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IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

December 2006

Vol.21, No.12 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.20 No.12 ISSN 954-

Ça Ira

"And so it goes!", as the French used to say, regardless of whether it went or not. Bungled in conception and therefore bungled in execution, Northern Ireland is indestructible for the reason that it doesn't actually exist as something in itself. It is a kind of buffer between the two states that do exist, and they insist that it must continue! They pretend to set rules for its continuance but everybody knows that they're bogus. Under the St. Andrew's rules Paisley was required to nominate a shadow First Minister on 24th November. At the appropriate moment he said very clearly that he would not nominate, but the two Governments pretended that he had nominated, or at least that he had not refused to nominate. And Michael Stone, who shot up the funeral of Mairead Farrell with the help of the police in better times, turned up at the front door with a bag of bombs at the critical moment, though crippled with arthritis, and provided a welcome element of confusion for the authorities, who were determined to keep the show on the road regardless. And so it goes.

And now we wait until March, when something will happen, or will not happen, or will happen by not happening: whatever.

Jim Gibney of Sinn Fein, who writes a column in the *Irish News*, said on October 19th that November 24th "could be a Nelson Mandela-de Klerk moment" or—

"an Arafat-Rabin moment on the White House lawn with much better prospects. It could be a moment when the planter and the Gael cross the Rubicon together. A moment when 400 years of conflict and division between Planter and Gael recede to allow in a potentially fresh vista".

The column is entitled, *Chance To Put Politics Of Partition Behind Us*.

Now, whatever one thinks of apartheid South Africa, it was a state. And the Boers, a people that had fought wars and conducted affairs of state, concluded that a situation had arisen in which they could not preserve total political mastery for much longer, so they cut a deal under which the blacks got the vote and the whites continued to hold their property. As for the Arafat-Rabin affair, it was a swindle, since the Jewish colonisation was to continue under it. Its purpose from the US/Israel viewpoint was to bring the exiled

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IRAQ:

Reduced To A State Of Nature
In The Name Of Progress

The USA has finally admitted that there was no Iraqi nation waiting to be liberated from the tyranny of the Iraqi State, and ready to spring into democratic mode once the Baath regime was destroyed. It has therefore backed away from "democracy" and stated that its new priority is "stability". But stability is what existed in Iraq before it was invaded, and before half a million Iraqis were killed either by the invasion or as a direct consequence of it. And it was, moreover, stability within a secular political order formed on Western ideological lines.

Any stability that can now be retrieved out of the chaos brought about by the invasion will be Islamist in character. The possibility of liberal development has been destroyed by the invasion.

One of the great issues for European liberalism today is the growth within the Islamic diaspora of the wearing of the veil by women. France prohibits schoolgirls from wearing it at school. Holland, the vanguard of liberalism in the drug scene, intends to make it a crime to wear it in public. And the Leader of the British

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Irish Soldiers In Afghanistan

Over half a million US troops have passed through Shannon on the way to and from Iraq and Afghanistan. This aspect of Ireland's support for the US war machine is well known.

Almost unknown is the fact that Ireland actually supplies troops to fight the Bush/Blair "war on terror" in Afghanistan, and it has been doing so since July 2002. Not many, it's true, but Ireland is a contributor to ISAF, the NATO-led multi-national force there, which has killed hundreds, if

not thousands, of Afghans in recent months.

This came as a shock to me when I discovered it on ISAF's website [1], where Ireland is listed as one of the 37 contributing states. And I suspect it would come as a shock to the vast majority of people in Ireland, since the Government keeps very quiet about it, knowing full well that is not a peacekeeping mission of the kind that Ireland has traditionally engaged in.

Recently, Labour TD, Joe Costello, questioned the Minister of Defence, Willie O'Dea, about it. He asked:

"if Irish soldiers are stationed in Afghanistan; if so, when the mission began; the number of soldiers serving in Afghanistan; the role of the soldiers; the person under whom they serve; the length of time they will stay; the person who decided to send Irish soldiers to Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

In a written reply, on 26th October 2006, O'Dea said:

"On 20 December, 2001, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1386 authorising the establishment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for

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Fatah movement—which had been cut to shreds by Israeli assassinations—back to Palestine to fight a civil war with the Hamas movement, which had arisen on the ground under the Israeli occupation. But Arafat refused to make war on Hamas, and therefore he was demonised.

Neither situation bears much resemblance to Northern Ireland.

Eamon Phoenix, in his *On This Day* column in the *Irish News* on 22nd November, looked back to 1937, when the paper commented on a comparison made by the London *Observer* between Northern Ireland and Czechoslovakia, and: “*The Irish News took the view that Northern Ireland was, like Czechoslovakia, a purely artificial state*”.

This is how “*constitutional nationalism*” deludes itself.

Czechoslovakia demonstrated that it was an artificial state by handing over part of itself to Nazi Germany under British pressure, and by falling apart during the following year. Northern Ireland cannot do that because it is not a state at all, never was, and never can be.

The affair of 24th November could not have happened in a state.

Northern Ireland exists under the authority and supervision of a power external to itself—the power of the state to which it is attached but in whose government and political life it plays no part. This arrangement served a purpose of the British State, which is why it was made.

The purpose could not have been good government of the 6 Counties. And it was not made in response to a demand from the 6 Co. Protestants. So its only conceivable purpose was to give Whitehall continuing purchase on the affairs of the 26 Counties after it was compelled to let them go.

We have said this hundreds of times without contradiction. If somebody can think of another purpose for which this unique political arrangement was made, we will publicise it.

We campaigned for twenty years to have the 6 Counties democratised into the political life of the state which holds them. There could be nothing more Constitutional than that. But the Constitutional Nationalists were venomous in their opposition to the project. The Unionists toyed with it but rejected it. And Whitehall was always completely opposed. The 6 Counties were to be governed outside the Constitutional life of the state which held them. That was the common ground of the Constitutional parties.

Northern Ireland has sometimes been compared to Lebanon, especially in the power-sharing aspect introduced in 1973. But the comparison is groundless because Lebanon is a state. It is not a state that brought itself into existence through the exercise of popular will. It was carved out of Syria by French Imperialism, and was given a Constitution designed to disable

the majority and maintain in permanent power the social elements on which France thought it could rely. Nevertheless, it is a state, and it has a Constitution, and in those two respects it differs from Northern Ireland.

It is a confessional state, based on what in the North is called sectarianism. All the many sects, or peoples, have a place in government as of right. The Shia are the largest community, but they are denied proportionate representation. There is no official knowledge of how big they are, because no census has been taken for generations. A census, by showing the actual population balance, would endanger the Constitution. In all probability the Shia are a majority in the state, but it is necessary that this should not be officially acknowledged.

When the Constitution was made, the Shia were despised as people of no account, as Catholics in Ireland used to be. But, like the Irish Catholics, they made something of themselves, and are now pressing to be taken account of by the Constitutional regime.

Prime Minister Blair warned them recently that they must proceed by democratic means. His choice of words indicated that he knew Lebanon was not a democracy. He said in effect that democracy should only be achieved by democratic means. But that makes no sense. It only makes sense if the word *Constitutional* is exchanged for democratic. But that gives a veto on democratisation to certain parties within the undemocratic Constitution.

As we go to print there is a massive Shia sit-down in the main square of Beirut. A few months earlier there was an anti-Syrian demonstration by the parties of the established order. It was reported very sympathetically by the Western media, and it led to the withdrawal of a Syrian force which had helped to end the Lebanese Civil War and maintain peace after it. That was followed by the Israeli invasion, which was defeated by the Shia militia, Hizbollah. And Hizbollah had gained allies outside its own confessional sphere, which was a very dangerous development.

Then a member of an important Christian family was assassinated. The anti-Hizbollah parties blamed it on Syria without a shred of evidence, even though application of the test, *Who benefits?*, would point the finger at Israel—and assassination outside its own borders is a long-established Israeli method.

It was assumed for about a week that the consequences of the assassination of Gemayel would disrupt the alliances made by Hizbollah and disperse the prestige it gained by its successful defence of the country against Israel, and that the pressure for reform was off. That was when the Shia resorted to the tactic of their enemies during the Summer and flooded into the centre of the capital for a sit-down, which

is pretty well being reported as an act of terror.

Such is life under a Constitution of guaranteed power-sharing between religious communities.

Meanwhile other things are happening in the world. There is trouble in the entourage of Boris Berezhevsky, the multi-billionaire Russian emigre who was given a massive share of the assets of the Russian State by Yeltsin, the great democratiser. There have been radioactive poisonings that have not yet been got to the bottom of. The finger was pointed at Putin by the Northern Ireland Secretary, and the Shadow Deputy First Minister pointed in the same direction.

And Yegor Gaidar was taken ill at a function in Maynooth.

Berezhevsky took the precaution of leaving Russia with his money while the going was good, as did the owner of Chelsea Football Club. A few years ago Berezhevsky gave a long interview to BBC television in which he explained that Putin would necessarily fail because the forces of economic determinism are irresistible.

Then Michael Khordokovsky, the oligarch who stayed in Russia to dispose of Putin by the power of money, found himself disposed of when he couldn't pay a tax bill. (He was jailed.) And this has created a very serious problem for the West.

The idea was that Russian oil and gas would become available to the West on easy terms—and even be taken over by the West—as the financial oligarchs dissolved what remained of the Russian State. Russia was destined to take its place with Kuwait and the Emirates as a supplier of cheap fuel to the West. But everybody in Kuwait can be paid off with a small percentage of oil revenue—and it was never a state anyway, only a clan whose Sheikh was secretly bribed by Britain almost a century ago when it got its first foothold in Arabia. While Russia was a powerful state less than twenty years ago, and it has so many people that only a very small fraction of them can be bribed.

The democratisation of Russia and the privatisation of its economic life by Yeltsin had such a destructive effect on ordinary life that life expectancy plummeted by ten years in the course of the 1990s. Hence the popular support for the reassertion of the authority of the state by Putin.

Economic determinism broke down. Khordokovsky is in prison in Siberia. And Berezhevsky is in London with his billions, his base in Russia destroyed, but saved from extradition by British policy, and, like so many emigres, he is running a subversive campaign against the Russian state from abroad, but by far the best

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The Project For A New Irish Century

The *Irish Times Project*, which is the re-Anglicisation of the Irish Republic, commenced with the take over of the old *Irish Times* company by Major McDowell and his Irish Times Trust in the early 1970s. He has a proven racist view of the Irish nationalist.

The *Irish Times* employed journalists of leftist or liberal views, ostensibly to modernise Irish society, but in fact to portray it as a corrupt society and, with selective journalism, portray 1916 as a mistake.

The *Irish Times* to-day is highly influential in setting the agendas, not only of its own journalists, but of most journalists in the Republic, including those in RTE.

I'd like to give two examples of how this agenda is used to inflict damage on the Irish state and nation.

Eddie Hobbs has coined the phrase "*The Rip Off Republic*" in a series of programmes on RTE television. These demonstrate that Irish businesses create excess profits by inflating their prices at every opportunity. It has been reported in the media that this phrase has damaged the image of Ireland abroad and adversely affected its tourist trade.

The influence on prices in the Republic is due more than anything else to the fact, as the OECD point out, that we have the lowest level of direct taxation in the world and therefore one of the highest levels of disposable income. Therefore our level of VAT, which is a compensatory tax, is high, and the price resistance of customers is low, both of which cause the higher prices.

This main fact is omitted from the programme. So that, instead of exploring ways the problem might be dealt with, the view is conveyed that this is more corruption and national demoralisation is promoted.

Another example is George Lee on RTE radio a couple of weeks ago deploring the extravagant size and opulence of houses being built around the country, whilst young couples, even on double income, cannot afford to acquire a house. George attributes this to bad taste, greed, and bad government—all national failings. In fact the cause is due to

- (a) the abolition of domestic rates—but this was done by the O'Donoghue/Lynch Government, and these were the good guys according to the media, so it is not mentioned
- (b) the torpedoing of the centre-left Fianna Fail/Labour Government by the *Irish Times*.

This was the first of three such attempts to derail Fianna Fail-led Governments by that newspaper.

The centre-right Fianna Fail/PD Government, which won't intervene in the house market, is the result of its one successful attempt at derailment.

What is really required is that the State insists on balanced reporting by the state broadcaster.

Pat Murphy

America, Not Ireland

"If a baseball player slides into home plate and, right before the umpire rules if he is safe or out, the player says to the umpire—'Here is \$1,000.' What would we call that? We would call that a bribe. If a lawyer was arguing a case before a judge and said, 'Your honor before you decide on the guilt or innocence of my client, here is \$1,000.' What would we call that? We would call that a bribe.

"But if an industry lobbyist walks into the office of a key legislator and hands her or him a check for \$1,000, we call that a campaign contribution. We should call it a bribe." : Janice Fine, *Dollars And Sense* magazine.

There are grounds for thinking that, in America, campaign contributions have influenced decisions of government. Despite years of inquisitorial Tribunals, it has yet to be demonstrated that such a contribution altered a single decision made by politicians.

financed one. Let's call it the Fifth International, or the Capitalist International.

And Yegor Gaidar, the Von Hayek or the Milton Friedman of the Yeltsin privatisations (or should we say the David McWilliams), has business in Maynooth, which was so recently a factory of spiritual values. (And his radioactive poisoning, considered at length on Channel 4 news by Conor O'Clery, turned out to be a stomach bug!)

We live in interesting times.

Editorial Digest

Justice Maureen Harding-Clark has just been appointed a High Court judge in Ireland. Her appointment is one of a batch of new judges just announced which is less than inspiring. Presumably Bertie Ahern has followed the advice of his Minister for Justice on them. Ms Clark has worked in the Hague for the well-funded *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia*, which accepted its status as an instrument of NATO policies. As such, she helped to drive ex-President Milosevic to an early death (and, some allege, worse). In UN General Assembly elections held in 2003 she stood for the now rarely-mentioned *International Criminal Court*, which was established despite the opposition of such as America, China, Israel, India, Japan, and Russia. She topped the poll on the basis of her expertise in sexual and other violent offences against women and children. Ms Clark spent her childhood in Malaya, where her father was an engineer, and speaks French and Malay. Non-signatories to the Court remain outside its jurisdiction. Moreover 24 plus countries have been obliged to sign agreements with the US not to bring actions against it in the Court. The 18 Judges of the ICC were sworn in on 11th March 2003, in a "glittering" ceremony in the Knights' Hall of the Dutch Parliament, presided over by Kofi Annan (IT 12.3.03). Since then little has been heard of the Court—which is probably why she found time to join the Irish Human Rights Commission under Dr. Maurice Manning in May 2004.

Dublin-Monaghan Bombings, 1974. A Northern Ireland Office memorandum obtained by the *Irish News* confirms that the British Government knew the identity of the UVF men implicated in the car-bomb attacks within four months. It states: "*The Secretary of State {Merlyn Rees}... was able to inform the Irish ministers {FitzGerald, Jim Tully}, in confidence that the 25 ICOs {internment orders} he had signed during the UWC Strike included the persons he believed to be responsible for the Dublin bombings*". The "*nature of the evidence*" prevented further action.

Margaret Urwin, a spokesman for the families of victims, commented: "*The outgoing British ambassador in Ireland, Stewart Eldon, recently claimed his government failed to cooperate with the Dublin/Monaghan inquiries because of national security issues*" (IN 29.8.06). The implication of that is that Government agents were implicated.

Human Bomb Strategy of the Provos in 1990 may have been "*the brainchild of British intelligence*", British Irish Rights Watch has claimed in a dossier sent to the Historical Enquiries Team of the PSNI, which investigates unsolved murders. Its report states: "*It is known that at least two security force agents were involved in these bombing*". (The 'human bomb' tactic, whereby civilians working for the security forces were forced to drive explosives into army facilities, was used three times, working once. IN 29.8.06.)

MIS is pushing ahead with its plans to take over a lead security role in Northern Ireland, despite the opposition of political parties, apart from the DUP. It is building a huge new headquarters in Co. Down, and has started to advertise for staff, in particular an *English Language Monitor*, the job description for which will be to assess "*legally intercepted material*", including CCTV footage, and pass relevant information to the "*relevant intelligence desk*". Applicants for this confidential work must be second generation British and will be paid the princely sum of £16,143 to £22,300! A recent film on general release, *Red Road*, set in Glasgow, featured the units monitoring CCTV footage. It is not generally realised that the cameras, which cover large areas, are under continuous monitoring by police staff, each of whom surveys banks of screens—possibly around 30 per person—and can follow particular people or vehicles from one screen to the next. They also look into buildings. One of the Monitor's duties will be to examine CCTV footage of "*national security targets*".

Diplock Courts, featuring non-Jury trials, and introduced in 1973, are to be phased out gradually. However, the jury system is to be altered as a consequence. Jurors will be accommodated separately in the Courts, and screened from the public gallery during trials. They will get police protection and personal information will be withheld from the Defence (but obviously not from the Prosecution). The Defence will lose the right to peremptory challenge "*to prevent jury stacking*", writes Peter Hain (IN 11.8.06), and the jurors will themselves be checked for criminal record checks. The DPP will decide which cases will go to jury. These changes were over-sold in the *Irish Times* with the headline, *Non-Jury Diplock Courts Set To Be Abolished In North* (28.11.06).

Kennedy-gate *Irish Times* star journalist Stephen Collins slipped in some gratuitous character-assassination of Taoiseach Ahern in a review of Olivia O'Leary's new book, *Party Animals* (O'Brien Press). He said: "*Ahern took a substantial amount of money for his private use in the early 1990s*" (25.11.06) The word *took* is deliberately ambiguous here. It seems Ahern told Olivia years ago in the 1980s that only three copies of the *Irish Times* were sold in his constituency. Collins quotes from the book: "*We've worked out who buys the first two and we're still working on the third*", he told the journalist grimly". GRIMLY!? It seems that Collins can't take a pointed joke. But there is truth in what Ahern was saying. The *Irish Times* has limited reader appeal. Indeed, in some areas of the country it is only recently that small numbers have started appearing for sale. It would be interesting to know how much of its circulation is outside the 26 Counties. That is what makes Government promotion of the paper by paying for digitalisation all the more inexplicable.

Bias. The tapping of the phones of three journalists by Sean Doherty in a Charles Haughey Government has become part of a media litany of denigration. It is ignored that damaging Cabinet leaks benefitting a foreign power was the occasion for the action, legitimately authorised by the Minister for Defence. But a far worse instance of tapping, that of journalist Vincent Browne's phone for eight years, 1975-1983, which was initiated by a Fine Gael Government, is totally ignored, even though there were no Cabinet breaches or security dimensions. Browne writes: "*my phone was tapped to get political information, probably information concerning Charles Haughey*" (IT 24.7.06).

Year Of Workers' Mobility. 2006 has been the *European Year Of Workers' Mobility*. The Commission has spent Euro 10 million to encourage workers to leave their countries to take up employment. The money has been used to promote job fairs, advertisements, and a website that publishes every job advert across the EU posted by national employment agencies, such as Ireland's *FAS*. The site, <http://europa.eu.int/eures/hom.jsp?land=en>, translates the 1 million job adverts which appear into all 20 official languages (IT 21.2.06).

Obituaries: Readers will be pleased to learn that no Irish people died in the week ending 18th November—if the *Irish Times* Obituary Page is to be believed. It gave a large Obituary to Milton Friedman, and medium-sized ones to Ferenc Puskas, Nancy Wynne-Jones and Hilda van Stockum. ■

Workforce 2010

Snouts In The Trough

The Strategic Investment Board (SIB), established to address "a legacy of under-investment" in our infrastructure, has been given the key role in delivering the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. This ten-year programme has a total potential investment of nearly £16bn. The SIB is not a philanthropic society, created for the benefit of our economy. It is a limited company wholly owned by the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and financed by the taxpayer. Its Board is stated to consist "of leading experts in their fields". This 'expertise' does not come cheap. Chief Executive, David Gavaghan is paid over £216,000 plus allowances for his services. Fellow Board member James Stewart, also a member of Partnerships UK, is paid over £403,000 plus allowances. By comparison, the Prime Minister is paid just a little over £185,000.

In the SIB's Annual Accounts for 2003-04, the then Minister Ian Pearson boasted—*"In eleven months, the SIB has put more than twice the value of privately-financed projects out to the market than had been signed in the previous eleven years in Northern Ireland."*

One of these projects is known as *Workplace 2010*. It is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) aiming to transfer and leaseback 80 Government-owned buildings to the private sector. Its fundamental idea is to save up to 30% of Civil Service office space across Northern Ireland generally and to halve the number of buildings occupied in Belfast in particular. The novel way to achieve this is the implementation of an "open plan working environment", utilising concepts such as hot-desking, off-site storage and home-working to "optimise" the occupancy rate of buildings. In this Orwellian paperless utopia, staff will have "breakout areas"—for small meetings in an open environment, "huddle rooms"—for small meetings in a closed environment and "touch down areas"—to examine files or plans that are too big for the smaller desk specification. Staff are barred from "nesting"—the practice of making yourself at home at your own desk. At taxpayers' expense even recently and expensively refurbished buildings will be torn apart to accommodate this "exciting new working environment".

The consultants for the project, Deloitte, were paid £546,000 for their early work and Strategic Development Plan. The current bill for all consultancy work undertaken to date sits at £2.4m.

The consequences for the local market of Workplace 2010 were outlined by Jack Hood of McConnell Martin who stated ".....*Workplace 2010 is the biggest single threat to the Belfast office market. This will bring excess and substandard space to the market, which is not good news for landlords in an already flat market.*"

It is good news however for one of the four lucky British-based shortlisted bidding companies. These are Telereal, Partenaire, Land Securities Trillium, and Mapeley. The former head of the Civil Service, Gerry Loughran, is batting for one of the bidders. Former NIO Minister Richard Needham is in the corner for another. Mapeley, of course, have 'form' in this area. They secured a similar contract, the infamous "Steps" project (in which Deloitte were also the lead consultants) in which the Inland Revenue transferred its entire property portfolio and facilities management to Mapeley who were based in the tax haven of Bermuda! A subsequent report by the Westminster Public Accounts Committee savaged the project and declared as "astonishing" the fact that the Inland Revenue had facilitated tax avoidance on such an enormous scale.

The founder and former Chief Executive of Mapeley, Robin Priest, is now a "senior engagement partner" for Deloitte, responsible for the *Workplace 2010* project.

Like the Steps project, Workplace

2010 has a 20-year term for the leasing back of the buildings. After paying for 20 years we, the gullible Northern Ireland public, can even "buy back" these public buildings at the end of the contract, but at full market rates. Like paying a mortgage but not owning the house! The notion that such a project involves "risk transfer" appears fanciful, given the rate of appreciation of equity in property, measured against the likely wage inflation and building costs for maintaining the accommodation over the period of the contract.

The evidence against the use of PFI in terms of value for money, contract compliance, and flexibility of provision, mounts daily. The white elephant in the room in local discussions on PFI is Balmoral High School. This PFI disaster inaccurately projected pupil numbers for its new PFI school. The school is now set to close only a few years into a 25 year contract. The taxpayer is left to pick up the tab for the duration of a contract for a school that will not exist!

PFI makes sense to the Chancellor for two reasons. First, Chancellor Brown is ideologically committed to the New Labour ideology of "contestability"—that all public sector provision should be contested between lean, mean providers. Second, the higher cost of private sector borrowing and the escalating costs of PFI projects are hidden "off balance sheet". They serve to meet Brown's Golden Rule on borrowing. To protect the fiction of 'value for money' the Treasury commissioned a number of reports on the efficacy of PFI—using only beneficiary companies! In 2001 the Treasury-commissioned Mott McDonald Report

Report: St. Andrew's Agreement

Be Careful What You Ask For—You Might Just Get It

The following letter by Mark Langhammer, National Executive member of the Labour Party, appeared in the Irish News, 1st November 2006

The agreement at St Andrews offers a chance to dump unaccountable, part-time, direct rule ministers. Voters should be aware, however, of the high social and political cost sought in return.

In the Northern Ireland Assembly, the sectarian designations system is intact which discriminates against any 'third strand' political party. Our 'shared future' will undoubtedly give way to communal carve-up.

The financial package is hitched to an aggressive ideological programme of privatisation through the Strategic Investment Board. The DUP, Sinn Fein, the UUP and the SDLP are all signed up to the Reinvestment and Reform initiative—extremist Thatcherite dogma currently ripping our public services apart—and the marketing of Health.

The Efficiency Review Panel is aimed at wrecking the 'seven-council model' [a proposed reform of local government], rejecting 'co-terminous' efficiencies and returning to the diseconomies of the current system. The loss of this 'grown-up' framework for local government is to protect the councillor base of local parties.

The system of accountability being considered has been described by Sean Farren [of the SDLP] as 'daft, crazy and unworkable'. Finally, a government without opposition will inevitably result in voter apathy and political corruption.

Northern Irish voters, be careful what you ask for.

You might end up being saddled with it.

established a measure for public sector "inefficiency" within conventional procurement of up to 24%. The inefficiency factor, called "optimism bias" is nonsense, of course, but Mr. Brown has written this "independent evidence" into the Treasury Green Book Guidance.

As it happens, Mott McDonald are listed as receiving funding from the SIB and have been recently involved in two PFI projects in Northern Ireland—the Alpha and Omega projects within the Water Service.

The Strategic Investment Board was borne of a Reinvestment and Reform Initiative agreed to by all local Executive political parties. It remains a dangerously unaccountable body, with no element of Northern Irish public interest represented on it. The ideological "marketisation"-dogma it promotes represents the cronyism of a banana republic. Say goodbye to the family silver.

Mark Langhammer

(This article first appeared in the *Irish News*)

Mark Langhammer is Director of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in Northern Ireland, a union opposed to PFI and the "marketisation" of Education, and the Chair of the Labour Forum.

IRAQ

continued

Commons says he doesn't want women wearing it to come to his constituency office. And, in Ireland, Dublin 4 is panicking at the thought that Ireland might become an Islamic state if current demographic trends continue.

All of this is new. It has come about since President Bush announced his Crusade five years ago—at a time when Iraq remained secular and liberal, despite ten years of "United Nations" (i.e., US/UK) sanctions, and when scarcely a veil was to be seen on anybody except a few grandmothers who wore it out of old habit.

The Taliban state in Afghanistan had little influence on the conduct of the Muslim Diaspora. The Taliban were putting Afghanistan together again after the years of Russian government and US subversion, but even those who understood that they were doing something necessary felt little inclination to emulate them.

It was the destruction of the Taliban Islamic State, followed by the destruction of the secular liberal Baath State, and the failure of the destroyers in both instances to establish something viable in place of

what they had destroyed, that provoked the growth of a stubborn and purposeful Islamism in the Islamic Diaspora.

When the President was invading Iraq, and his Army began to meet with Islamist resistance, he said this was a good thing as it was concentrating the Islamic fundamentalist forces of resistance to democracy and progress in Iraq, where they would be crushed. It was better to have them gravitate towards the battlefield of Iraq rather than have them dispersed piecemeal around the world. In this conception of things, "fundamentalists", or "extremists" were a fixed quantity, and they came into being, somehow, apart from what is going on in the world, rather than being a response to it. They existed independently of Amer-anglian action in the world, and were committed to doing what they do regardless of what US/UK did. They used Western actions as an "excuse" for doing what they did, but they would have done it anyhow.

Such was the view of the President and the Prime Minister. Both have had Marxists as advisers—Trotskyists for the President, Communist Party types for the Prime Minister. Before they entered the corridors of power these Marxists chattered interminably about the dialectical interconnection of all things, but in their exercise of power they have become what they used to describe as dogmatic and metaphysical.

The leading British Marxist is the Home Secretary. John Reid explained a few months ago that, as a senior Cabinet Minister, he is in the business of bending others to his will. Resistance to this is evil. And the chief force of evil in the world is Islamic extremism—a metaphysical entity produced by some special creation, having nothing whatever to do with British foreign policy other than attempting to thwart it in order to be free to do evil.

The Prime Minister is less pretentious intellectually than Dr. Reid. He sees visions and is all Heart and his heart is always on his sleeve. He saw a vision (on a mountain in Spain as we recall) which told him to invade Iraq. (It happened just about the time when the President decided to invade but Mr. Blair denied that it came into his head by way of projection from the White House.)

Why has the invasion inspired from on high worked out so badly? After two years of being in denial of obvious facts and of obvious causative connection, he recently conceded that facts are facts—a few days after the White House downscaled democracy and up-sized security. And he spoke as follows: It was put to him, on Al Jazeera television, that

the invasion of Iraq has "so far been pretty much a disaster". He replied:

"It has. You see, what I say to people is, 'Why is it difficult in Iraq?' It's not difficult because of some accident in planning. It's difficult because there is a deliberate strategy—al Qaeda with Sunni insurgents on one hand, Iranian-backed elements with Shia militias on the other—to create a situation in which the will of the majority for peace is displaced by the will of the minority for War" (17 Nov).

But the Shia are the majority people of Iraq and the Sunni are the second largest. And it is not the Kurds who are resisting the Occupation. And Al Qaeda only got into Iraq because Bush and Blair destroyed the state which kept them out. So one is left with a picture of Iraq in which the will for peace and the will for war are the same will—or the same wills.

Blair sent his army into Iraq to Do Good. Doing good consisted in the first instance of destroying the state apparatus of tyranny. But there were evil forces in Iraq which did not want to be good and they went into insurrection against peace. And where did those evil forces come from? It turned out that they were for the most part the forces that had been held in check by the regime of the overthrown tyrant.

Three and a half years ago we reported a very important Statement by the British commander at the time of the invasion, Air Marshal Burrage. On 25th March 2003 he said that the invasion had the object of "pricking the bubble of unreality so that we can rebuild the attitude of the people".

The "bubble of unreality" was the reality of life as actually lived in the Iraqi state. Pricking it in order to re-make the sense of reality of the people of Iraq is not meaningfully described as liberation. Something that exists, but is held in restraint, can be liberated from the restraining force. But destroying the state by conquest in order to reconstruct the people in the image of the conquering states is something very different. (Or partly in the image—sufficiently so to serve the ulterior purposes of the conquerors.)

Blair, in his immediate response to the chaos that followed the invasion, made reference to "the strong membrane of the state", whose removal precipitated chaos. But that ephemeral acknowledgement of reality gave way immediately to years of denial.

We commented at the time (April 2003).

"The bubble of unreality is what Blair in his moment of awful realisation described as the strong membrane of the

state. The Burradge project involves the remaking of Iraqis after the conquest into a people which will welcome the conquest retrospectively. The whole thing reminds one more and more of the invasion of Hungary in 1956".

Three and a half years later one must say that the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 might be reasonably described as liberation by comparison with the 'liberation' of Iraq. The Soviets very quickly established a viable regime of state which lasted for a third of a century, which was a very long time by contemporary standards.

There are two basic English political philosophies—that of Thomas Hobbes, conceived during the chaos of what is called the English Revolution (1640s), and that of John Locke, which played a part in the *coup d'etat* of 1688.

Hobbes's view was that any state is better than none. He had experienced life without a functional state, and said that life in a state of nature was nasty, mean, brutish, and short. He supported Charles I in 1640. Then he supported Cromwell. And finally he supported Charles II. It did not matter to him what the form of government was, so long as it was strong.

But for Locke, writing a generation later within the security of the restored monarchy, government had to be just so in order to be tolerable. Government by James II was intolerable to progressive English Protestants because it repealed the Penal Laws against Catholics, who needed to be suppressed because their outlook was medieval. When the people found the Government irksome, they were entitled to throw it off, revert to a state of nature, and consider their options.

Both of these incompatible philosophies of state are well-developed, and both are available to the governors of the English state to draw upon as expediency indicates. In the case of Iraq it has gone from Locke back to Hobbes.

Locke's philosophy of politics is finicky by comparison with Hobbes's. It was developed in a situation of security, in which the gentry were confident that they could control the populace while inciting it against the King. In Hobbes's state of nature the people were in turmoil and it was a case of each against all. In Locke's state of nature the gentry, having assumed effective command of the people, throw off the curbs of the monarchical state and establish themselves in freedom. (Between the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the French Revolution of 1789 there was little in the way of an internal State in England to which the people could appeal against the gentry. The country was governed by arrangements made between the gentry, each gentleman being the state in his own region.)

At the start of 2003 the finicky philosophy prevailed in the House of Commons. The functional Iraqi State just wasn't good enough for the Iraqi people. So Tony Blair comes along, like William of Orange in 1688, and knocks it down so that the Iraqi people can make a nicer state for themselves.

But there was no 'Iraqi people'. And there was no elite stratum underneath the 'tyranny' that could act in place of the people. And the effect of destroying the 'tyranny' was to bring about the state of nature as envisaged by Hobbes.

We said in September 2003:

"...Four months after the destruction of the state, the condition of Iraq is one of social chaos. This was the entirely predictable outcome of the destruction of the state—the "regime"—in a country where national life and social cohesion were functions of the existence of the state.

"In the propaganda which prepared the way for war—the "diplomacy", as it is now called—the American and British Governments counterposed "the Iraq regime" and "the Iraqi people". And the Irish Government... helped to peddle that nonsense.

"Situations exist in which a meaningful and practical distinction can be made between the state and the people, so that it would be reasonable to expect the destruction of the state to leave the people more or less in being...

"But there is no Iraqi people. There are of course people in Iraq, but those people had no sense of themselves as a distinct and united people before Imperial Britain found it convenient to throw together certain territories to form a 'national state' under British hegemony and call it "Iraq"..."

We gave an account of the intervening period, then said that, 80 years later—

"...Iraqi national feeling still did not exist in free form. It only existed in conjunction with the regime. The assault on the regime was therefore an assault on the very "Iraqi people" that the invaders appealed to.

"And the invaders knew it—or had reason to know it..."

"The "Iraqi people" is an ideological construct—a rhetorical turn of phrase..."

Four years ago the revisionist regime in Ireland was at the height of its influence. A central doctrine of that revisionism is that nationalism is bad and is entirely unnecessary to the conduct of public affairs. One of the most thorough revisionists, Professor Girvin, described his position as liberal universalism (or words to that effect). Nationality was divisive, retrogressive, and unnecessary. On that view it would appear to be a thing of no account that there was no sense of Iraqi nationality dispersed amongst the peoples of Iraq. But we thought it was a thing of great consequence.

Arthur Griffith's insight, expressed over a century ago, that nationality was a necessary intermediary between the individual and humanity at large, is not yet obsolete. It is not yet the case that the human race has been entirely standardised into individualist ciphers which can be thrown together any old how as states with a reasonable expectation of functioning. Irish revisionism in that respect, if not essentially false, is at least premature by some centuries. But the most eminent 'opinion makers' were in the grip of that doctrine four years ago, and were made very stupid by it.

Kevin Myers (*Irish Times* then, *Irish Independent* now) has apparently made a good confession of his errors, or at least an expedient one. But Myers was small fry—a mere cheerleader on the sidelines. Eoghan Harris was a player in the invasion—an adviser to Ahmed Chalabi:

"*Why The Arabs And Iraq Need Chalabi*: The Iraqi National Congress leader believes the nobility of creating democracy outweighs the risks, writes Eoghan Harris" (Sunday Independent 4 April 2003).

The article is accompanied by a picture of Harris advising Chalabi, who "has spent most of his life in savage struggle with Saddam Hussein". And it includes some spurious autobiography:

"In RTE canteen culture [after the Harris regime was broken, presumably], the State Department is Good because it wants to hand Iraq over to the United Nations. The problem is that the Pentagon hawks (who, of course, are Bad) want to hand Iraq over to the Iraqis..."

"Faced with that fact, a really inquisitive RTE would take another look at the label pinned on the Pentagon. That's what I did when I met Ahmed Chalabi in Washington in March 2001, and he told me that he preferred the Pentagon hawks to the State Department doves. At first I was a bit taken aback. After all, I had been brought up on the *Animal Farm* of leftist Ireland to chant Pentagon Bad, State Department Good. But it is my invariable instinct, in the face of facts which contradict my conditioning, to think the thing through to the (usually) bitter end. That habit had helped me to say good bye to socialism [after the fall of Sir Nicolae Ceausescu, who was beloved of the Sticksies, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, as we recall!]. So I listened carefully while Chalabi forced me to confront my prejudices about the Pentagon.

"Chalabi believed that the State Department, like the CIA and the British Foreign Office, fundamentally followed a Lawrence of Arabia policy of cynical realpolitik, doubting Arab ability to handle democracy, and doing deals with despots, dictators and kings.

"By contrast, Chalabi had found that the Pentagon hawks, people like Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz and Richard

Perle, had moral clarity, liked Arabs and actually believed that the Gulf would be safer for America, Israel and the Arabs if democracy could be installed in brutal states.

"Most Irish people fear the Pentagon hawks' brand of moral clarity. They prefer the messy bluster of a Bill Clinton, who does a bit of bombing and then backs off. Personally I prefer a Rumsfeld who finishes what he starts. But I am not blind to the dangers...

"Chalabi believes the nobility outweighs the risks. The last time I saw him, ...when I was teaching him communication techniques for television, he believed Bush had made up his mind to topple Saddam and that there was a risky but a reasonable chance of deposing an evil regime and setting up a federal state in Iraq..."

Chalabi returned to Iraq in the baggage train of the invasion force and went to live in the family mansion in Baghdad. Within a short time he was discarded by the Americans who found that he had been feeding them false information to encourage the invasion. He had attached himself to the White House in the early 1990s when, having baulked at invasion in 1991, it allocated millions to groups which claimed to have support within Iraq, for the purpose of enacting a *coup d'etat*. This was all deception. Chalabi was a confidence trickster. Insofar as he had allegiance, it seems to have been as a Shia to Iran.

There is no knowing whether he had any realistic ideas of what it might be possible to do in Iraq when the state was defeated and destroyed. Confidence tricksters tend to live in their story of the moment, and not disable themselves by looking beyond it. But there was one very substantial political intellectual in the emigre opposition to the Baath, Samir al Khalil, and it seems that he attached himself to Chalabi, returned to Iraq with him, and was given some institute to occupy himself. [The Iraq Memory Foundation; he is also said to be currently a Professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies at Brandeis University near Boston—ed.)

Al-Khalil (pseudonym of Kanan Makiya) was an architect who had worked as part of the Baath system for a number of years before defecting, and who described its working in a book published in 1990, a couple of months before the American Ambassador gave Saddam the green light for direct action against Kuwait, which was stealing Iraqi oil.

The book is called *Republic Of Fear*. But the title is utterly misleading. The writer had come to hate the regime and asserts that fear is the medium in which it functions. But fear is more or less a medium of existence in all states, except a few ultra-civilised petty states like Luxemburg and Liechtenstein, which are

more communities than states.

But what Samir al Khalil described is not a population cowering in fear of the terror of the state, but a population being drawn into active participation by the modernising dynamism of the state, and drawn from all quarters, Shia as well as Sunni. The state, in the process of its construction, is breaking up the preceding centres of loyalty, and people of all backgrounds are becoming citizens (or subjects—participants, at any rate) in the state. The family is being destroyed—a sure sign of progress. And '*fundamentalist*' religion has ceased to be a social entity and separate from the state, becoming a mere private retreat for individual from the hectic pace of development.

That was the situation when Britain invaded Iraq for the umpteenth time and helped the US to blow it apart.

*

The chaos brought about by the Ameranglian invasion and occupation is being described as "*civil war*" by some, while others (the White House and Downing St.) deny that it is civil war. The ground of this difference of opinion is unclear. It seems to relate to the policy of the invaders, rather than being descriptive. Characterising the situation as one of civil war is felt to be in conflict with carrying through the purpose of the invasion. But the invaders have been flirting with the idea of civil war for a very long time. The media, inspired by the two Governments, began talking about it within weeks of the invasion.

(Forty years ago American opponents of US activity in Vietnam characterised the Vietnamese conflict as a civil war, with the implication that the US therefore had no legitimate part in it.)

But, leaving the imperialist semantics of the matter aside, it is hard to see how the conflicts between the inhabitants of Iraq, consequent on the destruction of the state by the invaders, can be described realistically as a civil war. A war for control of the state between parties with radically different purposes about its conduct is a civil war. But there is no longer an Iraqi state. It was systematically destroyed by the invaders.

The various social entities in the region which lived together harmoniously within the Ottoman Empire, and which were held together less harmoniously by the monarchy imposed by Britain after its first conquest, and by the Baath state which was established by the Iraqis themselves, are now in conflict with each other because the state has been destroyed—not out of rivalry to control the state.

The British media have recently been inspired to wonder if a strong man is not

what is needed. A discarded 'Prime Minister' of the invasion regime, Allawi, was asked about this in a long television interview in mid-November. But "*strong men*" of the required kind—Napoleons—are not to be had for the asking. And Allawi was too diplomatic to point out the obvious—that a strong man had built a functional Iraqi state in which the populace participated, that the invaders destroyed that state, and that the strong man had been sentenced to death after a show trial and was waiting to be hanged. Hardly a precedent to encourage another.

Further Reading

I Remember The Quiet Day We Lost The War In Iraq

Boris Johnson recalls a visit to Iraq, just 10 days after its 'liberation'. Wandering around the Iraqi Foreign Ministry building, he found it deserted. Suddenly a grizzled American turned up, escorted by soldiers, a spook working for the US Government, turned up. Questioned by Johnson, he said, "*I was just wondering if anyone was going to show up for work*". Johnson comments, "*We failed to anticipate that in taking out Saddam, we would also remove government and order and authority from Iraq*".

Sunday Telegraph, 26.11.06

<http://fairuse.100webcustomers.com/sf/telegraph1.htm>

Saddam condemnation a guilty verdict on America as well by Robert Fisk.

Independent (UK), 6.11.06

<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/fisk/article1959051.ece>

Report

Britain's Wars Will Never End

The following appeared in the *Irish Independent* on 20th November

Peter Molloy takes issue with Pat Muldowney's suggestion that the remembrance ceremonies held the British wars of the past up to "admiration and emulation" (Letters, November 13 and 16). David Dimpleby's commentary on the events at the Cenotaph most certainly did both.

And Mr. Dimpleby is the accepted voice of the British State on these occasions.

In particular, as the cameras focused in on children, he expressed the hope that these children could learn from the occasion because it was certain that they too would one day be called upon to risk making the same sacrifice.

There is no notion in Britain of a "war to end all wars". The assumption is that fighting wars is Britain's burden into any foreseeable future.

Conor Lynch

Shorts

from

the Long Fellow

A ROYAL FLUSH?

In November the French Socialist party selected Segolene Royal by an overwhelming majority as its candidate for President. But what does she stand for? At a recent socialist party debate in Paris in front of 5,000 party members she was ridiculed for her mindless platitudes such as: "democracy is like love, the more there is, the more it grows" (*Le Monde*, 28.10.06).

There were signs that a small minority of socialist party members had grown weary of her media friendly campaign and her announcement of new policies every week without reference to the party.

Her socialist rival Laurent Fabius caught the mood of that minority with the following words:

"Almost every day new ideas spring up around us and among us. This evening I would like to propose the newest, which no other can rival: that in 2007 the socialist party candidate respects the socialist programme"! (*Le Monde*, 28.10.06).

Apart from a few gimmicks and the fact that she is a woman, Royal is firmly at the centre of the French political establishment. Her support for the European Constitutional Treaty and her view that the 35-hour week should be phased out indicates that she would prefer to adapt to globalisation rather than confront it as Fabius seemed intent on doing.

In recent months I have suggested that her lack of substance would be exposed and that the right wing Nicholas Sarkozy would prevail at next year's election. But Sarkozy's campaign has looked quite brittle in recent weeks. His criticism of the judiciary has alienated many in his own party and there is no doubt that the Chirac wing of the Gaullists (UMP) would much prefer Royal as President. Perhaps this will be enough to give France its first female President.

THE POPE'S CHILDREN

David McWilliams's documentary *The Pope's Children* has been criticised for being "superficial", but I haven't noticed much profundity among his critics.

In my view he captures very well the craziness of our consumption boom which has been financed by cheap German credit. He gave as an example of the replacement of production by consumption the closing of Navan Carpets Factory and the opening of a retail park with Woodies the DIY chain as the anchor tenant. At the time of writing, Greencore, the owners of Irish

Sugar, are planning to build apartments and a retail park on the site of the old sugar factory.

McWilliams has been predicting a property crash for years. In the second part of the series he suggested that this has not happened yet because there has been a massive vested interest in preventing it: from the builders, lending institutions, estate agents, conveyance solicitors, landlords—right up to *The Irish Times*, with its lucrative Property Section and recently purchased website: *MyHome.ie*.

There is some evidence that property investors have been choking off the supply of housing units to people needing homes. According to McWilliams one in six housing units in this country are unoccupied. In the UK the figure is one in thirty one.

Recently this columnist met a dentist who had invested in property. She thought that rising property prices were good for her, not only because the value of her investment has increased, but because it has prevented a large swathe of the population from aspiring to home ownership. This would increase the demand for rented accommodation. She thought that this was the reason that rents had increased recently for the first time in many years.

But value must be produced somewhere in the economy for the rents to be sustained. And it looks like the era of cheap credit is drawing to a close. What is good for Germany is bad for us. Rising interest rates are already beginning to have an effect:

"A sharp increase in the number of construction companies unable to meet their debts has resulted in a sudden increase in bad debt claims from holders of trade credit insurance policies..." (*Sunday Business Post*, 12.11.06)

THE IRISH TIMES EXPOSED?

The front page of *The Irish Times* (6.11.06) had a story about the Taoiseach.

In the middle of it there was the following reference to an interview he had with TV3 presenter Ursula Halligan.

"... 'There was one group out to bury me, very persistently to bury me', he told TV3's *The Political Party*."

"Asked by presenter Ursula Halligan if he meant *The Irish Times*, Mr Ahern replied: 'Well yeah, there were elements. They tried day in day out, but you just had to get on with it and just had to keep on doing your job' "

Later on in the same report there is the following:

"Asked if he believed that there was 'some big, bad enemy out there waiting to get' him, Mr Ahern replied: 'Yes, I do. I do. This wasn't just off the back of a truck. This was a sinister, calculated set-up, there's no doubt about that.'"

This is a very serious charge that Ahern has made against *The Irish Times*. The most important politician in the state has

said that *The Irish Times*, along with other elements, is out to bury him politically. Where does this leave the newspaper's much-vaunted independence which is stated in its Memorandum and Articles of Association? There has been no rebuttal from the paper. Perhaps the newspaper is hoping that it will all blow over like the controversy over the 'White Nigger Letter'.

IRISH TIMES CONTEMPT?

Meanwhile, the case against *The Irish Times* trundles on or is about to 'trundle on'. Judge Alan Mahon has ruled that, since Editor Geraldine Kennedy and journalist Colm Keena have refused to answer questions over the story it published on Ahern, the next step would be to apply to the High Court (*Sunday Independent* 19.11.06). But no action has been taken yet.

Ray Burke and Liam Lawlor were put in jail for contempt and not for any other reason. If the Tribunal cannot, or does not even try to put *The Irish Times* journalists behind bars, where will this leave its credibility? And where does that leave Irish democracy?

However, it may be that Mahon is waiting on the outcome of his action against the *Sunday Business Post*. A report in that paper of 26th November indicates that the case it is defending against the Mahon Tribunal is similar to *The Irish Times*, but differs in an important respect.

The Tribunal's case against the SBP is that it published stories based on "confidential documents". The Tribunal's definition of "confidential" is documents which it has in its possession but have not been put in the public domain.

The Tribunal lost its case in the High Court and is now appealing to the Supreme Court. But the reason why the High Court found in favour of the SBP may not give too much succour to *The Irish Times*. Justice Kelly in the High Court said that the Tribunal's definition of "confidential" was too broad and that, if it had confined itself to documents, which were given to it on the basis of confidentiality, it would have had a case. My understanding is that *The Irish Times* used documents which were given on a confidential basis by Ahern.

I suppose in the light of this it is understandable that the Tribunal is waiting for the outcome of the SBP case before pursuing the IT.

In his judgement Justice Kelly said that the right of the Press was "not unfettered". Also—

"This court recognises the cardinal importance of press freedom"... "Any restriction on it must be proportionate and no more necessary to promote the legitimate object of the restriction"...

Kelly ruled that the Tribunal could not, by the unilateral adoption of a "policy",

confer the quality of confidentiality on any material. He continued:

"To permit the Tribunal to do this would, in my view, be to allow it in effect to legislate for the deprivation of a party before it of rights to which he is entitled...

"I can find no authority – statutory or otherwise, express or implied – which enables the tribunal to create such far-reaching confidentiality, nor in my view should this court enforce it...

"Had the tribunal been less ambitious and sought merely to ensure that documents which it obtained in confidence would have their confidentiality preserved by injunctive relief, there might be something to be said for the court's intervention – but that is not what is sought... It is quite clear that the tribunal seeks to go much further and to render confidential everything contained in a brief, regardless of nature or source."

Kelly went on to say regarding the Tribunal:

"It has taken a blunderbuss as its weapon of choice in protection of the undoubted rights of persons whose reputations may be damaged or who furnished truly confidential information to it.

"What was required was a weapon of precision which would protect that deserving of protection, whilst inflicting minimal collateral restrictions on the defendants' rights."

BEWARE OF THE REVISIONISTS!

The *Sunday Independent* (12.11.09) had a long and wide ranging interview with Ahern in the course of which the Taoiseach said the following:

"My father was big into history – and obviously because of the background he was in – and he always said: 'whatever you do in your political life, fight against revisionists.' He always feared the revisionists. I'm talking about people who would try and take the history of the Twenties and Thirties and try and present it in today's terms. He is dead about 16 years. But that was the last piece of advice he gave me."

Perhaps Ahern could start fighting against the revisionists by looking at some of the revisionists in his own camp. Elsewhere in this magazine it is reported that the Minister for the Environment Dick Roche thinks that *The Irish Times* is "the paper of national record".

Is it really necessary to explain to a senior Fianna Fail politician that *The Irish Times* has been the self-proclaimed newspaper of Southern Unionism from its foundation in 1859 right up until about 1948 when, following the declaration of the Republic by the Pro-Treaty party, it knew the game was up?

And since 1948 its old political instincts have not been abandoned.

Irish Soldiers In Afghanistan

continued

six months to assist the Interim Afghanistan Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and the surrounding areas. The authorisation of ISAF has been extended by the UN Security Council since then. NATO assumed the lead in ISAF on 11 August, 2003. The current Commander of ISAF, which has a strength of approximately 8,000 personnel, is Lt. Gen David Richards (UK).

"Ireland has participated in ISAF in Afghanistan since 5 July, 2002, following the Government Decision of 2 July, 2002 authorising the provision of seven members of the Permanent Defence Force for service with the force.

"Seven Irish personnel are currently serving with the force. Three personnel are serving as staff officers with the ISAF HQ in Kabul and four personnel are deployed in Liaison Teams in the Regional Command Capital (RC(C)) Kabul. The Liaison Teams specifically liaise between the RC(C) and the Afghan National Directorate of Security, Kabul Police and the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). Irish personnel serving with ISAF are rotated on a four monthly basis.

"It is proposed that the Defence Forces will continue to serve with ISAF in the immediate future, subject to an ongoing review by my Department." (Question 176)

This answer is incorrect in one respect in that, as of 5 October 2006, ISAF had approximately 31,000 (not 8,000) troops [2], the largest contributors being the US with 11,250 and the UK with 5,200. The US has a further 8,000 troops in Afghanistan under its own command in southern Afghanistan.

The answer is misleading because it designed to give the impression that Ireland is engaged in a "peacekeeping" mission in Kabul, and has nothing to do with the bombing of villages in southern Afghanistan that ISAF is now engaged in. To that end, it quotes from the Security Council resolution 1386, which set up ISAF, initially for 6 months, when its role was indeed

"to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas, so that the Afghan Interim Authority as well as the personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment".

Initially, therefore, its role could at a stretch be described as "peacekeeping", and its area of operation was limited to a small area around Kabul. Bombing villages in southern Afghanistan was not part of its initial mission - that was then the

business of the US forces under separate US command in Operation Enduring Freedom.

O'Dea's answer states that "*the authorisation of ISAF has been extended by the UN Security Council*". Extended in time, he seems to be saying. It was: for a further 6 months in May 2002, and a year in November 2002. But, in October 2003, as well as extending the time span of its mandate for a further year, its role and area of operation was also changed. Resolution 1510 authorised ISAF to operate—

"in areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul and its environs, so that the Afghan Authorities as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel engaged, in particular, in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, can operate in a secure environment"

In addition, by 1510, from then on, ISAF was required to "*work in close consultation*" with "*the Operation Enduring Freedom Coalition*", which by no stretch of the imagination was engaged in "*peacekeeping*". None of this is mentioned in O'Dea's answer.

Under this new mandate, ISAF set up bases first in northern Afghanistan (for instance, at Konduz and Mazar-e-Sharif) and then in the west (for instance, at Herat), ostensibly to provide security for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These actions met with little resistance, since these areas are home to the groups that made up the Northern Alliance, which helped the US overthrow the Taliban regime in late 2001. Also, as far as I can see, ISAF made no attempt to interfere in the governance of these areas, which were unaffected by the powerless regime in Kabul (and it made no attempt to interfere in poppy growing). I suspect that in the North and West, ISAF did neither harm nor good.

In 2006, 10,000+ US troops were transferred to ISAF command and it extended its operations to the Pashtun areas of southern Afghanistan, from which the Taliban regime arose. By so doing, ISAF essentially joined in the still ongoing US Operation Enduring Freedom and it understandably met with fierce resistance. This seems to have taken the troop supplying states by surprise. States like the Netherlands and Canada that sent troops to Afghanistan on a "peacekeeping" mission have had dozens of them come home in body bags.

Currently, Bush and Blair are trying to bludgeon NATO states into sending more troops to kill and be killed in southern Afghanistan, and to lift the '*caveats*' they apply to troops already operating in Afghanistan. Germany, for instance, restricts its troops to firing in self-defence,

which is appropriate to a "peacekeeping" role. (It would be interesting to know what 'caveats', if any, Ireland lays down for the operations of its troops).

Bombing Afghan villages is now a regular part of ISAF operations. The small Irish contingent may reside in the safety of Kabul, far away from these actions, but, as a state contributing to

ISAF, Ireland is as responsible for Afghan deaths as the US and the UK, whose aircrew are dropping the bombs.

David Morrison

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References:

[1] www.afnorth.nato.int/ISAF/structure/structure_structure.htm

[2] www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/061004_update.pdf

democratic government, one of the longest-lived in the world today—soon there will be nearly a century of such continuous development. This is rare—one of the youngest states with one of the longest-standing democracies in the world today. All attempts at totalitarianism have been avoided and, just as significant, we have also avoided war as a means of avoiding totalitarianism.

We needed no one to aid us in securing and maintaining our independence and democracy. No 'rapid reaction forces' appeared to help us.

And the more independent we have become the better off we have become. And political independence has been the key to this success. Independence has been the how and the why of our economic success. These are the legacies and achievements of Paddy McCarthy and his colleagues.

These are achievements and legacies for all parties and all citizens and that is why why we all should celebrate them and him.

I would like to get back to these accusations about the War of Independence being a squalid affair of Catholics against Protestants. This is the chorus we hear at the moment. And I want to refer to it because of where we are, because the history of this town and this area is a living refutation that sectarian issues ever mattered to people here in modern times in their political conflicts.

It's a great pity that the history of Millstreet has not been written. I have highlighted some sources for this history in a few publications and some people may have thought I was indulging myself by raking up past conflicts unnecessarily. But it is a great history and I have not published the half of it.

Modern history in the area begins with the convulsions of the Land War and for the decades during and after the Land War the Millstreet area was synonymous with extreme political and social conflict. Kevin O'Byrne has researched the period and I am indebted to him for a lot of the information on that period and we hope to publish his researches soon.

The place became renowned nationally and internationally during that War and it was said of Millstreet that it "...par excellence has established its character for being the seat of lawlessness and blackguardism of every description" (Cork Constitution, 5.7.1881). It was described on another occasion as having "...the unenviable reputation of being the most lawless town in Ireland" (Cork Constitution, 22.8.1881). An MP who lived through the period later described it

Millstreet's History Needs To Be Written

Talk given on 5th November in Millstreet to commemorate Paddy McCarthy (8 February 1896 to 22 November 1920)

I am very glad to be asked to say a few words at this commemoration.

I suppose people might ask why this commemoration at this time? We have had not one like this before so why now?

I think it is necessary and very welcome because to me it is part of a reaction to current revisionist attitudes to the War of Independence. For decades past it clearly did not seem necessary to have a commemoration like this. The national monument in the Square and the fact that Paddy McCarthy's name is the first on it sufficed. People clearly appreciated the reason he and others fought and died nearly 90 years ago and there was no need for any more specific commemorations down the years.

However, times change and you would need to be blind, deaf and dumb not to realise that there is a new attitude abroad these days about the War of Independence and the 1916 Rising.

If you read the vast majority of history books written these days or most of what is written or said repeatedly in the media every day you will constantly see the legitimacy of that War being questioned, criticised, disparaged, and—at the very least—a general feeling generated that maybe it was not necessary and that we brought it on ourselves for no good reason.

The most outrageous development of this attitude is the suggestion that the War was a sectarian war against Protestants—Southern Loyalists have been made to disappear from history. This is what we hear constantly from the likes of Eoghan Harris, Ruth Dudley Edwards, Peter Hart, and their myriad supporters in editorial rooms and studios cross the country.

The general idea is to give us a bad conscience about that War and, as it led to the formation of the State, a bad conscience about the whole basis of our political society. A bad conscience is a terrible affliction to have, a very debilitating condition to endure and has no positive benefit.

I think it is very important to counter

this and events such as these are a means of doing so. And I think you will find that there are many similar events being held elsewhere nowadays throughout the country for the same reason but you will not hear much about them in the media.

This revision of our history is countered simply by putting all the facts on the table.

The basic fact that needs re-emphasising is that Paddy McCarthy was part of the legitimate army of a democratically-elected Government. That is something that gets obscured these days.

What Government here or anywhere else has ever won 75% of the seats in an election as happened in 1918? No clearer mandate or message has ever been given to a government here or elsewhere in modern times. That is the authority on which Paddy McCarthy and others did what they did.

That is the essential fact about the War of Independence. Yet, you will find no history books on that election.

Yet, this overwhelming result for independence was ignored by the Government of the day and this after a World War had been fought by that same government for the "freedom of small nations" and in which over a quarter of a million Irish men joined up and 50,000 died on the basis of that promise. As well of course as millions elsewhere. They were all cynically betrayed. And instead of the "freedom for small nations" we got the "Black and Tans". Paddy McCarthy came down here from Meelin to put a stop to the Tans terrorising the people of this town and the area around here and he died doing so. What he and others did led eventually to political independence for this state.

And what have we done with that independence? Again all possible negative factors are paraded before us regularly by our self-hating revisionists but what are the most obvious and important facts?

Independence has led to continuous

as having been "*the cockpit of Ireland*" (Cork Accent, 4.4.1910).

The cause of all this was that evictions were the order of the day by the progressive landlords of the time. These evictions led naturally to protests, 'outrages', boycotting, moonlighting and demonstrations on almost a daily, and nightly, basis.

This agitation on the land issue included such unheard of and blasphemous activities as a demonstration in the Church here during a Good Friday service (15.4.1881). On another occasion the Parish Priest's sermon was stopped and drowned out by a demonstration of mass coughing among the congregation, most of whom then walked out (29.8.1881). These were extraordinary occurrences and caused a sensation in the media but they were only the tip of the iceberg and were almost routine to most local people.

Now in all this there was not a trace of inter-religious hostilities, it was a conflict amongst Catholics for many obvious reasons—one being that some of the biggest landlords were Catholics such the McCarthy-O'Leary's. Also, the main ideological opponent of the Land League was the local Catholic Parish Priest, Canon Griffin, who was known far and wide for his opposition to it. And he was ably supported by the most prominent Catholic businessman of the time, Jeremiah Hegarty.

If any religious description could be put on these conflicts it had all the appearances of being anti-Catholic—which of course it was not. Religion simply did not come into it, unless people such as Canon Griffin introduced it by political preaching from the altar. And of course the local Bishop, Dr. Moriarty, had earlier made the famous (or infamous) declaration about the Fenians—i.e. that "*hell was not hot enough nor eternity long enough*" for them.

After the Land War one of its great leaders, William O'Brien, established a very strong base here with his All-for-Ireland-League, a Party who had a distinctive conciliatory policy towards Unionists and Protestants that put him in opposition to the main Redmondite Home Rule party. This policy was known as the 3 Cs, standing for '*Conference, Conciliation and Consent*' and its whole *raison d'être* was harmony between Unionists, Protestants, and Nationalists based on those concepts. With the able support of Canon Sheehan, the aim of O'Brien's party was to prevent a Catholic Ascendancy replacing the Protestant Ascendancy that he had just helped overthrow. In the 1910 General Elections his Party defeated all the Redmondites in Cork, except a Protestant Home Ruler in East Cork, whose seat O'Brien did not contest. There were protests here in the town when Home Rule was passed as it was seen as a way of

copper-fastening divisions between Protestants, Unionists and Nationalists.

O'Brien and his Party went on to support Sinn Fein in the 1918 Election, seeing it as the only alternative to the totally discredited efforts at Westminster to get any real form of Independence or unity in Ireland. This support by O'Brien and his Party, which had huge support in the area, is what guaranteed such success around here for Sinn Fein in that Election and later for the military struggle. This is the political heritage of this area and it is a heritage that produced people like Paddy McCarthy and his comrades.

If we took heed of our revisionists we would have to start imagining that Paddy McCarthy was a terrorist of some sort, and yet again the basic fact was that he was the very opposite—he, quite literally, died fighting terrorism in this town, which was the explicit policy of the Tans and Auxiliaries orchestrated from the Barrack here. Our revisionists of course always seem to have a great inability to distinguish between cause and effect.

Again, if we followed these revisionists we would also have to start imagining that he came down from Meelin to shoot Protestants in the Barrack. It has been established recently (see *History Ireland*, Autumn 2004, Vol.12, No. 3) that about 20% of the Tans were Irish and about 60% of these were Catholics so that between them and the RIC, who were mostly Catholics, it is almost certain that there were more Catholics than Protestants in the Barrack at the time. Even if it had entered his head to do so, he would have a very difficult job indeed trying to separate out the Protestants from the Catholics in the circumstances. This is all nonsense of course but this is the kind of demeaning nonsense that is the provenance of current revisionist history.

The fact is that there are a few things that are absolutely certain about Paddy McCarthy and his colleagues—one is that he and they did not have a sectarian bone in their bodies and another is that he died fighting terrorism in this town—the same terrorism that on the previous day was terrorising the people in Croke Park.

It is very fitting therefore that we pay tribute to him and his comrades and that he and they continue to get the credit they deserve. I want to thank Noel Keating and colleagues for organising this event.

Jack Lane

Join the debate . . .

Pat Muldowney is taking all and sundry on Indymedia about the Pearson Case and much else. *Why not join in ?*

The web address is
<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/79753>

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Report

Remembrance Day Arrives Again

Yet again Europe was in the throes of war. Volunteers from every street and parish in Ireland died in their thousands. Families and neighbours gathered together to read letters from the front line. Poems and songs were composed and sung at weddings and dances, at public houses and fairs. People saw the war as a great common struggle against tyranny in which the destiny of their country was at stake. There are few people in Ireland today whose family was not touched by tragedy.

This was the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-14. The armies of the Irish had been defeated at home, and were, as they saw it, continuing the struggle alongside the armies of France. They fought and died at Cremona, Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudinard and Malplaquet. They filled the cathedral of Ypres with captured British battle-standards. In this season of Remembrance, should we be commemorating and honouring their sacrifice?

I suggest that, before we honour them and hold them up to impressionable young people for admiration and emulation, we should consider carefully what they were fighting and killing for. Was the killing necessary? Was it for a worthy cause? Do we really know what it was all about?

All the more reason why we should be even more cautious about commemorating more recent wars whose propaganda is actually still alive and killing. For instance, what was the real purpose of the Somme butchery?

Well, setting war propaganda aside, we know what the victors got out of their Great War victory. To ensure permanent peace after the war to end all wars, out of the rubble of the defeated, the world was presented with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia (remember them?), Iraq, a Jewish Protectorate in Palestine, and the Black and Tan terror against Irish democracy.

Why, it is almost enough to make a person want to keep out of all foreign wars! Which, when you think about it, was the rock on which the foreign policy of independent Ireland was based - until recently.

Pat Muldowney

Irish Independent 16.11.06

Report

Another view of Gallipoli

Kevin Myers refers again to the Irish who fought in the First World War (*Irish Independent*, November 9) and specifically those who fought and died at Gallipoli in Turkey. Mr Myers rightly condemns the role of Winston Churchill in that campaign, and also the role of Britain in various conflicts following the First World War.

Some days ago Mr Myers admitted to having been wrong about the Invasion of Iraq. He asked himself how could he have swallowed the pro-invasion bilge. How long will it be before he asks himself publicly how he could have swallowed the British imperialist bilge in relation to the First World War? ...

The man we tend to call 'the Father of Constitutional Nationalism', Daniel O'Connell, said that Ireland was not worth the shedding of one drop of blood. Yet some of those who purported to be of that non-violent tradition saw no inconsistency in supporting John Redmond when, incredibly, Redmond switched from being a Parnellite separatist to being a Home Rule British imperialist. To his eternal shame, and to the shame of most of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy and clergy at the time, they supported the British side in the First World War, at least in the first two years of that war, though their spiritual leader, Pope Benedict XV, described it as "senseless slaughter".

According to the most reliable figures, 185,000 Irishmen fought in the British Army in the First World War. 50,000 of those were already in the British Army at the outbreak of the war. 35,000 Irishmen were killed. It is estimated that about 20,000 of those would have been Irish Catholics... Compare that loss of life to the 450 who were killed in the 1916 Rising. Mr Myers considers that Irish participation in the First World War was praiseworthy, as he believes from that joint participation there would have emerged a Home Rule unity within the British Empire in a still-united Ireland.

Very few commentators on the period consider that a realistic scenario.

I think that very few of the non-Unionist Irish today would consider that type of Irish unity desirable, that is, the type of rigger-bugger Landsdowne Road International unity, where everyone knows their place in the Freemasonic pecking order, and joins in a suitably PC "national" anthem....

The wind that shakes the barley has blown the British Empire away. Good riddance. When are the Vichy Irish going to accept the fact?

Seamas de Barra,

Irish Independent, 13.11.06 (extracts)

does
it
up?

Stack

We kick off with the first week in September 2006 and *Heritage Week* was celebrated. It was interesting to see what the State and politicians thought was worthy of commemoration. In Cork, the Masonic Hall in Tuckey Street (only its front hall) had some of the *public* who were aware of its opening and how to put this—the more aware—of our politicians present. There was a lovely photograph in the *Examiner* of former Lord Mayor, Cllr. Deirdre Clune (daughter of Peter Barry) Fine Gael; Lord Mayor Michael Aherne, Labour; former Lord Mayor Cllr. Jim Corr, Fine Gael—all with Alan Campbell who went by the grand title of Provincial Grand Master of Masons in Munster. There was no evidence of any of the Fine Failers but then as one of the *Irish Times* hacks once said, what would these backwoods-men know of heritage?

The **row in UCC** still rolls on, with various accusations made by the Professor of Philosophy, Des Clarke, against the reign of President Wrixon. The Minister of Education Mary Hanafin resisted pressure for an official inquiry and instead appointed a former civil servant to look into the flurry of allegations concerning debt and bullying. Fine Fail is happy with Wrixon but the multimillionaire President has had enough and has made public his intention to step down in January 2007. An English recruitment firm was appointed to find a successor and the name of the new President will be publicised on December 10th 2006.

The **King and Queen of Norway** recently had a three day State visit to Ireland. They also visited Cork and gave a royal reception on board the Royal Yacht for the business and the civic elite of Cork. Unfortunately, a British warship, the Wessex berthed on their final night and the poor Royals were shunted from the prime and highly secure Harbour berthing to the open and unsecured berthing on the opposite side to give primary place to the warship. Why had this to happen? Nobody bothered asking any questions, even though the Royal couple made ample time to shore up our national ties and opened a conference on Ireland's maritime legacy at the National Maritime College of Ireland at Ringaskiddy amongst many other events.

Tatler magazine is a rather English institution and caters for the country/titled set in England. Imagine my surprise when *Tatler Ireland* (I have yet to see the magazine and this from someone who *knows* their magazines!) was given wide

publicity in the *Irish Times* and other Irish media when it announced its Irish Women's awards. *Woman of the Year* was Adi Roche of the Chernobyl Children's Project. *Woman Politician* was Mary Hanafin. And *International Woman* was Hilary Clinton, who announced she would collect the award herself when she came to Ireland in the very near future. There was something rather surreal seeing the feminist/socialist Nell McCafferty collect her *Hall of Fame Winner* at the Mansion House, Dublin. Such is the changing face of our country.

The **British Council** in Ireland has been very busy too. It is becoming very overt and seems to be presented in a very positive light especially in the *Irish Times*. Recently it held a Conference in conjunction with Co-operation Ireland about how the Irish media portray "*national identities*". The title of the conference was *New National Identities and the Role of the Media*.

A **Mary Minihan** was the winner of the first *Anne Maguire Student Journalism Award*. She is Press Officer for the Progressive Democrats. Her article for the *Irish Times*, insisted—she wrote in a personal capacity—that "*inward migration is forcing us increasingly to take a good hard look at some of our sacred cows*".

There has been media uproar about our neglect of **Children's Rights** from certain quarters. Eventually Minister for Children, Brian Lenihan TD, announced that we were going to have a referendum "*to enshrine children's rights in our Constitution*". The nub of the matter was about Baby Ann who was given up for adoption by her unmarried student mother, and had spent two and a half years with her adoptive parents who, even by the Supreme Court's account, were lovingly looking after her. But just before the adoption became legal and binding, the mother and father married and asked for their child back. The Supreme Court insisted on the *natural rights* of the latter. What was very extraordinary about this case was the insistence of one of the Justices, Catherine McGuinness that she had "*an interest in this matter*" as she had campaigned for 13 years to have a Constitutional Referendum on the Rights of the Child.

And the other extraordinary intervention came from **Barnardos**, an English children's charity, with well funded advertisements and spokesmen led by their Chief Executive in Ireland, the former Labour spinmeister, Fergus Finlay. I looked up their website and found that Barnardos have "*a presence*" in nearly all the Commonwealth countries. Dr. Thomas John Bernardo was born in Dublin in 1845 and was educated in a protestant school, but at the age of 16 "*converted to Protestant evangelicalism*", went to Victorian London, and founded his charity in 1867 when he saw the terrible

poverty of the East End (though it was worse in the city of his birth). Victorian society has dictated that poverty was "*shameful as a result of laziness or vice*".

Interestingly there is an advert in the *Sinn Fein Handbook*, Dublin, 1917, for J.M. Barnardo & Son Ltd for the finest 'Furs of Quality' Est. over 100 Years. It was usually Jews who were furriers and it would make a good item for research to see if there is a linkage here. Barnardos English Memorandum and Articles of Association are heavily laden with the Protestant ethos and this too would have to reflect part of their Irish mission. There are lots of Irish Catholic charities but nothing was heard from them. But they—like a lot of the rest of Irish society—would know that our Constitution perfectly protects the right of the child already.

Article 42.5 provides that, "*in exceptional cases, where the parents for physical or moral reasons fail in their duty towards their children*" the State "*shall endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child*". Bertie, as usual, has allowed for plenty of manoeuvre in this issue even saying that the Executive alone may just look at the adoption laws and bring them more into line with more modern procedures.

LEST WE FORGET

In November 1920, the Black and Tans arrested four Irish Volunteers, Alfie Rogers, Michael Egan, Michael "Brod" McMahan, and Martin Gildea. They were ill-treated and tortured for several days and on 16th November 1920 the four men were bound hand and foot and taken to Killaloe Bridge on the River Shannon and they were shot dead. Between fifteen and twenty shots were fired at the unarmed men. The British authorities said they were shot trying to escape but local witnesses denied this and their story was believed. There is a monument on the Killaloe Bridge on which a wreath is laid annually by the local people on or about November 16th. The four men are known as "*The Scarriff Martyrs*". Scarriff is a small town near Killaloe. The Martyrs are buried in Scarriff Cemetery. Here is a verse of a well known local ballad:

"They bound them tight both hands and feet with twine they could not break
And they brought them down to Killaloe by steamer on the lake
Without clergy, judge or jury upon the bridge they shot them down
And their blood flowed with the Shannon, convenient to the town".

When will our President honour our homegrown patriot dead? Scarriff or Smerwick—or is it the trick that they would have to have worn the British uniform before a Presidential wreath-laying appearance?

Michael Stack

The Countess And The Drama Queen

Ruth Dudley Edwards was unknown to me until very recently. One morning I heard a woman putting a strange slant on history on the radio and a friend told me who she was. I believe that she is a writer of formulaic crime fiction and has a good reputation. That is not a put-down. I quite like that sort of thing when it is well done.

Some months ago she threatened to sue a magazine I sometimes contribute to, accusing it (wrongly I think) of questioning her integrity as a historian. I believe that nothing has come of that. (I am now also aware of her close association with the British spy and assassin, Sean O'Callaghan, who lived in her house, and who she promoted in campaigns against Irish Republicanism.)

A few weeks ago she appeared on RTE radio's *Speaking Ill Of The Dead* series, talking about Countess Markievicz. She was introduced as a journalist and historian, and not as a political commentator or agitator, and certainly not as a writer of fiction. Furthermore the broadcast was introduced in academic terms as a lecture.

Here is a sample of Ruth Dudley Edwards, journalist and historian, speaking about Countess Markievicz:

"She was a self-indulgent blood-thirsty show-off, who brainwashed children into believing that they must die for Ireland. Who killed without pity and who, defying the vote of the Irish people in June 1922 to accept the Treaty, continued to murder during the Civil War. Craving excitement and the limelight, she adopted causes she barely understood, because she was mesmerised by charismatic men...

"Markievicz was a snob with a bogus title. She was physically brave to the point of recklessness. But she lacked the moral courage to admit her failure of nerve when she was faced with the prospect of execution in 1916. She was beautiful, flamboyant, all style and no substance. Along with other green harpies of her generation, my grandmother Brigid Dudley Edwards deserves a mention, Markievicz became a role model for generations of women who mistook pitilessness and intransigence for principle."

First let's get Ruth's granny out of the way. She has made a big thing of old Brigid in the last year. The image she portrays is of a Sinn Fein fanatic with a picture of Hitler in her bedroom. The image implied is Brigid—Markievicz—Sinn Fein—fascist or Nazi influence.

I grew up in a Republican family, joined the *Fianna* and later the IRA. I was

not in Sinn Fein but knew an awful lot who were. (I will say more about this kind of progression later.) In all this time I never heard of Brigid Dudley Edwards and, recently, I've asked former comrades, and none of them have heard of her either. So she can have had no influence on anyone for ill or good. I also find the current fashion of denegrating members of your family distasteful. But it seems that this sort of thing sells well in the age of Gerry Springer.

I've met all kinds of people in the Republican Movement, some of whom I could not stand. But I've never met a fascist or a Nazi. (Though I've met a fair few in Labour and Conservative circles in Britain and even in Irish labour circles. And, of course, Fine Gael began life as an avowed fascist party.)

All this is understandable since the Republican Movement, in its various manifestations, has had a distinctly internationalist outlook. The United Irishmen were almost a local branch of French-led republican freemasonry. The Fenians were part of a European republican movement—that's where the tricolour comes from.

The Proclamation of 1916 saluted "*our gallant allies in Europe*", the Germans and the Austrians. That was not about "*Ireland's opportunity*" but was an acknowledgement of the nature of the war as an unprovoked attack by Britain. This was explained week-in week-out by James Connolly for two years, and predicted and explained by Roger Casement.

In the thirties the IRA in alliance with Fianna Fail defeated Fascism in Ireland. And the volunteers who fought for the Spanish Republic were, in the vast majority, former or serving IRA Volunteers.

The current hate figure among trendy writers, Dan Breen, supported the Indian independence movement, along with Eamon deValera. And if you walk around West Belfast you will see no end of murals supporting oppressed peoples all over the world. Volunteers I've spoken to have regretted that the nature of the peace process has forbidden them from passing on the arsenal they no longer need to other worthy causes.

If Ruth's account of her Granny is accurate, and for me that is a big if, then she was a rare type in the Republican Movement, if she was in it at all.

The narrow-minded politics that can give rise to fascism does not exist in the Republican Movement. But it does exist. It exists in people like Ruth Dudley

Edwards who want our reintegration with Britain.

Britain has always harboured a fascist/Nazi core in its heart, concealed—sometimes more, sometimes less—under democratic forms. Today the Nazi element is more to the fore than usual. There is a rapid dilution of the democratic forms, and the killing of the "*lesser breeds*" by the hundreds of thousands has again become a matter of routine. People like Ruth Dudley Edwards would have us become part of all this as they celebrate the Irish leaders who supported the slaughter in Europe and Turkey of 1914-18 and denounce those who rebelled against all that.

There can be no doubt that this is what she is about in anything I've come across by her. It is what she is about in her involvement with the British Council. (It will take a separate article to deal with the role of that body in Ireland today.)

Let's look at the charges that Markievicz "*adopted causes she barely understood because she was mesmerised by charismatic men*", and that she "*brainwashed children into believing that they must die for Ireland*". Her chief associate as she entered politics was Bulmer Hobson. I've heard him called all sorts of things but charismatic wasn't one of them.

What Markievicz primarily rejected from her background was its imperialism. And there are still Gore-Booths aplenty at the heart of the British establishment.

She found little to attract her in the Sinn Fein Movement, which was at ease with imperialism before 1916. It wanted the status that Hungary had in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But that Empire was not running around the world grabbing colonies. Though if it had, I believe that the impulse would have come from the Hungarian part of the Dual-Monarchy, if its attitude to its neighbours, then and since, is anything to go by.

The person who influenced Markievicz was Robert Baden-Powell. Baden-Powell could be rightly accused of taking children and brainwashing them into believing that they should kill and, if necessary, die for the Empire. He was influenced by the use of children in the South African War.

It was his efforts to organise his scouts in Ireland that got Markievicz going, and she founded *Na Fianna Eireann* in 1909. She enlisted the support of Con Colbert, Sean Heuston, and Sean McDermott who certainly was a charismatic man. But it was that way about. There was also the probability that Britain was going to treat Africa as it had treated Australia and America by removing or coralling the native populations and replacing them with settlers, unlike its policy in India.

It began to do so in South Africa,

Kenya, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and elsewhere. Ruth Dudley Edwards is older than me and I can remember the advertisements for settlers in Rhodesia. But Britain went into decline before serious extermination could get under way. And it was challenged in the world by the United States and on the ground in Africa by the Irish Catholic missionaries.

The Scots had been integrated into the imperial process and they were to the forefront of colonisation. And similarly with Protestant Ulster. The latter celebrate their genocidal US Presidential forebears and the battle of the Somme today more than their temporary victory at the Boyne.

The *Fianna* were organised to keep Irish youth out of the clutches of Baden-Powell's imperialist ideology. They were taught instead Irish patriotism. There was no middle ground available in the circumstances of the time—if there ever is.

I mentioned earlier my own progression into the IRA. But as I explained in an earlier article, and in more detail, I was the exception. Very few *Fians* ever went on to join the IRA. But they grew up in an Irish atmosphere rather than a British one. A similar process occurred with the Boy and Girl Scouts of America. They were imbued with American patriotism, whatever one may think of that.

I'm not aware that Markievicz ever knew Jim Larkin well. But when the Dublin lockout happened in 1913, as a civilised human being with a social conscience, she did what she could to help the workers and their families who were being starved into submission. By then, having some influence in the national movement, she helped to organise and staff relief food centres.

I'm not sure that middle and upper class people can ever be socialists in the sense that working class people can. (Which is why "socialist organisations" run by such people are usually a pain in the backside.) But they can witness the evils of capitalism and imperialism and be repelled by them and throw in their lot with the workers' movement. Many do this, and Markievicz was one of them.

To this extent she came under the influence of James Connolly. We all have to learn from someone. It is to her credit that she choose who to learn from. There were plenty of "charismatic men" in Sinn Fein, in the Volunteers, in the Gaelic sports and language movements, and in the Irish Party, to whom she could have turned if she was of a disposition to be mesmerised.

She had already marked out her political ground as an anti-imperialist and it was only in the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the Irish Citizen Army that she found her views fully represented. And so she went to war with the Citizen Army in 1916.

The only ground for accusing her of "bloodthirstyness" is her decision to go to war where killing and dying happen. I've not heard Dudley Edwards or others like her describe the British Soldiers in the Great War as bloodthirsty, even though the killing of wounded and captured enemy was commonplace. This is even admitted in the wave of war programmes that have flooded British television this year.

She is also said to have been excited when she first shot one of the enemy. What does that mean? It's the unemotional killers that one has to worry about. We don't know how we'll react in battle and it's a relief to find out that you don't fall to pieces.

But Markievicz, we are told, so enjoyed the business that, "defying the vote of the Irish people in June 1922 to accept the Treaty, continued to murder during the Civil War". Now that little quotation tells us a lot about Ruth Dudley Edwards and the fact that she is a propagandist rather than a historian. Was the 1922 election the defining, or even the only election, in that period of Irish national development? We are given to believe so.

"Continued to murder" means that Markievicz was already busily murdering before the election. But there were, of course, other elections. There was an election in 1918 in conditions of peace when the by-now republican Sinn Fein swept the board on a policy of Irish independence and set up the Government of the Irish Republic. Markievicz was a Minister in that Government. The IRA was its Army. There were more elections in 1921 when the IRA was getting the better of things and Sinn Fein did even better.

The election of June 1922 was only marginally won by the Treatyites when the people of Ireland, not just their Army, were threatened that Britain would break the Truce and launch "immediate and terrible war". Everyone knew exactly what that meant. The British had shortly before used bombers and poison gas against the people of Iraq, and were readying to use the concentration camp system that had been successful in South Africa.

The Americans were by then isolationist so far as Europe was concerned and there were no election monitors in those days. The election of June 1922 would be ridiculed as a farce if it was replicated anywhere in the world today by all but die-hard imperialists. As soon as it was practical, the Irish people threw out the Treatyites and never again let them govern alone.

No authority at all sprung from the election of June 1922 except the authority of brute force, in the event used by Irishmen at Britain's behest and often with British troops in green uniforms.

The story of Markievicz cracking up at

her courtmartial has been doing the rounds a lot lately, even though the accusation has been in the public domain for decades. The accusation that she broke down and pleaded for her life comes from the prosecutor at the trial in a book written many years later. Ruth Dudley Edwards has asked why he would say these things if they were not true. She should know about selling books. They need sexy bits.

Another sexy bit in this man's book was that it was he in a private (of course) conversation with General Maxwell who saved deValera's life. DeValera's life was spared because he was believed to have been an American citizen and Britain was trying to bring America into the war. Markievicz's life was probably also spared for fear of reaction in America.

But there are the verbatim records of the Military Tribunals available to the public which includes Ruth Dudley Edwards. Yet this 'historian' ignores them as evidence in favour of the uncorroberated word of a man trying to sell a book. The Government records show Markievicz as behaving just like all the others. If it had been otherwise, we'd have heard all about at the time and since from the British—indeed if it had crossed their minds, they'd have made it up.

Finally there's the trivial matter of the "phoney countess". Her son is supposed to have left message opened after his death saying that his father was not a Count. Allowing that this was not a spelling mistake, it's hardly his mother's fault if her husband told him he was. After all about a fifth of Poles are Counts or some other form of nobility.

Conor Lynch

Report

Countess Markievicz

The following letter failed to find publication in The Sunday Independent

"Snob, fraud, show-off and murderer" is how the "Speaking Ill of the Dead" outburst of Ruth Dudley Edwards against Constance Markievicz is headlined in your issue of October 29th. That report continues: "New documents, uncovered in memoirs written by prosecutor William Wylie, claimed that the Countess actually cited her gender when begging for her life after her execution was ordered".

There is in fact nothing newsworthy about Wylie's allegations. They had first been made public by Leon Ó Broin in 1989. It is, however, a great pity that a historian like Ms. Edwards, whose fine 1977 biography of Pearse is once again available in a welcome reprint, has remained so out of touch with the subsequent research that refutes Wylie's

character assassination. In his 2002 book, *"From Behind A Closed Door: Secret Court Martial Records of the 1916 Easter Rising"*, historian Brian Barton writes in respect of 85 year-old trial records only released in 2001:

"In fact the official record of Markievicz's trial shows that she acted with characteristic defiance throughout... When speaking in her own defence, she retracted nothing, stating simply: *'I went out to fight for Ireland's freedom and it doesn't matter what happens to me. I did what I thought was right and I stand by it'...*"

He continues:

"Wylie's wilful and scurrilous distortion of her response at her trial is difficult to interpret. It may reflect a personal sense of irritation at her self-assurance and boldness, which he may have considered an insult to the Court. Perhaps it reflected deep-rooted sexual prejudice and rank misogyny on his part. More likely, his fictitious account sprang, above all, from a feeling that the Countess had by her actions betrayed both her religion and her class... Such considerations certainly influenced the Trinity College Provost's daughter Miss Mahaffy's assessment of her as *'the one woman amongst them of high birth and therefore the most depraved ... She took to politics and left our class'...*"

Leave them she most certainly did. But personally I prefer the more temperate tones employed by Ruth Dudley Edwards in her characterisation of Markievicz during the course of her Pearse biography:

"Constance Markievicz, a woman... frustrated by a social position which denied her energies any release save on the hunting field... She had been instrumental in setting up... Fianna Éireann... although there was much resentment at a woman leading that male organisation... (and) training boys to participate in a fight for freedom... A dominant personality, with the courage and assurance of her Ascendancy background, she took her suffragette principles to their logical conclusion and refused to be hampered by her sex from playing a full part in separatist movements... Her identification with the workers could not be challenged: she had worked for them throughout the lockout".

We in SIPTU have been privileged to be able to return the compliment through our association with the full publication of the Markievicz trial record in the 90th anniversary booklet published last month by the Irish Labour History Society, entitled *"James Connolly, Liberty Hall and the 1916 Rising"*. This booklet also publishes for the first time the 1916 witness statements of Rosie Hackett and those workers who had printed the Rising's Proclamation here in Liberty Hall.

Manus O'Riordan
1.11.06

The Special Position of the Jews: *Benefits and Ill Effects*

The word 'Semite', according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, means "a member of any of the peoples supposed to be descended from Shem, son of Noah, including esp. the Jews, Arabs, Assyrians, Babylonians and Phoenicians". But the word 'anti-semitism' discriminates. It has to do only with the Jews, and means *felt or expressed hostility* to them. It is the antagonism to a human group which the hybrid Power that rules the West rates as the most abominable of such antagonisms. From San Francisco to Berlin, a day seldom passes but politicians or mass-media preachers remind us of its atrociousness, warn us against committing it, or express horror and indignation at some actual or alleged instance of it. The condemnatory chorus functions not only as a stern moral judgment but also as a punishment, inasmuch as it defames a public man among the right-thinking and can imperil or even end his career.

This singular stigmatising of hostility to Jews, as distinct from, say, Arabs, Catholics, Blacks, Germans, or whatever, is not the fruit of moral reasoning. It derives from a political decision. It reflects the special status which America and its European associates have conferred on the fifteen million Jews as a body and, in particular on Israel, the Jewish state, where over a third of them live.

This special status, which has been created in the last half-century, is an approximate recurrence in our time of the special treatment accorded to the Jews in the Roman Empire and in its nominal refoundations, first as the Carolingian empire, later as the Holy Roman Empire. In the Roman case it took the form of what are usually referred to as the Jewish 'privileges', but might be more accurately called the Jewish exemptions. Practising Jews were exempt from the poll tax and from ritual sacrifice at the Emperor's altar. More generally, they could not be obliged to do anything which conflicted with their religion, such as work on the Sabbath, attend in pagan temples, or perform the occasional civic duty of tax-collection. In the two succession empires, the Carolingian and the Holy Roman, that ancient special status was transmuted into protection of the Jews by the Emperor personally; a protection often practised in the Emperor's place by bishops, and which devolved, with the passage of time, on the German princes.

Those two elements, protection and exemption, recur in the special status accorded to Jews by the American Empire.

The vehemence with which the ban on anti-semitism is proclaimed, and the severity with which it is enforced, give to Jews a protection against defamation and aggression which exceeds that given to any other group. The exemptions, on the other hand, are limited to the state of Israel. They derive from the diffused public doctrine about Israel to the effect that this small and relatively new state has a value far in excess of the value of any other small state, however long established. Three important corollaries follow. The maintenance in being of Israel is a duty incumbent on all right-thinking people. Israel's right to security far exceeds any right to security of the states and peoples surrounding it, most notably the Palestinians. When nuclear weapons were the prerogative of only a few great powers, the world quite properly allowed Israel to arm itself with such weapons, and assisted it in so doing.

The effective exemptions which Israel enjoys follow from these premises. Israel is effectively exempt from international law, in particular with regard to Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, the conduct of warfare, and the exercise of military occupation. Israel also enjoys effective exemption from such international principles of human rights as it chooses to ignore.

These exemptions are 'effective' rather than formal, inasmuch as Amerope has not openly declared that they exist, but intimates forcefully that they do, with the result that they in fact operate whenever Israel breaches the rules or principles in question. When it fails to comply with a Security Council Resolution that calls for its compliance, no punitive consequences follow. And—quite otherwise than often happens when breaches of the laws of warfare or of military occupation, or offences against human rights, are perpetrated by ordinary states—when Israel is the perpetrator, there are no authoritative pronouncements that crimes have been committed; much less arraignments of those responsible before international courts or imperative demands that they be brought to trial in Israel.

The reason why Amerope intimates the Israeli exemptions tacitly, rather than declaring them formally, is presumably the self-interest of American state power, the main strike force of Amerope. Formal upholding of the theory that international law and human rights principles apply equally to all states enables the United States to exploit breaches of these in those

weaker states which it has selected for intimidation or destruction.

In passing, a question suggests itself. From a western point of view those special freedoms of action (or inaction) permitted to Israel are exemptions. But taken together, are they at the same time something else: a concession to the particular nature of Jewish political and military ethics? Something similar to that Roman package of exemptions which was in fact a concession to Jewish religious law and ethics?

Western political and military ethics, such as they are, are an end-product of western Christian civilisation. In the shaping of that civilisation and its ethical systems, Jews, even if they wanted to, were not allowed to play an active part. Perhaps westerners assume too readily that not only western Jews collectively, but also non-western Jews worldwide, at some point subscribed, or now really subscribe, to those western and basically Christian values and ethics which they had no part in shaping.

Is it not possible that Jews, and in particular the Jews of Israel, find in the Jewish Bible, which we call the Old Testament, a quite different and non-western source for their basic values and, accordingly, their political and military ethics? In that book divine justification is provided for the ruthless massacre of neighbouring peoples by the army of Israel when it was victorious; a war ethics quite at variance with traditional or contemporary western ethics, whatever about western practice. Moreover, with regard to 'human rights', in the Jewish Bible there is no notion of the equal worth of all human beings from which the notion of 'rights' common to all mankind might grow.

It is not a question of whether rabbis in their teachings to the Jews of Israel have drawn on the Talmud's teachings about Jews and non-Jews. Of course they have. While Palestine was still a British mandate, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine and a renowned scholar of the Halakhah or biblical law, said, "*The difference between a Jewish soul and the souls of non-Jews... is greater and deeper than the difference between a human soul and the souls of cattle*". In a booklet published in 1973 by the Central Region Command of the Israeli Army, the Command's chief chaplain wrote:

"When our forces come across civilians during a war or in hot pursuit or in a raid, so long as there is no certainty that those civilians are incapable of harming our forces, then according to the Halakhah they may and even should be killed... Under no circumstances should an Arab be trusted, even if he makes an impression of being civilised... In war, when our forces storm the enemy,

they are allowed and even enjoined by the Halakhah to kill even good civilians, that is, civilians who are ostensibly good."

Or again, in 2001, in a Passover Sermon, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, former Chief Sephardi Rabbi and a present member of the Israeli Parliament, exclaimed:

"May the Holy Name visit retribution on the Arab heads, and cause their seed to be lost, and annihilate them!" and continued: "It is forbidden to have pity on them. We must give them missiles with relish, annihilate them. Evil ones, damnable ones."

The question is not whether prominent rabbis have taught or teach such things—it is logical that they should do so—but whether, and to what extent, such teachings influence the behaviour of the Israeli state, secret services and army. If in fact they have had considerable influence, this would go far to explain, and in Israeli terms justify, the extreme cruelty of their treatment of the Palestinians and, to a lesser degree, of the Lebanese. And that would also—to return to the thought that prompted this aside—render it inadequate and patronising to view the freedoms of action and inaction granted by the West to Israel merely as "exemptions from the western system of values, law and ethics". More accurately seen, the allowance of those freedoms of action and inaction to Israel would amount to a respectful recognition of a different system of values, law and ethics than that which the West nominally upholds.

However, leaving such speculation aside, it goes without saying that the special status granted to the Jews is well-meant; is intended to bring Jews only benefits, and does in fact bring them benefits. But it has also led to unintended ill-effects. And indeed, if one compares the benefits and the ill-effects which have accrued to the Jews as a result of their special status, one is forced to the surprising conclusion that the latter outweigh the former, certainly in the long term.

Undoubtedly beneficial are the direct results of the special status. Throughout Amerope anti-Jewish publications and statements have, with occasional, very marginal, exceptions, been effectively suppressed. Wherever, particularly in the United States, Britain, and France, bars existed to Jews becoming members of certain elite clubs and associations, or studying or teaching in certain elite educational institutions, such bars no longer exist. This has been of particular benefit to Jews in the United States, Britain and France, where such bars, tacit or explicit, were numerous and where half of the world's Jews live. All careers are now wide open to Jews, and where Jewish ability leads to notable Jewish success in

one professional sphere or another, such success meets with pragmatic acceptance rather than the begrudging public complaint of former times. Although Jews form only 1.5 per cent of the American population, *Forbes* magazine records that 25 to 30 per cent of the wealthiest families are Jewish. Jewish money, sagaciously placed, gives Jews an entirely disproportionate influence on the politics and especially the foreign policy of the world's only superpower. Israel, as the Jewish state, has received regular and abundant subsidies and supplies of armaments from the US. These together with the freedoms of action and inaction granted to that state, have enabled those less than six million Jews to become a power in the world out of all proportion to their numbers.

The immediate benefit of all these improvements in the Jewish condition has been a great increase in Jewish freedom and power. The crowning and ultimate benefit derives from Jewish awareness both of this freedom and power and of the fact that these are assured to them, unchallengeably, by their status as a specially-protected category of human beings. That crowning benefit is a collective self-confidence and self-assertiveness such as Jews have not possessed since the time of Herod the Great, friend and protégé of the Roman Empire.

Unfortunately, however, both in the West and in Israel, in too many Jews for the general Jewish good this self-assertiveness has tended to deteriorate into intimidation, bullying, and aggressiveness. And these Jews, by their very actions, are the Jews who get most noticed. Such deterioration was probably an inevitable result of the special status, given that this was granted only in the last half-century and that most Jews—and in particular most American Jews as well as the Israeli political and military classes—come from those lower strata of European and Russian Jewry on whom anti-Jewish discrimination most severely fell. When long-standing powerlessness attains power and privilege, there is a well-known tendency for these gains to deteriorate into abuse of them.

In Amerope this is particularly the case with American Jewish organisations. Not content with the special protection of the Jewish good name, and of Jewish interests, provided by the law and by the mass media, these organisations practise an aggressive militancy whenever there is an instance, even minimal, of criticism of Jews or of Israel, or a visit or public appearance by a person deemed hostile to Jews, or a denial or diminution of the Jewish Holocaust, or anything which might be so interpreted. In such instances, in actions extending far beyond the United

States, intimidation is set in motion by street demonstration, by thousands of concerted emails or telephone calls, or by boycott or legal challenge. The degree of organisation and mobilisation is impressive and is meant to impress. By the same token, the impression often given is of intolerance of free expression and of reaction out of all proportion to the matter in question.

With immensely more serious consequences, disproportionate reaction is Israel's norm. A disproportion smacking of arrogance and sadism has regularly characterised Israel's use of its military power in its responses to Palestinian resistance to its occupation of Palestinian land and to the virtual imprisonment of the Palestinian population by road-blocks, walls, fences, and sea limits. The same is true of Israeli responses to the resistance by Lebanese guerrillas to Israeli occupation of Lebanese land and the capture and imprisonment of Lebanese. There has never been the slightest possibility that the Palestinian or Lebanese armed attacks would endanger the existence of Israel. In view of this, the Israeli punishment of Palestinians and Lebanese for resisting has amounted to grossly abusive use of the freedom from international sanction which Israel enjoys.

All too obvious has been Israeli delight in the employment of immensely superior military power for its own sake. Muscular pride of the 'Just look what we can do!' kind have shown through when Israeli forces bomb and shell Lebanon by air, land, and sea simultaneously. Similarly, with the regular killing of Palestinian men, women, and children by tank and rifle fire, by gunboat, and by rockets released from planes; a continual killing spree whose bag, to use the hunting term, amounts to about four times the number of Israelis killed by the Palestinian fighters.

And that is not to mention the everyday bullying sadism of the Israeli soldiers: the capricious bulldozing of houses and ancestral olive groves; the phone call out of the blue informing a house-owner that he would be well-advised to leave his house because it is to be demolished in fifteen minutes; the random boring through interior walls in armed house-to-house searches; the wilful barring at a roadblock of a pregnant woman or a sick man, woman or child on the way to a hospital; the killing by fire from a naval ship of a fisherman who had strayed beyond the authorised area for fishing; the re-arrangement of a local road-blocking system so that a journey by car from A to B which normally took ten minutes now requires two hours; the forcing of fifty male inhabitants of a Palestinian village to build a wall in the middle of the road and then to dismantle it again. It is a pattern of everyday behaviour, with the quasi-racial

contempt included, which one might expect to hear told of a particularly Nazi-indoctrinated German army unit in occupied Poland during World War II. And add finally, to complete this snapshot of arrogant abuse of the special status, the grabbing of hill-top stretches of Palestinian land beyond Israel's legal boundaries and the building there of splendidly-appointed Israeli colonies which mock the poverty of the Palestinian villages beneath.

Given that the Palestinians have the indisputably legitimate grievance of the dispossessed, the rational and self-serving Israeli policy would have been to treat them with respect and generosity, even in the face of provocation. The aim would have been to reduce their sense of wrong to a level where pragmatic good neighbourliness, such as exists with the ruling social strata of Jordan and Egypt, would have been possible. Instead, irrationally and tragically, the Israeli aim has been simply to *subject*, by inducing in the Palestinians a constant fear of death and destruction, so that the future relationship of the two peoples might be like that of Spartans and Helots, or of White and Blacks in the old American South or in the South Africa of apartheid.

The ill effects for Jews of these Jewish behaviours in Israel and vicinity and in Amerope belong to the category of predictable consequences and are therefore, unfortunately, fact. Israel's policy of inducing fear in its environment has ensured, and will continue to ensure, fear and insecurity as constant presences in the Jewish state. A far cry from the 'safe haven for Jews' which the early Zionists dreamt of. Israel's treatment of the Palestinians and its actions in Lebanon have made Israel hateful in the Arab world and in the wider Muslim world. And the Israelis, being virtually the only Jews in those worlds, the result has been the emergence of a virulent and publicly-expressed anti-semitism from Iran and Morocco to Indonesia; a vast area where previously no anti-Jewish antagonism existed. With bitter irony, this new phenomenon, casting its shadow over future centuries, dwarfs that historical European anti-semitism which oppressed Jews for hundreds of years.

In Amerope, and especially in Europe, the majority of people regard the special dispensation granted to Israel by the Power above them with amazement and dismay. Viewing Israel and its actions as they would any other state and its actions, they have felt towards the Jewish state a growing hostility that is tinged with contempt. On this view, Israel, on account of its long-standing behaviour, is, rather than a value for mankind, a blot on it, and constitutes a menace to the world's peace. Because the state in question is a much-

vaunted democracy where the state represents the people, this aversion to Israel has an inherent consequence: it amounts to aversion towards more than a third of the world's Jews.

Fortunately, most westerners who share this hostility know to distinguish: they do not allow it to become an antagonism towards Jews in general. They are party to the collective moral decision of the West, in the wake of the horrifying fate of European Jews during World War II, that anti-Jewishness, even merely felt, would cease forever. That moral decision, combined with the fact that many westerners have Jewish acquaintances, friends, or relations, in whom they find no cause for complaint, successfully prevents most of these foes of Israel from extending their repugnance for one third to the other two thirds.

However, it is also the case that in the West in recent decades, and especially in Europe, a new anti-Jewishness has been emerging. Those factors just mentioned which work against an extension of anti-Israeli feeling to Jews in general do not always prevail. To some degree this is simply a matter of opponents of Israel not knowing Jews in the flesh. But by far its main cause is the intimidatory activity of the main Jewish organisations in America and Europe, and the message they deliver about Israel. Along with the annoyance sometimes amounting to disgust which these organisations cause by their petty-minded witch-hunts, they offend many judicious non-Jews by supporting Israel's every action blindly; and they drive to fury by misrepresenting any criticism of Israel as hostility to Jews.

To put it another way, the honest attempt of westerners averse to Israel to keep that hostility distinct from their general feelings about Jews is too often defeated by the virtual inaudibility—perhaps so ordained by the Power—of the few Jewish groups and individual Jews who publicly oppose Israel's policies and atrocities. Thus, willy-nilly, the message delivered by default to westerners of good will is that 'we Jews who share your life and live among you do not share your standards of civility, but on the contrary support those who trample on your standards, if they are Jews'.

Granted, Jews have a perfect right to differ and to be 'different', as Jews have been known to be since time immemorial. The West, by according them a special status, implicitly recognises that right. But then it is a decision of the Jewish people as to how they use that status; and it injures them when it leads them to appear to base their difference on support for a state whose most notable external activity is to oppress and kill.

Desmond Fennell

Kennedy-gate

The following article appeared on the Indymedia Internet site, at

<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/79495>

The recent Bertie Ahern controversy showed that the *Irish Times* believes it has a right to depose Taoiseach if it disapproves of. It already has the scalps of Haughey and Reynolds and now wants Bertie's. The paper holds such a powerful position in Irish public life that its faults cannot be openly discussed. A debate between Minister for Communications, Noel Dempsey, and Ryle Dwyer of the *Irish Examiner* illustrates the problem. Dempsey failed to mention that the paper broke the law. Neither did he dare to challenge the paper about its over the top anti-Fianna Fail bias. And nobody dares to mention the connection between the paper and the British Foreign Office initiated by Major Thomas McDowell in 1969. So confident are the media professionals who defend the paper, that they simply toss off rhetorical put downs, as in Ryle Dwyer's reply to the Minister in the *Irish Examiner*. It is past time that the bastion of Irish 'investigative journalism' should itself be investigated.

A politicians-versus-media debate that began at an Opus Dei event (the Cleraun Media Conference, held over the weekend of 21st-22nd October), having raised a matter of critical importance, is serving us very badly. The point at issue is whether or not the *Irish Times* was right to run its story on Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's finances based on a leak from the Mahon Tribunal. At the Conference Noel Dempsey, the Minister for Communications, attacked the *Irish Times* for publishing the story; and a week later on 28th October Ryle Dwyer of the *Irish Examiner* replied to that attack. Both contributions avoided the important issues and in different ways both reflect the degree to which the *Irish Times* has placed itself beyond criticism.

Minister Dempsey started well when he issued a short press statement carried on RTE news bulletins on October 21st, arguing that the *New York Times* banned "stories which damaged an individual, the only source for which was another individual protected by anonymity". On that grounds the action of the *Irish Times* could be characterised as journalistic malpractice.

Unfortunately the speech from which the press statement was taken was less coherent. Dempsey's talk delivered to the Cleraun conference (<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/Press+Releases/Ensuring+Professional+Integrity+in+a+Crowded+Media.htm>) was notable for its omissions more than its

content. Instead of directly criticising the *Irish Times*, he spoke in general terms about how modern media were increasingly giving way to commercial pressures. About the pertinent aspects of the matter—that the *Irish Times* had deliberately broken the law and acted out of highly questionable political prejudice—he said not a word.

Geraldine Kennedy, the Editor of the *Irish Times*, must have known she was flouting the law when she decided to run the story. By publishing confidential items of evidence stolen from the Mahon Tribunal, she showed contempt for due process and effectively took the law into her own hands. Then, when the Tribunal issued a subpoena for the documents on which the story had been based, she authorised their destruction, notwithstanding the fact that the leak was anonymous. Apart from issuing reports, Tribunals have very few powers, but they do have the power under sections 4 and 5 of the *Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) (Amendment) Act 1979* to initiate legal proceedings against parties obstructing their work. Under these provisions Liam Lawlor was imprisoned and it is under the same provisions that Geraldine Kennedy is now facing prosecution. According to Pat Leahy writing in the *Sunday Business Post* (October 22) it is "highly unlikely" that Ms Kennedy will be jailed. This poses a question: why was Liam Lawlor imprisoned for breaking a law, while Geraldine Kennedy will remain at liberty having violated the same law?

The other matter neglected by Noel Dempsey was the question of political prejudice. Clearly, going by the opinion polls, the Irish electorate has decided that the entire monies-gifted-to-the-Taoiseach controversy was much ado about nothing. An electorate that rewarded a long-term political leader by allowing his reputation to be ruined without proper evidence and due process would be foolish indeed. But the Editor of the *Irish Times* does not see it that way. Her response to the opinion polls was along the lines of 'you have disgraced yourselves again'.

The following extracts from *Irish Times'* Editorials illustrate some of the delusions currently afflicting Ms Kennedy:

"The removal of a Taoiseach from office can be a long and painful process, as both Charles Haughey and Albert Reynolds found to their cost." (28 September 2006)

"What a breathtaking exposition of the culture of Fianna Fail we have witnessed in recent days... The country is convulsed by the revelations... What he did was wrong and he must say so. An apology is not enough." (2 October 2006)

"So, we are to hold our noses. The Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat Coalition Government is safe, the Opposition parties didn't quite come to the wire and the semantics over the difference between the loans and gifts received by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in the circumstances in which he received them while he was minister for finance in 1993 and 1994, won the day. Nothing that was done was wrong. But, warts and all, that is our democracy. This is looking at ourselves and, through our elected representatives in the Dail, our political values.

...It is wrong for a serving member of government to receive monies from personal friends for any purpose..." (4 October 2006)

"The culture of nods and winks and looking the other way is alive and well in Irish democracy. Among a significant sector, however, it reinforces the case that the public interest requires vigilance, investigation and continuing scrutiny. If the rest of us "look the other way", it won't be long before the culture of corruption engendered by Mr Haughey will resurface. But, regrettably, this poll would indicate that this does not seem to matter." (13 October 2006)

It is as though Geraldine Kennedy is on a mission to rescue Irish society from what she sees as the corrupting influence of the main party of government. Valid as this may be as an opinion, it is questionable, to say the least, as an editorial policy for the country's leading newspaper. Whatever one thinks politically of Fianna Fail, viewed from the dispassionate perspective of political science, the party must be acknowledged as one of the great political parties of modern Europe. Fianna Fail has played a central role in the development of the Irish State; to dismiss it as hopelessly corrupt is a gross distortion.

There is another aspect of the *Irish Times'* political prejudice that does not get aired very often. A letter released by the British Public Record Office in late 1999 indicates that the owner of the *Irish Times*, Major Thomas McDowell, made contact with the British Ambassador to Ireland in 1969 with a view to enlisting British Foreign Office assistance in controlling the newspaper. The issues arising from that letter are too complicated to be detailed here, but the existence of the letter testifies to a murky aspect of the *Irish Times* that has never been satisfactorily explained. If Geraldine Kennedy were serious about the need for transparency and keeping everything

above board she would have instigated an investigation into that matter and made the results public. She has not done so.

In any case it was disappointing that Noel Dempsey did not take the opportunity presented by the Cleraun Conference of vigorously questioning the *Irish Times*, if not on where its true allegiance lies, then on its attitude to the rule of law and to the Fianna Fail party.

Noel Dempsey's speech contained a reference to the *Irish Press* that merits comment. He said that the paper was initially set up, not as a commercial entity, but as a propaganda machine, and that when it was set up the vast majority of the Irish people were not newspaper readers. He explained that the term "propaganda machine" should not be seen in a negative light. These are all valid points not heard very often, but the Minister made no further reference to the *Irish Press*. He said nothing about the immense imbalance currently affecting the Irish media because the traditional *Irish Press* propaganda-machine no longer exists; and he never mentioned the fact that the paper cannot be re-launched because a competitor and knight of the British realm, Sir Anthony O'Reilly, has a controlling share in the ownership of the title. What is most astounding is that an experienced Fianna Fail politician like Noel Dempsey feels no sense of responsibility for the current disastrous situation in which no Irish newspaper expresses the Fianna Fail view.

Ryle Dwyer's article published in the *Irish Examiner* on 28th October in reply to the Minister treats a serious matter flippantly, a common failing among media pundits. Like the Minister's speech it was notable for what it failed to mention. Noel Dempsey's strongest point was that the *New York Times* would have refused to publish the story on ethical grounds. Dwyer answers this point by ignoring it.

Here is a long extract from the article:

"This particular tribunal was set up in 1997 and at the rate it is going, God only knows when it will conclude. Bertie Ahern received the first of the money in 1993 when he was Minister for Finance, and he hung on to it for over nine years as Taoiseach."

"It is absurd to suggest that the media jumped the gun or showed disrespect for the tribunal. The argument could just as validly be made that the tribunal has shown disrespect for the media."

"The news media and the tribunals have different roles. The question people should be asking is not why the media broke the story when it did, but why it took it so long to get the story in the first place."

"The tribunal was set up to look into planning irregularities and payments to

politicians, but Judge Alan Mahon has allowed himself to be diverted into investigating how The Irish Times got the story. If the aim of whoever leaked the material was to distract the attention of the tribunal, the ploy has certainly worked."

"The primary concern of the tribunal at present is to protect the integrity of its inquiries", Judge Mahon stated recently. "This objective is best served by taking all necessary steps to establish the identity of the party or parties who furnished the documentation to The Irish Times".

"Surely the judge does not think he should have the right to delay any aspect of Irish life to facilitate his deliberations. He is supposed to be inquiring into planning corruption and payments to politicians, not the information-gathering techniques of reporters."

"From a media perspective, the important issue was whether it was in the public interest to know that the Taoiseach was financially indebted to friends."

"Judge Brian McCracken ruled in August 1997 that it was "quite unacceptable that a member of Dáil Éireann, and in particular a cabinet minister and Taoiseach, should be supported in his personal lifestyle by gifts made to him personally."

"As Taoiseach, Bertie warmly endorsed those findings. "Public representatives must not be under a personal financial obligation to anyone", the Taoiseach told the Dáil. He said the money he received was a loan, but he made no real effort to repay it for well over a decade until after Colm Keena broke the story.

"The public may or may not be exercised over this behaviour, but the people have the information now and it is their right to decide to ignore it. The only proper way that they could have come to that decision, however, was by knowing the information. Thus, Colm Keena and his editor, Geraldine Kennedy, should be congratulated, not prosecuted."

Most writers presenting a case make their main points as clearly as possible in a logical sequence and then add a few rhetorical flourishes for colour. Ryle Dwyer jumps from one rhetorical assertion to the next without any effort at building a case and then inserts a few serious points somewhere in the rhetorical jumble.

The first point that needs to be made in answer to his assertions is that tribunals were set up because the consensus of opinion in society was and remains that 'trial by media' is inherently unjust. Once the media pack get their teeth into a story as they did in the recent campaign against the Taoiseach, innuendo takes over from fact. Whatever about the difficulties of answering allegations in a judicial or quasi-judicial hearing, there is no defence against innuendo.

So, we have tribunals charged with thoroughly investigating complex matters of major public concern. Our recent tribunals have all been established in response to media campaigns. That the work of one such tribunal should now be undermined by the publication of leaked information in the *Irish Times* is doubly offensive, given that the *Irish Times* helped to create the public concern in the first place. Ryle Dwyer is merely compounding the offence by disparaging Justice Mahon for attempting to defend the integrity of his investigation.

There is something of the clever schoolboy in the way that Dwyer attempts to turn Bertie Ahern's own words against himself. It is impossible to view this spectacle without asking whom is more valuable to society: the political leader grappling with the burden of high office or the journalist playing clever word games. Hopefully, Justice Mahon will bring a wider breadth of vision to his judgement of Bertie Ahern than the small-minded moralising of our media crusaders.

In his final paragraph Ryle Dwyer does some fancy footwork to come up with the idea that the media has fulfilled its function by placing the facts about the Taoiseach's debt to his friends before the public. But that is not the way Geraldine Kennedy views it. She was hell-bent on ending Bertie Ahern's tenure as Taoiseach. The whole point was to knock a serious dent in Fianna Fail's ratings in the opinion polls. Since the opposite has occurred, the end result is that the work of a costly tribunal has been undermined for no good reason.

In conclusion, following the publication of Colm Keena's story on Bertie Ahern the role exercised by the *Irish Times* in Irish society needs to be examined and debated. The present debate between Minister Dempsey and Ryle Dwyer skirts the real issues. The Minister is too pusillanimous to confront the *Irish Times* about respecting the rule of law and pursuing dubious political agendas. And Ryle Dwyer is more concerned to express solidarity with his colleagues in the paper of record than to provide the public with a diversity of opinion. His approach is symptomatic of a media that takes the same line on all the major issues. The *Irish Times* leads and the *Irish Examiner* follows slavishly.

The *Irish Times* is exercising power without responsibility. How long more will it be allowed to get away with it?

David Alvey

The Discussion

Indymedia promotes discussion on its

site. Here are some comments that were made on this article, with responses,

CREEPING PURPOSEFULNESS by Stuart Mon Nov 06, 2006 15:40

The Irish Times has displayed a noticeable shift towards systematic bias in many areas since Geraldine Kennedy's editorship began, even a campaigning zeal on some issues. The choice to highlight "increases" in PD voter preference after Bertiegate on the front page was a stark contrast to the overwhelming rejection of Michael McDowell as leader in the detailed results on page 8. The expression of rights (currently for children) without emphasis of responsibilities promotes the economic right anti-family, anti-community agenda. The selective publication of politically-motivated statements in the run up to the citizenship referendum actively promoted the yes campaign (<http://www.ireland.com/focus/referendum2004/pathpoll/>). The support for university heads in conflicts which the IT has repeatedly mis-characterized as a "modernisation" conflict is promoting a services model third-level education system (http://www.geocities.com/stuardneilson/UCC_Reference.htm).

But there is also a growing family values / morality / fundamental values theme that perhaps not everyone within the IT sees—Emily O'Reilly, Bertie, Mary MacAleese and many others have expressed "comforting" moral constructs. Most unusual is the retention of William Reville, professor of the public understanding of science, as he drifts into creationist, rights-from-fertilization, God gave us physical laws, intelligent design territory.

They are all welcome to their views and their expressions, but a public image and reputation should not be subverted to promote unrelated beliefs, and becomes worrisome when it is en masse.

MIXED FEELINGS by Spinning Quickly Mon Nov 06, 2006 16:53

I don't like the drift of some of the changes in the Irish Times—drop Krauthammer and other neo-cons would be one of my policies if I were editor.

On the other hand I'm worried by the implication that a "great party of Europe" is above reproach—surely that is dangerously close to saying they are above criticism?

I'm unsure of where I stand on the issue of the publishing of the details about Bertie—I abhor corruption but don't want the legal process short-circuited. If Geraldine Kennedy goes to jail for contempt, I suppose I won't lose much sleep.

On a related matter, where does the Irish Political Review stand on insinuating that a newspaper is in the control of organisations outside the state? (Link enclosed.)

Related Link: <http://www.atholbooks.org/magazines/cands/currented.php>

BANANAS by Peking Billy Tue Nov 07, 2006 15:45

The Irish Times is an economically conservative, largely socially liberal newspaper read mainly by the middle class. Its readership base do not like Fianna Fail. A majority of Irish voters think otherwise. End of. Mr. Alvey and his latter recruits to Irish nationalism should really think of better campaigns than ones that

echo the paranoia of the Catholic right of the 1930s. Then again they have published a study of the old bigot Scelgin....

REPLY TO COMMENTS ON THE IRISH TIMES by David Alvey—Irish Political Review Group Tue Nov 07, 2006 23:19

I agree with Stuart. One problem with the Irish Times is the campaigning zeal that attaches to its coverage. I would like to know what exactly is the agenda of this powerful institution. We know there is a well organised group called Reform which wants Ireland back in the Commonwealth. The group was endorsed by the British Ambassador. Many of its members are influential media types like Bruce Arnold.

Is the campaigning zeal that appears when attacks are made on Fianna Fail really an attack on the Irish national tradition itself? The Irish Times has been to the fore in backing history revisionists like Roy Foster. I believe that the paper views Irish affairs from the perspective of the British worldview. Thus when Geraldine Kennedy attacks the culture of nods and winks she is attacking that part of the Irish national tradition that is outside of British influence.

The other point I particularly agree with Stuart on is the way the paper campaigns 'en masse' with one voice. Not only is the one voice confined to the Irish Times, it is shared by the rest of the influential media.

Spinning Quickly doesn't like my calling Fianna Fail a great party. Actually I am not an FF supporter and definitely not a Bertie supporter. But FF have shown a capacity for government over a long period of time and under De Valera and Haughey they demonstrated a capacity for producing statecraft, a rare commodity at the best of times.

Nobody likes corruption but I honestly believe the extent of Irish political corruption has been magnified out of proportion. That is a discussion for another day. Regarding Bertie's recent controversy, are the media seriously suggesting that Bertie was open to bribes? I remember reading that one of the British prime ministers, Lord Russell I think, got into financial difficulties. A group of businessmen came together and paid off the debts. It was done because political leadership skills are rare and extremely valuable to a society and politicians are not able to leave their posts and earn big money. The debts were paid and there has never been any suggestion of impropriety. But that is an event in British politics, our media intelligentsia would never question the bona fides of a highly regarded British statesman.

Spinning Quickly also asks where does the IPR group stand on insinuating that the Irish Times is controlled from outside the state. We are deeply suspicious on this point. McDowell made contact with the British Foreign Office in 1969 with a view to pulling the Irish Times back from the nationalist influence of Douglas Gageby. There is indisputable evidence of that. The question is: what type of influence from Whitehall was used from that point on? That is certainly a fitting subject for a separate thread on Indymedia.

Peking Billy seems to be suggesting that I am being paranoid. Well according to yesterday's story about Bertie's interview with Ursula Halligan, Bertie himself is firmly of the opinion that there is a sinister element behind the recent campaign against him, spearheaded by the Irish Times. If the Irish Times have nothing to hide why did the shutters come down so tightly when we demanded an explanation for McDowell's connection with

Whitehall?

The big issue of our times is what is going on in the Middle East in Palestine and Iraq. The best thing we can do about it is campaign to revive De Valera's stance whereby the Irish state took the line that we couldn't stop the Great Powers from waging wars of imperial aggression but we could refuse to be their tool. Regarding the point about being a "latter recruit to Irish nationalism" I was a critic of Irish nationalism twenty years ago, it is true, and my vantage point was the Young Ireland tradition. In other words I have always taken my political inspiration from the Irish national tradition.

I would like to see the maximum unity across the left, nationalists, republicans, anti-war activists, resisting those elements who wish to roll back the Irish national revolution. And I see the Irish Times as being at the heart of those pro-British elements.

Apologies for the length of this!

CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST

by Nick-None Wed Nov 08, 2006 01:07
Remember Martin Luther King's old maxim: 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'?

Well it seems to have been fulfilled once again in relation to 'Bertiegate'. Remember when Michael McDowell ignored due process by leaking documents to a favoured journalist so the journo could write an 'expose' of Frank Connolly? The same McDowell who had previously threatened dire consequences for Gardai and others who did the same. Nothing was ever substantiated against Connolly, but the damage was done and the Centre for Public Enquiry—headed up by Frank Connolly and a thorn in McDowell's side after it suggested the purchase of Thornton Hall should be investigated—closed down due to lack of funding. Now in all of this shameful episode while a Minister for Justice carried on an 'enemy to the state' campaign faintly reminiscent of Stalinist Soviet Russia, our Taoiseach Bertie Ahern remained tight lipped. He should have reprimanded his Minister for stepping beyond the normal bounds of protocol, for tampering with democratic processes to pursue a personal vendetta. Instead he said nothing. Now it is his turn. Fianna Fail's reaction to the Frank Connolly episode makes it very difficult for them to rush to Bertie's defence. Of course, none of this lets Geraldine Kennedy off the hook either. Yes, the public have a right to know these things, but due process has to take place also.

What was remarkable was the public's jaded response. Nobody seemed either unduly surprised or angry that Bertie had done what he did. Ms. Kennedy may have overestimated her readership's interest in 'the cause'. The apathy is a bit worrying: it means Irish society at large has come to expect a little hint of corruption in Irish political life as a given (not that Bertie's 'gift' was necessarily a case of corruption, rather that at least it is irregular and perhaps inappropriate for someone in his position).

It is the price the electorate seem willing to pay to continue amassing wealth and 'getting on'. That is not the best frame of mind with which to keep an eye on our democratic processes and rule of law.

IT'S NOT ABOUT BERTIE! by David Alvey—The Irish Political Review Group
Wed Nov 08, 2006 21:55

I think Nick is missing the point. I am concerned about the powerful influence being exercised by the Irish Times, not about defending Bertie's record. The Irish Political Review gave full coverage to the disgraceful manner in which McDowell forced the closure of the Centre for Public Inquiry. We were one hundred per cent behind Frank Connolly.

It was not in the least surprising that Bertie failed to reprimand his Minister. I could supply any number of additional reasons for not supporting Ahern: the ridiculous commemoration of the Battle of the Somme, his continued support for the Shannon stopover, his rounding on Sinn Fein etc etc.

The real issue is bringing the Irish Times to book for interfering with due process and for using a leak from an anonymous source to discredit Ahern and Fianna Fail as part of a questionable anti-national agenda. Anyone who cares a damn about the national heritage in this country should be alert to what Geraldine Kennedy is playing at and how hugely influential her paper can be.

PRO-MCDOWELL BIAS IN THE IT by Stuart Fri Nov 10, 2006 12:07

To take a very specific case, the Irish Times published the essence of much-needed and widely welcomed civilisation and reform of An Garda Síochána (*Radical reform of Garda structure proposed, Wednesday*) with articles on, to my recollection, pages 1, 6, 7, 8 and 15. There are followups on Thursday and Friday. The only criticism of McDowell and the only reflection of any other perspective other than McDowell's is in Miriam Lord's laughable circus piece (*Opposition explodes after McDowell lights the fuse, Dail Sketch: Happy the mutt who dwells in Michael McDowell's house. Jack is his name, as it happens. He is a loyal companion to the Minister and a fixture at constituency clinics, writes Miriam Lord, Friday*).

The views of the GRA and the AGSI, the POA, probationers, legal representatives and others are important in ensuring a successful and democratic reform, but there is a danger that widespread dissatisfaction with a whole range of policing issues will allow some very PD reforms sweep in unnoticed and unopposed.

PRO PD BIAS IS UNREPRESENTATIVE by David Alvey—The Irish Political Review Group
Fri Nov 10, 2006 14:28

Fair point Stuart! Geraldine Kennedy is a former Progressive Democrat TD. Clearly she is continuing to peddle PD obsessions as editor of the Irish Times. The problem of course is that the Progressive Democrats represent 5 per cent of the electorate, while the Irish Times is the most important serious daily in our Republic. A fitting subject to be addressed by the Press Council if ever it comes into existence. ■

TO BE OR IRB?

'Up the ghostly Republic!'

In his second volume of autobiography, *The Singing Flame*, Ernie O'Malley recalled how as o/c of the Second Southern Division of the IRA during the Truce period of the War of Independence he came face to face with the problem of "dual control" as posed by the IRB. On reaching Limerick city on a tour of inspection in early December 1921, he was surprised to encounter Tipperary Commandant Brian Shanahan who was present in that city without the permission of the Brigade Adjutants. So O'Malley ordered him to return home. But Shanahan, in a manner as confused as it was hush-hush, responded: "I have to remain here. There's an Irish Republican Brotherhood meeting here today and I've been ordered to attend". Further along the street he met another of his own officers, the Adjutant of the East Limerick Brigade, also present in the city without permission of his Divisional Adjutant, and again he had a similar encounter with one of his mid-Clare officers.

O'Malley decided to follow his subordinate officers into the IRB meeting, which was being conducted by the Brotherhood's Secretary Seán Ó Muirthile. The latter's reaction was to demand: "What brought you here? You have not been summoned, nor are you entitled to attend. I must ask you to leave the room". But O'Malley's own riposte was to stand up and declare: "I am sorry, but this is my divisional area. My officers are present. Even some who are not officers. I am responsible for my area and for them to the Government of the Republic". O'Malley's officers then voted that he be allowed remain at the meeting and Ó Muirthile conceded. O'Malley's narrative continues:

"He tapped the table with the fountain pen. The men stood to attention. 'I call the meeting to order in the name of the Irish Republic', he said, standing to attention himself. The officers sat down. An order was read about the re-organisation of the IRB in each area. The circles, as the groups were called, were instructed to take in recruits. Ó Muirthile spoke again. 'This order must be put into effect at once. Select the men carefully but increase the strength of the organisation. Are there any questions?' 'Yes', I said, standing up. 'I think it inadvisable to recruit among the trucers. They have not been tried. Many officers who have been thoroughly tested during the war do not belong to this organisation. I see some present here whom I never considered in any way energetic. All officers in our division are fully occupied

now. They have more work than time'. I sat down".

Not a single other officer present spoke on the matter (even though a group of Tipperary delegates told O'Malley outside the meeting that they had agreed with his views on the trucers but did not like to say anything), so that Ó Muirthile could conclude: "All right. Circles will be strengthened ... This meeting will close in the name of the Irish Republic". (pp. 33-37).

Despite the similarity of language used, O'Malley and Ó Muirthile were in fact proclaiming allegiance to two quite different Republics. In the case of O'Malley it was to the real, functioning Irish Republic democratically ratified by Dáil Éireann in January 1919. In the case of Ó Muirthile it was to a sixty-year-old concept rather than an actuality—to "the Irish Republic virtually established" by the constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood itself upon its foundation. "To be or not to be? That is the question". Within a week of that confrontation between the two different O'Ms, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed by the President of the virtual Republic, Collins, in defiance of the President of the actual Republic, de Valera. This action was to set in train the IRB's own negative response to that Shakespearean question in respect of the fate of the actual Republic which was to be all too realistically disestablished by means of an "immediate and terrible war" whose fratricide made it all the more horrific than that other threatened war that the Treaty's Irish Free State had sought to avoid.

In the July IPR I reviewed Fearghal McGarry's 2005 biography, *Eoin O'Duffy—A Self-Made Hero*. McGarry is particularly acute in observing the role of the IRB as a mechanism by means of which Collins ensured O'Duffy's advancement. O'Duffy had joined the Irish Volunteers in May 1917 and was commandant of the Monaghan Brigade by that August. McGarry tracks his further progress as follows:

"O'Duffy was, by inclination, more active on the military side of the movement and his later political prominence was a consequence of his influence within the Volunteers and IRB. His initiation into the latter, which presumably occurred when he first met Collins in November 1917, was witnessed by another leading Brother, Seán Ó Muirthile: 'Collins had in mind

the possibility of O'Duffy being a useful man in the IRB Councils as well as the Irish Volunteers Councils, and I was invited by Collins to the first interview he had with Eoin'. O'Duffy's subsequent rise to national prominence was due in no small part to the patronage of Collins, who reorganised the IRB into the secretive élite of the republican movement". (pp26-27).

"Although O'Duffy would become a leading Brother, succeeding Collins as Supreme Council Treasurer in 1921, he rarely alluded to the organisation... Those who declined to join were most suspicious of its influence. Francis O'Duffy, an IRA officer and Sinn Féin councillor, did not see the need for a secret society: 'When Eoin O'Duffy announced that all Volunteer officers were to take an oath of allegiance to the Dáil, I enquired publicly if officers were to regard this oath as superseding any other undertaking they might already have given, and O'Duffy gave a definite assurance to that effect. I hoped that this would put an end to the IRB organising among the Volunteer officers, but I was mistaken'. Soon after, two of his key men were given 'an instruction in Eoin O'Duffy's handwriting' to join the IRB. The reluctant officers were supported by their captain: 'I pointed out that since Volunteer officers were bound to obey orders from their 'superior' officers in the Volunteers and had sworn allegiance to the Dáil, they could not conscientiously take an oath to obey their unknown superiors in another organisation'. He believed that 'many of the officers were members... This might be expected from the influence which O'Duffy exercised in that area'. He was right. The key figures on the brigade staff, including O'Duffy's deputy, Dan Hogan, were IRB men. Those who were not, such as Dr. Conn Ward, had resisted pressure to join". (p. 32).

"{Battalion adjutant} Brian MacMahon's memoir illustrates: 'I was told that a meeting of the local IRB was always held on the nights previous to Battalion Council meetings and that the business of the following night was discussed and decided upon at each IRB meeting' ... {The IRB was} already a 'sore point' as O'Duffy 'had several times invited me to join and had asked my elder brother, also a member, to put pressure on me to join'... MacMahon was under no illusions about O'Duffy's loyalty to the IRB: 'I knew O'Duffy all my life, as we were born and reared within a stone's throw of each other, and close friends until the IRB question intervened somewhat. We had several heated arguments as to the validity of the Brotherhood or its necessity, and I should have known that if I should ever come up against the IRB I could not rely on his support.'" (p.33).

"Although the office of deputy chief of staff was the second highest in the Irish Republican Army, there was a remarkable degree of confusion as to when O'Duffy assumed the post. In a letter to Brugha (who insisted that no

such position existed), O'Duffy claimed that he had been offered the commission on 1 August 1921. It was only in September, however, that he began using the title in his correspondence. Mulcahy thought that O'Duffy had been appointed deputy chief of staff in March 1921 (when he was actually made director of organisation). One reason for the confusion was that Mulcahy and Collins had deliberately not informed the minister for defence (Brugha) of the appointment. Another was that the new position was essentially the same as director of organisation, but was intended to signal the authority of Collins's rising protégé... The promotion reflected the importance of the role O'Duffy had carved out in the post-truce GHQ. The lines of demarcation between the function and powers of the GHQ triumvirate of Mulcahy, Collins and O'Duffy were by now remarkably vague; Mulcahy, the 'dour unclubbable and sober' chief of staff, technically commanded the IRA, but it was the 'plain-speaking, hard-drinking and very sociable' Collins who, as minister for finance, IRB president, and IRA director of intelligence effectively called the shots." (p.83).

Peter Hart's fudging of the issue of Michael Collins's post-Treaty set of assassinations will be dealt with in Part 5 of this series but, up to that point, in his 2005 biography *Mick—The Real Michael Collins*, Hart himself also has some very pertinent observations to make regarding the IRB:

"Collins entered 1919 as Director of Organisation and Adjutant General, still patching together the Volunteer organisation. His first act of the new year as such was... to preside at the first meeting of the West Cork Brigade, with Frongoch buddy and IRB stalwart Tom Hales as commandant" (p203).

"Once the shootings began de Valera did not object, but he did push for a new oath of allegiance binding the Volunteers to the Dáil and the Republic... Collins and the other IRB men on the Volunteer executive opposed the idea, but were overruled. If you can't stop them, de Valera may have been thinking, at least make sure they're loyal". (p218).

"Brugha was quite right that Collins was amassing power and dominating the central institutions of the revolution, that he had a large personal following, and that he was also an active leader and promoter of the IRB within the IRA. And, as events would soon prove, an independent and ideological army was a very dangerous thing, regardless of who was in control. By Christmas 1920 the relationship was poisonous..." (pp262-3).

"{Following the July 1921 Truce} Dev had no problems with GHQ himself, but he was intent on keeping Collins's enemies on side for a political settlement. Some friends of Mick assumed this meant he was conspiring with them against Collins, but there is no evidence

that this was the case. The only conspiracy around was the one that everyone knew about but only Brugha dared mention: the IRB that Collins now controlled as head of the Supreme Council." (p289).

"The high point of Michael Collins's career came on 16 January 1922... the formal handover of power by the Lord Lieutenant (Viceroy) of Ireland... to the Provisional Government that would oversee the establishment of an Irish Free State. Collins was its chairman, and the star of the show... The first ever Provisional Government press statement, signed by Collins, described the event as the 'surrender' of Dublin Castle... but, according to the terms of the Treaty, Collins owed his new position to a vote of the southern parliament established under Government of Ireland Act (the pro-Treaty Dáil members acting as such for the purpose) and to the devolution of authority by the Crown, as represented by the Viceroy. In legal fact, he was not taking power in any revolutionary way; it was being granted to him by the government he had sworn to overthrow." (p355).

"The Republic, the Dáil and its ministries did not vanish with the creation of this new centre of authority. Keeping them in being was good politics, as it added nationalist and democratic legitimacy to the new government, so the Dáil ministry continued in much the same shadowy way as before, with its cabinet meetings—under the presidency of Arthur Griffith—continuing until April. Griffith reappointed Collins to the Department of Finance... Collins was now the most powerful man in Ireland. Griffith, while still a key player in post-Treaty politics, had no particular desire to lead or rule, so the two regimes functioned as one. Collins was its figurehead and its main spokesman. He was the only person to hold positions in both the Dáil and the Provisional administrations, and he was able to choose much of the latter's cabinet from among his friends and loyalists, including Joe McGrath, Fionán Lynch and Éamon Duggan. Diarmuid O'Hegarty was made Cabinet Secretary. In the Dáil, long-time ally Dick Mulcahy replaced Cathal Brugha as Minister of Defence, and he in turn was replaced as Chief of Staff by Eoin O'Duffy, a Collins protégé. Many of these men were also IRB members, and therefore doubly attached to Collins as the still-reigning president of the Supreme Council of the IRB" (p356).

Hart also recounts how central in importance had been the activities of the IRB Supreme Council at the end of 1921 during the course of the Treaty negotiations themselves:

"Collins had his own ideas about revising the oath, and he consulted the IRB Supreme Council on the subject while he was in town. In fact he had kept it informed throughout... On 3 December... the councillors agreed that the oath would have to be changed, and

suggested a new version... which was passed on to Collins by (IRB Supreme Council Secretary) Ó Muirthile over a hurried lunch at the Wicklow Hotel before Collins returned to London for a final round... Collins gave Lloyd George a copy of the IRB-approved version, but Lloyd George refused to discuss it, saying he would do so only once Dominion status was accepted... The Irish delegates had accepted 6 December as the deadline for giving a firm answer to the British proposals... Lloyd George had a trump card to play, however... He accused Griffith of going back on his word... predicated on Ireland being a Dominion... In a theatrical gesture, he retrieved the secret memo resulting from their private 13 November agreement, to Collins's amazement... Such was the shock of the memo's reappearance and the weight of the occasion that Griffith said simply, 'I said I would not let you down and I won't'... The Irish strategy checkmated, the British cannily made a series of concessions. The new oath supplied by Collins was adopted with minor changes... Why did Collins sign?... He had the IRB Supreme Council's blessing." (pp312-321).

That I have fundamental differences with C. Desmond Greaves's 1961 biography of James Connolly has long been evident from everything I have written on the subject from *Connolly In America* (Athol Books, 1971) down to *James Connolly Re-assessed* (Aubane Historical Society, 2006). Greaves sought to re-create Connolly in his own ideological image and likeness, with the consequence that the Connolly biography suffered. But Greaves had no such compulsion to remould his subject in his 1971 biography of Liam Mellows, and particularly incisive observation followed as a result, not least in his analytical narrative of the Treaty debates leading up to the Civil War. The title of this series—*To Be or IRB?*—had already suggested itself to me as a summation of my views on the post-1918 role of that body and how it would set about dismantling an actual Republic. But on recently re-reading—after a lapse of more than two decades—my copy of *Liam Mellows And The Irish Revolution*, I also came across a paragraph where I found Greaves providing the best short summation of the IRB issue in question:

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"According to (IRB publicist) PS O'Hegarty, Mellows and Brugha 'without waiting for any expression of opinion by Dáil Éireann... toured Ireland in a motor car, visiting Volunteer companies and pledging them to (in their words) maintain the existing Republic'. They had at most the five days, 9th to 13th December, for this nefarious work. Meanwhile on the 10th, likewise without waiting for the Dáil, the Supreme Council of the IRB decided to throw its influence behind the 'Treaty'. Liam Lynch was the sole dissident. The decisive factor was no doubt Collins' signature... Just what argument swayed the conclave must of course be inferred. One imagines the ghostly Republic of 1855 detaching itself from the shadows and demanding the exorcism of its living successor. There would be stooping to conquer, *reculer pour mieux sauter* (translated: to step back, all the better to jump), and a breathing space during which pure souls could wander with their vision in the wilderness, until ordinary mortals had made a few pounds and were once more ready for the fray" (p270).

Hart describes how Collins's IRB loyalists were primed for the subsequent Dáil debate on the Treaty, including how it was championed by Seán Hales, brother of the anti-Treatyite Tom Hales:

"Collins employed his troops well—Seán MacEoin, Richard Mulcahy, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Seán Hales and Eoin O'Duffy... These men were carefully prepped with some of the best pro-Treaty lines. Collins would become famous as the author of the image of the Treaty being a 'stepping stone' to the republic, but it was actually an old phrase of Griffith's, first used in the debate by Eoin O'Duffy, who declared that he recognised the Treaty 'as a stepping stone only. I regard it as not being final, otherwise I would be false to my oath and my country'. Seán Hales of West Cork had earlier spoken of the agreement as 'a jumping off point... the best rock to jump off for the final accomplishment of Irish freedom', suggesting an agreed party line was in use, even if Hales had mingled the wording" (pp327-330).

Tim Pat Coogan, in his 1990 *Michael Collins—A Biography*, had written much more enthusiastically of such intrigue:

"However, his (Collins's) close friend and IRB colleague, the much respected Seán Hales, very nearly let the cat out of the bag with his frank description of what he did think was worth fighting for... After pointing out that the people were for the Treaty and that for the moment the Volunteers were poor and exhausted, Hales went on to describe the situation he envisaged when the 'army of occupation' was withdrawn: 'In a short time with the building up of the youth of the country, the training of their minds and the training of them as soldiers and the equipping, that day will soon be at hand when you could place Ireland to

my mind in rightful place amongst the nations of the earth... When Sarsfield under duress signed that Treaty with the English King foolishly enough... he honourably kept his word and they honourably broke it. Well the day is coming when we will pay that back... There is no fear that the soul of Ireland will die. Ireland's destiny is to be a Republic'. Significantly, Hales did not use this argument in the public debate, confining himself merely to a declaration that he would support the Treaty" (p300).

In his 1999 book *The Irish Counter-Revolution 1921-1936*, John M. Regan also highlights the IRB propaganda strategy as enunciated by Seán Hales, notwithstanding his own pejorative opening sentence derisively dismissing the significance of the Republic that had actually existed and functioned:

"In four weeks Collins and Griffith demanded of the Dáil that it make the transition from the aspirational politics of the gaelic isolated republic to the reality of proposed inclusion in the British Commonwealth. For all the candour and brilliance of the proposers' arguments, the treaty, as its supporters freely admitted, rankled. It was in Collins' seductive stepping-stone interpretation of the treaty that some deputies saw a means of reconciling their republican principles and gaelicist aspirations with the settlement. Seán Hales, a former commander of a flying column in west Cork, Republican Brother and close associate of Collins, explained how republicans could support the temporary disestablishment of the republic by accepting the treaty as a means to an end: 'If I thought that this treaty which has been signed was to bar our right to freedom, if it was to be the finality, I wouldn't touch it. But I took it that it is to be a jumping off point to attain our alternative ends, because if it is in one year or in ten years, Ireland will regain that freedom which is her destiny and no man can bar it.' Collins may have gone a good deal further than suggesting that the treaty be used merely as a constitutional stepping-stone in private. Hales reputedly told anti-treatyite Éamon de Barra at the end of December: 'I agree with Mick. He says the British broke the treaty of Limerick, and we'll break this treaty too when it suits us, when we have our own army'. Anecdotes about what Collins would do in respect of the republic were legion and multiplied when they were attributed posthumously. He may, as many were to claim for him, have given or even have cultivated the impression that he remained true to the revolutionary republic. Such an interpretation was after all implicit in his adherence to the IRB as a post-treaty institution, but on the issue of the republic, as with much else, he remained ambiguous where he was not completely silent" (pp44-45).

It is at this point that Peter Hart begins to wobble from his otherwise demonstrable

ability to come to coherent conclusions on the role of the IRB:

"The IRB executive, directed by Collins, had approved the Treaty (although, contrary to republican mythology, it did not tell its members in the Dáil how to vote). Collins had hoped its continued existence would prevent a split—it was his secret weapon—but in fact republican fraternalism proved almost entirely irrelevant to individual decisions about which side to take. Most of the anti-Treaty officers were IRB men, and didn't care what the Supreme Council told them. Mick's followers in the army were mostly IRB, but their loyalty was personal or professional rather than institutional... The Brotherhood did still provide a forum for negotiations between different groups after the Treaty, but it was not able to direct events".

"Despite its lack of real power, the IRB's reputation as a ruthless mafia grew spectacularly in these months. Non-members on both sides suspected it of undue influence, reducing its effectiveness and tainting those who belonged—not just Collins, but also Mulcahy, whose later political career was blighted by this part of his past. It was also seen as a vehicle for corruption. Collins used every appeal he could think of to bring men to his side, not least of which was the offer of a job or high rank in the new regime. Handouts and jobs for the boys had been part of his reputation since 1917, and many anti-Treaty men have recorded their indignant replies to such advances in 1922. Harry Boland was reportedly offered two jobs" (p378).

In spite of himself and the self-contradictory elements present in Hart's 'on the one hand, and on the other' account, it is remarkable just how much does come through regarding the significance of the IRB's role. What is missing due to Hart's myopia, however, is any recognition of the fact that IRB personal loyalty to the Supreme Council President did assume an institutional coherence that enabled the Brotherhood to effect two key assassinations in the succeeding months. And the minority of anti-Treaty IRB members also developed a particular coherence of their own which made them prime targets for elimination by their erstwhile Brothers.

We have already noted Greaves's account of how there had been only one dissenting vote from the endorsement of the Treaty immediately provided by the IRB's Supreme Council—that of Liam Lynch. Of even greater significance, however, was the emerging opposition (after an initial wobble)—while he was on Supreme Council business in the USA—of Harry Boland, a predecessor of Collins as IRB President. Upon his return to Ireland for the Dáil's Treaty debate Boland was to

employ an oppositionist logic that was no less relentlessly IRB in character, and in which he proceeded to articulate some unavoidable, if unpalatable, conclusions. In his 2003 biography, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution*, David Fitzpatrick recounts:

"Sliding elegantly from utilitarian to moral arguments, he (Boland) then tricked Collins into admitting that he did not regard the agreement as 'a final settlement of the question between England and Ireland'. This enabled Harry to contrast his own reliance upon 'conscience' with the hypocrisy of his opponents: 'If this is not a final settlement we have lost the good opinion of the world on the day we sign the Treaty with a mental reservation that it is not a final settlement... If I could in conscience vote for the Treaty I would do so, and if I did I would do all in my power to enforce that Treaty', treating 'as a rebel any man who would dare rise out against it'. In due course, Collins would indeed set aside his 'mental reservation' and treat Harry, without gloves, as a 'rebel'" (p267).

And yet neither Fitzpatrick himself nor his student Hart can bring themselves to concede that subsequently Boland was indeed assassinated! (Of which more anon in Part 5).

It was left to Greaves's biography to highlight (and shamefully few other writers have ever done so since) the particularly coherent and cogent critique of the Treaty that was to be articulated by the long-standing IRB stalwart Liam Mellows. In response to Mellows, the IRB leadership felt that it now needed to engage in a counter-manoeuvre, to be effected by IRB Treasurer Eoin O'Duffy. Greaves provided the following account of the forceful impact of Mellows on that Dáil debate:

"Then Mellows spoke... The plenipotentiaries were sent to make a settlement in accordance with Irish aspirations, not to surrender... He denied their right to agree to anything inconsistent with the existence of the Republic on behalf of which they were sent. The Republic existed or it did not. The Declaration of Independence was the announcement of a Republic, not a mandate to move towards one. He was aware of public opinion. He had visited his constituency and spoken to the people at their firesides. What had gripped their minds was the fear of 'immediate and terrible war'. This was not the will of the people but the fear of the people. The 'Treaty' was in reality a new coercion Act, in the biggest sense possible... The people of Ireland established a Republic... Like Countess Markievicz (who had argued that 'if we pledge ourselves to this thing, whether you call it Empire or Commonwealth, that is treading down the people of Egypt and of India'), Mellows raised the colonial question: 'We are going into the British

Empire now to participate in the Empire's shame, and the crucifixion of India and the degradation of Egypt. Is that what the Irish people fought for freedom for?' He went on, 'This Treaty reminds me of the Treaty of Versailles, of the miserable end up to that bloody holocaust when the nations of the earth, after fighting supposedly for ideals, parcelled out among themselves the spoils of the young soldiers. The misguided young men who fought in that conflict were left disillusioned'. By contrast the people of Ireland 'placed Ireland on a pedestal for the first time in the history of this country. For the first time in the history of this country we had a government established by the directly declared will of the people... Ireland was put forth to the world as a headlight, as a beacon.' Some thought they could turn to the League of Nations to protect them from undue British interference. The League of Nations was a League of Robbers. He concluded with a warning, 'You can have unity by rejecting this thing. You cannot have unity by approving of it'. Mellows' speech made a considerable impression, and he was invited to a meeting of an informal back-benchers' committee on the evening of the 4th January. The aim was to find a compromise position which all deputies could support. The initiative seems to have come from Eoin O'Duffy. On the morning of the 5th it was announced that the committee was evenly divided between ratification and rejection." (pp276-9).

A minority in the IRB had provided the best arguments against the Treaty. But the pro-Treaty bloc on the IRB Supreme Council (with only Boland and Lynch dissenting) were determined to enforce it. Yet, for a time, a third force would also emerge from the ranks of the IRB—opposed to the Treaty but pulling out all the stops to prevent Civil War. Such noble and valiant efforts of Seán O'Hegarty, Florrie O'Donoghue, and Tom Hales would be doomed to failure. The Civil War would be launched by Michael Collins, not only as Chairman of the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State but also as President of the IRB's own "*ghostly Republic*".

Manus O'Riordan

(To be continued).

Wind That Shakes The Barley

You can read an expanded version of Niall Meehan's article on historical revisionists and *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, which appeared in *Village* magazine of 9th November on:

<http://www.counterpunch.org/meehan11112006.html>

John Redmond—A Fantasy

John Redmond was "*unjustly airbrushed from history*", according to the *Irish Times* (1st Sept.) in an article on the 150th anniversary of Redmond's birth. It is a bold claim. Is it conceivable that there was ever a single person in any generation since Redmond's death, who took the most marginal interest in Irish politics or Irish history, who did not know that Redmond took nationalist Ireland into Britain's war on Germany, and that he led the Home Rule movement into a deadly conflict with the Ulster Unionists on the issue of all-Ireland devolution before giving way and conceding Partition?

The political leader of that era who has been airbrushed from history is William O'Brien. And the *Irish Times* writer (Charles Lysaght, "*a barrister*") attributes to Redmond the major social reform of that era, which was actually achieved by O'Brien: "*On Redmond's watch the land question was solved and Ireland became a nation of landowners*".

O'Brien was a political propagandist, an organiser, a land agitator and a statesman. He worked up a strong land agitation in collaboration with the Ulster Protestant tenant-right movement, and made a deal with the Unionist Government in 1903 which was designed to serve a political as well as an economic purpose. The land issue was finally solved by appeasement of the landlords. It was solved by hire purchase over a generation, instead of by expropriation. In order to get the land, the tenants had to negotiate deals with their landlords. When the deal was made, the Unionist Government put up the money for the landlord, and the tenants agreed to refund the Government by annual instalments.

Redmond was leader of the Home Rule Party at the time. But the land purchase deal was not made between the Party and the Government. It was made, behind the back of the Party, by the combined Catholic and Protestant tenant-right movements led respectively by O'Brien and T. W. Russell.

The Home Rule Party condemned the deal as a landlord swindle and did its utmost to prevent the tenant farmers from taking advantage of it by warning them that they were being cheated.

Redmondite opposition to land purchase led to a drastic reduction of support for the Home Rule Party where O'Brien's influence was greatest, and where land purchase was pursued most

thoroughly, and it resulted in the collapse of Redmondism in Co. Cork in the 1910 General Elections, and its substantial erosion in the neighbouring counties.

The *Irish Times* tells us that—

"his successor John Dillon said of him that he had bent all his energies to the conciliation of his own countrymen of all sections and also the reconciliation between the people of this country and the people of Great Britain. Dillon also claimed for Redmond that he had struck down all the obstacles to Irish freedom across the water and had left the whole of England friendly to his country's freedom so that now there remained but one obstacle. That obstacle was unionist Ulster."

Dillon said that at a graveside oration, which is not a place for telling the truth. But 88 years later it won't do.

Redmond won "*the whole of England*" to no particular view of Ireland. He won half of it to Imperial Home Rule on condition that the Home Rule Party formed a governing alliance with the Liberal Party against the Unionist Party—an alliance in which it kept the Liberals in Office while remaining itself on the backbenches. The *quid pro quo*—the establishment of all-Ireland devolved government—was never delivered.

Why was it not delivered? Because the Party that Redmond kept out of Office would not allow it. By July 1914 Home Rule was deadlocked. The Liberals had passed the Bill in Parliament but were afraid to follow through into implementation in the teeth of Unionist resistance in Britain, which was defying Parliament throughout the country. (That was not an unusual situation. Parliament was habituated to giving way to the threat of force in the country. That is how Catholic Emancipation, and the franchise reform acts of 1832 etc. were achieved.)

In September 1914 the Liberals, having given themselves a war to fight, needed the active support of the Unionists (who six months earlier had brought about the Curragh Mutiny). They made a deal with the Unionists that the Home Rule Bill would be signed by the King, and thereby made an Act, but that it would not be implemented for the duration of the War, and that, after the War, it would not be implemented as it stood. The practical meaning of this agreement was that the Home Rule Act was dead in the water. (Parliament could not be bound by law.

That was the meaning of Parliamentary Sovereignty. The majority in Parliament at any given moment may do as it pleases, provided it can get away with it in the country. And, if Britain as a country had any definite position on Ireland, it was one of essential indifference—well described by a character in an Iris Murdoch novel:

"England destroyed Ireland slowly and casually, without malice, without mercy, practically without thought, like someone who treads upon an insect, forgets it, then sees it quivering and treads upon it again" (*The Red And The Green* p216).

But Redmond pretended that the Royal signature followed by immediate suspension was the enactment of Home Rule. He was desperate to go recruiting for the War. The *Irish Times* published a long jeering editorial against him for posturing but not fighting. So he seized on the make-belief—the transparent fig leaf—of Home Rule on the Statute Book as an excuse to start recruiting.

Six months later the Unionist Party, which had been on the brink of war against Home Rule a few months earlier, entered the Government. But Redmond kept on recruiting. And a year and a half after that the Unionist Party ousted the Prime Minister who had brought in the Home Rule Bill, and effectively took over the Government (without election, and after the five-year mandate of the 1910 Election had run out) with a venal but talented Liberal opportunist, Lloyd George, as figurehead. But Redmond kept on recruiting. And, by the time of his graveside oration, he had reduced his Party to a hulk.

Redmond was what is called "*a good House of Commons man*". And like many another good Commons man, he mistook the Chamber for the world.

William O'Brien was not a House of Commons man, good or bad. But he understood the Commons, as Redmond did not. And he understood the relationship between the Commons and the country, having himself played an active part on both sides of that relationship.

In 1832 it is probable that industrial regions of England would have gone into rebellion if Parliament had not given way on the franchise reform. Parliament gave way on the brink of rebellion, and the rebels became Parliamentary statesmen. That is the actual meaning of "*compromise*", even though the word is generally used to suggest arrangements made through polite discussion in the tea-room.

O'Brien was a forceful leader of the land agitation in Parnell's time, and was imprisoned by Bloody Balfour. But then

Balfour, meeting him in the Commons, congratulated him and said that the state could do with more like him. Then, about ten years later (after Parnell's disruption had subsided), O'Brien worked up another land agitation, and on the strength of it made the land purchase deal with Balfour, who had become Prime Minister.

After the Election of December 1910, Redmond staked everything on a tight alliance with the Liberal Party, enabling it to carry a contentious Budget and face down the House of Lords. O'Brien considered that approach to be imprudent in the extreme from the viewpoint of Irish national interest. And, in 1912, he did not support the Home Rule Bill, being convinced that it could not be carried through in the heat of Liberal/Unionist party conflict, with these two parties being of equal strength, and Redmond keeping the Liberals in Office. And, when the Unionists went outside Parliament in their opposition to the Bill, he did not whinge like a Parliamentary cretin. That was the way things were done in England, and if you were playing the Parliamentary game, you should try to do so in the light of how it was actually played.

Charles Lysaght reflects:

"Only the tragic events since 1969 have caused people to question whether Redmond's way, rather than the path of violence and more immediate separation set in train by the 1916 rebellion, would have served us better, and to reassess him as a historical figure."

But the actual choice in the relevant period was not between "*Redmond's way*" and "*the path of violence*". That is an entirely false antithesis.

Redmond's way was a path of violence, if what is meant is the Ulster Protestants. And it was failure to achieve anything on that path of violence that led to another path of violence being taken.

It is absurd to use the word "*reconciliation*" to describe Redmond's relations with the Ulster Protestants. He made himself an absolute hate figure to them, and his lieutenants were venomous towards them (as Senator Mansergh still is, judging by his recent lecture on Carson on RTE radio). And he relied on the British Army to overcome that resistance.

What the 1916 rebels did was to strike out on a path of violence *against* the British Army, instead of hoping to be its cheerleader against the Ulster Protestants, or acting with it against the Germans and the Turks.

The alternative to "*Redmond's way*" during the 1910-14 period was not some other "*path of violence*" than Redmond's,

but the path of "*Conference, Conciliation and Consent*" by which the All-For-Ireland League broke Redmondism in Cork in 1910.

Having overcome the antagonism of landlord and tenant by the 1903 Act, O'Brien aspired to bring the former landlords into the national movement as independent country gentlemen. And, having collaborated closely with the Protestant tenant-right movement in the North in the agitation which led to the Act, he hoped to consolidate that collaboration in subsequent politics. There was conflict over land purchase between the Protestant tenants and the landlords who were the big-wigs of the Orange Order and the Unionist movement. This led to an Independent political development in the North. O'Brien's approach was to moderate the Home Rule demand in order to nurture the all-Ireland development of the tenant struggle. The Unionist Government tried to facilitate that approach by establishing an Irish Council—a general authority for supervising local government in Ireland.

The Redmondites nipped that proposal in the bud. But something like it was then proposed by the Liberal Government that followed—which, having an overall majority in Parliament, had no interest in Irish Home Rule. The Redmondites were vehement in their opposition and the proposal lapsed.

The Unionist policy of 1895-1905 was to *Kill Home Rule With Kindness*. This consisted of providing a remedy for particular grievances within the structure of the Union in the expectation that the nationalist movement would then decline. The Redmondites also believed that the nationalist movement was nothing in itself, and that it depended on the aggravations of particular grievances. That was why it used its influence to prevent the implementation of the land purchase Act, and to shoot down the Council Bill. O'Brien and his colleagues, by contrast, took it that there was a substantial Irish nationality and that it would make its way in the world more easily as the aggravations and resentments of the Protestant Ascendancy were removed.

Those were the actual alternatives for the political generation before the Great War. The only "*path of violence*" in that situation was "*Redmond's way*" of using the British Army against the Ulster Protestants. The "*path of violence*" in the form of national military rebellion against Imperial power was not present as an actual alternative.

It was not until the Ulster Protestants formed an illegal, but openly presented, Army to oppose Redmond's "*path of*

violence", and the British Army mutinied against the role mapped out for it by Redmond, and Redmond went wildly beyond his electoral mandate by committing Home Rule Ireland to participation in the British war on Germany and Turkey, that the other "*path of violence*" opened up. And that other path is best regarded as a branch that was opened up off Redmond's path when it proved to be a *cul de sac*.

In August and early September 1914 the *Irish Times* presented the war of the British Empire against Germany as a righteous war in defence of Civilisation, and jeered at Redmond for his hesitancy in participating in it until he had made a local deal to his own advantage. The West British ideologists have been feeling their way back towards that position. But the *Irish Times* does not feel that the ground lost after 1916 and all that has yet been recovered sufficiently to allow a restatement of its 1914 position.

What it says instead is this:

"it was British public opinion, moulded over the years by Redmond, that forced Lloyd George's government to call off the Black and Tans and negotiate with the Sinn Fein leaders... It was a debt ungenerously never acknowledged by its political beneficiaries. Instead they preferred to upbraid Redmond as an imperialist and blame him for having sent so many Irish to fight in the Great War. Yet, what else could he have done? If nationalist Ireland was not prepared to support Britain in its time of peril, how could it expect any support from them [sic] in dealing with the Ulster unionists? How far the British would have gone in imposing home rule on Ulster if the Redmondite strategy had not been negated by the 1916 rebellion and the emergence of Sinn Fein as the voice of nationalist Ireland, we shall never know. But what is certain is that those events caused successive British governments to give the Ulster Unionists the most favourable deal possible."

So 50,000 Irish dead in a British war was the blood price for Home Rule!

A blood sacrifice was required for the transubstantiation of Home Rule on the Statute Book into a Home Rule administration. But the sacrifice was not enough because it was called off half-way through the War, and therefore the Irish were punished and the Ulster Unionists were rewarded because they continued the blood sacrifice to the bitter end.

The 1914 Home Rule vision of a war of civilisation against barbarism was a delusion perhaps. At least there was a strong element of delusion in it, along with the element of calculation, and it was therefore not as repugnant as this view that it was a blood sacrifice made from

political calculation—a calculation which miscarried because the human material of the sacrifice recoiled from it.

But Charles Lysaght may well be right. I tried to get a clear idea of Redmond about thirty years ago and failed. I could not decide whether, in 1914-16, he acted out of deluded idealism or out of a political calculation which could take the sacrifice of thousands in its stride. Insofar as I reached a tentative conclusion, it was that he himself did not know which it was, because the back of his mind was a morass of obscurity.

A piece of Hitler's handwriting was published in the papers around that time, and somebody who had studied handwriting as a key to character remarked to me that he showed a tendency to blot his loops, and that this indicated a dangerous blurring of thoughts or impulses. I have no opinion on whether handwriting is a guide to character, but that comment about Hitler corresponded with what I knew of him. And it put me in mind of Redmond as well.

Perhaps it is just the mentality of politicians who govern states that do dreadful things as a matter of course, and by 1914 Redmond had developed the mentality of a governing politician who had some very unpleasant things in prospect with regard to the Ulsterish.

About a year before Balfour collaborated with William O'Brien to deal with the landlord problem in Ireland, 26,000 Boer women and children and old men died in the Concentration Camps in South Africa for which his Government was responsible. It is unimaginable that he did not know of it. It's probable that he arranged not to know—but as Gita Sereni said of Albert Speer, that too is a form of knowing. But I have never seen any Balfour biographer probe Balfour's state of mind during the second phase of the Boer War.

I was interested in Balfour because he was the last genuine intellectual to be Prime Minister of England. Redmond belongs in a different political category—with the backbench Tory squires who thought with a small stock of clichés. They no longer exist. Tom King, the last of them, was put on the Front Bench by Thatcher and made Northern Ireland Secretary.

It was Redmond's misfortune to be leading a Party in a very difficult situation with the mentality of a backbench Tory squire. He was the compromise leader when the factions into which Parnell split the Party got together again. He had the prestige of having stuck with Parnell when Parnell was wrecking the Party. And the obscurity of thought which characterised

him at the end was there at the beginning. It was the condition of his unthinking loyalty to Parnell. And it was strongly in evidence throughout his period of leadership, on the issues of land purchase, the Council Bill, and the interweaving of the Ancient Order of Hibernians with the organisation of the Party.

The AOH is not mentioned in the *Irish Times* memorial. It was a kind of Catholic defence organisation cum friendly society, claiming descent from the rising of 1641, and it might be considered a necessary institution in Plantation Ulster. It was reinvigorated, modernised and expanded by Joseph Devlin of West Belfast around 1900. Devlin and John Dillon were the active political leaders of the Party under Redmond's somewhat aloof statesmanship. Devlin built the AOH into the structure of the Party with Dillon's approval, and Redmond allowed it, to say the least. And it was the AOH that gave internal life to the party between election campaigns.

Devlin and Dillon were to the fore in rejecting the land purchase deal, and they directed the *Freeman's Journal* (the main Home Rule newspaper) in discouraging tenant farmers from availing of it. But in North Cork systematic land purchase began at the instigation of Canon Sheehan—the very popular and also very intellectual novelist who has been entirely discarded by Colm Toibin in his thousand-page *Penguin Book Of Irish Fiction*—and by D.D. Sheehan. Land purchase then spread rapidly through Co. Cork and the neighbouring counties, so that landlordism ceased to be an issue, though persisting in areas where the AOH/Party influence prevailed.

Canon Sheehan then instigated a movement against the Home Rule Party with its AOH core, indicting it as a Catholic Ascendancy movement intent on taking the place of the overthrown Protestant Ascendancy. The All-For-Ireland League was formed against Redmond on this issue, and the Home Rule Party was defeated throughout Cork in both the 1910 Elections. But Redmond paid no heed.

The Ulster Protestants in 1912 did not react against some abstract possibility of 'Rome Rule' whose reality lay in the distant past. They responded against a Home Rule Party whose vital organ was a Catholic secret society comparable to the Orange Order. That was William O'Brien's case, and there was substance to it. And he held that, by pressing ahead with Home Rule on those terms, and relying on the British Army to enforce it, Redmond was setting the country on the way to disaster.

And *that* is what has been "airbrushed from history".

And, by the way, how was 1914 Britain's "time of peril"? Nobody attacked it. Nobody had the slightest intention of attacking it. It embarked on a war of choice from a position of overwhelming strength.

Brendan Clifford

PS In recent months the North Cork edition of *The Corkman* has been carrying a column describing the experience of a student on going to Trinity College. This student, Daire Hickey, popped up in a couple of *Questions & Answers* programmes on RTE television during the year. In his column a couple of months ago he related how he went to see *The Wind That Shakes The Barley*. And, reflecting on the film, he concluded that violence had probably not been necessary to get independence.

I suppose Professor Fitzpatrick has perfumed the air of Trinity with that notion. But it is an astonishing idea—an idea from out of the blue—not an idea that is likely to form in anybody's mind from following the course of events in Ireland as a whole from 1912 to 1921—an idea which a mind acquainted with the sequence of development in North Cork from 1903 onwards could not entertain. But that development has been cut out of the historical record as far as it is possible for the University system to cut it out.

At the recent launch in Dublin of Julianne Herlihy's book, *Taking Leave Of Roy Foster*, somebody doubted that the 'revisionist' doctrines of the Universities had bitten deep into the country. I mentioned Daire Hickey's strange idea as evidence that they had.

Trinity has been working hard, assisted by Professor Garvin at UCD and Professor John A. Murphy in Cork, and by the 'Official Republicans' in the media, at engendering virgin minds into which any fanciful notion that serves the new political agenda can be inserted. And they have had a substantial degree of success.

Redmondism gave up the ghost in North Cork when, following its crushing defeat in the first 1910 Election, it did not even contest the seat in the second election. What Redmond abdicated to was not a movement dedicated to "the path of violence", but the "Conference, Conciliation, And Consent" movement for making peace with the remnants of Protestant Ascendancy, curbing the Catholic Ascendancy element in the Home Rule Party, desisting from the strategy of over-ruling the Ulster Protestant community (which it did not treat as part of the Protestant Ascendancy) by means of an alliance with one of the British Parties against the other, and scaling down the Home Rule demand for the time being in order to maintain the contact with the Ulster Protestants which had been established in the tenant-right movement.

Nine years later it became one of the Republican strongholds in the War of Independence. Daire Hickey might investigate why people of his grandfather's generation considered violence to be necessary in 1919. Was this a coherent development from their 1910 position, or a bizarre and unaccountable departure from it? But Trinity is not where he will get the answer, or even be allowed to tackle the question.

Some years ago John Bruton said violence had not been necessary. But what he meant was that Independence had not been necessary, or even desirable. Whether desirable or not, it is true enough to say that it was not necessary—at least not in the sense that engaging in war with Britain was necessary, once the body politic set itself the aim of independence. The electorate might have decided to settle down as West Britain. If it had become West Britain it would presumably not be in misery over what it had not become—as Brer Rabbit reasoned himself into the conclusion that, if he had not existed, he would not have minded not existing. But in 1918 it decided conclusively that it was not its destiny to be West Britain.

To abstract from the subsequent course of events in such a way as to conclude that the independence that was achieved through war with the Imperial Power was achievable without war—that is what is absurd.

The voting was over and done with before the War started. And the War started because the British Government and Parliament ignored the vote. That is how things were in the realm of appearances. And, if one goes below the realm of appearances (which is Professor Fitzpatrick's method) or sails airily above them (as Professor Foster does) with the object of displacing the realm of appearances as being somehow unreal, then one enters the realm of mysteries. And then one is better off becoming a Freemason straight away.

PPS

A book on *The Burning Of Cork* by Gerry Whyte and Brendan O'Shea, just published by the Mercier Press, says:

"Where once the RIC had been a highly respected institution within the community, now [1920] many of these officers and their families were pariahs; shopkeepers refused to supply them and former friends and neighbours either openly ostracized them or simply stayed away..."

"For those officers who chose to remain within its ranks, it was inevitable that they would attempt to carry out their orders with a steely purpose and determination. The Volunteers might well have been fighting for a republic but the RIC were fighting now to preserve their own way of life. Both sides were fighting for survival—it was in fact a

civil war where the stakes could not have been higher.

"In an attempt to maintain the strength of the RIC and regain some control of the countryside, the British government now decided to begin advertising in Britain to attract new recruits into the force" (p27).

And did it remain a "*civil war*" as the police in Ireland were bulked out with battle-hardened recruits from Britain?

In fact the RIC were never an "*institution within the community*". They were a controlling body of the British State in Ireland, which never had representative—not to mention democratic—legitimacy in Ireland. They were recruited from the population in Ireland, but they were an institution detached from that population, and one of their main functions was to spy on it and submit regular reports to the British Government about it.

A democratic franchise was introduced for Westminster elections early in 1918, and in the first election held under it the Irish electorate voted for independence, thus de-legitimising British authority in Ireland if a democratic mandate is held to be a necessary condition of legitimacy in the democratic era. The RIC was thereby de-legitimised as an institution of British government in Ireland, but it continued to serve that Government, in defiance of the electorate which it policed. But it cannot be said that it *decided* to defy the electoral mandate. It had no forum in which it might make decisions. It was a paramilitary body of the State, subject to military discipline. It was not a kind of autonomous guild that could act on its own behalf against the democracy. From first to last it acted as a disciplined agency of British government (even when it was being 'undisciplined'). It had no collective power of decision. The individual policemen after 1918 had the choice of obeying the orders of a clearly alien and undemocratic authority against the population, or resigning.

The authors mention in passing that an Irish Government was established, but they do so in a way that is consistent with their "*civil war*" thesis:

"...on 21 January 1919, the struggle for independence entered a new phase when 28 Sinn Fein members of the Westminster parliament, who had been elected at the general election of 14 December, gathered at the Mansion House in Dublin and established Dail Eireann as the independent constituent assembly of the Irish nation. They ratified both the declaration of independence, which established an independent Republic, and a democratic programme, which enshrined the principles by which the new republic

would be governed. However, not all Volunteers welcomed the development. Some within the movement continued to believe that constitutional means alone would never produce an Irish Republic and so... the more militant republicans decided to take matters into their own hands" (p18).

So a *minority* of the candidates elected in 1918 set up the Dail and declared independence!

Twenty-eight is about a quarter of the Irish complement of MPs. In fact Sinn Fein won three-quarters of the seats. And it won them on a clear policy of establishing independent government, and *not* becoming members of the Westminster Parliament. Given the clarity of the electoral mandate, the fact that only 28 could meet to give effect to it is a fact of little consequence—except as an example of the British refusal to accept the electoral mandate.

I never before saw it said that the Volunteers who resorted to physical force in January 1919 did not approve of the assembling of the Dail or its Declaration of Independence.

Concerning the military centrepiece of the War, the destruction of a body of elite Auxiliary RIC at Kilmichael, the authors give the numbers of dead and wounded, and then comment:

"These represent the undisputed facts of what happened and they would have a large impact on both sides as the war continued. However, the disputed facts also had impact—not least amongst which was the question of whether the Auxiliaries in the second lorry offered to surrender only to recommence firing or whether some Auxiliaries genuinely attempted to surrender but Barry ordered all of them killed including those already wounded. The reality of the situation is that some reports refer to a false surrender, and others do not. This effectively made it impossible to determine the truth" (p84).

A reference note on this point says:

"While Tom Barry has always maintained that the surrender attempt by the Auxiliaries had been bogus, the matter of what transpired at Kilmichael... has been the subject of some intense debate among historians".

And they list Barry, Deasy, Meda Ryan, Peter Hart, Brian Murphy, and Aubane.

This says quite clearly that the "*disputed fact*" of the false surrender had a huge impact on both sides at the time. I was not aware that it was an issue at all at the time—that it was either disputed or made much of. The leader of the Auxiliaries mentioned the false surrender as a matter of fact in a book written much later. The first participant in the ambush to write about the affair, Stephen O'Neill

in the *Kerryman* in the late 1930s, mentioned the false surrender and nobody disputed it. Barry mentioned it in his book in the late 1940s and nobody disputed it. It was first disputed by Peter Hart in an Oxford University Press book in the 1990s, and the OUP was not at all disconcerted by the fact that the survivor to it who told Hart that it was a genuine surrender which Barry did not honour was not a survivor in the ordinary sense but communicated with Hart from beyond the grave. (Is Oxford reverting to fundamentalist Christianity?)

I understand that Authority, in the form of UCC, gave its *Imprimatur* and *Nihil Obstat* to Hart's book, but surely a degree of mild scepticism is allowable, even in Cork City.

The authors contributed to an RTE television programme on the burning of Cork a few months ago, in which one of them said that Lord Mayor Mac Curtain was a "*legitimate target*" for the British occupying force. This is softened in the book, which says he was "*a prime target for a reprisal*" because he had not publicly condemned the shooting of members of the occupying forces—or "*the British security forces*", as they prefer to put it (p33).

Another book that has just appeared is *Spies, Informers And The Anti-Sinn Fein Society: The Intelligence War In Cork City 1920-21* by John Borgonovo. The book itself is an objective and meticulous investigation of the available material on the subject, but it has a bizarre Foreword by Professor Eunan O'Halpin, who says of it that, "*It cannot answer every question which arises about the nature and ethics of political violence... during the War of Independence, but it addresses the grim matter of premeditated death in a disciplined manner*", drawing on the Bureau of Military History statements. It seems that, until the Bureau was opened, there was nothing much to "*give IRA perspectives on individual acts of violence*", except police and military accounts and local memories. But, with this new source of information, it can be seen that—

"IRA motivations cannot be... understood in isolation from the actions of the British government and of the Crown forces".
Eureka!!

And furthermore:

"As Peter Hart, Meda Ryan and others have shown, Cork county was an exceptionally violent place during the War of Independence!.

Did we really need to be told that?

But what Meda tells us is how Cork resorted to violence to give effect to an electoral mandate, and what Hart tells us is that Cork was a welter of family feuding and murder which latched onto the independence movement as an excuse for

enhanced murder.

O'Halpin had a book called *Independent Ireland* published by Oxford in 1999. In that book Irish national political legitimacy is portrayed as being established by the Treaty. The action of some of his ancestors in defending the Dail Declaration of Independence is dismissed as something else—not Defending Ireland.

Such was the fashion in those times. O'Halpin must have felt a chill wind of change blowing, to be contributing a Foreword to this book.

But, if he is genuinely concerned about the "*ethics of political violence*" in Ireland in 1919-21, should he not address the decision of the British Parliament to continue British government in Ireland in defiance of the election result? The appropriate place to begin in such a matter is with your own side.

BC

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Report

The Irish Labour History Society Conference

with Some South African Omissions

The 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising provided the theme for the Annual Conference of the Irish Labour History Society, which was held in Liberty Hall this October. In view of the fact that Professor John Horne of Trinity College Dublin has emerged as one of the principal proponents of the Anglo-French version of First World War history, one might have expected that his opening lecture, *James Connolly and the Great Divide—Ireland, Europe and the First World War* would have been controversial. But it wasn't. Expressed in beautifully eloquent English, it was a fairly unobjectionable, if anodyne, general survey of pre-1914 Europe, the various tendencies within the socialist movement at the time, and their varying responses to the commencement of war itself. It was left to a contributor from the floor to inject a note of controversy when Charles Callan attacked Connolly for supporting Germany in that War and spoke of how Germany had to be defeated in order to prevent the emergence of a German Empire stretching from the North Sea to the Indian Ocean.

Callan was ably answered by Dr. O'Connor Lysaght who pointed out that this was, to say the least, part of the geographical spread—but enhanced by an even more extensive global presence—of that imperialism which was already *in situ*, namely, the British Empire. Lysaght, notwithstanding a general adherence to

Lenin's view of the War, is nonetheless supportive of Connolly's position insofar as he believes that in a choice between a victory for Kaiser Germany or one for Britain plus Tsarist Russia, the former would have been the lesser evil. Indeed, in his recent pamphlet *The Great Irish Revolution: Myths And Realities*, one of the myths he seeks to counter is "*That the First World War was Fought by Britain to Defend Democracy*". Lysaght's reply to Callan went on to incorporate the following arguments from that pamphlet:

"The War was fought by Britain and its allies in the Entente to preserve and strengthen Tsarist Russian hegemony in eastern Europe and south-west Asia. The only one of the three main partners in the plan that maintained political norms approaching democracy was France, and, even there, women did not have the vote. The parliamentary franchise for the United Kingdom was less democratic than that of the German and Austrian Reichstags that it opposed. Until the Spring of 1917, when Tsarism collapsed and the USA joined the Entente, that alliance's defeat would have been the lesser evil of either side winning. The secret treaties between its members ensured that its victory would have been that of the world's two largest imperial metropolises, Britain and France, with Tsarism gaining more territory than Stalin after the next conflict".

The second session of the Conference heard three papers. Dr. Colin Whiston of Keele University spoke both objectively and competently on the subject of *James Connolly and Trade Unionism—the Struggle for an Independent Working Class Politics*. Iconoclasm might have been expected from Professor Emmet O'Connor of the University of Ulster whose paper was entitled *Labour and Republicanism: the Unimportance of James Connolly*, not least because of O'Connor's track record of iconoclasm in respect of Larkin. In fact his paper was to show that an ongoing commitment to the struggle for national independence had preceded Connolly and had been even more diligently nurtured by Larkin—a welcome antidote to the nonsense pushed by Professor Roy Foster of Oxford University and others that Larkin kept a "healthy" distance from Connolly's supposed "sins" on that score. That session's final paper, *Connolly and 1916*, was by Dr. John Newsinger of Bath Spa University. It gave an honest exposition of Connolly's stand but then criticised him from the lecturer's own fantasy world of the Socialist Workers' Party for not holding his fire until the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. This would, apparently, have guaranteed Connolly's place in history as "*the Leader of the Irish Revolution*"! Some participants were heard to observe that if O'Connor convincingly disposed of the myth that Dev had said

"*Labour Must Wait*", we now had New-singer's Petrograd hindsight suggesting that the message should instead have been "*Connolly Must Wait*"!

The final session heard two papers. Sinéad McCool spoke of *The Women of 1916*, based on her meticulously researched and marvellously presented book, *No Ordinary Women*. SIPTU Head of Research Manus O'Riordan's paper, entitled *WW1—Why Connolly Wanted a German Victory*, was also based on previously published work, his Aubane Historical Society pamphlet, *James Connolly Re-assessed: The Irish And European Experience*. Arguing that Connolly's stand was radically different from that of Lenin and more akin to that of the Polish Socialist leader Pilsudski, O'Riordan went on to justify that stand. He drew fire from two participants. Dropping the mantle of non-partisanship adopted for his own opening lecture, John Horne welcomed the factual presentation of where Connolly stood but condemned its justification. Replying to O'Riordan's exposé of how anti-Semitism had played such a major part in British war hysteria, he argued that surely it was just as prevalent in Germany. And likewise in the case of general xenophobia. O'Riordan replied that, of course, war hysteria in all belligerent countries had manifested itself in mob violence. Indeed a vivid description of the atmosphere in Berlin could be found in the memoirs of the Jewish IRA veteran and subsequent Lord Mayor of Dublin, Bob Briscoe. But even though hundreds of his own known relatives were to perish at the hands of Nazis, O'Riordan pointed out that Briscoe had never allowed the two World Wars to be confused. Briscoe had not experienced any anti-Semitism whatsoever while living in Kaiser Germany and to the end of his life he continued to justify his own support for Connolly's pro-German activities in that First World War. (Extensive excerpts from Briscoe's account are in fact carried in the Aubane pamphlet already mentioned).

In this session Callan was to resume the argument that he had previously held with Lysaght. Annoyed that Horne, acclaimed by Kevin Myers as the foremost expert writing on German atrocities in Belgium, had not played up that particular theme, Callan also wondered at Connolly's silence on German atrocities in South West Africa. He complained that he had "*never heard such a tendentious and out-of-context paper*" as that given by O'Riordan, attacked the lecturer for providing an account of the 1914 Dublin pogrom against German shopkeepers and their families as "*something that everybody knew about anyway*", and denounced him for describing that mob as "*Redmondite*". He further accused O'Riordan of making

an unforgivable personal attack on Tom Kettle in describing him as drunk on the occasion of his anti-German intervention at a public meeting in Dublin.

O'Riordan answered some of these objections but could have gone further. He rightly wondered that, if "*everybody already knew*" of the anti-German outrages in Dublin, why it had been left to him to be the first to ever write a historical account of them and why nobody else had followed. But since it was a newly-enlisted Catholic soldier who had led that rampaging mob, O'Riordan should also have made the point that to describe it as anything other than Redmondite would be to introduce an unsubstantiated sectarian element by suggesting that it could only have been Orange bigots like the fictitious Bessie Burgess in Seán O'Casey's *Plough And The Stars* who would indulge in such pogroms. O'Riordan also omitted to point out that in the version of his paper recently published in the ILHS/SIPTU booklet—*James Connolly, Liberty Hall And The 1916 Rising*—he quite clearly footnoted that the source for this description of the drunken Kettle had been none other than one who should be close to Callan's heart, Ruth Dudley Edwards.

O'Riordan was undoubtedly on solid ground when arguing that—when it came to civilian atrocities—Connolly had retained a sense of proportion in respect of the 5,000 or so civilian atrocities in Belgium for which Germany was responsible and the genocide of 10 million people under Belgian rule in the Congo. "*Such wholesale genocide was the Belgian atrocity that most concerned Connolly*", as O'Riordan correctly put it. O'Riordan also argued that it was probably the same sense of proportion that had resulted in Connolly's silence on the wiping out—through deliberate starvation as much as direct killing—of 65,000 Herero people by the Germans during the South-West African War of 1904-1908, particularly since it came so soon after 50,000 civilians—mainly children, but also women and old men—had perished in British concentration camps during the South African War of 1899-1902. But O'Riordan was under a misapprehension if he surmised that Connolly had any meaningful knowledge of what had gone on in South West Africa. British war propaganda had worked up hysteria by focusing on German atrocities (whether real or fabricated) against white Europeans. British imperialism had at that time absolutely no interest in seeking to nurture outrage about what had happened to the indigenous black population of South-West Africa, lest it refocus attention on the Belgian Congo. The South-West African issue was to be held in reserve until the last year of the War, when the

purpose became the justification of a demand that white South African rule be substituted for that of Germany in preparation for the colonialist scrambles of any forthcoming 'peace settlement'. Namibia is, of course, the name chosen by that country's indigenous majority when they finally won their fight for independence against Apartheid South Africa. And all of the following information is taken from the January 2002 issue of the Namibian journal, *The New African*.

The end-of-War indictment of German rule in South-West Africa was compiled by a South African military magistrate, Major Thomas Leslie O'Reilly, for the South African Administration's "Blue Book" dated January 1918 and entitled *Union Of South Africa—Report On The Natives Of South-West Africa And Their Treatment by Germany*. This exercise was then published by His Majesty's Stationery Office and presented to both Houses of the British Parliament in August 1918. In June 1918, the administrator of South-West Africa, E.H.M. Gorges, informed the South African Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, that he had written to all his military magistrates urging them "*to do their utmost to suppress any attempts of the ill-treatment of the natives (by the new white South African occupiers), pointing out that a clear record in this matter was essential if we wanted to use the German maltreatment of the natives as a reason for keeping this country*". Later, in an official report written shortly after the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles, Gorges noted that:

"Great use was made in Paris of the Blue Book compiled here under my directions, dealing with the ill-treatment of the Hereros and other tribes of this country by the Germans; and the solemn declaration was made that the care of these hapless and undeveloped peoples is to be one of the primary duties of the League of Nations, and that the custody and tutelage of these peoples is to be given to a state which has shown that it can exercise a conscience in the matter".

Such "*conscience*" was, however to dictate that once the 212-page "Blue Book" had served its colonialist purpose, the British and South African Governments came to a common agreement in 1926 to order the "*total destruction*" of all copies of the report because of the "*embarrassment*" that it "*painted the European in too poor a light*". The objective was now to integrate the German-speaking whites in a common colonial project undertaken by White South Africa, that of exploiting and oppressing the Black majority of South-West Africa, thus guaranteeing that two decades later, they too could enjoy for at least another four decades the exhilarating experience of living under an Apartheid regime.

Tomás Ó Mórdha

IN BRIEF

STRIKES

"Workmen or labourers are entitled to strike if they conceive they have a grievance and cannot otherwise obtain redress. The law recognises such a right and public opinion endorses the law.

"Arbitration and common sense have in many instances been found to be quite as effective but while that is so, the right to strike remains, and will continue to remain, the great protective weapon which labour can fall back upon when the occasion demands it." (*Cork Examiner* editorial, 2.9.1913 on the Great Dublin Labour Lock-Out).

CARLOW

"A mean, miserable, beggarly town. And since they've got the sugar factory there's no standing them"—Leix man on Carlow town, quoted in Frank O'Connor, *Irish Miles* (1947).

SIPTU

"MORE than 1,000 home help employees in the Dublin area have joined SIPTU in recent months following the launch of a major recruitment drive.

"The union has also targeted building workers in a concerted attempt to increase its number of activists and expand its current membership of more than 200,000.

"SIPTU has recruited seven organisers this year since a new unit, dedicated to recruiting and organising new members, was set up this year at an annual cost of 1 million Euros.

"While the overall number of unionised workers continues to increase, the rise has not kept pace with the rapid expansion of the labour force.

"Mr. Noel Dowling, the head of SIPTU's organising unit, says that about a quarter of private sector workers are now members of trade unions. Overall, when the public sector is taken into account, some 37 per cent of workers are union members. This is a drop from 60 per cent in 1990." (*Irish Times* 6.1.2005.)

SIPTU took on its first three organisers in March, 2004, and four more have joined since. The seven have received 'intensive training', with the assistance of the British TUC.

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AND THE MURDER TRIANGLE

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Report

Wearing The Poppy

My late father served in the British army in the second World War. He never wore a poppy and anyone I knew who served with him never wore a poppy.

They regarded it, and the British Legion, as symbolising all that was worst, most jingoistic and reactionary in the British establishment.

I suspect that this was the attitude of most second World War veterans, because it was the votes of three million servicemen that put Churchill out of office in 1945 and Clement Attlee's Labour government in.

I appreciate that times change and the poppy means different things to different people.

But I think it is important not to impose contemporary views of the significance of wearing, or not wearing a poppy, on past generations.

It would certainly be wrong to assume the poppy had, or has, the same significance for all British veterans and their families.

Pádraig Yeates
Irish Times
17.11.06

Madariaga

"No one has ever succeeded in keeping nations at war except by lies"

Salvador de Madariaga
(1886-1978),

Spanish writer, diplomat, and historian, noted for his service at the League of Nations.

THE CONTENTION OF THE POETS

AN ESSAY IN IRISH

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

"This essay is an attempt to throw light on the lives and works of a few outstanding writers in the Irish Language, who were contemporaries of Shakespeare and Cervantes. "The Irish writers of that period are not well known...The reason for this is historical. In the 17th. century Gaelic Irish civilisation experienced a catastrophe, which led then and in the centuries following to a breach in culture." (From the introduction.)

Beginning with a review of the career of Fearghal Óg mac an Bháird, a gifted, exuberant and likeable professional poet of this period, John Minahane shows how the Gaelic men of learning responded in different ways to drastically changed circumstances. He presents the *Iomarbhágh na bhfillead*, or *Contention of the Poets* (when poets from North and South conducted a heated professional controversy) from the standpoints of the participants. The attempt by the exiled Franciscan monks of Louvain to seize the intellectual leadership of Gaelic Ireland is emphasised. Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire, founder and grand strategist of Louvain, master of Gaelic *senchus* and radical philosopher (*"the most difficult problem of Irish intellectual biography"*, according to the author) is highlighted as a key figure. The other key figure is Tadhg mac Dáire mac Bruaideadha, champion of Munster tradition...and something more.

Many poems are cited, giving the original Irish with adjacent translations. There are also two important political poems which have not been published before.

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position" (ibid, p83).

Martin Mansergh was born in England in 1946; educated in England at [The King's School, Canterbury](#) and [Christ Church, Oxford](#). Mansergh studied [Philosophy, Politics and Economics in Oxford](#), and obtained a Doctorate in French History. He entered the Irish [Department of Foreign Affairs 1974](#), and was promoted to the position of First Secretary in 1977. In 1980, he was recruited by Taoiseach Charles J Haughey and has worked for the Fianna Fail Party ever since, serving under three Fianna Fail leaders as Director of Research and Policy, as well as Special Advisor on [Northern Ireland](#). In that role he was involved in discussions between the [nationalist](#) parties and the [Irish Government](#) and met regularly with intermediary [Father Alec Reid](#).

Mansergh was a key member of the teams which negotiated the Fianna Fáil-Labour Coalition in 1992 and the Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrats coalition in 1997. As a senior Adviser to Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Mansergh has played a key role in the Northern Ireland Peace Process over the last twenty years. He is also a member of the Irish Council of State, having been appointed by the President Mary McAleese.

One of his godfathers was the late Canon John Collins, the Anglican minister who was one of the founders of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

"One journalist accurately captured the conundrum in 1994:

'Fianna Fail has never been overburdened with academics and intellectuals, and Mansergh's knowledge and scholarly skills have made him almost indispensable to the party.' (ibid,p79).

**SENATOR MANSERGH
AND SOLOHEADBEG**

"On a clear January morning in 1998, Martin Mansergh travelled the short distance from his home in Friarsfield to the memorial site at Soloheadbeg. It was an important moment for him. 'This ceremony today is in a small way—and here I speak not politically but very personally—a symbolic act of

reconciliation.'

"Those attending had gathered—as Mansergh saw it—to pay tribute and keep alive the memory of a pivotal moment in Irish history. The particular poignancy for the Friarsfield resident was derived from the invitation itself as the idea for the Mansergh address had come from a relation of Dan Breen.

"On that morning in January 1998, Mansergh quoted Seamus Robinson, another of the IRA men involved in the attack. 'The action at Soloheadbeg was designed to set the ball rolling,' Robinson had declared. Moreover, as Mansergh read his Irish history, the 1916 Easter Rising had been 'a well-calculated prelude to a successful and organised guerrilla struggle, which began at Soloheadbeg.' There would be wider implications from the struggle for independence in Ireland. The conflict was a 'watershed' for anti-imperialism within the British Empire. Mansergh observed that there were many countries around the world that acknowledged a debt to Ireland's sacrifice and example.

"But he did acknowledge that people from all political and religious persuasions in the island had paid a price. Families like the Manserghs would have lived anxiously through the years of revolution in the knowledge that neighbours from a different political and religious persuasion would determine their futures" (Rafter, p150).

**PROFESSOR NICHOLAS MANSERGH
ON SOLOHEADBEG**

"Nicholas Mansergh, 'an historical realist' according to his son, 'recognised that political independence would simply not have happened without events... 'like the Soloheadbeg ambush'. The cost was also acknowledged by Nicholas Mansergh: 'For the policemen who died at Soloheadbeg there was reserved the melancholy fate of having fallen on the wrong side of history... even successful national revolutions exact a price, the nature of which later generations find it hard to remember and contemporaries impossible to forget' (p150, ibid).

"The Mansergh family was in a similar situation to other members of their class when the War of Independence started in 1918. PSG Mansergh ruled that politics was not to be discussed at Grenane. The response was characteristic of many southern Protestants, who

adopted a 'wait-and-see' stance and generally avoided contact with the army and the police.

"The head of the Mansergh household maintained his daily routine of walking into Tipperary Town, but he kept a rifle at Grenane. The first shots in the War of Independence were fired at Soloheadbeg—two miles from the Mansergh estate. The sound of gunfire was heard at Grenane" (p24, ibid).

"The father of republican Dan Breen was one of the Grenane tenants who purchased his holding in the 1890s" (p20, ibid).

A FOOTNOTE:

"At Meenbanad, a plateau halfway between Kincasslagh and Dungloe in the Rosses of Donegal, stands a slab monument with the following inscription in Irish and English:

To commemorate the first action in the War of Independence when the Irish Volunteers rescued two comrades James Ward and James Duffy from British Troops at this place on the 4th of January 1918.

"'This place' was then the last railway halt (known officially as Kincasslagh Road) before the terminus of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway at Burtonport, and the volunteers were removed from the train that was to take them to Derry Jail. The action, carried out by a party of local men that included Fergus Ward and the brothers Dom and John Bonner, antedated by a year and seventeen days the incident that is conventionally regarded as the beginning of the Anglo-Irish War" (Edward Purdon, *The War Of Independence*, Mercier, 2001).

What Is A Journalist?

"Do not fear the enemy, for your enemy can only take your life. It is far better that you fear the media, for they will steal your Honor. That awful power, the public opinion of a nation, is created in America by a horde of ignorant, self-complacent simpletons who failed at ditching and shoemaking and fetched up in journalism on their way to the poorhouse..."

Mark Twain.



LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 24 No. 12

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

Book Review (Part Two):

Dan Breen And The IRA

Soloheadbeg And Oxford

I first read Dan Breen's *My Fight For Irish Freedom* around the Summer of 1955, in a Donegal school conducted by the Presentation Brothers, where the week before you finished for the Summer, you could choose your own reading.

It was a double achievement: I had read my first full book: 'Dan Breen's book', and I had finally found out what Soloheadbeg and Knocklong were all about.

Shortly after, in the same school, I read Bruce Marshall's *The White Rabbit* (1954), about the exploits of Yeo-Thomas in Vichy France.

Had their roles been reversed and had Yeo-Thomas been in South Tipperary, Irish academia and the Dublin media would probably have relegated him into nonentity by this time. Breen would have been a British hero.

DAN'S BOOK: *MY FIGHT FOR IRISH FREEDOM*

"One of the most consistently heard rumours about Breen is the one which suggests that he was illiterate or semi-literate and, therefore, incapable of writing his own book. Breen, in reality, was an inveterate correspondent and book reader who wrote vigorous letters full of rich turns of phrase and potently argued points of view" ("*Dan Breen And The IRA*", Joe Ambrose, Mercier, 2006, p153, 2006).

"Early in 1922, Dan Breen visited our home in Philadelphia, where he met Joe McGarrity and Luke Dillon. Breen gave my mother notes which she later used as the basis for his book *My Fight for Irish Freedom*" (*My Parents And Other Rebels*, Michael Kevin O'Doherty,

Errigal Press, 1999).

"In 1923, my father had advised Dan about publishing his book and had suggested the title. Mother had written the text but neither of my parents had any financial interest in the work. Dan was paid £350 by the Talbot Press and was due to receive royalties of 10%. In 1925, he parted with all rights for a further lump sum and left for the United States. The book was revised in 1964 and has been reprinted eight times since then."

The late Kevin O'Doherty's father, Seamus O'Doherty, was a member of the group within the Irish Republican Brotherhood which was responsible for the 1916 Rising. His family came from Derry.

He married Katherine (Kitty) Gibbons, Collinstown, Co. Westmeath, a National School teacher working in Dublin.

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FROM OXFORD TO DONOHILL

Senator Martin Mansergh's father, Professor Nicholas Mansergh "*heard the shots that rang out from Soloheadbeg, signalling the start of the War of Independence (which interrupted his primary schooling) and recalled seeing the republican Liam Lynch near Grenane with a gash down one side of his face*" (*Martin Mansergh, A Biography*, Kevin Rafter, New Island, 2002).

The boy who heard those fatal shots in January, 1919, Nicholas Mansergh, was a member of an Ascendancy family with an Estate at Grenane, not far from Tipperary town. He later became a Cambridge professor and was awarded an OBE in 1945. He played a major role in the Empire Division, at the Ministry of Information during World War II.

His son, Senator Martin Mansergh, is regarded by many as the 'heir apparent' to Dan Breen's old Fianna Fail seat in Tipperary South. In the 1992 General Election, he polled 5,233 First Preference votes, failing to get elected; but, with the decision by Deputy Noel Davern not to contest next year's General Election, many would regard his prospects in the three-seat constituency as strong.

Fianna Fail have chosen Siobhan Ambrose and Mattie McGrath to run in this constituency also. The three are up against Deputy Davern of Fine Gael, who holds the second seat, and Seamus Healy, an independent Socialist, with the third.

"He may not have had the rank or status of a cabinet minister but, in reality, his influence was greater than most politicians who held senior ministerial

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