rising leaders as "*nothing short of murderers*", for which the latter's brother Terence MacSwiney is said to have apologised to Tom Clarke's widow, with the excuse that Mary had been distraught with worry as a result of his own arrest and imprisonment (Clarke, pp124-6). If we have only Kathleen's word for that, Peter Hart also quotes Mary as rhetorically and snobbishly asking: "*Is a fine body of men like the Irish Volunteers to be dragged at the tail of a rabble like the Citizen Army?*" (Hart, p48, but with a multiple-sourced footnote which leaves it quite unclear as to which particular source this attributed sentence is in fact taken

from, and whether that source is documentary or anecdotal).

Whatever about the degrees of accuracy of each of those statements attributed to Mary MacSwiney, she was surely on much more solid ground when she herself penned the following coherent argument as to why it would have been madness for MacCurtain and MacSwiney to have 'had a go' at that later stage in Easter Week when it finally became clear in Cork that the Rising had gone ahead in Dublin:

"Cork as everyone knows, is built in a hollow surrounded on all sides by hills. The Volunteer HQ was in the flat of the City and directly under one of the enemy's big guns all the week... From Easter Monday afternoon all egress was impossible... Further information on the enemy's movements had shown the impossibility of any movement on our part and then came the further threat that any attempt on the part of the Volunteers to take action would result in the instant shelling of the City" (quoted in Costello, p67).

Just over six weeks after the death of Terence MacSwiney on hunger strike in Brixton Prison, his widow Muriel appeared before a session of the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland that was held in Washington on December 9, 1920. Her testimony on that occasion is reproduced in the Athol Books publication *Letters To Angela Clifford*. Whatever about Mary, the last thing that Muriel MacSwiney would ever have felt was any social prejudice against the Irish Citizen Army, given the fact that her own support for the Irish independence struggle had actually been preceded in childhood by an acute awareness and rejection of social inequality and all that it entailed (pp52-3). But there can be little doubt that she shared her sister-in-law's views on the hopelessness of any possible Easter Week Rising in Cork, in the wake of the debacle of Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order. As Muriel put it:

"When we got the news in Cork of the insurrection in 1916, we heard there was something up in Dublin. And I went into town to try to find out what had happened. I heard that my husband was up at the Volunteer Hall, the headquarters of the Republican army in Cork. He had been sleeping there because they thought it was safer for him... He might be shot or arrested. He was up at the hall all the week. I had a chance to see him and get the news of what was happening in Dublin and in Cork. My husband was arrested after that" (p54).

MacSwiney had been deputy commander to MacCurtain during the events of 1916. It is indeed difficult to come to any other conclusion that that drawn last year by authors Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea when they wrote

(and as they reiterated on RTE this July 19 in a further television documentary by Conal Creedon, entitled *Why The Guns Stayed Silent In 'Rebel' Cork*):

"MacCurtain could not, and should not, have done other than what he did. Kept in ignorance of the IRB's real intentions until the last moment, had he chosen to commit his brigade against a far superior force neither he nor many of his colleagues would have lived to fight again. Instead, by offering solid leadership and sound judgement he preserved his force intact and available for future operations. With his soldiers more committed than ever to a cause they passionately believed in, the next phase of Ireland's fight for freedom would be managed in a distinctly different manner... The next chapter was about to begin and this time the soldiers of the Cork Brigade of Irish Volunteers would play a pivotal role" (*Baptised in Blood—The Formation of the Cork Brigade of the Irish Volunteers 1913-1916*, p113).

In early 1962, when not yet 13, I met Muriel MacSwiney herself when she visited our family home. There commenced a sporadic schoolboy's correspondence from which just three of her letters to me have survived (although if by any chance there might possibly have been a fourth letter as well, that's the very most there was). The last such letter—dated 7th April 7 1966—was in response to me asking her if she would be visiting Ireland for any of the 50th anniversary commemorations of the Easter Rising of 1916. When we had met four years previously Muriel told me that she disliked the English form of her name, but when Terence (or Terry, as she called him) had explained that, when written as *Muirgheal*, her name could be translated as "Bright Sea", she heartily adopted its Irish language form. So it was as *Muirgheal* that she replied to me as follows from her Paris home:

"I am not coming over for the 50th anniversary of 1916. I consider that not alone after 50 years but 5 there should be proper conditions especially for the children, free health services, good schools, full employment (no having to quit our own Éire to be able to live; we had it during the English reign). Religious Freedom..."

"A very disgraceful thing has happened in connection with the 50th anniversary. I expect you will know that Tom Clarke was chosen (at a private meeting of the leaders before the Rising) as the President of the Irish Republic. I know this from my husband and Cork volunteers etc; and although your father is so much younger I think he will also be aware of it. All the Dublin papers published a letter from me to this effect a short time ago. Well, we are not allowed by the government to honour our great President".

"There is an old man living, I suppose,

not so far from you, J Clarke... I correspond with him but never met him. He is completely blind and has to depend on others. He was in prison with my husband. He wrote or dictated a very good letter to me saying that he had known Tom Clarke personally well, and that of course he was chosen as President. However Clarke has not sent this to any of the papers and has not protested to the Government. I wrote protesting to Lemass, and Senator Skeffington also raised this in the Senate".

"Tom Clarke was a Fenian aged 16. They were kept for years in solitary confinement, and some lost their reason. A small number had escaped to America and did not suffer this. T Clarke after being released went to the USA and married the daughter and niece of Fenians (especially the uncle John Daly), Limerick, famous. They came back to Éire and had a small tobacconist and newspaper shop in O'Connell St., at the corner beyond Parnell's monument".

"Well, don't do this if there is any reason against it, but if you could go to see J Clarke and ask him from me why he did not protest to the Government? I should be grateful. You can tell him that although I have nothing to do with them, that I wrote to Lemass protesting, and I had a reply. Pearse was military Commandant of all Ireland, not President, and Connolly Commandant of Dublin".

"Your father will know I think why Cork was not in the glorious 1916 Rising, but Cork did make up for this later. It is for this reason also—Tom Clarke's not getting what he more than deserves—which prevents me being in Dublin 1966". (All underlining by Muriel herself.)

Muriel's friend Senator Owen Sheehy Skeffington, son of the Francis Sheehy Skeffington so brutally murdered during the 1916 Rising by British army Captain Bowen-Colthurst, was not as categorical a champion of the Clarke Presidential claim as she believed him to have been. In the Senate debate of 16th February 1966, on the proposal to strike a commemorative ten shilling silver coin, Skeffington confined himself to the following representations:

"There is just one further point I feel I ought to raise though I do so with some hesitation. The portrait of Pádraig Pearse will appear on one side of the coin. I think of Pearse with the greatest admiration and respect, but I also remember Tom Clarke who was the first signatory of the Proclamation, and who was recognised at the time as being the senior of the others, the man they looked up to, and whom they regarded as their senior leading them. I am very happy to think of the portrait of Pearse being there, but I would feel even happier if Tom Clarke could appear also ..."

In reply, the Minister for Finance, Jack Lynch, commented:

"The point made by Senator Sheehy

Skeffington is not an invalid one, but it will, I think, be agreed that Pearse probably symbolised the insurrection more than any other single individual. In any event, he was the head of the Provisional Government and I think Commander in Chief of the Forces ..."

Skeffington did not, in fact, demur at Pearse being described as President. More to the point, it struck me at the time of Muriel's 1966 letter that—if what she was saying of Tom Clarke as President was at all accurate—it was strange that the latter's own widow Kathleen Clarke was not following Muriel's lead in publicly pointing this out to even greater effect. Quite the contrary, Kathleen Clarke was fully participating in the Government's 50th anniversary commemorations and keeping her mouth shut as Pearse was being repeatedly referred to as President. We now know, of course—from the posthumous publication of her memoirs—that Kathleen Clarke had already written privately on this matter for her own personal record and testimony and had probably been the principal source for what others had been verbally suggesting down through the years. What she had to write will be looked at in the second part of this article, as it is deserving of examination in terms of our understanding of the *modus operandi* of the IRB.

But what of Muriel's correspondent Joe Clarke? I had observed that he was not in fact anywhere nearly as poor-sighted as she believed him to be. Clarke was, however, well near crippled, but he employed such a peculiarly athletic usage of two old-fashioned under-arm crutches as effective leg-substitutes that he was nonetheless quite mobile. Clarke was a man whom I held in particular awe as one of the surviving veterans of the 1916 Rising's most effective engagement in Dublin City—the Battle of Mount Street Bridge, where the maximum number of casualties had been inflicted on the British Army. Too shy up to that point to have ever had the courage to say hello and initiate a conversation on that historical event, there was no way that I as a schoolboy could imagine myself now introducing myself for the first time to Clarke in order to deliver what in effect was a reprimand from Muriel.

Not that it would have done any good. However it came about, the fact is that, while no reference had been made to the actual Presidency in the 1916 Proclamation itself, in the manifestos issued by Pearse from the GPO between Easter Tuesday and Friday he had signed them as "*President of the Provisional Government*". An official of both the First and Second Dáils that had formally ratified Pearse's 1916 Irish Republic, Joe Clarke

was a theological Republican adhering to an apostolic succession that saw the governance of a hypothetical Republic transferred in 1938 to the IRA's Army Council by Mary MacSwiney and the other surviving remnants of the Second Dáil who now considered de Valera to be no less a compromising traitor than Collins. As a front-ranking keeper of the flame, Joe Clarke in turn became a patron saint of Provisional Sinn Féin/IRA in 1970. There was no way that such a man—devoted to the concept of the historical legitimacy of the Provisionals' claim to the mantle of the 1916 Republic—would ever have publicly accused Pearse, the First Apostle, of having illegitimately usurped the Presidency of that Republic, irrespective of what he might have related in private correspondence with Muriel.

From 1971 onwards, as a member of the British and Irish Communist Organisation (and, accordingly, a 'Two Nationalist', as Muriel herself had also become by that time), my politics had come to be diametrically opposed to those of Joe Clarke and the IRA war that he was now championing in Northern Ireland. Among my work colleagues at that time was a hardline Belfast Provisional Republican with whom I had many loud, heated arguments (although a personal friendship was still maintained) and who would later appear on all our TV screens in 1988, spattered with the blood of her friends as the UDA's Michael Stone mounted his murderous assault on a Republican funeral in Belfast's Milltown cemetery. On one occasion in 1971 she had, however, chosen to ignore all our sharp political differences when finding herself with a particularly embarrassing dilemma: charged with organising Joe Clarke's 90th birthday party, she had no knowledge of the Irish language with which to write a suitable inscription on his birthday cake. Could I help? Strange as it may seem, I did. I carefully wrote out for her: "*Do shean-Fhinín nár ghéill riamh*", which translates as "*To an old Fenian who never yielded*". What ever possessed me to do that? My recognition of Clarke as a man of firm convictions and principle would not in itself have been sufficient for me to overcome my loathing for his politics at that particular point in time. But I had an even greater respect for him which was in fact grounded in the one common political experience that we had both shared in 1969—when that uncompromising 'die-hard' was in fact prepared to allow himself to appear to compromise for the sake of a higher political purpose.

In 1967-9 I was no longer a schoolboy. In terms of political activism, I had in fact become an Executive Member of the Connolly Youth Movement. Although set up by the 26 county precursor of the

Communist Party of Ireland, the Irish Workers' Party, it was not yet affiliated to that Party and had within its ranks some members, like myself, who were more sympathetic to the politics of the Irish Communist Organisation (or the B&ICO, as it became known from 1971 onwards). At that juncture the most momentous social struggle to be fought for many a decade in Dublin was being led by the ICO's Dennis Dennehy, through his foundation of the Dublin Housing Action Committee. Arrested and jailed for his protest activities, Dennis proceeded to go on hunger strike, forcing his unconditional release after twelve days. As narrated in *Letters To Angela Clifford*, it was memories of her husband Terry's own hunger strike that resulted in Muriel MacSwiney being so inspired by Dennis's stand that she took the initiative in contacting him, who in turn introduced her to Angela Clifford.

Dennis Dennehy's courageous stand was so inspirational right across the political spectrum that for a brief period it united such diverse political strands as the ICO, IWP and IRA in a common political purpose. The 50th anniversary of the First Dáil was due to be commemorated in its birthplace, Dublin's Mansion House, on 21st January 1969—right in the middle of Dennis Dennehy's imprisonment and hunger strike. It was decided to mount an effective protest at source. A meeting was convened in our home by my father, IWP General Secretary Michael O'Riordan, to secure agreement on a variety of measures with one common purpose. The minor item on the agenda was to issue me with instructions as a CYM activist to head off another protest that was being conspiratorially planned for that Mansion House commemoration, in respect of which I had been taken into the confidence of its Connemara organiser—the former IRA leader, native-speaking Irish writer, future Professor of Irish at TCD and irrepressible Gaeltacht agitator, Máirtín Ó Cadhain. And when I explained what that higher political purpose was, Ó Cadhain more than willingly pulled back.

My father had in turn persuaded IRA Chief-of-Staff Cathal Goulding and his Adjutant General Seamus Costello to escort to our home the aforementioned 1916 hero Joe Clarke. On one level it was a memorably hilarious evening. Goulding and Costello each had a powerful sense of humour—particularly infectious in the case of Goulding—while there was more than one twinkle in the eyes of Joe Clarke as he thoroughly enjoyed being teased about the youthful, passionate 'crush' he once had on Sinéad, the future Mrs. De Valera, as she gave him Irish language lessons in the early years of the last century.

But then the gathering turned to the

serious purpose for which the meeting had been called. Inspired by a long tradition of Republican hunger strikes, Joe Clarke also shared in the admiration of Denis Dennehy's stand. But now he was being instructed that, in order to translate that admiration into effective action, he would have to appear to swallow his principles. Clarke obeyed, conscious of the fact that he was being instructed to do so by Goulding and Costello whom he regarded as *"the de jure Government of the Irish Republic"*. But he also ended up being thoroughly convinced by his commanding officers that he would not really be compromising but would in fact be doing the very opposite, disrupting what he regarded as an objectionable 'Free State' ceremony in the most dramatic and effective way possible.

As one of the surviving officials of the first Dáil, Joe Clarke was automatically on the guest list of invitations, even though everybody fully expected on the basis of his track record—as he initially had himself—that he would refuse to come to any such Government commemoration. And indeed it would forever stick in his gullet that—after their initial surprise at his appearance at the door of the Mansion House—the 'Establishment' had made him most welcome: *"Let me take your coat, Mr. Clarke"* etc. But the experience that was to hurt him the most was that—in order to allay any suspicions as to his true purposes in showing up—*"I had to accept a handshake from Dick Mulcahy"*, Free State Army Chief-of-Staff (and, in the eyes of anti-Treatyites, a hated "executioner") during the Civil War. (As a matter of interest, when Muriel married Terence MacSwiney while he was a prisoner in Frongoch camp in 1917, Mulcahy had been Terry's best man). Joe Clarke was, however, strong-willed enough to bite his tongue and stay the course.

So it was that the nation turned on its TV sets for live coverage of President de Valera's Commemorative Address, only to be greatly surprised to hear Dev being heckled on such a ceremonial occasion. The cameras then obligingly switched to this little man on crutches whom viewers nationwide both saw and heard shout out loudly and clearly—several times—*"Release Dennis Dennehy!"*, before he was hustled away by the Establishment's bouncers. And it was on account of his morally courageous commitment in undertaking such an action, which undoubtedly contributed to the mounting pressure for Dennis Dennehy's release that thereby saved his life, that I had no hesitation two years later in wishing Joe Clarke a Happy 90th Birthday.

That 1969 meeting in our home was to

be my only experience of observing the workings of the *"de jure Government of the Republic"*, and on that particular occasion it had worked both constructively and effectively. Five years later, in the much changed circumstances of 1974, Goulding still considered himself to be a *de jure* chief-of-chiefs who was above every 'Free State' law and whose "Government"—with the full complicity and connivance of the *Irish Times*—decided to publicly issue me with either an actual death sentence of its own or 'merely' an incitement to 'others' to murder me, but that's another story.

Within a year of the effective solidarity action that it had taken in support of Dennis Dennehy's leadership of the Dublin housing agitation, that same "Government of the Republic" had already propelled itself into disarray and a resulting split. Goulding's proposal that his movement should take up seats in the 26 County Dáil, in order to undermine it from within, led the last surviving rebellious TD of the Second Dáil, Tom Maguire, to declare—with Joe Clarke's full support—that the 1970 Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis had absolutely no *"authority"* to come to any such decision. And so Joe Clarke became Vice-President of the breakaway Provisional Sinn Féin. With Goulding's disorientation in response to the Northern crisis deepening still further, followed by the secession of Costello from his ranks in order to form the IRSP/INLA in 1975, the Sinn Féin the Workers' Party/Official IRA "Government" also proceeded to sentence Costello to death, and finally succeeded in carrying out that "execution" in 1977.

The Officials thought that they were being very smart indeed, by embarking on a re-run of the old IRB game of mixing assassination with infiltration, in those heady days when Eoghan Harris appeared to run RTE on their behalf. But it all ended up as an example of history repeating itself as farce. Some of the issues of the real, substantial, IRB of history that had been raised by Muriel MacSwiney in respect of 1916 do, however, need to be addressed in greater detail. Moving on to the subsequent implications for Tomás MacCurtain right up to the time of his murder by the RIC four years later, it is necessary for me to further develop my argument as to how Harris gets it so wrong and how Hart is dead right about the IRB in 1920. In doing so I am also required to examine the counter-arguments of John Borgonovo, a historian for whom I have the greatest respect and admiration, but whom I consider to be mistaken in his assessment of the IRB.

Manus O'Riordan

(To be continued).

Secretive Fenians?

The Village magazine's (Issue 82, 20-26 April 2006) Newspaper Watch, by Chekhov Feeney, had the gnomic headline *From Pravda's Russia To Dublin's Easter Rising*, which has nothing to do with what is discussed in the text. "Discussed" may not be the proper word: there is the standard revisionist whinge about the commemoration of the Easter Rising, especially as this year there was a military parade to mark the ninetieth anniversary of the event.

One phrase stood out, to the effect that (modern, pluralist, etc) Dublin was "*exalting the exploits of a small group of secretive and violent Republicans in 1916*". Apart from the sheer comedy of emphasising "*1916*", as if Europe was engaged in a croquet match, instead of a blood-letting the like of which no civilisation had ever experienced before in history, how "*secretive*" were the Republicans?

Sinn Féin, technically Dual-Monarchist, had been since its was founded in 1904, a publicist group. Arthur Griffith barely drew breath, after August 1914, between the closing down of one of his journals under DORA (the Defence of the Realm Act), and the setting up of another. Patrick Pearse, the most violent of all the "*violent Republicans*" was a Home Ruler, until the shelving of the Home Rule Act due to the Great War inadvertently breaking out. Connolly and Casement both made it clear that the Great War was 'Made in Britain'. The separatist 'mosquito press' sustained that argument up until the Rising, after which they were all shut down, and their Editors interned.

But prior to the opportunities the Great War brought, the Fenians / IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) were anything but secretive. Their main contribution to Ireland's political culture being the annual Manchester Martyr commemoration held in Dublin. The parliamentary Party ran local and provincial commemorations. The Manchester Martyr Dublin event, usually a mock-funeral, in the early 1890s attracted Fenians, Parnellites and Trade Unionists. These commemorations dwindled somewhat in numbers when The Party seemed to be on the way to achieving Home Rule, though the IRB rigidly excluded MPs from organising or taking part in them. Four MPs had taken part in

the 1899 demonstration, (organised by the Old Guard Benevolent Union—a welfare society for veteran Fenians). The numbers grew over the years 1900-1912, with the Old Guard, the Irish National Foresters, Fianna Éireann, Maud Gonne's the Inghinine na hÉireann, and the Irish-American Alliance Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH IAA). Sinn Féin as a body first attended in 1912. In 1913, the above were joined by the IT&G, the Irish Women Workers' Union, over a hundred students from UCD, and even some UIL (United Irish League) branches.

1914 saw this expanded still further with the addition of the Citizen Army, and a thousand Volunteers; the AOH IAA were there, but I am not sure whether they had armed themselves at that point as the Hibernian Rifles (see the Summer issue of *Church & State* for an explanation of this group, which participated in the Rising).

These events were staged with 'money from America'—from Clann na nGael, the IRB's organisation in the USA. Or possibly the Americas—not all migrants to Canada were 'loyal' and the Irish community in Argentina were strongly Republican in sympathy, they lived and flourished in a Republic, after all.

The IRB involved itself in anything that was 'live' in Nationalist Ireland, from the GAA to the Abbey Theatre. It did not only deal with the more obvious aspects of 'Nationalist Ireland': the IRB in Belfast on the eve of the Rising was heavily Protestant, Ernest Blythe, Seán Lester, and Bulmer Hobson come to mind. There were also Herbert Moore Pim and (if the Witness Statements in the Bureau of Military History are to be believed), a number of others who remained—relatively—obscure. In addition people like the composer Herbert Hughes, who were part of Hobson's social / intellectual circle, probably did not join the IRB, but may have been connected to the 'front organisation', the Dungannon Clubs (the reference being to the Volunteers of the 1780s, who were dedicated to defending the Kingdom of Ireland from the depredations of France and Spain. But not from ideas from the American colonies, which were then in revolt.)

The Republicans were "*violent*" but only because they had realised in the 1850s

and '60s that Ireland was not going to be allowed to become independent without a fight, something Pearse only realised in the course of 1915. The IRB was founded shortly after the Great Hunger of the late 1840s, but another factor in its genesis must have been the 'Indian Mutiny'. The politically thoughtful can only have studied the ferocious response to the revolt in India, and drawn the inference that such would be the fate of Ireland if revolt was engaged in. This led to the attempts to subvert 'Irish' regiments in the British Army, the—credible—invasion of Canada, and the subsidising of experiments with submarines. Carson sneered that Redmond's party was composed of Fenians who had thought better of their ways—he was entirely correct. Except for a small number of people of Joe Devlin's vintage and John and William Redmond themselves, the Party was made up of Fenians who had decided that Britain was too powerful (and brutal) to take on in a straight fight.

That is the context in which the loudly lamented 'violence' of Irish Republicans actually ought to be discussed—British imperialist violence (swiftly followed by the violence of 'gallant (Catholic) Belgium', France, Portugal, Russia and last, and (in this context), least, Germany; the 'evil empire' of Austria-Hungary, which had to be destroyed in 1918, was totally non-violent in relation to its internal population after 1848).

Most of the casualties, civilian and military, during Easter Week were caused by the huge over-reaction by the British forces, urged-on by the House of Commons. It was the latter, and not the soldiers manning the Courts Martial, who insisted on the executions.

It has often been said that it was the executions that led to the sea-change in Irish attitudes, but the sheer fact of the Rising itself gave people pause. Less that a thousand poorly armed women and men from three disparate groups had given the Empire, when it was openly armed to the teeth, a week's trouble. A state of mind (the 'slave mentality') started to dissolve, the killings and the rest of the over-reaction, the internment of all the participants, and hundreds of others who were essentially imprisoned for thought crime probably only speeded-up the dissolution.

It is difficult to understand why Chekhov Feeney and others in the media appear to want to adopt the state of mind which the Easter Rising did so much to destroy.

Seán McGouran

Rosneft – A Significant Russian Coup

The business news slot on RTE radio news ran an intriguing interview on the flotation of the Russian oil company, Rosneft, on July 12th. The short interview was with Robert Amsterdam, the Canadian lawyer representing the imprisoned Russian oligarch, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, founder of Yukos Oil. Amsterdam fulminated against the machinations of the Kremlin, claiming it had robbed his client. He was particularly critical of Western banks who were assisting the flotation which he asserted would be halted by the British courts.

As it turned out the Rosneft flotation could not have been more successful and its achievement highlights how Russia has become another part of the world where the US 'new world order' is not going to plan.

Rosneft is a nationalised Russian oil company which two years ago was producing half a million barrels of oil a day. Since that time the company acquired the biggest oil producing subsidiary of Yukos in a bailiff's auction instigated by the State. Rosneft increased its output to 1.5 million barrels a day but it also inherited substantial Yukos debts. The Yukos subsidiary was acquired by Rosneft in much the same 'opaque' (in the sense of being the opposite to transparent) way that Khodorkovsky acquired Yukos from the State during the Yeltsin era.

Rosneft's ILO (Initial Public Offering, the technical term for a flotation) attracted serious opposition. A hypocritical lead article in the June edition of *The Economist*, headed *Thou Shalt Not Steal*, sermonized that Putin should not be allowed away with it. An influential investor, George Soros, who was single-handedly responsible for causing runs on various European currencies before the Euro became the main European currency, advised investors in an article in the *Financial Times* not to touch Rosneft. Tom Lantos, a senior Democratic member of the US House of Representatives International Relations Committee, tried to pressurise the US banks involved, J.P. Morgan Chase and Morgan Stanley. He questioned whether financial institutions with access to US payment systems should be allowed to trade in assets that were acquired "contrary to or in violation of US laws and acceptable market practices". And then there was the Yukos legal action in the High Court in London.

But it all came to nothing. A High Court Judge ruled against Yukos, presumably because the auction of its subsidiary had been executed in accordance with Russian law. The

Russians had planned the flotation well. Firstly they made it clear that Western oil companies hoping to do well in Russia would be well advised to have a stake in Rosneft. Thus BP, which already had a major investment in another Russian oil company had no choice but to purchase a billion dollar stake in Rosneft. Then heavy investment from important non-Western companies was solicited. Petronas, the Malaysian State oil company, bought a substantial block of shares, and the Chinese company, China National Petroleum Company, were sold \$500 million of shares after they had requested \$3 billion.

The managers of Rosneft were also careful to employ prestigious Western banks to spearhead the flotation: JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley, ABN Amro and Dresdner Kleinwort. The Kremlin under Putin has already shown that it means to curtail and, in some cases, to crush the power of the oligarchs but it has been rightly wary of antagonising all of them. Led by the owner of Chelsea, Roman Abramovich, many oligarchs, hoping to keep in with Putin, came forward to make large investments in Rosneft. The final master stroke was getting Mikhail Gorbachev to endorse the ILO. In the *Financial Times* on July 11th he wrote:

"Rosneft's privatization is in sharp contrast to the auction of state assets in the early 1990s. The Yeltsin-era sell-offs were far from transparent and major state assets were transferred into the hands of a 'trusted' few.... By contrast the government today is managing this privatization, learning from past

experience."

But even with a sound strategy and the advantage afforded by the record price of oil the flotation was deferred on several occasions by the UK's Financial Services Authority (FSA). The FSA's decision to proceed with the flotation was ultimately the decision that counted.

The Rosneft flotation represents a major coup for the Russians. In financial terms Rosneft raised between \$10.4 and \$10.8 billion by selling a mere 14.8% of the company, giving it a total market capitalization of \$78.8 billion. The shares sold at the higher end of the price range recommended by the banks. This injection of cash will allow the company to immediately dispose of the Yukos debts of \$7.5 billion.

Politically the company has legitimised the process by which it came to be one of Russia's largest oil companies, and created a State-controlled mechanism for dealing with foreign companies wishing to invest in Russian oil and gas. Essentially the wholesale robbery of State assets that characterised economic policy during Russia's brief and unhappy association with Western ways has been reversed and Putin has re-positioned economic policy in line with the Chinese model: capitalist development under strict State control.

I suppose we should be grateful to RTE for giving a platform to Khodorkovsky's lawyer; the trend in contemporary media is to package the news so that listeners don't have to think; usually only sure winners get broadcast. But the station could be so much more relevant if its broadcasters were encouraged to occasionally 'think outside the box' of the prevailing Ameranglian worldview, a mindset that is becoming more threadbare with every passing month.

David Alvey

Justice For Captain Kelly

The following is an address delivered by Justin Kelly, the son of the late Capt. James J. Kelly, to the 2006 AOH National Convention, held in Boston, in July. Press reports indicate the event was attended by an estimated 1,400 delegates from across the United States.

I'd like to thank your National President, Mr. Ned McGinley, for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today about the "Justice for Captain Kelly Campaign".

My father, Captain Kelly, was an Irish army officer who was charged with illegally importing arms to Ireland, in what came to be known as the arms trial in 1970. At the time, it was the longest running trial in the history of the Irish state and received massive attention due to the fact that among the defendants were two leading government ministers, Neil Blaney and future Taoiseach, Charles Haughey.

To understand the complexities of the

case, it is necessary to view the historical context. In the late nineteen sixties, the Six Counties that comprise Northern Ireland, were on the verge of civil war. Spurred on by civil rights protests in the United States, the catholic minority in the north began marching for equality. The response from their Protestant neighbours was both swift and brutal and many were forced to flee their homes under threat of death. The partisan police force, were, at best, ineffective and volunteer Catholic Defense Associations were organized to defend nationalist areas.

As the situation deteriorated, the southern Irish government looked on

nervously fearing that things could spill over the border. Jack Lynch, the Taoiseach, intimated that his government would not, in his own words, "stand idly by" while our northern brethren were under siege. It was around this time, that my father, a twenty year army intelligence veteran, was sent north to assess the wants and needs of those in the frontline. He met with representatives of the Catholic Defense Association and the answer was clear. They wanted guns with which to protect themselves in the event of a doomsday situation.

He reported his findings to his superior officer, Col Michael Hefferon, who in turn reported to his commander, Minister for Defense, Jim Gibbons.

According to an army directive of the time, written by a Col Adams:

"At 16.30 hrs. on Friday, 6 Feb 1970 the Minister for Defense informed the chief of staff and the then Director of intelligence that the government at a cabinet meeting on that date had instructed the minister to order the chief of staff to prepare and train the army for incursions into Northern Ireland if and when such a cause became necessary, and to have respirators and arms and ammunition made ready in the event that it would be necessary for the minority to protect themselves. The minister explained that the Taoiseach and other ministers had met delegations from the North. At these meetings urgent demands were made for respirators, weapons and ammunition, the provision of which the government agreed as and when necessary"

In light of this directive, and under orders from his superiors my father was sent to the continent to negotiate a secret arms deal using funds that had been supplied by the government. The arms never arrived. In May, my father was arrested at our suburban home and charged with a conspiracy to illegally import arms. At first, he assumed there was a misunderstanding and went willingly with his captors. It was only when his belt and his shoelaces were removed and he was thrown in a cell that he began to realize that treachery was afoot. He demanded, and eventually received, an audience with both the Taoiseach and the Minister of Defense. The Taoiseach, as was his way, indicated that things were out of his hands. More insidiously, his commander, the Minister for Defense said something along the lines of "you're in the hot seat now, Jim".

At the ensuing trial, my father, despite the best efforts of the government was found not guilty. This was in no way thanks to the testimony of the Minister of Defense, Jim Gibbons, who undoubtedly committed perjury by denying all knowledge of the affair. In his testimony, the chief of intelligence, Col. Hefferon, made it clear that Gibbons was kept informed of all aspects of the operation.

Report

On The Take?

How Haughey refused to take money from Britain

A Channel 4 producer, Michele Kurland, persuaded Charles Haughey, in opposition before his third term as Taoiseach, to tour Ireland with her, making a documentary. Channel 4 is state-owned.

Here is what she told Eoghan Williams (Sunday Independent 25.6.06)

"Getting him to co-operate took a lot of coaxing and cajoling, although he soon dropped his refusal to do more than one take when told, rightly or wrongly, that Garret FitzGerald took 15 takes to get anything right.

"The first Haughey came when Haughey refused to sign the contract. *"He just would not take money—not a penny—from a British TV company. I said it didn't have to be in sterling, we could arrange payment in punts, but he just point-blank refused", Kurland remembers.*

"In the end he signed the contract on condition that his fee go to charity.

"I heard so many things about Haughey before I filmed with him and he was all of those things. He could be tricky and difficult and explosive, but he was actually a really good egg.

"Once we were waiting for Albert Reynolds to do an interview and he said, probably thinking that a woman wouldn't be in charge: 'When's your boss turning up?' Haughey wasn't like that."

"One of Haughey's greatest qualities during the filming appears to have been patience. He spent two hours on a rock waiting for a lost cameraman to turn up and while *"many less important people would have lost it", he happily recited poetry...*" [And when a cameraman dropped a camera in the sea, and it had to be dried with a hairdryer, Haughey did his half hour stint with the rest.]

This was the key to the trial. If the Minister of Defense, Jim Gibbons, had ordered the importation, then no crime had been committed. However, Col. Hefferon's statement was altered to omit any reference to the Minister under the direction of then Minister for Justice, Desmond O'Malley. This fact only came to light 30 years later when the state papers became available to the public.

Why was my father conspired against by the Irish government? Although a number of theories abound, I really cannot definitively answer that question other than to say that due to an about face of government policy he became expendable. What I do know was that my father's reputation was left in tatters. A whispering campaign orchestrated by influential politicians indicated that the jury had somehow been got at and that the not guilty verdict was a perversion of justice. As a child our house was under constant surveillance by the gardai's special branch and I thought everyone's telephone was tapped. I saw nothing unusual in the fact that our car was shadowed by unmarked police cruisers on our weekly trips to the market for groceries. My family received anonymous death threats through the mail, one from a notorious Loyalist paramilitary group.

Of all the hardships suffered by my father, I believe the one that upset him most was the way in which his army career was taken away. He'd served

honorably for twenty years; a career soldier who'd served three years in the middle east as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force and was held in the highest regard by all who served with him. That he was hung out to dry by the very people he'd sworn to serve was the ultimate insult.

We hear a lot of talk these days about protecting our troops. Whatever one feels about war in Iraq or elsewhere, everyone agrees that it is imperative that we support the troops who have given so much. I'm ashamed to say my government, the Irish government, abandoned a proud soldier.

My father fought for 30 years for the state apology that he deserved. He died penniless, in 2003, still waiting.

Thanks so much for your time. Go raibh maith agat agus slán libh.

Further information on Captain Kelly at:

<http://www.captainkelly.org/>

where you can also sign the on-line Petition to clear his name

It is hoped to carry a report of the Third Anniversary Commemoration of Captain Kelly's death at Glasnevin Cemetery, and of Harry Boland's speech, in next month's magazine

The Casement 'Black Diaries'

An Overlong Controversy in Outline

Part 1

The so called 'Black Diaries', the authorship of which is ascribed to Roger Casement, are now in the region of ninety years old. They have over time represented different things to different people. In times gone by, in Irish nationalist eyes, they represented yet another injustice heaped upon Ireland and the Irish by perfidious Britain. They were forgeries which wrongly identified the shame of homosexuality with the name of a gallant Irish patriot. On the British side, a perceived sexual perversity was seen as mirroring a moral and political perversity expressed in a highly decorated servant of the crown conspiring with its enemies. That was in days now long gone.

More recently, in Ireland, they have come to represent an aspect of what is believed to be a new maturity and sophistication; having renounced the primitive prejudices of an earlier time we gladly accept the idea that one of the martyred opponents of British rule in Ireland could have been actively homosexual.

But are things quite so simple?

When the notion of explicitly homoerotic Casement diaries was first cautiously and surreptitiously insinuated into the public mind, in 1916, it was not alone Irish nationalists who found the whole story suspicious. The story was extraordinary on its own terms. The 'diaries' referred to times when he was undertaking investigations into human rights abuses of an enormous scale in the tropics of Africa and South America. He confronted forces that were both watchful and ruthless. Had he a diary in his possession containing homosexual passages and it was discovered, his mission to liberate the indigenous people from the murderous cruelty of the rubber plantation bosses would have been ruinously at an end. Similarly disastrous it could have been at this perilous time, had a homosexual liaison come under the public gaze, which could have been used to undermine his credibility in an era when such a lifestyle was viewed highly negatively. Could Casement really have been as foolish and irresponsible as to wilfully put himself in grave danger of being compromised?

SOME BACKGROUND

Who was this man who had become world renowned for his investigations of human rights abuses in Africa and South

America in the early 20th century?

He was born in 1864 in Dublin, the son of a Protestant father and Catholic mother and was reared and educated as a member of Ireland's privileged Protestant middle class. Unusually for the Anglo-Irish gentry of the time, the father had nationalist political leanings. Roger spent some of his childhood near St Helier on Jersey. By his early teens he had lost both parents and was being cared for by relatives in Antrim. He went to secondary school in Ballymena. During his youth he held strongly nationalistic views.

His schooling completed, Roger became involved in the then burgeoning economic relationship between Europe and Africa, first working for a shipping company in Liverpool. Then, aged 19, he went to Africa for the first time where he undertook employment in the Congo.

The vast area south of the Sahara had just been shared out among the European powers and was being newly explored, transformed, developed and exploited. The new colonies became important economically and strategically for the Imperial homelands. Men were drawn there by a sense of adventure, by the hope of gaining great riches, by the religious idealism of the Christian missionary, by the secular idealism of extending the bounds of what presumed to call itself 'civilization', or were simply thrown there at the whim of circumstance. Casement worked in shipping, exploration, surveying, and railway construction and even spent an interlude as a lay helper on a Baptist mission station.

He was acquainted with many of the leading figures in the transformation of Africa at that time including Henry Morton Stanley. The lives of these men were far from easy but the rewards were rich. It was a harsh frontier existence. Very many died from tropical diseases the medical science of the time could not treat. Few European women took the chance of living in such forbidding circumstances. The wives of men stationed in Africa usually bided their time in the home country, their husbands returning on leave every few years.

Casement's great ability brought him to the attention of the British authorities and he became a representative of the Foreign Office Consular Service. A few years later he was at 34 appointed British Consul to the Congo Free State, which was then—rather than being a colony of

the Belgian state—the private fiefdom of the Belgian King Leopold II himself.

During the Boer War he was actively involved in intelligence gathering on behalf of the British State. This indicates the extent to which he had become by this time one of the Empire's trusted insiders.

RUBBER BARONS

Reports had circulated for years that horrific cruelties were being perpetrated on the native population in the Congo by Leopold's henchmen in pursuance of rubber gathering. Rubber was then becoming an ever more important industrial commodity, particularly so with the growth of the new motor industry. At the time, sap was collected from the equatorial rainforest by natives who were expected to gather a given daily quota. Failure to meet the quota, it was reported, provoked vicious cruelty, including flogging and mutilation. The population was being terrorised into compliance through a system of brutalisation which included deliberate massacre and induced famine. All this was being denied by Leopold's considerable publicity machine.

In 1903 Casement's discussions with the crusading journalist E.D. Morel led to the formation of the Congo Reform Association (CRA). He carried out an on the spot investigation. According to his report a catastrophic fall in population had been caused by indiscriminate "war", starvation, reduction of births, and diseases. This report, together with the campaigning of the CRA, were pivotal in bringing the brutal regime of Leopold to an end. Within a few years the Congo would be removed from Leopold's grasp and responsibility transferred to the Belgian state.

Witnessing the appalling brutalities of the Congo reawakened in Casement a personal identification with Irish nationalism. This was associated with a sense of outrage at the excesses of imperialism. His identification with the economic underdog and the political outsider reconnected him with his sense of being Irish.

After his report was published in 1904 he spent the Summer in Ireland where he made contact with a number of political activists. He joined the Gaelic League. Well remembered was his participation in *Feis na Gleann* (the Festival of the Glens) in Antrim where he made contact with a number of key figures in the nationalist movement who would remain his friends until his death.

He was appointed to a consular post in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1906. In 1908 at 44 he became Consul-General of Brazil based in Rio de Janeiro. While fulfilling his duties as an official of the crown he secretly wrote articles under pseudonyms for political publications in Ireland.

In 1910 he undertook an investigation of atrocities committed against Indians working in the rubber industry in the Putumayo region of Peru being carried by a London controlled company. He returned to Britain in 1911 and in July was knighted for his humanitarian investigations on two continents. While in England he continued to push for the appalling injustices to be overcome. He was not prepared to passively contend with indifference and inertia. The same year he undertook a second voyage up the Amazon. As a result of his efforts a parliamentary committee took responsibility for the matter and reforms were put in place.

IRISH POLITICS

For a number of years he had been quietly financially assisting nationalist periodicals and cultural organisations such as the Gaelic League, the Irish Texts Society and various Irish language colleges. He had also supported certain poverty relief efforts in the west of Ireland.

In 1913 he resigned from the Foreign Office and entered the arena of Irish politics with a speech in October in Ballymoney, Co Antrim at a rare event; a public gathering of Ulster Protestant Home Rulers. In November he took part in the founding of the Irish Volunteers, originally brought into existence in support of Home Rule. Then he spoke at a series of recruitment rallies for the Volunteers. In May 1914 he masterminded the operation which saw the landing of 1,500 guns for the Volunteers at Howth, Co Dublin, the following July. By this time he was touring the USA and addressing crowds with an acute analysis of British policy as it affected Ireland and Europe.

In October 1914 Casement travelled from the US to Germany via Norway as the envoy of the Irish-American organisation *Clan na Gael*. In Norway the British Minister there, Findlay, negotiated with Casement's Norwegian manservant and assistant, Christensen, to have Casement either captured or assassinated. The plot came to nothing. The British officially claimed the initiative came from Christensen. Casement asserted the innocence of his assistant and accused Findlay of attempting to bribe Christensen to betray him.

Once in Germany he secured a statement of support in principle for Irish independence from the German Government. He made attempts to recruit an Irish Brigade from Irish prisoners of war in Germany, but with meagre success. In the end the tally of recruits came to just over 50.

A selection of his political articles was published in the US in late 1914 and again in 1915. It came out under two somewhat different editions, titled *The Crime Against Ireland And How the War May Right It* and *The Crime Against Europe*. The

collection was later published in Germany both in the original English and in German translation. These articles were written between 1911 and 1914. They anticipated the outbreak of the war a few years before it occurred. A major theme was that Britain, then the world's major power, had been seeking to eliminate the growing economic and trading rivalry of Germany by war, the circumstances for which it had been preparing by means of secret diplomacy.

While the Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) was planning the Easter Rising Casement was not directly involved. The Rising was not his handiwork. When he discovered that 20,000 guns were to be smuggled to Ireland from Germany in preparation for the rebellion he felt he should journey back to dissuade the leadership. He believed that as the Germans were not in a position to provide serious military support the rebellion would result in a needless slaughter of the rebels. If they would not heed his advice then he intended to join them and go down fighting. As the arms ship set sail he travelled by submarine with two companions to Ireland. The ship and the submarine were intended to rendezvous off the coast of County Kerry. As it happened, the arms ship, *the Aud*, was intercepted and her crew scuttled her. After Casement put ashore from the U-boat at Banna Strand near Tralee he was discovered and arrested.

TREASON TRIAL

He was taken to London where he was interrogated by Reginald 'Blinker' Hall, chief of Naval Intelligence and Basil Thomson, head of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard. Hall was becoming a significant historical figure in his own right. He was in the process of earning a reputation, during the Great War, as an ingenuous practitioner of the black arts of deception and concocted disinformation.

Records of the interrogation contain no reference to Diaries and their content being among the matter discussed. Given that homosexual behaviour at that time was a serious criminal offence and something widely condemned, if the Diaries had been genuine, they could have afforded the interrogation team ample opportunity to put the prisoner under pressure. One needs to be aware that it was thought by the British authorities at that time, that Casement was the main intriguer behind the 1916 Rising. That the Diaries had not been used as leverage in some way nor, indeed, even been discussed at the interrogation is hard to explain while assuming them to be fully genuine.

Casement was soon imprisoned in the Tower of London and charged with treason. Soon rumours began to circulate in well to do circles, first in London, about Casement being a 'moral perverser'.

Photostats of a purported Diary were soon being discretely shown to chosen eminent and influential individuals. Some even got to peruse pages of what was said to be an actual Diary from Casement's hand. The American journalist Ben Allen was one of these. In the National Library of Ireland there is a statement from him of how it looked:

"It was a rolled manuscript which Hall took from a pigeon-hole in his desk.... The paper was buff in colour, with blue lines and the sheets ragged at the top as if they had been torn from what, in my school days, we called a composition book. The paper was not quite legal size."

After his conviction and the death sentence had been passed Casement made an eloquent speech from the dock asserting Ireland's inalienable right to independence.

A campaign began among influential individuals seeking to have the death sentence commuted. As a world renowned humanitarian and a man renowned for his integrity, charity and bravery, Casement, it was felt, should be shown mercy. The campaign began to waver. People were shocked to learn that, so it seemed, the man they thought they knew as Roger Casement had a hidden side they had not suspected. Having read parts of the 'indecent Diary', they would have no more to do with the effort to save his life.

In the US the story of the Diaries was used to undermine respect for him and what he stood for. It was particularly important from the point of view of the British war effort, that Casement's once hallowed reputation be destroyed. To execute a man known for his high idealism and principled courage, who had opposed Britain in the war, would undermine sympathy for the British Empire in America. It would be a propaganda disaster which would serve to undermine the hope that the US would join the war on Britain's side.

Some time before his execution on August 3rd 1916 he was received into the Catholic faith. The priest at the execution in Pentonville prison said he walked to the scaffold 'with the dignity of a prince'.

MYSTERY OF THE DIARIES

By the time of his execution the "rolled manuscript" Diary fragment and the photographic reproductions had already disappeared without trace. They have not been seen to this day. One or more large format desk Diaries had also been displayed to a few selected persons. These, so it seems, were part of the three desk Diaries, a cash ledger and a small notebook which today constitute the 'Black Diaries'. So, what exists today is not precisely and exactly what existed as the 'indecent Diary' of 1916. The torn out pages of the "rolled manuscript" that Ben Allen viewed are gone.

In the United States a propaganda campaign targeting radical Irish nationalism continued after his death. Alfred Noyes, an Englishman, then Professor of Modern Literature at Princeton, produced standard war propaganda along with work targeting the 1916 rebels and Casement. Allegations about the contents of the Diaries featured in this. He contributed to newspapers. One article of his, in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* of Aug 31, 1916 was titled *Revelations Of Casement's Diary*. He travelled widely giving public talks. In late 1916 in Philadelphia at one of these gatherings Nina, one of Casement's sisters, emerged from among the crowd and rebuked Noyes bitterly for the manner in which he had been slandering the memory of her brother and called him a scoundrel.

Some five years later in 1921 a desk diary was shown to two of the Irish plenipotentiaries who were attempting to negotiate a treaty with the British Empire, namely Michael Collins and Eamonn Duggan. Collins recognised the handwriting of Casement but there is no evidence he assented the volumes in their entirety had been penned by him.

In 1925 Peter Singleton-Gates, a man closely connected to the intelligence world, announced in the *Evening Standard* of London, that he intended to publish the Diaries. However, the Official Secrets Act was employed to prevent him doing so. Now the Diaries would enter into a state somewhere between existence and non existence, a sort of limbo state. Now, those who requested permission to view them were informed by the Home Office that their existence could be neither confirmed nor denied. It is hardly surprising then that Casement biographies in the 1930s paid little or no attention to the question of the Diaries.

In 1936 there appeared *The Forged Casement Diaries* by Dr. W.J. Maloney, a Scottish born doctor of Irish descent. It was published in Dublin. Maloney had never had a chance to inspect the Diaries. He did his research in the 1930s when they were in their limbo state. He noted the disappearance of the "*rolled manuscript*" of 1916. He established that there had been a campaign to blacken Casement's name. This had included propaganda ploys such as planting reports stating Casement said he wished to be hung for treason with a silken rope as befitted a gentleman of his standing. It was then reasonable to presume the Diaries to be another aspect of that propaganda campaign. Maloney related how the written accounts of the discovery of the Diaries left by Basil Thomson, the man who reputedly found them, were mutually contradictory. For some reason they had caused him to suffer from a fuzzy memory. Maloney showed the documents had not been legally proven such that they could be considered authentic in law. He

showed how the story of what he called the 'degenerate Diarist' had been subtly deployed during the trial to tarnish Casement's reputation and when the damage was done all traces of the alleged Diary material disappeared. He suggested if the documents were authentic there was no need for the then refusal of the Home Office to allow access.

The book related how a contemporaneous newspaper story, which suggested Casement had been arrested during his stay in Germany on a charge 'not specified', had been proven on the basis of post-war records to have been false. Maloney theorized that, had the material really been authentic, the logical and expeditious approach would have been to introduce it during the Trial so as to bring about the conviction of Casement as a criminal lunatic who would be confined at His Majesty's pleasure. Thus Casement and his attendant political causes would have

been disgraced before the eyes of the world while the British state would be portrayed as having acted mercifully. The conundrum over how to deal with the convicted traitor without provoking an adverse reaction would have found an elegant solution.

This book prompted Yeats to pen *The Ghost Of Roger Casement*, a poem calling for the vindication of Casement's good name. Its first verse was:

O What has made that sudden noise?
What on the threshold stands?
It never crossed the sea because
John Bull and the sea are friends;
But this is not the old sea
Nor this the old seashore.
What gave that roar of mockery,
That roar in the sea's roar?
The ghost of Roger Casement
Is beating on the door.

Tim O'Sullivan
July 2006

Reader's Letter

The Difficulties Of The Left Movement In A Sectarian Society

A Personal Account

The website: <http://www.workersrepublic.org/index.html> mentions Sylvia Pankhurst in relation to the Communist Party of Ireland's (CP/I) existence during 1921-1924.

Bob Stewart, a Scot, who was to become a prominent communist in the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) fell out with Jim Larkin and returned to England.

Also there in Ireland and working with the CP/I was Willie Gallagher, another Scot, later to become the communist MP for West Fife.

The website of the present CP/I also throws some light on that turbulent period, though I cannot find much on the split in the CP/I when it broke in two with the Northern section becoming the Communist Party of Northern Ireland (CPNI) and the Southern section becoming the Irish Workers' League during the 1939-1945 War. The split is thought to be due to Eire's neutrality during that war. The CP/NI then went on to back the British war effort. As a result the CPNI became Protestant-orientated, with its Party Trade Union leaders becoming a powerful influence among the industrialised Protestants. It looked as if you could become anything you wanted in Northern Ireland as long as you were Protestant. In fact, as a covert Catholic in the Belfast shipyard I preached communism and was taken to be a Protestant. I was aware of what I was doing.

The sectarian nature of left politics in

Part One

particular in the North is so hard to unravel that a political dissertation seems impossible. All one can do is fall back on personal reminiscences in the hope of making some sense of the situation then. Sealed up in Northern Ireland, cut off (and I say deliberately) from the early history of the CP/I, there didn't seem much hope of any further personal political development. As young men and women many of us looked towards the powerful post-war Communist Parties of France and Italy. France for me seemed a good option but instead I went to England.

When I went to London in July 1954 from Belfast, with a friend of mine, Declan Mulholland, we noticed a restaurant on Tottenham Court Road which had been advertised in the *Daily Worker*. Going in we were amazed to find Bob Stewart and Willie Gallagher sitting there. Awestruck we went over to them and were invited to their table. A general conversation followed with Bob Stewart asking us if we had come over to set the Thames on fire. A joke of course but it immediately demoralised me. Behind it I sensed not much was going to happen here either. The previous year—1953—Stalin had died and these two stalwarts of the CPGB weren't seeing too much of a future. Bob Stewart, a year later in 1955, was to suffer a crisis when the Russian husband of his daughter—an official of the CP/SU—was arrested in Moscow and died in prison. Maybe regime-change caused his demise. Anyway, Bob, grief-stricken but forever

the disciplined communist, carried on his Party duties.

Looking back now the year 1953 had not been a good one for Sean Murray either. He had headed the CP/I since 1933 and was the General Secretary when the Northern section became the CP/NI during 1939-1945 war. In 1949-1954 I was in its youth wing and later the Party. I was surprised by the number of expulsions from the CPNI during that time. There were murmurs about police spies and that could have been correct. Certainly the British *Daily Worker* was publishing photographs of expelled alleged police spies in its ranks during that period. Dissension also caused a number of expulsions. It was not a liberal debating society. A vicious Cold War was on the go and China was being threatened with the H-Bomb. The Soviets were threatening retaliation.

We knew next to nothing about Murray's background except that he had been a former IRA commandant and that he came from Antrim. Antrim town or Antrim the county? I still don't know. If Antrim the county then he could have come from anywhere. He may have been associated with the earlier CP/I during the 1921-1924 days of its existence when he was commanding an IRA flying column. We were never to know. The history of the CP/I seemed to begin in 1933. Members of the Young Workers' League wanted to know what went on in the communist movement in Ireland before 1933. Older CP members kept silent. If we raised the matter at annual conferences a CP member would come over and hush him or her up, and on one occasion even threatened violence.

Looking back now I feel that nationalist nature of the old CP/I had to be suppressed in order to fit in with the industrialised Protestant takeover. Sean Murray as a worldly-wise Communist (he spent two years at the Lenin school in Moscow) would understand this strategy and though he may have had some regrets he was disciplined enough to allow himself to be taken captive. How could he explain that to us as young eager enquiring communists?

My father, who had close associations with the American Communist Party, returned to Belfast in 1930 and joined the Workers' Revolutionary Group, and later the CP/I at its reconstitution in 1933. He was offered a two-year study period at the Lenin school in Moscow but declined. He hadn't been married long to my mother and I was at that time one year old. Soon after he left the Party but remained a communist. He never did tell me why he left. I expect it had to do with the Party's orientation towards Irish nationalism. My father was an Ulster Protestant in the Six-County manner but one who wanted the Catholic population integrated with equal rights. In his eighties (in 1980) he began

seeing the Provo war as a Catholic uprising and nothing to do with the struggle for a unified country. Like the Catholics he could see no justice arriving without violence. With six of us in the family as Catholics—and he as the lone Protestant witness, who cared to witness—he had seen what was happening to us on a daily basis.

Sean Murray had his work *The Irish Revolt—1916 And After* published by the CPGB. He was also associated with the 1933 pamphlet *Ireland's Path To Freedom, A Manifesto Of The Communist Party*. The lettering on the cover is Celtic. It is surprising how many Protestants went along with it. Two of the founders of the reconstituted CP/I I knew personally—Eddie and Sadie Menzies—were Protestants. Their daughter Edwina is still with The CP/I. There was also Betty Sinclair, Billy Sinclair, Andy Barr and Billy McCullough—later to become full-time leaders of their unions—who never wavered during this nationalist phase. Some of them also went to prison when the CP/I was still the CP/I.

During the CP/NI days, at the age of 18, and as a member of the Young Worker's League, I volunteered to go to Sheffield on a week's study course run by the CPGB. The Belfast Party would pay the boat fare but said they couldn't afford the train fare from Liverpool to Sheffield. I was told to hitch-hike. When my father learnt of this he wrote to Sean Murray and said I wasn't going because it would disrupt my apprenticeship. Murray was furious that I wasn't being allowed to make such a small sacrifice. I was an indentured apprentice joiner in the shipyard, a virtual economic prisoner of my parents when the term teenager hadn't been invented and I was earning buttons.

Prominent members of the CP, including officials of various Trade Unions usually met on a Saturday night in a pub in Pottinger Entry, off High Street in Belfast. The pub was owned by a Party sympathiser whom we knew as Oliver. Ironically, for a man who sold alcohol, he was disgusted by the heavy drinking of these Party members. Again, he might have seen this as symptomatic of a down-turn in the Party's fortunes. Personally I saw it as the habits of a well-placed, well-heeled communist elite who controlled most of the Trade Union movement in Northern Ireland. You would, on occasions, see Soviet Trade Union officials being entertained in this pub with a lot of Russian being shouted as they toasted one another in vodka.

It did lend a cosmopolitan air to a bleak Belfast though.

On one of these occasions, around closing time, Sean Murray suddenly grabbed me by the lapels and told me that the next time I was delegated to go to Sheffield I would go. I could do nothing

but laugh at this drunken old man threatening me.

But I was left wondering if I had been expelled from the communist movement.

Expulsion was bad enough but it was usually followed by black propaganda.

A man and his wife running the Party bookshop in Church Lane, Belfast, and living on the premises were expelled over an argument about Yugoslavia after that country had been expelled from the Cominform in 1948. Arguments still raged in the Cominform paper *For A Lasting Peace And People's Democracy* with Yugoslavia being berated as a fascist country. I had some of the cuttings from that paper and showed them to a friend of mine. I simply wanted to know if that was true about Yugoslavia going towards the West. I wasn't about to support Yugoslavia but nevertheless I was reported to the Secretary of the Young Workers League. I was called to a meeting with him and told not to deviate in future. I wasn't yearning for democracy. I didn't know what democracy meant. I was born into a one-party statelet. Communist direction and discipline suited me fine.

The man and wife team running the Party bookshop were accused of dipping into the funds. Whispers went round that they now lived up the Malone Road (a middle-class area). It was also said that they were also running a shop in Smithfield Market. It was a silly accusation in a city as small as Belfast. I had a walk up the Malone Road. Yes, they did live up the Malone Road but it was in a prefab. (temporary housing made from sheets of asbestos). I then had a run around Smithfield Market. The shop turned out to be a stall. They sold left-wing literature, Chinese magazines showing the revolutionary struggle, and some Soviet imports of an early version of the first transistor radio. Their daughter remained in the YWL and later joined the CP.

After being accosted by Sean Murray at closing time I noticed the two Soviet Trade Union officials taking off at speed. We went after them and found them wandering around the City Hall not knowing where they were. A CP member then came along in order to lead them back to his home where they were staying. An American warship was tied up in the Pollock Dock on a *good will visit* and the sailors were rampaging through the centre of Belfast. Our CP member, in an alcohol-fuelled jovial manner, began introducing the terrified Russians to the passing sailors. He was shouting slogans like "*World Peace*" and "*Russian meets American*". Maybe it was lucky that the drunken sailors couldn't be convinced that these were *real* Russians and not immigrant Russians like they had in the US. The Korean War was raging at the time and the Cold War was really on the boil.

Wilson John Haire

Hold your nose Minister, the Paparazzi are on your side

The *hoi poloi* have been much exercised lately about the danger of having their privacy invaded by unscrupulous photographers working the tabloid circuit. Middle class life as we know it is under threat from this latest incursion from the lower orders. But fear not, the busiest Minister for Justice in the history of the State, Michael McDowell, has legislation in the pipeline that will meet the menace head on. He is going to strengthen the right to privacy, a purpose with which all right thinking citizens must surely concur.

But not everyone does concur. RTE radio broadcast an unusually frank interview with a representative of the photographers on 10th July in which some of the less publicised aspects of our market-orientated system of values were spelt out. The avowed purpose of the interview was to disillusion the hordes of young people who want to be famous.

The programme was one of a series hosted by Geri Maye called 'Fame' and the photographer was Ray Senior from a company called VIP. Senior described the proposed legislation as a headline grabbing exercise aimed at protecting a tiny grouping of multi-millionaires, a waste of time when the Government should be tackling gangland crime and the heroin epidemic.

He explained the *paparazzi* phenomenon very patiently. A large section of the public is voyeuristic. They follow the lives of celebrities like they follow soap operas. But they don't want to see the positive side of the celebrities. They want to be reassured that their idols are secretly unhappy or mean or not really so good looking. So photographs of the celebs having a 'bad hair day' or showing the negative side of their natures are particularly prized. For their part the celebs need to have their pictures in the tabloid media often enough to be familiar. There must always be some soap opera drama happening in their lives: a romance, a romantic tiff, a two-timing episode, a break-up, now a pregnancy, then losing weight after pregnancy, now a nervous breakdown or drugs binge, then rehab etc etc. Being out of the limelight for even short periods can mean a drop in marketability. The whole circus is driven by surprisingly large amounts of money—Senior claimed that when Kerry Katama is on the front page of a tabloid or magazine, sales shoot up by thirty per cent.

Celebrities buy into this very consciously. They know they are making their private lives a public commodity. The paparazzi know the value of the commodity they deal in but they also

understand how the market in their commodity is constantly in flux. An apparently unimportant photograph today may turn out to be valuable next week, so everything must be photographed.

Senior was impressively scathing in repudiating the critics of his profession. The voyeurism of the public creates the demand and the newspapers and other media boost their sales hugely by pandering to that demand. "*The paparazzi only take pictures, they only do a job; the media make the ethical decision to publish the pictures, the public keep viewing them and the celebrities tip off their supposed pursuers on exactly where they are going to be*". But the people he had most contempt for were critics who failed to understand how the entire process revolved around the value of the commodity being traded. A more dedicated devotee of market values would be hard to find.

Unable to find any weaknesses in Ray Senior's defences on pop stars or screen idols, Geri Maye turned to sports stars who have fame thrust upon them. Again Senior was scathing about the whingers. The rugby star, Brian O'Driscoll, and the soccer player, Damien Duff were mentioned. One minute they are signing one million euro contracts with huge multinational companies like Nike and the next they are bemoaning the limelight. Grumpy stars like O'Driscoll invite the attention of the paparazzi because they avoid having their photograph taken; this only makes their photographs more saleable. The massive earnings of professional sports stars are nothing compared to their earnings through 'merchandising' and this is as true in the more respectable sports like golf as it is in soccer or snooker.

Not wanting to give a low life photographer a completely free run over the air waves, Geri Maye had kept a trump card up her sleeve in the form of an audio clip from the former professional model, Laura Bermingham. Bermingham had been photographed topless while changing for a fashion show at the RDS in Dublin. The pictures were published in the *Sunday Mirror* two years after the fashion show and she sued them. Her case was that she was a hard working professional model and she was photographed at her place of work. The RDS had very high and long windows and these were blacked out to create a changing area for the models. One small top corner of a black out curtain had given way. A photographer used a ladder to climb two roofs. The footage he took was through a video camera. Bermingham claimed that the video had been passed around at journalist stag parties before grainy stills were published in the *Mirror*. She stated that all she wanted was an apology. Once she received an apology she had settled with the *Sunday Mirror* as she no longer had a reason for not settling.

Senior's initial response when asked about the actions of the photographer was to the effect that he always admired people who pushed the boundaries in their work, but he also conceded that the action was illegal and he wasn't happy with it. Referring to Ms Bermingham he said, "*she got her apology and she got her settlement*". It seemed to me the last comment contained a dark hint but I am insufficiently imbued with market values to fully grasp it.

There is no denying that the market driven media do exert a corrupting effect on everything they come in contact with. But is Michael McDowell not allowing himself to be blinded by his own middle class prejudices in wanting to rein them in? As Ray Senior will corroborate, the paparazzi are perfectly attuned to the *diktat* of the market place; they are a pure product of the value system that McDowell and his party are seeking to impose on society. Perhaps the Minister just needs to hold his nose in embracing the radical future?

David Alvey

Ethnic Cleansing

The following letter by Nick Folley failed to find publication in *The Irish Times*

Referring to Niall Meehan's comments on *The IRA and its Enemies* Peter Hart (Irish Times 28-06-06) plainly states that he does 'not argue ethnic cleansing took place in Cork or anywhere else in the 1920s'. I think Hart may be hoist by his own petard in this case. On page 288-9 of *The IRA and its Enemies* (in reference to the killing of Protestants in Dunmanway in 1922) Hart writes "the fact of the victims' religion is inescapable...these men were shot because they were Protestant...sectarian antagonism...the gunmen, it may be inferred, did not seek to punish Protestants but to drive them out altogether...[the] rhetoric of ethnic intolerance..." It is hard to see how any reasonable person could try and suggest that what is presented here is anything other than a claim of ethnic cleansing. It certainly doesn't sound like 'quite the opposite' to me, as Hart claims.

I was also present at a talk on Political Violence in UCC on May 9th last when Peter Hart suggested that one of the top three factors driving the War of Independence was religion and repeated his claim that the Dunmanway massacre was sectarian. He adds 'there is absolutely no publicly available evidence to suggest that any of those killed were informers'.

I would have thought that Hart was familiar with 'Record of the Rebellion in Ireland' since he edited an edition of it. It clearly states that while many Protestant farmers did not give information to the

continued on page 24, column 3

Peter Hart Tries Again —And Gives Up?

Since his book on the War of Independence was published Peter Hart has had to make two public attempts to defend his theses about the War. In the *Irish Times* Letters' Page in 1998 and in *History Ireland* in 2005. It is clear that he lost the argument on both occasions and the Editors closed the debate in both cases. He then tried to put the issues he raised behind him with his book on Collins. He described this as taking on "the great white whale" of Irish history (*History Ireland*, March 2005). But that book has sunk without trace and has turned out to be more of a red herring than a white whale to mix marine metaphors. The book on the IRA in West Cork that made his name keeps coming back to haunt him.

His latest attempt to defend himself came as a response to the following letter by Niall Meehan on the film, *The Wind That Shakes The Barley*, in the *Irish Times*:

"In his article on Ken Loach's *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (June 17th), Luke Gibbons correctly asserts that there is no evidence of "ethnic cleansing" of Protestants in West Cork during the War of Independence.

"He is also correct to draw attention to the fact that racism was a prevalent British attitude. The British army regarded the entire population as their enemy.

"Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, then Brigade Major Bernard Montgomery, typically remarked: "It never bothered me a bit how many houses we burned... I regarded all civilians as 'shiners', and I never had any dealings with them".

"Such sentiments were also to be found in the minds and actions of those who set up and ran variants of the shadowy "Anti-Sinn Féin Society".

"Such "loyalists" gathered intelligence and went on RIC and Auxiliary raids to "spot", assassinate or torture their quarry.

"They were not representative of the whole Protestant community, many of whom were sympathetic to the republican cause. Protestants generally held little regard for the Black and Tans who, without distinction of creed, burned both Protestant and Catholic-owned property.

"British forces openly encouraged the loyalists and this has led some to conclude mistakenly that they were British forces in mufti. The revisionist historian Peter Hart holds this view. He spoke on it in a recent Rebel County documentary on the Ken Loach film on RTÉ 1.

"Hart concluded that Protestants shot for informing were innocent of such activities.

"Hart's view is a favourite among Orange Order members, as Drew Nelson, grand secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, explained to Gerry Moriarty (June 17th). Nelson believes, on the basis of Hart's research, in a "massacre of Protestants that took place... on the main street of Dunmanway, in April 1922". There is no evidence that Protestants were shot because of their religion.

"There is evidence that informers, whose names were left behind by departing Auxiliaries, were shot from April 26th to 28th, 1922 near Bandon, contrary to express IRA orders. The shootings were condemned by all shades of the pre-Civil War republican opinion.

"Two historians in particular, Brian Murphy and Meda Ryan, should have been interviewed. Murphy researched the topic in his recent work on *The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda* and Meda Ryan dealt with it in her recent Tom Barry biography.

"Murphy first drew attention to the racist British attitudes cited in Luke Gibbons's piece. Possibly the documentary makers were also not aware that Irish Academic Press will soon publish John Borgonovo's *Spies, Informers and the Anti-Sinn Féin Society*. It undermines the contention that the IRA was sectarian in countering the activities of loyalist spies.

"This is a subject that, I am sure, will excite further interest in the debate that *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* has opened up." (23 June)

Hart responded as follows and promptly dug a bigger hole for himself. He wrote:

"Niall Meehan, as usual, misrepresents my work (June 23rd). I have never argued that "ethnic cleansing" took place in Cork or elsewhere in the 1920s—in fact, quite the opposite. Nor does my book *The IRA and its Enemies* suggest that no Protestants were "guilty" of "informing" (at least by IRA standards) or that they were the only group to be targeted.

"What I do argue—based on a great deal of evidence from both sides—is that Protestants were no more likely than Catholics to inform, but that they were much more likely to be suspected, and vastly more likely per capita to be killed (or otherwise attacked) as a result.

"Nor were they alone. Ex-soldiers and those referred to as "tramps" and "tinkers" were also frequent victims, as were other perceived social deviants. What they all had in common was a marginal position in local society. The IRA, a product of local communities, couldn't get away with killing respect-

able farmers or shopkeepers—let alone priests—and tended to suspect outsiders anyway. It is surely a familiar enough pattern in human affairs: fear, anger and prejudice.

"My argument is thus about the nature of violence and community, not the straw man that my critics like to attack. As for the massacre of Protestants in April 1922, there is absolutely no publicly available evidence available to suggest that any of those killed were informers or members of some loyalist underground. They do not appear on any IRA intelligence lists, for example.

"Mr Meehan's suggestions—that religion had nothing to do with it, the IRA wasn't really responsible and the victims were probably guilty anyway—only reveals his commitment to the party line.

"We should always be profoundly suspicious of excuses for killing, no matter who offers them" (Department of History, Memorial University, St John's, Newfoundland, Canada, 28 June)

Niall Meehan replied as follows:

"Peter Hart writes (June 28th) that "Niall Meehan, as usual, misrepresents my work". That, indeed, is a serious charge, but let us see. He states: "I have never argued that 'ethnic cleansing' took place in Cork or elsewhere in the 1920s".

"My letter (June 23rd) did not say he did, and Luke Gibbons (June 17th), whom I cited as using the phrase "ethnic cleansing", did not name him at all. I referred to the Orange Order's use of Peter Hart as an authority on "murders" of Protestants in West Cork (Gerry Moriarty interview with Orange Order Grand Secretary Drew Nelson, *The Irish Times*, June 17th).

"However, It would not have been "misrepresentation" had I stated what Peter Hart denies. In 2005 Peter Hart said: "There was no ethnic cleansing in the Irish revolution... but there was ethnically targeted violence". If there is a real distinction here it is not clear to Peter Hart's Memorial University History Department. Its web page states, under "Research", that Peter Hart researches "ethnic conflict and cleansing in Ireland".

"Peter Hart, in *The IRA at War* (2003), wrote: "Similar campaigns of what might be termed 'ethnic cleansing' were waged in parts of Kings and Queens Counties, South Tipperary, Leitrim, Mayo, Limerick, Westmeath, Louth and Cork. Worst of all was the massacre of 14 men in West Cork in April [1922], after an IRA officer had been killed breaking into a house." Now, Peter Hart refers to a "massacre of Protestants". Is this ethnic "conflict" or "cleansing"?

"The evidence in fact suggests that these maverick, post-Treaty, pre-Civil War killings targeted loyalist British agents, in which close relatives were shot dead in two cases. They were stamped out locally by the IRA, but were "motivated by political and not sectarian considerations", to quote historian Brian Murphy's disagreement

with Hart on this point.

“Hart complains that “there is no publicly available evidence” that those shot were loyalists or informers. The evidence is an intelligence diary left behind by Auxiliaries as they evacuated Dunmanway Workhouse. Hart noted (1998) that it was published in the *Southern Star* in 1971, with the loyalist informers’ names removed out of deference to local families. A similar consideration informed Tom Barry in his *Guerrilla Days in Ireland* (1949).

“Hart claimed that, apart from the name excisions, this “invaluable series of articles reproduces the complete text”. However, despite not possessing a key piece of the jigsaw, Hart made speculative assumptions about the victims of the April killings. The assumptions turn out to have been wrong. The publicity Peter Hart gained for his sensational findings caused a response in which the linked names from the Auxiliary diary were published in 2003.

“On the April killings, Hart (1998) cites “by common consent the most trustworthy source we have”, the *British Record of the Rebellion*, to the effect that Protestants generally were not guilty of informing because “except by chance, they had not got [information] to give”.

“He failed to quote a key sentence following, stating: “an exception to this rule was in the Bandon area”. This is where the killings that Hart described took place. On January 18th, 2003 an *Irish Times* review of Hart’s editorship of *The Record*, by Breandan Ó Cathaoir, stated that Peter Hart “appears disingenuous” on this point. Madam, I see no reason to disagree with your reviewer.

“In my opinion Peter Hart, despite demonstrating his research and some flashes of insight, is not an objective historian of the Irish War of Independence or of its immediate aftermath” (3 July).

John Borgonovo (San Francisco) then responded as follows:

“Dr Peter Hart’s letter of June 28th stated: “I have never argued that ‘ethnic cleansing’ took place in Cork or elsewhere” during the War of Independence. That is not accurate. In his article “The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland” (“Similar campaigns of what might be termed ‘ethnic cleansing’ were waged in parts of King’s and Queen’s Counties, South Tipperary, Leitrim, Mayo, Limerick, Westmeath, Louth, and Cork”.

“He also compared the Irish Revolution to Bosnia and “the postwar ‘unmixing’ of people in Europe”. Dr Hart’s landmark book *The IRA and Its Enemies* essentially attributed the shooting of Protestant civilians in Cork to the IRA’s “fear of a desire for revenge”, rather than the actual guilt of those victims. I disagree.

“My upcoming book *Spies, Informers, and the “Anti-Sinn Féin Society”* studies the executions of suspected informers in

Cork city during 1920-1921. Of the IRA’s 30 civilian killings, five victims were Protestant and 19 were ex-servicemen.

“The latter number should be placed in the context of the city’s large ex-soldier population, which included over 5,500 veterans of the first World War. Overall, my research revealed no IRA campaign against the city’s Protestant, unionist and ex-servicemen institutions and leaders.

“Among Cork’s executed “spies”, clear evidence linked some of them to the crown forces, while others were shot without any explanation. Today it is impossible to establish guilt in many cases. British records about informants are fragmented, incomplete, and often unreliable. IRA records were destroyed during the conflict for security reasons. However, surviving documentation indicates the Cork city IRA only targeted civilians it believed were passing information to the crown forces.

“The Cork city Volunteers certainly had the means to identify local citizens working with British forces. Volunteers systematically intercepted mail, tapped phone lines and monitored telegraphs around the city. Republican spies and sympathisers could be found in key workplaces throughout the town. IRA intelligence officers closely watched British bases and personnel. One IRA spy penetrated the British army’s Cork command at its highest level, and had access to sensitive information that we must assume included the identities of local civilian informants. Her story can be found in *Florence and Josephine O’Donoghue’s War of Independence*, which I edited” (14 July).

These responses dealt concisely with the points made by Hart against Meehan. Some weeks hence Hart has not responded so he seems to have decided to give up the ghost on this debate almost as soon as it started. Rather pathetic but probably wise from his position..

It is rich to see Hart complaining about the lack of ‘public information’ when a major criticism of his work is that he refuses to name the alleged veterans of the Kilmichael Ambush that he claims to have interviewed. He is unable therefore to counter the allegation that he is claiming the unique achievement of having interviewed the dead.

Hart contradicts himself in the letter. He says he does not argue that ethnic cleansing occurred in Cork or elsewhere but also seeks to deny that the Protestants killed in April 1922 were informers. This can only mean that they were killed because they were Protestants and that would clearly be ethnic cleansing as understood nowadays. It certainly would not qualify as “the opposite” of ethnic cleansing. Peter Hart cannot have it both ways and trying to do so is transparent verbal trickery.

He also says that “*What I do argue—*

based on a great deal of evidence from both sides—is that Protestants were no more likely than Catholics to inform, but that they were much more likely to be suspected, and vastly more likely per capita to be killed (or otherwise attacked) as a result.” But where is the actual evidence to support these “*more likely*” arguments? Anyone can say anything is ‘more likely’ than anything else if evidence is not provided one way or the other. Surely, after his decades of research—his lifetime’s work—he is obliged to provide the evidence in a precise and indisputable way and should not have to resort to this vague formulation.

If, on the other hand, he is serious about the non-existence of ethnic cleansing then he has wasted his life. But who likes to admit that? Why cannot he be as precise as Tom Barry who specified exactly the number executed as spies in his area as 15, and explained: “*Incidentally for the benefit of those who are bigots—9 Catholics and 6 Protestants*”. Barry seems to have Hart in mind! Why is Hart with all his knowledge and hindsight not able to be as precise as Barry? Why cannot he be as precise as Borgonovo in the above letter where he is able to give exact figures in the area he has researched and, where he cannot be definite, he explains why he can not be. He has no need to resort to ambiguity and innuendo. That is the real historian’s approach. And how refreshing it is after reading Hart and other revisionists on these issues.

But of course the most absurd idea of all is that “*per capita*” parity of executions and attacks was not maintained. He should elaborate on this concept. He should give us the criteria by which those who wish to follow this line of argument could develop it and draw conclusions and make judgments. Don’t forget that the British side should be judged by the same criteria so there must be objective modes of assessment established. No war has just one side. Are we to expect that the Black and Tans should have taken due account of the socio-religious balance and made the necessary, meticulous, calculations before they went out on their escapades?

What all this shows conclusively is that Hart is saturated with a sectarian view of the War. He can only see Catholics and Protestants. Margaret Thatcher’s famous dictum was that there was no such thing as society—only individuals and their families. To Hart it is clearly a case of society consisting of individuals and their religious denominations (the category of loyalist does not signify at all). He would of course deny a sectarian approach—but he has to get himself into this sectarian frame of mind when he deals with his subject in order to seek to prove his case.

His career and reputation depend on establishing sectarianism as the driving force of the War of Independence—by hook or by crook. He therefore has a vested interest in proving something that he also denies exists! If he continues to deny ethnic cleansing, then all his supporters are made to look complete idiots because they have misinterpreted him comprehensively—as is evidenced by the many comments, reviews and letters to the press on the subject. He should urgently set up a helpline and an advice service for them as they may get confused in continuing to assert what their guru denies. Unlike him, they don't seem to be the type of people who can hold two contradictory views at the same time. One is quite enough!

The first requirement of a successful army to ensure victory is to be clear about its enemy. That seems obvious and banal but not if you take Hart seriously. The enemy army in the War of Independence was the armed forces of Britain and their supporters and no one else. If that was allowed to become obscured, defeat was almost inevitable. It was this clarity that ensured that the IRA did not lose. Imagine an army contemplating that in its attacks and executions of spies and informers it should ensure it was proportionate to the religious make-up of the people concerned. Imagine the ANC taking that approach in the ethnic sense. Imagine Hamas and the Israelis doing so! And what happens in wars where there are no religious or ethnic blocs to relate to? Maybe gender balance applies in those situations? And perhaps there is sexual orientation to be considered. And what about ageist factors? Soldiering could become a very complicated business indeed if Hart's concepts were pursued. One could almost come to feel sorry for the Tans in such a complex business!

The mind boggles that anybody could dream up such a "per capita" concept in fighting a war. If the Monty Python crew were still in operation I think they could hardly do justice to it. I am tempted to draft a script just in case they make a comeback and need material:

Sorry lads, no more Catholic/ Protestants to be topped this week, quota's been met for both!

Ah, but this one's not a practising Catholic, sir.

And this one's a very odd type of Protestant, opposed to all the others, sir.

And this one says he's an atheist, sir. Can't execute me at all, then.

I bet the next one's a Jew or a Muslim. Funny you should say that, sir.

Will Peter Hart's ultimate contribution to Irish history be as an inspiration for jokes in bad taste?

Jack Lane

Report

Killings In Co. Cork In 1920s

The following letter from **John Borgonovo** appeared in the *Irish Times* on 14th July 2006

"Dr Peter Hart's letter of June 28th stated: 'I have never argued that 'ethnic cleansing' took place in Cork or elsewhere' during the War of Independence. That is not accurate. In his article 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland' (in *Unionism and Modern Ireland*, Gill & MacMillan, 1996), Dr Hart wrote of this period: 'Similar campaigns of what might be termed 'ethnic cleansing' were waged in parts of King's and Queen's Counties, South Tipperary, Leitrim, Mayo, Limerick, Westmeath, Louth, and Cork'."

"He also compared the Irish Revolution to Bosnia and 'the postwar 'unmixing' of people in Europe'. Dr Hart's landmark book *The IRA and Its Enemies* essentially attributed the shooting of Protestant civilians in Cork to the IRA's "fear of a desire for revenge", rather than the actual guilt of those victims. I disagree.

"My upcoming book *Spies, Informers, and the "Anti-Sinn Féin Society"* studies the executions of suspected informers in Cork city during 1920-1921. Of the IRA's 30 civilian killings, five victims were Protestant and 19 were ex-servicemen.

"The latter number should be placed in the context of the city's large ex-soldier population, which included over 5,500 veterans of the first World War. Overall, my research revealed no IRA campaign against the city's Protestant, unionist and ex-servicemen institutions and leaders.

"Among Cork's executed "spies", clear evidence linked some of them to the crown forces, while others were shot without any explanation. Today it is impossible to establish guilt in many cases. British records about informants are fragmented, incomplete, and often unreliable. IRA records were destroyed during the conflict for security reasons. However, surviving documentation indicates the Cork city IRA only targeted civilians it believed were passing information to the crown forces.

"The Cork city Volunteers certainly had the means to identify local citizens working with British forces. Volunteers systematically intercepted mail, tapped phone lines and monitored telegraphs around the city. Republican spies and sympathisers could be found in key workplaces throughout the town. IRA intelligence officers closely watched British bases and personnel. One IRA spy penetrated the British army's Cork command at its highest level, and had access to sensitive information that we must assume included the identities of local civilian informants. Her story can be found in *Florence and Josephine O'Donoghue's War of Independence*, which I edited."

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Folley Letter from page 21:

Crown forces, the exception to this rule was in the Bandon area and adds that many of these informers were assassinated. While he praises it for being a most trustworthy source unsurprisingly he does not include these sentences, as they tend to contradict his thesis.

Secondly he must also be aware that Meda Ryan has established the existence of a list left behind by Crown forces after their departure naming as informers many of those killed in Dunmanway. It seems Peter Hart not only refuses to look at this evidence, he no longer reads his own books." (28-06-06)

Nick Folley's comment on 'Gentle Black & Tan' now up as a piece in its own right at <http://www.indymedia.ie/article/77252>

DEAL continued

Ms McManus claimed there was "a gross deficit in democratic accountability".

Green Party Leader Trevor Sargent said the House had been excluded from the process of drawing up the partnership deal.

He said there should be a vote in the House on the deal and an Oireachtas Committee which would have parallel role in the drawing up of a partnership deal.

VOICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME) said the new pact was "a bad deal for small business, a bad deal for the economy, a bad deal for democracy but a good deal for the public sector unions and C.O.R.I".

The association warned that this 'agreement at all costs' would have serious repercussions for Irish competitiveness and the overall welfare of the State.

Attacking the pay element in particular, ISME boss Mark Fielding warned pay increases of 4.5% annually, almost twice the EU average, were not feasible and would damage competitiveness and force firms to shed jobs or close down.

"It is beyond comprehension that these rates, negotiated by the subservient, weak-kneed negotiators in IBEC, provide for no initiatives that would help to introduce a comparable increase in productivity. This is economic madness and will lead to a further undermining of the competitiveness of the economy", said Mr. Fielding.

* **Special ICTU Congress:**
Tuesday, September 5, 2006
to ballot on 'Towards 2016'.

DEAL continued

June 2006, the Department of Finance's Public Service Benchmarking Body is seeking consultants to conduct a new public pay study, which will form part of the Government's *Sustaining Progress* agreement on public sector pay, to which a successor is now being agreed.

The benchmarking unit of the Department of Finance has issued the tender as a key part of its study on public sector pay and how it compares to wages in the private sector. The study is due to be published next year.

The tender said the study would be a "fundamental examination of the pay of a range of public service employees by reference to jobs of a similar size in the private sector".

The last benchmarking study led to an average 8.9 per cent increase for public servants. It was a controversial exercise because the calculations underpinning it were never published.

The review will examine the pay and jobs of about 600 public sector workers, including garda, prison officers, army members, ambulance workers, nurses, dental surgeons, civil servants, local authority clerical staff and teachers.

It will examine pay rates and pay rises in the private sector, how staff in the private sector are rewarded, and make recommendations on public sector pay.

The study must recommend how to recruit, retain and motivate staff and how to modernise the public service, according to a statement from the Department of Finance.

Public Service unions will be looking to the next round of Benchmarking to take their cumulative increase over the next two years close to 20 per cent. This is an extraordinary prospect when you consider that recent Government figures show that public-sector workers are earning an average of 40 per cent more than workers in the private sector.

"The new partnership programme represents a fundamental shift in the way social and economic policy is formulated in Ireland.

"In place of the traditional pay deal with social objectives tacked on, the agreement finalised yesterday sets out a 10-year strategy for the future direction of society.

"The new approach is a recognition by those involved that, in many respects, the social partnership process begun in 1987 has served its purpose.

"At that time the key objective was to kickstart an economy bedevilled by problems including chronic unemployment.

"Today, so many jobs are being created by the booming economy that a chief concern is whether sufficient workers can be sourced to fill them all" (Chris Dooley, Irish Times, 15.6.2006)

THE FARMERS

As we go to press, less than Euro 1 billion is dividing farmers and the Government on agreeing a farming pillar to the social partnership agreement, the two main farm organisations, the IFA and the ICMSA, reported progress when the talks were adjourned in late June.

The negotiations are expected to focus on farm demands that the Government increase its commitment to the sector as EU contributions decrease.

It is understood the farm lobby is seeking Euro 7.1 billion and Government has offered Euro 6.3 billion.

Jackie Cahill, president of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association, said a further response from Government was required to properly finance an envisaged seven-year farm development programme.

The organisation was also seeking a code of practice on the implementation of the controversial nitrates directive.

Padraig Walshe, President of the Irish Farmers' Association, said of all the sectors in social partnership, farming was facing the most serious challenges in the coming years. He said that any partnership agreement would have to recognise this.

CORI

Many targets set out in the wider social and economic section are restatements of existing Government policies. But the change in direction signalled by the document was hailed yesterday by CORI. (Conference of Religious of Ireland) Justice Commission Director, Fr. Seán Healy as a "major breakthrough".

Among the highlights he identified were the commitments to provide 27,000 social housing units in the next three years, and to raise the lowest social welfare rate to 30 per cent of gross average industrial earnings in 2007.

"C.O.R.I. will, in tandem with other parties to the deal, review its terms before making a formal decision on ratification. It is already clear, however, that with its remodelled format, social partnership has been given a new impetus" (Irish Times, 16.06.06)

DAIL DEBATE

"The government has signed up to a long-term vision for our society with a group of unelected sectional interests.

"What will be the cost of this plan? We don't know. Who was representing the ordinary taxpayer? Nobody. What is the role of our elected representatives in the Dail? They get to debate a fait accompli" (Cliff Taylor, Editor, Sunday Business Post, 18.6.2006).

Bad enough to read the above rubbish from the Free Marketeer, Mr. Taylor, but to see the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party engaging in the self-same rubbish beggars belief.

"Who was representing the ordinary taxpayer?" asks Mr. Taylor! The democratically elected government that's who. And it took a leader of the Progressive Democrats to explain this to Ms McManus—the sort of answer one would expect from any half-baked social democrat.

The Government has agreed to an Opposition demand for a Dáil debate on the proposed new social partnership programme which is set to be ratified later in the summer.

The Opposition is also seeking more involvement by the Dáil in the negotiation of partnership deals.

Tánaiste Mary Harney told the Dáil that the debate would be held before the House rises for the summer recess next month. "I think there are issues around democratic accountability. I have acknowledged that in the House before, and I think it would be a very good thing if the House was to debate the agreement which has yet to be ratified".

She added that the Government had a majority in the Dáil, and, therefore, it negotiated on behalf of the State and the House.

"I cannot see how you could have negotiations with a whole host of parties", Ms Harney said.

Earlier, Fine Gael Deputy Leader Richard Bruton said it would be churlish not to recognise the considerable work which had gone into negotiating an agreement.

"But I would like to ask the Government why it has not made any effort to address what is well recognised as a democratic deficit in the way in which this agreement is put in place. Is it not time that we had a much more transparent and open system for deciding what our priorities are for what, the Government tells us, are 10 years ahead?

"Is it not extraordinary that the Oireachtas has never been consulted about this agreement, was never consulted about, nor never debated, the last agreement, and here we are, as the elected representatives, and an agreement is being put in place and the Oireachtas has no say in it.

"It does strike me that we are being seriously bypassed. And this is not a new topic. The Government was well aware of the concern in the House about this issue before it commenced the process of negotiating a partnership agreement."

Labour deputy leader Liz McManus said it was astonishing that an agreement, to be extended over 10 years and covering a whole swathe of public policy, had not, at any point, been subject to public scrutiny.

"We still have not seen the agreement. It would certainly appear that the media has got the information ahead of the representatives of the public who sit in this House and who have been excluded from the process."

continued on page 24

DEAL continued

Under the new Public Sector productivity terms, hospital staff such as laboratory analysts and radiographers would be obliged to provide services from early morning to late evening with staggered shifts.

These pay-back clauses are linked to each phase of both national wage agreement and the special public service benchmarking pay rises.

The Government's personnel supremo, Eddie Sullivan has warned that the 13,000 CPSU clerical staff that future wage rises, including one due two weeks ago, will be frozen if members decide not to accept personal annual performance assessments.

Civil servants would receive a 'personal score' of between one and five from their managers.

Those receiving the lowest score would not qualify for incremental pay rises.

"Of course there are shortcomings. In particular, the public service is seen to have benefited excessively from such agreements, in the absence of the major reforms and productivity arrangements that were visited on the private sector. The disparity was exaggerated through the introduction of benchmarking in 2004. And a second review is under way. Public servants are already well paid. More importantly, they enjoy extremely generous and expensive pensions. A new balance should be struck between the public and private sectors"

(Editorial, Irish Times, 16.06.2006).

HEALTH/EDUCATION STAFF

There are general commitments from health staff to co-operate with change and modernisation and the reorganisation being put in place by the HSE..

There is a commitment to have more health staff working outside the normal Nine to Five day. Discussions are to be held on this and concluded by March next year.

The text, in a marvellous part of partnership-speak, says that the parties "agree to explore how any implications of such changes might be accommodated with particular regard to the incoming work of the public service benchmarking body and the operation of this agreement".

This indicates that health employees will get further benchmarking increases in return for working flexible hours. In education, there are similar general commitments to co-operation with change and modernisation.

There are to be discussions on re-deploying teachers in community and comprehensive schools.

There is also mention of a thorny issue for parents—the disruption caused by staff

training or so-called "in-service days".

The talks have identified alternative ways of delivering this training "that would reduce the impact on tuition time".

However, this is also to be discussed in the context of the next benchmarking round—in other words, teachers expect more money to co-operate with this change.

THE TEACHERS

The leadership of two of the three teacher unions have voted to oppose the new Partnership deal.

On 17th June 2006, the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) executive committee decided to advise its members to reject the deal.

On 24th June 2006, the Central Executive of the Association of Secondary Teachers (ASTI), the State's largest second level teachers' union, decided likewise.

The executive of the primary teachers' union, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) are recommending acceptance. The INTO has 27,000 members.

TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND

The move could see the Government withholding pay rises of 10 per cent over 27 months to the TUI's 13,000 members.

The President of the second and third-level teachers' union, Paddy Healy, is also hoping that other public-service unions might consider joining with it in looking for the new deal to be renegotiated.

Under the terms of the proposed deal, the TUI believes its members will be forced to introduce recent education legislation relating to issues such as special-needs provision and disadvantage.

However, it claims the deal contains no guarantees of additional resources to implement these changes, and that the pay increases it envisages are "barely above inflation".

"TUI is opposed to changes in conditions of service and increased workload being imposed on members in return for national pay rounds which principally compensate for inflation", Mr Healy said yesterday.

The Union retains the right to pull out of the new partnership deal altogether if the decision of its executive is supported at a special TUI congress this month, and ratified by a subsequent nationwide ballot of members.

However, like other Unions, it has in the past voted to reject previous pay deals but agreed to abide by the overall decision of ICTU's members to ratify and implement the deals.

The position of the State's largest Trade Union, SIPTU, is also widely viewed as critical in deciding whether the deal will be ratified at a Special ICTU Congress on September 5, 2006. It has traditionally supported pay deals.

ICTU General Secretary David Begg said congress would urge Unions to accept the new deal, which he said recognised "that economic and social progress are complimentary". He also said the new agreement would cover the cost of living.

NURSES

On 14th June 2006, the Irish Nurses Organisation (INO) and the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA), held a protest rally in Dublin in support of their decision to pursue an eight-point pay claim outside of the benchmarking process.

INO Deputy General Secretary, Dave Hughes, said the protest rally would send a loud message in advance of the June 20 Labour Court hearing of their claims that they would not be treated as second-class professionals.

"It seems in our health service that the further you get from the patient the higher your earnings and the shorter your hours", he declared.

The Unions are calling for the removal of an "anomaly" that sees childcare workers being paid up to Euro 3,000 more than staff nurses and midwives at every point of their respective salary scales.

They have also put together a "compelling case" for a reduction in the working week from 39 to 35 hours. As far back as 1980, the court said that nurses should be amongst the first to benefit from a shorter working week.

The Unions argue that nurses are now the only former officer grade of the public service required to work such lengthy hours.

They also point out that the Health Service Executive (HSE) now wants to standardise the hours of other grades at 35 while ignoring the fact that those providing frontline care work four hours per week longer.

PNA Deputy General Secretary, Seamus Murphy, said nurses were voting with their feet. Over the past six years around 9,000 nurses had left the country and almost 13,000 were recruited from abroad.

Mr. Hughes said they expected a decision from the Labour Court in July, 2006.

"This is a serious dispute. There are 40,000 people who are now saying they are not going for benchmarking and are now depending on the Labour Court to do what it does, which is mediate in disputes."

He also pointed out that the current pay agreement for nurses expired at the end of this month.

INO President Madeline Spiers said a first-class health service should not be built on the backs of nurses, it should be built with their co-operation.

BENCHMARKING

According to a tender issued in early continued on page 25

DEAL continued

On top of this, private sector workers will ultimately underwrite a like sum (8%-10%) from their wage to afford a Benchmark payment to the public sector—who says you can't fool most of the people, most of the time?

MANDATE, the retail sector Trade Union, decided not to take part in current discussions on a new national pay agreement because they provided very little for their 25,000 members.

MANDATE has served claims on major retailers, demanding a euro per hour on all existing hourly rates.

Two of the main teachers' Trade Unions, ASTI and TUI have recommended their members to reject the proposals.

PAY

The new agreement comes into play from 1st January 2006, for most private sector employees. The new deal provides for a three per cent increase in the first six months and a further two per cent in the subsequent nine months. A further two and one half per cent will be paid in the next six months and the same amount in the final six months of the deal.

This adds up to 10 per cent over 27 months, or about 10.4 per cent when the cumulative impact of adding one increase on top of another is calculated.

With annual inflation now running at close to four per cent, no one is going to be feeling particularly better off due to the increases. Those earning Euro 10.25 per hour or less will get an extra 0.5 per cent increase, payable during the second nine months. The parties are to discuss a new national minimum wage (the current level is Euro 7.65 per hour) and make recommendations to the Government on this in September, 2006.

The majority of private sector employees are not part of a Union and are thus not covered by the deal, though many employers will use it as a guideline.

The phasing is different for the public sector, where workers receiving the initial three per cent from 1st December 2006, two per cent from 1st June 2007, two and one half per cent from March 1, 2008 and two and one half per cent from 1st September 2008.

PENSIONS

A Government Green Paper is to discuss the pensions issue—a key part of the remuneration package—but one being downgraded for many private sector employees.

The Pensions issue proved a major obstacle. The Irish Congress of Trades Unions was seeking a moratorium on what they seen as management moves to downgrade employee pension schemes.

Congress suggested that independent assessors look at the financial position of companies seeking to shift from a defined benefit to a higher-risk defined contribution pensions scheme.

A defined benefit pension plan is one in which the benefits are first "defined" and the annual employer contributions needed to provide these benefits are then determined.

In contrast, a defined contribution scheme provides a member with a pension which is based on the value of the contributions paid by the employer and the member.

SOCIAL MEASURES

A lengthy section puts forward a new life cycle approach—aimed at supporting people through all stages from childhood to old age and including special measures for those with disabilities.

In terms of hard cash commitments, it commits to increasing welfare rates again in the next budget, to meet the target in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy of Euro 150 per week in 2002 terms.

This would indicate a substantial increase in the next budget of up to Euro 20 per week in the lowest welfare payments, which now stand at Euro 165 per week, following a Euro 17 per week increase in budget 2006.

The target of increasing the Old Age Pension to Euro 200 per week by 2007 is also reiterated—currently the contributory rate is at Euro 194 and the non-contributory rate is at Euro 182.

Elsewhere, the programme reiterates existing policy in a number of areas—such as the promised provision of 50,000 new childcare places and additional spending on home and day care for the elderly.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This is a focus of the Agreement. The deal accepts a recommendation from the National Economic and Social Council that 73,000 social housing units be provided between 2004 and 2012. The Government says it believes its plans should help 60,000 households over the next three years to 2008 through the existing social and affordable housing programmes and new initiatives.

There will be a particular push through a new scheme to bring more affordable houses on-stream in the Dublin area. Local authorities will also be supported in bringing new social and affordable housing schemes on stream.

The bottom line, if this policy works (and such commitments have been slow to come on-stream in the past), is that more people on relatively low pay levels will have the opportunity to get on the housing ladder.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

There are a range of new measures in this area. A new office for the Director of Employment Rights Compliance is being set up to increase the scrutiny on firms suspected of exploiting employees. The number of labour inspectors will be increased from 31 to 90 by the end of next year.

Employers will also face new obligations in record-keeping, particularly in payroll and working time records which will have to be kept in a prescribed form. New legislation to enforce this will be brought in next year. There will be increased penalties for employers who break the rules—running up to Euro 250,000 for serious offences.

There are also special measures to make it difficult for employers to lay off large groups of employees and replace them with lower paid foreign labour.

THE CIVIL AND PUBLIC SERVICE

In addition to the basic pay increases, a new benchmarking study is to be conducted, comparing public and private sector pay. This is to be completed by the second half of 2007.

The implementation of this benchmarking study is to be discussed between the social partners as they discuss what arrangement to put in place when the current basic pay deal runs out.

The agreement provides for some increase in open recruitment in the civil service—i.e. more jobs will be filled by competitions also open to outsiders.

This means that half of jobs at executive officer level can be filled by open competition, falling to two in nine for principal officers, one in five for assistant principals and one in six for higher executive officers.

Middle-ranking civil servants will see prospects for promotion restricted as more of the senior jobs, with Euro 85,000-Euro 130,000 salaries, will be opened to outside applicants.

Meanwhile, a minimum of 75 per cent of all internal promotions in each grade will be filled through competitive, merit-based processes by the end of 2005—traditionally many internal promotions have been based purely on seniority.

CPSU

Already, members of the Civil and Public Services Union (CPSU) have forced a ballot over the introduction of performance assessments agreed under the *Sustaining Progress* deal over three years ago, but not yet implemented.

Health sector workers are expected to resist the introduction of flexi-rosters as long as non-consultant hospital doctors continue to receive an average of Euro 1,000 a week in overtime pay for working outside the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 'core' hours.

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LABOUR

Comment

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Social Partnership

Ten Year Plan

On 14th June 2006, after five months of exhaustive and at times bitter negotiations, the *Towards 2016* blueprint was finally hammered out by the Social Partners. The plan sets out a draft deal on the social and economic agenda to last for a decade.

After months and months of talking, we should not be surprised that the main agreement runs to 71 pages.

And there's a further 67 pages on pay, the workplace and compliance rights.

"Union leaders acknowledged that the drawn-out negotiations to achieve a 10% pay rise over 27 months had left little time for contentious social issues to be addressed" (Irish Examiner, 12.6.2006).

Tougher penalties for companies exploiting workers are to be brought in after a spate of high-profile cases fuelled fears of a 'race to the bottom' in the Irish economy.

Flouting worker protection laws could now result in prison terms and fines of up to Euro 250,000.

Other key elements of the deal include increasing the number of social housing units built over the next three years to 27,000 and creating 500 primary healthcare teams to ease pressure on crisis-hit A&E units.

The lowest social welfare payments will also be linked to 30% of average industrial earnings. Employers and unions had already agreed a national pay agreement delivering wage increases of 10% over 27 months.

Pensions proved the crunch issue in the final round of talks and resulted in a compromise deal.

Employers' body IBEC agreed disputes would go to the National Implementation Body and the Government is to publish a wide-ranging discussion paper covering the contentious area within the next year.

The number of Labour Inspectors will almost triple to 90 as an office of Director of Employment Rights Compliance is set up.

It will probe worker exploitation cases in tandem with Revenue Commissioners and the Social Welfare Department. Underpaid workers will be entitled to compensation of up to five years' worth of wages in another bid to deter rogue bosses. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) pressed hard for tougher labour laws in the wake of employment scandals at Irish Ferries, Gama, and other major firms.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern welcomed the agreement.

"The proposals represent the best terms that could be achieved. This is an important framework for meeting the social and economic challenges ahead", he said

ICTU General Secretary David Begg expressed relief the marathon negotiations were finally over. "*By and large we've done a reasonably good job and managed to set the country fair for a more progressive era and dealt with important worker protection issues*", he said after the conclusion of talks at Government Buildings last night.

Other measures include assistance for the manufacturing sector, an energy initiative, regional development and a family carer strategy.

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See last month's *Labour Comment* for a summary of the main terms of the deal

IBEC's Brendan Butler said the deal would protect Ireland's competitiveness.

"Social partnership has consistently delivered since 1987 and this time, for the first time, we have negotiated special provisions for supporting the manufacturing sector", he said.

The director of the Conference of Religious of Ireland, Fr. Seán Healy, said economic and social development would, for once, be afforded equal priority under the agreement.

J.K. GALBRAITH

What would Galbraith have said of all this?

Since 1987, *Labour Comment* has pointed out the single failure in the whole Partnership process—the absence of a price control mechanism—what we have is strictly Wage and Salary control.

Benchmarking is an absolute boon for those in the Civil Service, the higher up the ladder the better and paid for by workers in the private sector. Partnership has been an outstanding success for the public sector.

Again, on this occasion, the ICTU failed to gain even a measure of Local Bargaining.

The Trade Union leadership in the Private Sector have definitely taken their members for suckers. The movement in that sector is now only a shadow of its former self. By 2016, it will be as good as irrelevant.

Ahern and Fianna Fail have massaged and nurtured their political core in the civil and public service—at the expense of private sector workers—but who can blame Fianna Fail, that's the way the game is played—when you're robbing Peter to pay Paul, one thing is certain: Paul is not going to complain—or, more properly, in the current scenario, they are robbing Paul and Peter, and the ICTU President and public servants are laughing all the way to the bank.

Towards 2016 won't even cover the impact of inflation, which could easily reach five per cent in a year's time.