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Northern Ireland:

etc., etc., etc.,

The Good Friday Agreement was made for the Social Democratic And Labour Party. The Democratic Unionist Party would have no part in it. The Ulster Unionist Party leader signed under duress and then facilitated the unravelling of it by the bulk of his party. And Mitchell McLaughlin warned against the "euphoria" that was being worked up about it by the propaganda apparatuses of the two Governments. Only the SDLP was happy with it. How could it have been unhappy with a project shaped to its own design?

So where did it all go wrong? Why did the working of the Agreement cause electoral support to slip away from the SDLP to Sinn Fein? And how did the SDLP exchange places with Sinn Fein, not only electorally, but in political disposition? How did it happen that Sinn Fein is engaged in constructive statesmanship with the London and Dublin Governments while the SDLP is whinging about matters that were implicit in the Agreement, aligning itself with the Tory and Fine Gael Oppositions, looking to the House of Lords to reject legislation passed by the Commons, and urging the "feckless and reckless" Tony Blair to stand down in favour of Gordon Brown?

It went wrong because the SDLP, the architect of the GFA, did not understand its own construction. It did not understand what we said over thirty years ago: that Northern Ireland is perhaps the least suitable region of the world for the operation of devolved government. It consists of a profound social antagonism between two peoples whose allegiance is given to different states, and it is not itself a state and is therefore incapable of being a democratic state. It has no capacity for evolving. Its internal arrangements are made from outside itself.

The SDLP naturally would not listen to us when we were attempting to displace it by bringing in the Labour Party of the state. But it might have listened to Charles,
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1916 And All That

When the British Home Secretary, former Communist Party fellow traveller, Charles Clarke, was announcing his latest "anti-terrorist" Bill, he specifically excluded the 1916 Rising from the list of terrorist acts, the praising of which could lead to prosecution and imprisonment. (All "terrorist" acts committed in the last 25 years would be included along with a specified list of such acts committed before that.)

This statement did not declare that 1916 was *not* a terrorist act. Just that it would be excluded from the list but nevertheless was a terrorist act. From the British point of view, the point of view of its own

history as it has chosen to write it, it was of course a terrorist act. More than that it was a terrorist act of the very worst kind. An act of treason committed while Britain was at war defending itself, democracy, civilisation, and general goodness.

The idea that 1916 was a treasonous act of terrorism is not confined these days to the British establishment. It is the opinion, if not too often directly expressed, of historical revisionism in Ireland also. It is the opinion of the majority of Irish academia and national media. Or rather of academia and media in Ireland. For these institutions are now mostly extensions of British media and academia.

The process of recolonising Irish academia has been quite deliberate and

The Dictatorship Of The (petty) Bourgeoisie

Michael McDowell has declared that as Minister for Justice he is entitled to use Garda Criminal files to prosecute a political campaign against Frank Connolly and Sinn Fein. The Minister believes that Connolly and Sinn Fein are intent on overthrowing the State and therefore the normal democratic procedures such as 'due process' must be set aside.

When we first heard this we thought that the Minister had finally succumbed to paranoid delusions brought on by the pressures of high office. We shook our heads sadly and remembered earlier signs such as his attempts to deport a leaving certificate student and his hysterical denunciation of *Daily Ireland* as a Nazi publication.

But what do we know? We don't have access to Garda or Special Branch files and the Taoiseach of our country, Bertie

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systematic with its centre in Oxford. The problem with the media is not so simple. The *Irish Times* was always an outpost of Empire. But the destruction of the *Irish Press* was just a grubby affair, the sorry details of which, I believe, are being dealt with in the *Irish Political Review* by someone else.

RTE was, for a while, in the pocket of left-Republicanism, which became lapsed-Republicanism, which then became something else which I don't claim to understand, but was certainly profitable. RTE television and the national printed media are now little more than training centres for the real thing—the BBC and the British press.

Journalism is by its nature the most
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Haughey when he said a quarter of a century ago that Northern Ireland "was not a viable entity". (And something which is not a viable entity cannot, of course, be a democratically viable entity.)

The GFA had no internal dynamic. It sought to manipulate the two hostile communities into operating a kind of joint government in physical proximity, but political separation, from each other. The various parties would control government departments allocated on the basis of a complicated mathematical system, but those departments would not be the instruments of a Cabinet or general Executive. Each department would be autonomous. It would be the possession of a political party—the government of a part rather than a part of the government; not accountable to the parliament.

The hope, founded on a crude application of the philosophy of association of ideas, was that the hostile parties would find their hostility withering away as a result of physical proximity within the same government buildings and a single body politic would evolve. But familiarity does not always breed content. The power of repulsion between hostile elements may increase in proportion to their closeness. It has been known for members of the same family to break of relations with each other and hate each other to the death, and the hope that feuding families placed in adjacent rooms but sharing the same entrance would grow to love one another was groundless.

UUP warded off the evil day when, as First Minister with a co-equal Nationalist Deputy First Minister, he would become head of this series of independent Departments. He was not in fact the Chairman of a Cabinet responsible to a parliament for the various governments departments, but at the same time he could hardly express hatred and contempt for the Education Minister and the Health Minister as the leader of the DUP did. And the Ministers for Education and Health, who in different circumstances might have rebuffed him, and would certainly have done so if he had tried to act as Prime Minister, in these circumstances embarrassed him greatly by trying to embrace him.

The UUP consistently lost support to the DUP because of the part it played in operating the Agreement, even though the part it played was to subvert it from within. But there was in the UUP/DUP conflict a considerable degree of role playing. The UUP was no more committed to working the Agreement than the DUP, but it had a different part to play in the service of the Unionist interest. Trimble brought about a situation in which Whitehall, in order to save him from bringing down the Agreement with unforeseeable consequences for the Union, suspended the Agreement—put it into deep freeze—and allowed the DUP to become the main representative of Unionism in circumstances where there was no Agreement in operation. And much of the UUP slipped across to the DUP without *angst* or trauma.

The SDLP did not play a comparable role on the Nationalist side to the UUP

on the Unionist side. It embarked on a fantasy of "post-nationalism" and acted as if the communal antagonism, which is the only possible content of Northern Ireland politics, had somehow been superseded by an Agreement which in fact formalised and structured it to a degree never seen before.

Trimble became 'First Minister' in the Summer of 1998. Then for a year and a half he was the First Minister of a Government without Ministries. He made IRA decommissioning a precondition of Sinn Fein taking up the departments to which it was entitled by the system established by the GFA. He declared the principle of "Guns before Government", which was nowhere to be found in the Agreement. He based his refusal to initiate the devolved system on a letter that Blair wrote him a day or two after the Agreement was signed, and on a second letter sent by Blair on the eve of the referendum in order to encourage Unionists to vote Yes. These letters formed no part of the Agreement. What they said could not have formed part of the Agreement. If their content had been insisted upon in the negotiation of the Agreement, there would have been no Agreement.

Trimble's method of stalling the implementation of the Agreement during the crucial year and a half was to refuse to nominate UUP Ministers, while insisting that the two years, envisaged by the Agreement as a period during which Republican decommissioning would occur, should still apply.

That was the time when it would have been to the point for the SDLP to criticise Blair as rash and feckless. His letters were the ground on which Trimble felt secure in sabotaging the Agreement.

We suggested that the SDLP should adopt the position that the two-year decommissioning clock should only start running when the devolved institutions were running, and that it should be stopped while the institutions were stopped. But it did not heed this good advice any more than it heeded our advice on other critical situations, chiefly in 1971 and 1974.

Eventually Blair exerted pressure on Trimble (of a kind we can guess at) to nominate Ministers. But he did so on a six-week decommissioning ultimatum. And so we had a couple of spurts of devolved government before the Marxist-Leninist Secretary of State, John Reid, arranged the Stormontgate etc. grounds for suspension in order to *Save Dave* from himself. But it proved impossible to save him from others.

And Sinn Fein conducted itself so well, while the SDLP did so so badly, that they have changed places, and the SDLP is now playing the Green Card for all it is worth

in the hope of regaining credibility.

The 'On The Runs' are its issue: which is to say, the arrangements for people who were not in prison in 1998, so that they could be let out, or people who had not been even charged but might be.

What we have now is the British Government attempting to draw a line under the war so that things can 'move on' (a term without which British politics would not work), and the SDLP along with the Tories pleading the cause of eternal justice which takes no cognisance of political circumstances—and Fine Gael supporting the eternal cause in the South and making the Government think again about one of the few sensible things it has contemplated—the issuing of free pardons by Parliament.

The SDLP's fig-leaf is that Westminster included policemen and soldiers in the On The Run provisions. They have accused Sinn Fein of being in collusion with the state in order to cheat the victims of state terrorism of the justice which they deserve. If the SDLP leaders actually believe that the state will mete out justice to its victims in these matters, they are living in a bigger fool's paradise than we ever imagined.

*

“one of the architects of Ostpolitik—Willy Brandt's adviser, Egon Bahr—once said: “If you want to change realities, you have to recognise them”.

“In the early 1970s, West Germans did—in many cases very reluctantly—recognise the reality of a second German state and began to deal with it.

“Two decades later, they were reunited, when the two parts decided to come together in acts of concurrent self-determination.

“A majority on the whole was made up—and had to be made up—of the majority of the two parts.

“The people of Ireland—and of nationalist Ireland overwhelmingly—have decided that Ireland will only be reunited by that same method.”

Thus does Senator Martin Mansergh pursue his mission.

This is a further contribution to his argument with Liam O Comain of Derry in the *Irish News* (28 Nov.) Some of his earlier contributions were commented on last month. Another contributor to that discussion asked: “Does Martin Mansergh understand the meaning of the word ‘devious’?” It's a pertinent question. One begins to suspect that the answer is that he doesn't.

The meaning of the paragraphs quoted, if the series of facts is understood as causative, is that the unification of Germany came about as a consequence of the recognition by West Germany of the legitimacy of the East German state. And Mansergh clearly intends his facts to be understood in a causative connection

Recognising Britishness?

Derek McDowell of the Irish Labour Party wrote *Hard Thinking On The Road To Unity* in the *Irish Times* (21st November) 2005. The following reply failed to find publication.

Derek McDowell asks us (21.11.05) whether we are really ready to recognise the Britishness of a large part of the population in a United Ireland.

The partition arrangement failed in 1969. In 1998 a re-vamped version of Stormont was set up. That's where we are now.

The partition which failed in 1969 was not the partition of the Six Counties from the Twenty Six, but the partition of Ulster from Great Britain. The arrangement established by Britain in 1920 deliberately placed the Six Counties outside the system of representative government of the British state, thereby reducing Northern politics to the heavy-handed policing of one community by another. That is what failed in 1969.

Subsequent efforts to end this partition—to involve the Northern population in the processes by which their (sovereign British) government is constituted and elected—were rejected, not by the Catholic community, but by the Protestant or British community itself. *British Rights for British Citizens* was a slogan of the Civil Rights Movement. Sustained efforts to break the embargo on Northern involvement in the election of the British government, and in the government of the British state, were defeated by Unionism which has grown to love its little ghetto.

Derek McDowell states that a united Ireland must recognise the Britishness of a large part of the population, and suggests various measures, unpalatable to him, which might do this. The problem with Derek's idea is that the Protestant community itself rejected essential Britishness in favour of superficial Britishness in the form of a cult of the Union Jack, the Somme and the Queen. (Unlike the Provisionals, who, far from rejecting the legitimacy and authority of the Irish Republic, strive to participate actively in its councils.) Worse than that, the primary purpose of Union Jackery—the restrained version, not just its extreme manifestations in the mutual communal aggravation—is to express difference and division. In plain language, Catholics are not welcome to join in. So all of Derek McDowell's concessions to Britishness and Union Jackery would be of no avail.

The failure of partition, in the above sense, means that the lesser partition is now on the table. Irish unity is the only game in town. So Derek McDowell is right—there is a problem. But misreading the problem, as he does, will not help. The one and only thing the Unionists really want is substantial restoration of the old Stormont regime, and that they cannot have. The various other possibilities—and Unionist rejection of actual Britishness means there is now only one—can therefore only come about against their will. Unfortunately, this is the reality that must be faced up to. **Pat Muldowney**

with each other. The implication is that West German recognition of the legitimacy of East Germany led to a *rapprochement* between the two states as East German suspicions of West Germany were allayed.

Is 15 years such a long time in politics that it allows a confidence trick like this to be got away with?

The obstacle to the unification of Germany was never the will of the people in East Germany. And the operative cause of unification was the collapse of the Soviet regime.

Germany was divided as a consequence of invasion. Britain declared war on it in 1939 on the issue of Danzig. The Poles resisted a settlement of that issue at the urging of Britain, which gave them a guarantee of military alliance against

Germany. It declared war when Germany resorted to direct action, but did nothing whatever to make good its guarantee to the Poles. It maintained its declaration of war against Germany after the Polish state collapsed, and was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union, but still made no attempt to invade Germany, though it tried to get into military conflict with the Soviet Union in Finland. The British intention was that the French should bear the main human cost of the war on Germany, and it made only minimal provision for fighting it. But, once burned, twice shy. The French bore the main cost of the first war on Germany and were prevented by Britain from making a settlement that would rule out the possibility of a second war with Germany for many generations, or even centuries. They were not willing to bear the main brunt of a second war instigated

by Britain. When Germany responded to the declarations of war on it in May 1940 with some initial success, Britain took its Army off the Continent and made no arrangements to return. And France made a settlement. But Britain, safe behind its control of the seas, and knowing that Hitler had no intention of attempting an invasion, maintained its declaration of war and kept Europe on a war-footing, in the hope of bringing about a war between Germany and the Soviet Union.

That strategy bore fruit in June 1941. The military substance of the Second World War was the war between Germany and the Soviet Union. Russia fought alone for three years, with British activity limited to pin-pricks on the margins. American entered the war in December 1941 and urged the opening of a Second Front. Britain refused to act in 1942 and 1943. The hope was that the German and Russian Armies would so weaken each other that Britain could eventually step in and assert mastery. But, after the Battle of Kursk, it became evident that Russia was going to win and that, if the Second Front was delayed for another year, the power across the Channel might well be Soviet. The invasion was therefore launched in 1944 and Britain and the USA succeeded in seizing France and parts of Germany from the weak German Army in the West before meeting the Russian Army in the heart of Germany. (The meeting point would probably have been much further East but for the systematic British obstruction of the Americans.) And *that* was the Partition of Germany. It had nothing whatever to do with the will of the German people. The area of Western occupation was made into the Federal Republic and the area of Soviet occupation into the People's Republic. The division between them was not a function of German politics. It was a function of the geopolitics of the Great Powers.

The West German state was the creation, with American backing, of Konrad Adenauer, one of the founders of Christian Democracy. Adenauer refused to recognise the legitimacy of the East German state. When the Social Democrats came to power, they recognised East Germany as a legitimate state. This recognition of reality had no effect whatever in changing the reality which it recognised. The Partition of Germany carried on for a further generation. Unification came about through the collapse of the Power behind East Germany, and of the political stratum within East Germany which acted for that Power. When unification happened—when the East Germans voted for unity—the West German state reverted to Adenauer's position that East Germany was not a legitimate state, and it set about criminalising its personnel. Border guards who had protected the state were prosecuted for murder. Confiscations

of landlord property carried out by the East German state were treated as theft, and the property was restored to those who had owned it in Nazi Germany. In the matter of pensions etc., service of the Nazi state was recognised as legitimate and the pensions were paid, but service of the East German state was not recognised as entitling a person to a full pension. And the general consequence of unification was the colonisation of the East by overlords from the West who decreed that everything done under the auspices of the East German state was worthless and should be destroyed.

But certain changes enacted in East Germany were recognised as legitimate by the West German state after unification. Those were the changes made directly by Russia as an occupying Power, without the intermediacy of the East German state.

Such was the unification of Germany. It was the incorporation of the East into the West German state, and the punishment of East Germans for having served the Russian occupation. Willy Brandt's 'recognition' counted for nothing either in bringing about unification or protecting East Germans after unification. His *Ostpolitik* was treated in the moment of unification as being no more legitimate than the state which it recognised.

Senator Mansergh might care to reconsider his German model for Irish unification.

Liam O Comain comments:

"Mr. Mansergh refuses to live in the real world when he believes that something relevant to Germany's history and recent past will have any significance to the British problem in Ireland. Perhaps it could have some bearing if Britain was willing to disengage from Ireland, but she has no intention of doing so".

Which recognises what Mansergh denies: the crucial role of the Power behind the statelet, in Ireland as well as Germany.

Wolfe Tone's part in 1798 is also an issue in this dispute:

Mansergh (4 Nov): "Liam O Comain... still fails to grasp his misunderstanding of the teaching of Wolfe Tone, that you have to achieve unity between people (the means) first, in order to achieve separation (the object)—not the other way around."

O Comain (5 Nov): "Martin Mansergh has got it wrong in relation to Tone's principles for the father founder of Irish republicanism led a rebellion against British occupation (the separatist objective) before achieving unity (the means). So who is putting the cart before the horse...?"

Mansergh (28 Nov): "On a point of history, Wolfe Tone did not lead the 1798 rebellion. Lord Edward Fitzgerald was designated leader till his arrest and

he had no one replacement. Tone was the emissary of the United Irishmen in Paris and was captured off the coast of Donegal in November 1798. The whole basis of the rebellion was to combine in particular northern Presbyterians and Catholics throughout Ireland. He did not unite them but at least he tried, with some success. Contrast this with the world of active dissident republicanism which is a Protestant-free zone."

O Comain (2 Dec): "Martin Mansergh in his recent exercise as an apologist for the Belfast Agreement attempts to rewrite history by cutting hairs and denying Wolfe Tone's leadership of the republican rising of 1798. Even Schoolchildren would name Wolfe Tone as the authentic leader of that glorious chapter in our history. Unfortunately Mr. Mansergh's response is the typical reaction of revisionists and unfortunately that ilk has grown in numbers in recent decades as they twist the truth, on behalf of their non-national political ideologies."

It seems that Mansergh broke off at this point (O Comain on 17 December concluded a reply to another correspondent by asking "*why doesn't Martin add his opinion also?*"). It was very foolish of him to have engaged in this dispute in the first place. Not because the matter at issue is irrelevant—far from it—but because he has no sense of what it is to live as part of the 'minority' in the Northern Ireland Limbo.

He has been making it clear in recent years that his general outlook is that of his father. Nicholas Mansergh was a British academic/administrator with some property in Ireland. He has recently been hailed by Professor Joseph Lee as the greatest Irish historian of the 20th century. His books were written in the service of the British state. Martin has indignantly rejected the notion that his father was a spy. We don't know who floated that notion. We can only say it is absurd. Nicholas Mansergh was entirely open and above board in his activities—altogether unlike Elizabeth Bowen. He was a permanent member of the apparatus of the British state in Britain and his job was to handle the British interest intellectually in matters related to the decline of the Empire. His book on Northern Ireland, published in the mid-1930s, is written entirely from the British viewpoint and it glosses over the perversity of the Northern Ireland political system, blaming its political abnormality on the Nationalists. His book on the First World War, which began as a series of lectures delivered at a Protestant ladies college in Dublin during the Second World War, is little more than a re-hash of the British war propaganda of 1914. And Martin has recently gone on record as dissenting from the 1916 Proclamation in the matter of the "*gallant allies in Europe*".

(As for Professor Lee: he is, it seems, an “*anti-revisionist*”. But he resigned from his position as Professor of History in Cork University and made way for a revisionist because he was unable to hold his own against his subordinates in his own department.)

Senator Mansergh describes O’Cain as “*dissident republican*”. Is that because he is not a Provisional Republican? Does Fianna Fail regard Provisional Republicanism as authentic and legitimate? Obviously not. If it did so, it would have been acting differently with regard to the North in recent years, and the outcome would have been different.

Albert Reynolds, during his brief period in office before the *Irish Times* and the Labour Party undermined him, did treat Provisional Republicanism as an authentic product of the thoroughly abnormal Northern Ireland set-up. He did not apply to it the standards that would be appropriate to a party in a functional democracy but which have no relevance in Northern Ireland. But Bertie has been incapable of continuing that approach. He has entered the make-belief of Northern Ireland democracy, and has handed over Northern policy to his Minister of the Interior—one must not mistake names for things; MacDowell has the Justice portfolio, but his conduct is that of a Minister of the Interior who asserts the authority of the state with little regard for law. The 26 Counties is now being governed by a party representing 4% of the electorate, in the manner of a banana republic.

The leaders of Sinn Fein are declared to be bank-robbers without a shred of evidence being produced. In the year since the Northern Bank robbery there have been a number of arrests in connection with it, but we have not heard it suggested that any of those arrested were connected with Gerry Adams. The Columbia Three were treated as guilty for political purposes in Ireland. They were found Not Guilty by the court in Columbia. And they were found guilty by Executive decree, which even C.C. O’Brien says was on instruction from Washington. The attribution of the robbery of documents from Castlereagh high-security barracks to the Provos for political purposes has not been followed by charges, or even arrests, of Republicans—and nothing has come to light which challenges the view that it was an incident in the dispute between forces of state security in the North. And the Stormontgate case collapsed in Court—with the state acknowledging that the person whom it charged with illegal possession of documents was in fact its own spy, an agent.

We do not deny that those responsible for governing a state must sometimes act

on information which cannot be made the basis for criminal prosecution. Even well-governed democratic states do it all the time. But, in the doing of it, they do not usually blurt out from the housetops as certain fact the allegations concerning which they do not even have sufficient evidence to formulate a charge.

Of the four major allegations which were the pretext for suspending the operation of the Good Friday Agreement, three of them (those within the jurisdiction of the two states which collaborated in making the allegations), remain entirely unsubstantiated, while in the case of the fourth (Columbia) the finding of the Court on the basis of presentation of the evidence was overturned by the Executive without either new evidence or review of the evidence on which the finding of the Court was based.

This is government by Ministries of the Interior, North and South, acting outside the rule of law, without even the decency of preserving the good name of the law by announcing that it has been suspended to facilitate Executive action in what the Governments claim to be a dire emergency.

(In the North, the Secretary of State, Peter Hain, has no standing of his own. Following a long career as a dissident, he entered the establishment as Tony Blair messenger-boy, and he has the good sense to know his limitations. The party currently governing the South has convinced itself that it warded off a Provo *coup d’etat* during the past year. One of the PD Senators, John Minahane, went on Radio Eireann to characterise Provisional Republicanism as a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary conspiracy. Meanwhile, the leader of the PDs has been making discreet approaches to the Labour Party, which is led by the Marxist-Leninist Official Republicans who denounced the Provos as mere nationalists back at the start of it all. The Provos were unaffected by the collapse of Marxism-Leninism, or were possibly even strengthened by it, because they were mere nationalists. And now the leader of the Labour Party, Pat Rabbitte, who is in the Labour Party because Marxism-Leninism collapsed on him, describes the Provos as “*tribalists*” (IT 30.12.05), while declaring his intention of participating in the revived 1916 commemoration—this intention being undoubtedly determined by the resurgence of Provo Sinn Fein.)

The revelation that a prominent member of Sinn Fein has been an agent of the British Government for twenty years led to a demand by the SDLP that Gerry Adams should resign, and a warning from Anthony McIntyre that the Dail is being penetrated by the British wolf under the guise of Sinn Fein sheep. Thus the Provos are being simultaneously criticised by the SDLP

for being lax in its counter-intelligence activity and for engaging in that activity at all. And God only knows what Anthony McIntyre is up to.

On the day that it was officially admitted that Denis Donaldson was a British agent, Paul Murphy (Peter Hain’s predecessor) was brought on British radio to assure the British public that, even though the Stormontgate prosecution had collapsed, what was alleged by the prosecution was true, because Donaldson had in his possession documents that he should not have. But in which capacity did Donaldson possess those documents? And what documents were they?

The state lays charges against its own agent and members of his family for illegal possession of documents and then collapses the trial on the basis that the agent is going to be named. Who was going to name him? Was Donaldson expected to serve a prison sentence in order to maintain his credibility as a Sinn Fein and justify the suspension of the Agreement on the grounds that Sinn Fein was in breach of it? Was this a requirement too far for him? Did the Government give him advance notice that he was going to be “*outed*” in the hope that it would cause him to accept its offer to disappear into a false identity in foreign parts and thus enable Lord Alderdice and his ‘Independent Monitoring Commission’ to find that the Provos had breached their Ceasefire by getting rid of him?

We do not expect that these questions will ever be answered. But the practical assumption must be that the State planted the ‘Stormontgate’ documents, but somehow its agent who planted them failed to plant them on anybody but himself and his son-in-law.

The British state has, in its internal affairs, operated by espionage and blackmail ever since the time of Elizabeth and Cecil. We did not believe otherwise during the years when we tried to get the Six Counties incorporated into its political life—and we were ourselves never subjected to its espionage and blackmail activities as much as during those years. But the Dublin state, which is in so many ways a creation of the British in that regard, is certainly no better. And the best way of coping with it all is to carry on regardless. After all the agent must serve the cause which he is sent to subvert in order to gain purchase on it.

The Sinn Fein leadership has been consistent in its approach for 20 years. It worked the Agreement well from the viewpoint of the general nationalist interest while the SDLP worked it badly, and we cannot see what more could be expected in Northern Ireland. The Stakeknife (or is it Steak-knife?) revelations did it little damage, and we cannot see why the Donaldson affair should damage it. It is

the little boy in the Northern Ireland Office who was left looking foolish. Twenty years ago, when he was a saboteur on principle, he was the victim of a conspiracy from which he was lucky to escape—but in office in the most conspiratorial state of all he has lost the ability to believe in conspiracies, and he must maintain his disbelief even in the face of an exposed conspiracy.

Our view of the Agreement from the start has been that it is an unworkable concoction, constructed in accordance with John Hume's convoluted rhetoric, and agreed to by the UUP under duress, which might be given a semblance of life by strong external pressure on the Unionists continuously applied. The Provos agreed to operate within it from a position of initial disadvantage, and they made a success of their part in it—i.e., the Catholic community is for the most part satisfied with the part that they have played. They have in a sense become part of the establishment, but in an arrangement which is far from being a settlement.

In those circumstances there are certainly general grounds for republican criticism. Senator Mansergh brands such criticism as “*dissident*”, but without recognising Provo republicanism as authentic or legitimate. And, by his far-fetched modes of argument, we cannot see that he does anything but harm to the cause he imagines he is supporting.

It is, as O Comain says, ridiculous to quibble over the customary republican view of Wolfe Tone. And two referendums, held in two states with the results not being combined, are in no way comparable to the 1918 Election, held in what until then had never been regarded as anything but an integral constitutional unit. “*Concurrent*” voting is of no consequence. A 6 County vote for unity would not be invalidated by the fact that the 26 Counties voted on a different day. The day doesn't matter. It is only part of the confidence trick. Numerous elections have been held in the North and the South ever since 1921, and neither their results or their significance would have been different if they had always been held on the same day.

As for the leader in 1798: Wolfe Tone sailed from France with serious intent, having organised a French invasion, and was captured. His reasoning was that a successful invasion would elicit widespread support. O Comain is right in his sequencing.

The unity within had crumbled before Wolfe Tone sailed. Lord Edward was betrayed by a high-minded informer. The supposed General for County Down, the Rev. William Steel Dickson, had been imprisoned, possibly because Lord

Castlereagh, whom he had once taught, had a soft spot for him, knew what he was up to, and wanted to put him out of harm's way—and he was all but forgotten when Athol Books restored him. Most important of all was General Simms, *United* General for Co. Antrim. General Who? Why, General Simms, the lynchpin of the movement in its heartland. He resigned his commission on the eve of battle, leaving his Army leaderless, and settled down as a prosperous Belfast bourgeois under the Union.

Wolfe Tone was the man all right. Mansergh is being too clever by half.

(Of course the main fighting was done in Wexford. But it happened in response to Government terrorism in an area where there was scarcely any *United* organisation.)

And Mansergh's jibe about “*dissident*” Republicanism being “*a Protestant-free zone*” is very cheap indeed. It was no merit at all on the part of the United Irish movement that it included Protestants, seeing that it was a movement within Protestant Ireland, and was strongest in Antrim and Down, where there were then very few Catholics. In those days Ireland was a Protestant State for a Protestant nation. The United Irish aspired to bring the Catholic millions into the nation to strengthen it as an independent component of the Empire. It was not disputed then that the Kingdom of Ireland was an integral constitutional entity. Things are rather different now. The country has been divided and the ‘democracy’ of the British part of it has been rigorously separated into Protestant-free and Catholic-free political bodies by the Agreement for which Mansergh is an enthusiast. Segregation is the order of the day. And, within this officially-ordered segregation, the ‘dissident Republicans’, as far as we know, have been as successful in attracting Protestants as any other organisation on that side.

The Dictatorship Of The (petty) Bourgeoisie

continued

Ahern, does not think that his Minister is a fascist fantasist. The Taoiseach has not, no more than the *Irish Political Review*, direct access to Garda files. That privilege is reserved for the Minister for Justice. But perhaps Ahern is on McDowell's circulation list. If so, it would be interesting to know where the Taoiseach stands in the pecking order in the midst of this state crisis. Was he consulted before McDowell read the Garda files or did he have to stand in line behind Chuck Feeney the financial benefactor of the Centre for Public Inquiry, the organisation that Frank Connolly works for? Or perhaps the Taoiseach had to wait until after *Irish Independent* journalist Sam Smyth had been given the details?

But whatever about the procedures for dealing with the crisis, it cannot be denied that there is a crisis. Not only does the Taoiseach support the Minister, but also the ‘democratic’ opposition does, or at least the ‘democratic’ opposition has not called for his resignation. Fine Gael believes that Connolly, not McDowell, has “*questions to answer*”.

But what questions has Connolly to answer? Indeed what is Connolly being accused of? His alleged subversive act was travelling to Colombia on a false passport. It is difficult to know how this represents a threat to the Irish State unless the interests of Columbia and the Republic of Ireland are so close that a threat to one state is a threat to the other. Frank Connolly has denied this ‘heinous’ crime in unequivocal terms. But apparently others know better.

In an interview with Eamon Dunphy the journalist Sam Smyth said that he “*believed*” that Connolly had travelled to Colombia on false documentation. He then produced “*evidence*”, which consisted

Correction

In December's *Irish Political Review*, the article, *Sewer Journalism*, incorrectly says that Sir Anthony O'Reilly owns a stake in the *Observer*. He doesn't. The *Observer* is owned by Guardian Newspapers Limited which is in turn owned by the non-profitmaking Scott Trust, who bought it from Lonhro. No newspaper barons involved — which makes the crap journalism about Liam Lawlor's demise all the more disgraceful.

of a copy of a passport application not in Frank Connolly's name. He claimed that the passport application had a passport photo, which looked like Frank Connolly. But he had not seen the original picture: only an A4 copy. Even though Smyth has known Connolly for nearly 20 years he could not say for certain if the person in the A4 copy was Frank Connolly, but other unspecified people "believed" that the person in the photograph was indeed Connolly.

Dunphy said that he knew of other journalists working for *Independent* newspapers that also saw the A4 copy and did not think that it was Connolly. And isn't it interesting that a valid passport photo (the application was successful after all), allegedly of Connolly, accompanying a passport application in another name is not sufficient to convict Connolly of a criminal offence?

But perhaps such notions of 'evidence' and 'due process' are the mere 'props' of the judicial system of a bygone era. They have no place in the new revolutionary era ushered in by Michael McDowell. *The Irish Times* columnist Kevin Myers has described such a notion as "due process" as a "folderol" and a "mare's nest". The job of journalists in the new era is the revelation of 'truth' and 'truth' does not need to be filtered by evidence or due process. Any journalist who does not recognise the 'truth' is an "enemy". Myers has announced that Frank Connolly travelled to Colombia on bogus documents and the IRA was responsible for the Northern Bank robbery. Anyone who does not recognise these 'truths' is either a "dupe or a mole". All distinctions between the roles of the Minister for Justice, journalists, policemen, judges and juries have become irrelevant. The citizen is either for the state or its enemy. Indeed it appears that the past and present have also become blurred. The Special branch files on Connolly have been made public and they indicate that Connolly was a member of a group called "Revolutionary Struggle" twenty years ago when he was a student and therefore he is a member of "Revolutionary Struggle".

In a bygone era we might have dismissed Myers as a reactionary windbag, the court jester of the West Brit coterie that runs *The Irish Times*. But not anymore! Kevin Myers has joined the main stream. The Minister for Justice has decreed at a press conference at which he refused to answer any questions about the Frank Connolly affair that all journalists should

paste Myers article to the wall and learn it by heart. Myers represents the new orthodoxy.

The Minister, who is a member of a party representing about 3% of the vote and with two Cabinet seats, believes that Sinn Fein along with their proxies—the Centre for Public Inquiry and Frank Connolly—are part of a conspiracy to overthrow the State. We have said in the opening paragraph that McDowell is intent on prosecuting a 'political campaign' but this doesn't quite describe the essence of the campaign. His political opponents are not just people he disagrees with but criminals.

How could the Republic of Ireland have arrived at such a perilous state requiring such extreme measures? The economy has been booming. The war in Northern Ireland has stopped and the IRA has been de-commissioning its arms. Twenty years ago unemployment was nearly 20%. There was a war in Northern Ireland. Thirty years ago bombs were going off in Dublin and Monaghan. And yet no Minister for Justice felt it necessary to use criminal files to try in public his enemies: not Sean Doherty, not Jim Mitchell, not Michael Noonan, not Paddy Cooney, or any other Minister for Justice.

We are impressed by McDowell's energy and revolutionary zeal, which has carried the state's largest political party in its wake. But we cannot avoid the conclusion that the people who allowed the State to reach such a degree of vulnerability in the most favourable circumstances imaginable are unfit to govern. Since it appears that we now have to be either for or against the current McDowell led regime we feel we have no alternative but to declare ourselves on the side of the revolutionary opposition!

Finian McGrath TD Condemns McDowell

On 13th December 2005, the Independent TD, Finian McGrath, spoke as follows on Michael McDowell's idea of 'justice':

"Today is a very sad one for the justice system as it marks a step backwards regarding human rights on the island. It is not the first time in the history of our small State that a Minister for Justice has tramped over the rights of our citizens. It is a disgrace, a scandal and an abuse of power. It is a shame that any Minister for Justice should turn his back on the decent fundamental principles of justice. The Minister has done our democracy a major disservice and hidden behind Dáil privilege to undermine the backbone of our judicial system, which guarantees the presumption of innocence until one has been proven guilty in a court of law.

"I agree with Mr. Justice Flood's comments this morning that we must stand up for the system and guarantee our citizens their rights under the Constitution. There has been nothing progressive or democratic about the actions or words of the Minister over the past few days. He has undermined the justice system and damaged the independence and integrity of the DPP's office. Those are serious issues, and it is time the Minister resigned. We cannot have a Minister who thinks himself above the law or that law and order are his to decide. The Minister would be at home in some right wing government in South America.

"I also accuse him of being a hypocrite regarding the leaking of Garda files to a journalist to destroy Mr. Connolly and the great work of the Centre for Public Inquiry in rooting out sleaze and corruption in this country. In recent days we have seen more evidence of it in my constituency, with great damage to politics. Regarding Chuck Feeney and the Centre for Public Inquiry, I urge them to reconsider funding instead of listening to the Minister or his party, who from day one wanted to take out the centre. This country needs such groups, and Frank Connolly has been a tireless investigative journalist who exposed scandals, corruption and sleaze. Many people knew that elements would take him out.

"This debate is about a Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform who abused his power to trample on the rights of a citizen and seriously damage the integrity of the justice system."

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The 2006 Budget

Brian Cowen's second Budget showed many of the hallmarks of his first. It was politically astute and cautious with none of the free market triumphalism of McCreevy's budgets. Cowen recognised the need for everyone to participate in the success of the economy. But there was nothing radical about it. There were no property taxes; no increases in corporate or Capital Gains Taxes; no reduction in indirect taxes such as VAT, which for the first time generates more revenue than income taxes. He tweaked the tax system in a more social direction without running any serious risk of causing this country to lose its position as the second most unequal society in the OECD.

In truth there was no electoral incentive for Cowen to do any more than he did. The largest 'left' party in opposition, the Labour Party, has not been calling for increased corporate, capital gains taxes or property taxes. So why would Fianna Fail introduce them?

CHILDCARE STRATEGY

The centrepiece of Labour's strategy was its child care policy. It was the one policy that Pat Rabbitte said was not negotiable in a future coalition with Fine Gael. It now looks like Cowen has taken Childcare off the political agenda by eliminating significant points of difference with the Opposition.

The Government has continued to make progress in the amount of Child Benefit. This year Cowen increased the amounts to 150 euros a month for each of the first two children (11.6% increase) and to 185 for subsequent children (9.9% increase). As he pointed out, in 1997 the amount for the first and second child was a mere 38 euros a month.

In the Budget he announced that the first 10,000 euros of childcare income would be tax free and exempt from PRSI for childminders minding up to three children other than their own.

A new early childcare supplement will be introduced. This will amount to one thousand euros a year to be paid to parents for each child under the age of six.

From next March paid Maternity Leave will be extended by four weeks to 22 weeks. It will be extended to 26 weeks in 2007. Unpaid Maternity Leave will increase by four weeks in 2006 and another four in 2007. This will bring unpaid maternity leave to 16 weeks. There is already fourteen weeks unpaid parental leave. Therefore in total a parent will be entitled to a total of 56 weeks' leave.

A new capital expenditure programme will be introduced to increase the number of childcare places, in order to ensure that the money thrown at the problem will not just result in higher childcare costs. A national childcare programme running from 2006 to 2010 will support the creation of an extra 50,000 childcare places. The maximum grant to private providers will increase to 100,000 euros and the maximum grant to community providers will increase to 1 million, subject to a maximum of 20,000 euros per place.

The Minister for Finance has in effect trumped Labour's strategy. There was some criticism that he spread the resources too thin but, as McCreevy found out a few years ago, Irish preferences are for the state to be neutral between women staying at home and working women with children in creches.

It is not a good time to be in opposition. Labour's excellent Joan Burton was floundering. In the 2005 budget she was reduced to claiming that Cowen was only repairing the damage inflicted by his predecessor. For this year's budget she was saying that Cowen, like St. Augustine, wanted virtue but not now. One of the issues which Burton highlighted last year was the number of millionaires that were paying little or no tax. Cowen decided to tackle this issue. The details are unclear at the time of writing but anyone with a salary over 250,000 euros, including artists, will have to pay some tax. The tax exemption for stud owners will also be phased out. Perhaps Burton is right to say that it should have been phased out sooner but, by the next election, the issue will no longer be a point of political conflict.

Burton also made some good points criticising the generous tax exemptions for private health care. There is no doubt that this will be the Government's Achilles Heel in the next election. Health is the one sector which is completely unsuitable for free market policies. The main reason is that the supplier determines the demand. Unfortunately, Fine Gael is in favour of a free market solution. Rabbitte has already declared that Labour's childcare policy is not negotiable. Can he now turn around and say that its health policies are not negotiable? By tying itself in with Fine Gael, Labour is in danger of being squeezed from the right by Fianna Fail and from the left by Sinn Fein.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND PENSIONS

Cowen increased all personal social welfare rates by 17 euros a week. The

lowest social welfare rate will therefore increase by 11%. Higher rates will increase by a smaller percentage. Non contributory pension will increase by 8% and Contributory Pensions will increase by 9.6%. These are significant increases given an expected inflation rate of 2.7%.

INCOME TAX

A feature of our tax system that is rarely mentioned is the individualisation of the Tax Credits, which has taken place in recent years. Media comment has only been on the individualisation of Tax Bands. In this year's budget Cowen increased the Employee Tax Credit. In the past this was an insignificant relief, which was conceded to PAYE taxpayers after the marches of the late 1970s. Cowen increased it by 220 euros to 1,490 (17.3% increase). This relief applies to individuals in the PAYE system.

By contrast, the Single and Married Couples' Credits were increased by only 50 euros and 100 euros respectively. This modest increase of 3.2% means that the Single persons allowance is 1,630 euros and the married person's credit is 3,260. It won't be long before the Employee Tax Credit is larger than the Single Persons' credit. About five years ago the Employee Tax Credit was less than half the Single Persons' Credit.

The policy of individualisation of the Tax Bands continued. The Minister increased the standard rate Tax Band by 2,600 to 32,000 euros, which is just under 9%. But this increase also applied to the Married Couples' Tax Band and represents a less than 7% increase to 41,000. Before McCreevy, the Married Couples' Tax Band was double the Single Persons' band. The ratio is now about 1.28. There is no doubt that the thrust of tax reform in the last five years has been to encourage married women to enter the workforce.

Cowen also increased the threshold for the 2% Health Levy from 400 to 440 euros a week. Other tax reliefs included an increase from 200 to 300 euros a year for Trade Union subscriptions. The Tax Credits for widowed persons, blind persons, incapacitated children, dependent relatives, and those aged 65 or over will increase by between 20 to 50 per cent.

While there was no change in the corporate tax system he did close a loophole allowing foreign executives to avoid paying tax for remuneration for work here being paid from abroad. The closing of this loophole will save 100 million euros a year!

Overall the budget was expansionary but, such is the buoyancy of the economy, that the anticipated General Government Deficit will be a mere 0.6% of GDP.

So the Minister cannot be accused of being irresponsible. There were no great surprises in this Budget. Cowen has continued the tentative move to the left, which began with his first Budget last year. About a year ago Pat Rabbitte suggested that Bertie Ahern's sudden conversion to socialism was the funniest thing to come out of Ireland since the *Commitments*. It would be interesting to know what Labour

would have done differently in the last two years and what it would do differently if it were in coalition with Fine Gael after the next election. I suspect not a lot.

John Martin

But Ireland is a country where history matters—and whose history inescapably involves Britain too...

Here Kettle goes on at some length about the rise of Sinn Fein affecting Ahern's decision—implying one must suppose that there was something discreditable about that.

“But Ahern and Fianna Fail—and even Ireland itself—pay a price for again embracing the legacy of 1916. That legacy is not just the sentimental heroic nationalist myth so intoxicating to the Irish diaspora. It is also the legacy of a state born in martyrdom and violence, created around the romance of the deed, whose origins are steeped in the pseudoreligious cult of the transformative blood sacrifice and purging authenticity of the acts of a committed minority that al-Qaida or Hamas could recognise...”

“Of course the 1916 events need to be marked, discussed, celebrated and regretted... By 2016, does Ireland really want to be defined anew by men and women who were contemporaries of the Kaiser, Lord Kitchener and Charlie Chaplin? Very few of the rest of us feel this need. But if Ireland cannot liberate its self-image from its violent past, what hope is there for its non-violent future?”

So forget your history and if you have to be violent don't be violent on your own behalf. Is that it?

A myth is something that is made up, that hasn't actually happened. But Kettle doesn't deny that 1916 happened and even goes on to state that Irish politics emanate from 1916—so that's not a myth either. What he really means is that 1916 shouldn't have happened and should be treated just as a fairy tale—if something of the Grimm variety.

It is “*intoxicating to the Irish diaspora*”. Is it? My experience of the “*Irish diaspora*” in England is that it becomes English within a generation. In America it knows why it is there. It was starved out by the million by Trevelyan at the behest of England's economists, her politicians, and her clergy. Irish Americans know all about 1916. But they feel (or as Mr. Kettle would have it, are intoxicated by) the Great Hunger of the 1840s. The so-called Famine was a great tragedy, and those who escaped with their lives ensured that their descendants would never forget.

This in turn has meant that Britain can never get American backing for doing what it wishes in Ireland—and that annoys the hell out of Britain, as even a casual reading of its press reveals on an almost daily basis.

1916 was an altogether different matter and is remembered within Ireland

1916 And All That

continued

servile trade. For most it is about serving a master, the publisher, as cravenly as possible, for as little effort and as much money as possible. To be a slave to a paper of one opinion is a boost rather than a barrier to a better job with a rival paper. The ability of the journalist to repress or reshape his opinion in the interests of his paper or to be able to have many opinions is what is of interest to potential editors or owners.

There isn't the market for too many Pat Lynchs or Robert Fisks. And the British press usually pays better and offers more opportunities than the Irish press.

The historical revisionist, i.e. pro-British, movement in Ireland assumed it was operating in a vacuum—and within academia and the national media, it was. But in the society as a whole, it was not. It made the mistake of assuming that nothing coherent existed outside of academia and the media.

It was a victim of its own propaganda when it assumed that Irish society had become like the British general public.

It took only a bit of noise from a few nutters from Cork (as Prof. Damien Kiberd described them) to stop the revisionist movement in its tracks and make it prove itself to a people which still had a mind of its own. So far it has failed utterly to prove itself.

Unlike academics, Irish politicians, whatever else you might think about them, know their constituencies very well. And while John Bruton may have let himself be drawn in to the British (and Orange) inspired Reform Movement, those still in active politics weren't going to follow him and lose votes. (This has been sneered at as opportunist, it is in fact a sign of political health.) They saw the revisionists being routed whenever they took their message outside TCD or UCC, and decided that there still was life in the Irish nation.

As I write, the Taoiseach is about to

commemorate the assassin, murderer, ambusher and terrorist, Sean Moylan, down in darkest Kiskeam. He has announced the reinstatement of the annual military commemoration of the treason perpetrated at the GPO in Dublin in 1916. Not to be outdone, the would-be Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, has set up a permanent society to further the memory of the Free State wing of Irish nationalism and the ideas of its founder, the assassin, Michael Collins.

And all this around the time when Britain is remembering its, our, everybody's war dead in all the battles for civilisation since August 1914.

The moment has not yet arrived when Mr. Clarke—it would be the Home Secretary and not the Foreign Secretary—could publicly upbraid the Taoiseach for his temerity in honouring the other war dead—those on the other side in Dublin 1916. But the organ of Liberal Imperialism, *The Guardian*, needs have no such inhibitions.

One Martin Kettle did the honours. His article on the 29th October had all the hallmarks of something whispered in the ear. But never mind, let Mr. Kettle take the credit. At a certain level in British politics it is unreasonable to expect someone to be able to distinguish what he has been told to say from what he has thought up all by himself. Here he goes:

“...it is surely not pointless to hope that both humankind and its anniversaries can be set to more constructive than destructive purposes. This is specially true of anniversaries at the heart of a nation's foundation myths... Last Friday... prime minister Bertie Ahern electrified party supporters with a surprise announcement. From next year, he told them, the Irish army would resume its long discontinued Easter military parade down O'Connell Street, past the Dublin GPO building, focal point of the 1916 rising that led to the existence of the Irish republic itself...”

“It may be tempting to regard all this as both obscure and premature, even by the standards of modern anniversary-mania.

for altogether different reasons. (Being remembered *within* Ireland is what makes it dangerous to Britain.) For although the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army who merged into the Irish Republican Army or *Oglaigh na hEireann* on Easter Monday 1916 were forced to surrender after a week in Dublin and Co. Meath, they went on to something of a victory five years later. The battle in Dublin was the beginning and not the end. There followed Kilmichael, Crossbarry, Fermoy, Clonbannin and many others which made British rule impossible in the greater part of Ireland.

The wisdom of the 1916 rebels was endorsed overwhelmingly by the Irish people in a general election in 1918. Britain defied the clear will of the Irish nation as expressed in that election and suppressed the institutions that emerged from it. This is what led to the Black and Tan war over the following few years. (Kettle makes some incoherent references to the problem of the North. That was dealt with by the above mentioned Cork nutters and others associated with this magazine 35 years ago with the development of the perfectly coherent 2-nations theory. This is not the place to go into all that again.)

1916 was organised by people who did not believe for one minute that the war raging in Europe was for the freedom of small nations. This was how Britain described its declaration of war on Germany when the latter marched through the viciously imperialist state of Belgium. And it was organised by people who believed that Germany was a form of State Social Democracy being attacked by free market Britain in alliance with Autocratic Russia.

The 1916 rebels were very aware that their rising was also a part of the general conflict in Europe. The Proclamation read at the beginning of the Rising by Patrick Pearse refers to "*our gallant allies in Europe*".

The Proclamation is the founding document of the present Irish State. The spirit of this Proclamation, and its understanding that Britain goes to war on the basis of lies, inspired the most successful military commander in 1916, Eamon de Valera, to proclaim Ireland's neutrality a generation later, in 1939. No wonder 1916 gets up the noses of the British establishment. It set a very bad example to the world.

Kettle's complaint, and it is a complaint, that history matters in Ireland, or that it can't liberate itself from its violent past, 10

etc., makes one feel like crying hypocrisy. Especially with the endless celebrations of Trafalgar and World War Two. I notice that the 5th November can't come round without Guy Fawkes still being referred to in pejorative terms.

But I don't think it is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is not something that can exist in England, such is the Anglo-centric mind-set in that place.

Recently I said to a Swiss friend that England can send its army into another country and describe the killing of one of its soldiers as murder. She said that she'd never thought about that but that it was indeed bizarre. I repeated this to an English friend and he couldn't see what point I was making.

The Englishman cannot be accused of thinking "*my country right or wrong*". He will dispute the actions abroad of his country but never the fact that it is acting abroad. And the past is always about having had good intentions—"*lions led by donkeys*" and all that.

I do not know that this mind-set can be changed other than by catastrophe. Maybe by Britain getting in deep somewhere and having no one this time to bail it out. A giant Suez. But Ireland can be spared incorporation into that terrible world of illusion.

As in the past, Ireland can give "*bad example*" to the world. And any development in that direction is going to make Britain as mad as hell. There may be interesting times ahead. But they may be rocky times.

Conor Lynch

PS: Shortly after the Taoiseach's announcement that there would again be an annual military commemoration of 1916, RTE Radio interviewed the recently retired Chief of Staff of the Irish/Free State Army. The General welcomed the proposal and insisted that the army he had commanded was called *Oglaigh na hEireann*, the same *Oglaigh na hEireann* that fought in 1916.

There is, and always has been, a serious dispute in Ireland about which army is the true successor to James Connolly's army: the Free State Army, the IRA, the Continuity IRA and others at different times. What is never in dispute is that whatever is the legitimate army of Ireland must prove its legitimacy with reference to the army that was established on Easter Monday 1916. ..

Athol Books At The RIA

A recent book launch at the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) provided a rare example of recognition of a sort being extended to Athol Books, a small non-commercial publishing group that is generally eschewed in the small world of Dublin publishing. While the spirit of the proceedings was impressive, the general discussion on the books being launched was less than inspiring. The quality of a 'discourse' delivered towards the end suggests, to this author at least, that all is not well in the Irish academic establishment.

The launch took place on 13th December 2005 at the RIA premises beside the Mansion House in Dublin. The books being launched were: *Roger Casement In Irish And World History*, along with *A New History Of Ireland, Volume I: Prehistoric and Early Ireland* and *A New History Of Ireland Volume VII: Ireland, 1921-1984*. As these were the last volumes in the 'New History of Ireland' series, the launch represented the culmination of a publishing project that was begun by Professor Theo Moody in 1968. It was in that sense more than a book launch; as a member of the audience later stated, it was a unique meeting of nearly two hundred Irish historians, a celebratory occasion.

As a representative of Athol Books, I was invited through the good offices of Tim O'Sullivan of the Roger Casement Foundation because of the Casement material published by Athol Books in recent years. The deal was that I could display the publications on Casement, together with some recent titles from Athol Books on Irish history, provided I did not sell any of them.

I took the trouble to produce a handout for the event (see below) and I arrived a half an hour before the first launch so as to have time to set out my stall. I was able to distribute the handout to most of those in attendance and the material was inspected very closely by many people (especially *Hitler's English Inspirers* by Manuel Sarkisyanz based on lectures delivered at Heidelberg University). The Reading Room where the RIA and Athol Books material was displayed side by side has an imposingly ancient atmosphere. As a stranger at a prestigious event I was afforded every courtesy by the staff. At the very end I was approached by Patrick Buckley, the Secretary of the RIA who knew something of the evolution of Athol Books. He opined that, while disagreeing with the broad thrust of many of its publications, the output of Athol Books was impressive.

The RIA deserves credit for allowing Athol Books material to be displayed at one of its major events. If, over the last thirty years, the establishment had in a similar spirit risen to the challenge of Athol Books by recognising its existence as a source of original thought, intellectual life and mental freedom in Ireland would have been immeasurably enhanced.

The speeches for each of the three books being launched were predictably tame. While Noel Dorr was speaking about Casement, I was glad I had included in the handout an excerpt from the blurb of *The Crime Against Europe*. Casement's understanding of the role of British diplomacy in causing the Great War should have been a starting point for the diplomacy of the independent Irish State: that is the point that a veteran of the diplomatic corps like Noel Dorr should have addressed. The only other point I noted was a complaint by Professor Kevin Nowlan against the editors of the *New History Of Ireland* for not inviting Continental scholars to give their views of Irish history.

After the break, a formal meeting of the RIA took place in which a discourse was led by Professor Jane Ohlmeyer of Trinity College, to mark the completion of the *NHI series*. At this point I took out my notebook. One hour later when Professor Ohlmeyer was finished I replaced my pen in a pocket having written nothing. Had I not been present I would not have believed it possible to read a paper to such an audience without saying anything, but that is what happened. The highpoint of the lecture was a whinge about the absence of women in senior positions in history faculties in Irish universities.

When eventually the chairperson asked for contributions from the floor, it was very difficult to get anyone to speak. A few speakers made yet more laudatory noises about the great Professor Moody etc etc. At last a young man with something to say took the floor. He said that as a young male historian he was surprised that when Professor Ohlmeyer had made her point on the gender question no one had rushed to say 'hear hear'. He went on in a similar tone of disapproval for a few moments. Even for seasoned careerists, well versed in the ways of contemporary academic politics, the debate must have come across as depressingly unfitting for an important event of the historian profession in Ireland.

On the train home the thought struck me that what should have been said was that the *NHI* was disgracefully late and hopelessly out of date at the time of publication, that it reflected badly on Professor Moody and his co-editors and authors to have started a project that could not be delivered in

reasonable time. Building on the comment of Professor Nowlan someone should also have informed the audience that Irish historians have sold out by allowing themselves to become an adjunct of the British universities. But these things could not be said at a meeting of contemporary Irish historians. Apparently nothing at all can be said at such a meeting.

David Alvey

Recent Publications

Athol Books and Aubane Historical Society

The Catholic Bulletin and Republican Ireland With special reference to J J O'Kelly ('Sceilg') by Dr Brian P Murphy osb,

Athol Books

This book analyses the development of different strands in the Irish national and cultural movements of the early years of the 20th century. From extensive and meticulous research Dr. Murphy provides new insights on the relationship between these tendencies and their evolution. He sets the record straight and challenges assumptions made by a number of the early revisionist historians.

For its trenchant and well-argued justification of the Rising and the case it made for Independence to people at home and abroad, the *Bulletin* was once described as "*Ireland's heavy artillery*". That seems a most apt description of it.

Sean Moylan in his own words

Aubane Historical Society Book Euro 15

Sean Moylan was the Republican military commander in North Cork during the most intense phase of the War of Independence. Thirty years later he wrote an account of his part in that war and it was placed in the Bureau of Military History along with the accounts of many others. His account is published here for the first time.

"Sean Moylan answers questions put by the Kevin Myers of this world in *The Irish Times* in relations to the fight methods and situations in which he and others found themselves... this sets the record straight." *Éamonn Ó Cúiv T.D.*

"A great antidote to the writing of revisionist historians..." *The Irish Examiner*

"*Sean Moylan: In His Own Words* is a pivotal moment in literature, captured and published for the many of us who are too young to remember and lots of questions to ask about Ireland's turbulent past." *The Corkman*

The Rise and Fall of Imperial Ireland

by Pat Walsh,

Athol Books

Book Euro

24

This book examines Redmondism – how it was shaped by the Boer War, its involvement with Liberal Imperialism, its collapse in tandem with that of the Liberal Party. It is full of resonance with contemporary debate. The story of 'Imperial Ireland' sets the scene

for the subsequent course of 20th century Irish nationalism.

Spotlights on Irish History

by Brendan Clifford,

Aubane Historical Society Book Euro

13

Spotlights On Irish History looks at major personalities, movements, and events through which Ireland developed from what Pearse called a 'mob' into a nation. Brendan Clifford, at a series of meetings held in his native Slieve Luachra, looked over the past from the standpoint of the present. Slieve Luachra is a region in which, amidst all the 'revisionist' undermining, the past has held firm enough to make this possible.

Publications on Roger Casement

The Crime against Europe with the Crime against Ireland by Roger Casement, introduced by Brendan Clifford

Athol Books

Book Euro

13

The *Crime Against Europe* is Roger Casement's only published book. It is a book about British foreign policy and, because of what followed from its publication, it is a book of Irish foreign policy. It states the definite view that British foreign policy was the cause of the World War that began in August 1914 and that the most desirable outcome of that war was the defeat of Britain by Germany. It represents the British declaration of war as an act of aggression which gave effect to the foreign policy of the preceding years.

The Casement Diary Dogmatists

Edited by Brendan Clifford

A Belfast Magazine

Pamphlet Euro 2

This pamphlet disputes the dogmatic assertions of Professor W.J. McCormack and Jeffrey Dudgeon that the Casement diaries are authentic

Traitor-Patriots in the Great War: Casement and Masaryk by Brendan Clifford

A Belfast Magazine

Pamphlet Euro 2

Roger Casement was hanged by Britain for being a traitor, while Britain recruited Thomas Masaryk to be a traitor. And, while in its treatment of Casement it suggested that treason was something essentially dishonourable and set in motion an underground slander campaign to destroy his private reputation along with his public reputation, in the case of Masaryk it represented treason as an honourable patriotic activity.

Roger Casement: A Reassessment of the Diaries Controversies

by Mairead Wilson (Athol Books)

Athol Books

Pamphlet Euro 2

This pamphlet questions the documentary evidence of those defending the authenticity of the Casement diaries.

Further information:
www.atholbooks.org

"No Taxation Without Representation"

Mark Langhammer: Speech at the launch of the QUB booklet, *Visualising Equality*, Tuesday 6th December 2005

It is most appropriate that the launch of this *Visualising Equality* booklet should be at the Grosvenor Conference Centre. This building and Mission is run by the Belfast Central Mission—originally set up by the Reverend William—or “Daddy”—Maguire. Daddy Maguire was a Fermagh man, but when his mission brought him to York Street, he was appalled at the harsh poverty he encountered within the working class, and spent the rest of his years developing missionary work with a social purpose.

The pictures you’ll see around the walls of children travelling by train from inner city Belfast to Bangor or Portrush—in what became known as the “*Days of Delight*”. These were amongst the earliest pioneering efforts at anti-poverty relief.

The topic tonight is Equality, in a Northern Irish context. I feel that movement towards the fair society that my Party, the Labour Party, would like to see is a task with *political will* at its heart.

I have spent all of my political life trying to achieve, for myself and others, political equality. Trying to re-establish the principle of “*No taxation without representation*”.

What is abnormal about Northern Ireland is that its politics are disconnected from Government. And politics disconnected from Government isn’t really politics at all. None of the votes cast in Northern Ireland contribute towards the election—or chucking out—of a government. We are governed by a *New Labour* Party without a vote to its name. It governs in close consultation with a *Fianna Fail / Progressive Democrat* Government in the Republic of Ireland which, equally, hasn’t a vote to rub between its fingers.

That position is the democratic scandal of Western Europe. It is also the fundamental equality question. No other question comes close. We need political rights to give us—in the words of Michael Collins—“*the freedom to achieve freedom*”

The failure at the level of state to have votes that count has been compounded by the 1998 settlement. The principles of the Good Friday Agreement I have no difficulty with. They are threefold

Firstly, *Inter Governmental collaboration* as the bedrock, or foundation, of stability.

Secondly, *Equality within Northern Ireland*, with emphasis on equality as between the “two communities”.

Thirdly, *North/South*, and *East/West* co-operation

12 Within the arrangements for Northern

Ireland, a “confessional” Assembly was provided for whereby participant Assembly members “confessed” their communal affiliation—effectively as Protestant, Catholic or Other, and then it was determined that only the votes of the first two—the Protestant Unionist and the Catholic Nationalist—were to be weighed and counted in important divisions.

I brought this to the attention of the Human Rights Commission in a detailed submission. I also took the view that building such a discriminatory mechanism at the heart of the most central Good Friday institution, was bound to stimulate sectarian enmity. (And so it proved, with Northern Ireland more segregated and divided than at any time in history.) Not surprisingly, the Human Rights Commission—itself a creation of the Good Friday Agreement—didn’t want to know.

I am a believer in the primacy of politics—I suppose that’s an odd belief to hold in a place where there has been no access to real politics in any of our lifetimes. But let me give you two practical examples of what I mean—from the 1998 settlement.

Firstly there is the decision, based on the Patten recommendations, to recruit 50% of new police recruits from the Catholic community. I support that measure. It’s a measure which was badly needed to redress the recruitment patterns of the past and to start to get a policing service that reflected the community served. But it is a discriminatory policy, deliberately so. Denis Bradley, the Vice Chair of the policing board acknowledges that very bluntly. He also, sensibly, says that it cannot go on for ever. But it is discriminatory, it works and was the result of deliberate political policy.

On the other hand there are a raft of ‘mechanistic’ equality measures within and arising from the 1998 settlement, which I cannot see very much merit in, or results from. Take *Equality Impact Assessments*.

In Newtownabbey Borough Council (where I was a councillor for many years) the Mayor is always a Unionist of some sort—always has been in every year since the Borough’s inception in 1958. In some years Unionist have elected Mayors who they have known to be illiterate and incompetent, rather than looking outside the Unionist family. In my last 4 year term in Council, the Unionist family got together to agree who would be Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Chair and Vice

Chair of all committees. They decided this—all jobs decided by Unionists—for every Council job and every external appointment of note, for each of the 4 years of the Council term. Nothing we could do about that!

The only post that (I thought) the Unionist family could not dictate were the representatives for the *Newtownabbey Local Strategy Partnership*, a body that distributed local EU PEACE monies.

Seats for the Partnership were to be determined on a proportionate basis. So Unionists chose the Unionist members. Nationalists chose the Nationalist member. But the Independent (or “Other” member) was chosen not by the Independents but by the Unionists! And the “Independent” chosen was *not* Labour, Alliance or one of the Ratepayer members, but the independent member ‘close to the thinking of’ the UDA/UFF

I, and other independents, sought to test this through use of the Equality Impact Assessment process. We forced an assessment; we got good legal advice; we made a good formal written representation; and we made a lot of noise in the press. But at the end of it all—even though the case had been plainly made throughout the whole process about the unfairness of the decision, the points made in any Equality Impact Assessment are advisory—they have no teeth. And so it proved, with the Unionist blocs put their hands in the air to support their original, biased, unfair and sectarian determination.

The formal and, as I said, “mechanistic” equality provisions were of no account.

In the word-picture that I contributed to the *Visualising Equality* booklet, I stressed the primacy of politics. I started with the good practice (in Equality terms) of the Swedish and Scandinavian models which score much higher by whatever equality measurement one cares to use than most other societies, and stressing that politics were the determining factors.

I mentioned the socialist and welfare consensus created under Bevin and Attlee from 1940 to 1980 which put people first and was created as deliberate political policy. I also mentioned the dog eat dog Thatcherite consensus created from 1980 onwards as being rooted in the essentially political worldview of Thatcher, Keith Joseph and von Hayek. It was political.

We in Northern Ireland will not get equality—whether in terms of gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability—without establishing political rights; without establishing governmental politics.

Politics disconnected from government is a perversity. Yet perversity of our ‘political’ system is what we, our mothers and fathers, and their mothers and fathers, have had to

put up with. Of our local parties, only Sinn Fein have an orientation towards the politics of Government (and that as a relatively small party in the Republic). Both Unionist parties and the Alliance Party are uninterested in governmental politics. The SDLP too is content with Northern Ireland-ism. I am amongst a few pioneers in the Labour Party seeking to

develop Labour membership and activity with the vision of **normal, governmental politics** in mind.

The place for any serious Equality campaign to start is in the **battle for political rights**; for the freedom to achieve freedom.

No taxation without representation.

The document of the entity that ultimately controls the newspaper is also hypocritical. It gives the impression that *The Irish Times Trust Limited* is a charitable institution but it has never given money to charity.

No doubt in a pathetic attempt to salvage some respectability, *The Irish Times Trust Limited* has instituted "*The Douglas Gageby Irish Times Fellowship*". The holder of the fellowship will "*acquire a greater understanding of the needs of the developing world*" (*The Irish Times*, 28.10.05). The fellowship will provide necessary financial support for between three to six months. How much will this cost: 5% of the Editor's basic salary of 320,000 euros perhaps? But it's not exactly 'charity' because the holder of the fellowship will be "*required to complete his/her project within an agreed time-frame and submit articles based on his/her research for publication in The Irish Times*". Also, "*the right not to award the fellowship is reserved*".

What a miserable institution!

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

CHIRAC'S EUROPE

President Jacques Chirac's article in *The Irish Times* (27.10.05) illustrates the gulf between France and Germany on the one hand and Britain, Ireland (perhaps) and some of the new states in the EU on the other. Chirac declared his commitment to a "*social Europe*".

"The society that Europe strives for is centred on the dignity of the human being.

"Were we to give up this ideal we would betray our heritage. France will therefore never let Europe become a mere free-trade area. We must rekindle the commitment to a political and social Europe rooted in the principle of solidarity."

He goes on to propose ambitious projects and suggests that Europe as a whole could follow the example of the economic cooperation between France and Germany. But, towards the end of the article, there is recognition that the Treaty of Nice is not a powerful enough engine to drive a 25-member state Europe. In the meantime:

"...I believe that states wishing to act together in addition to the common policies should be allowed to do so. The members of the euro zone would, in this context, deepen their political, economic and social integration."

Britain, of course, is not in the "euro zone". The French realise that if a "*social Europe*" is to be preserved there will need to be close cooperation between states. This cooperation is impossible among the 25 states with their incompatible political outlooks. Therefore, such cooperation will have to be confined to an inner core with France and Germany as the driving force.

BLAIR'S EUROPE

Tony Blair has also a vision of Europe. He wants to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). But in 2003 the UK blocked a proposal limiting subsidies

to individual farmers to 277,402 euros (*L'Humanité*, 12.11.05). Perhaps Queen Elizabeth would not have liked *that* reform. *L'Humanité* doesn't indicate how much she received, but it is certainly far more than the 287,308 euros that Prince Albert of Monaco obtained in 2004.

HOLY SHOW PART 1

According to Mary Rafferty of *The Irish Times*, the Taoiseach has made a "*holyshow of us in front of the neighbours*" (*The Irish Times*, 13.10.05). Apparently, our democratically elected leader used figures defending the CAP and attacking Tony Blair that "*...were wrong. And not just a little bit wrong either. They were wildly inaccurate*". It is only at the end of the article that we learn that the OECD figures that Ahern used were not "*wrong*" or "*wildly inaccurate*" but merely out of date. He used figures from 2000 whereas the OECD used figures from 2003 in a rebuttal of an article which Ahern wrote in the *Financial Times*.

The 2000 figures indicate that the EU subsidy to Agriculture amounts to 1.32% of the Gross Domestic Product of the EU. The US subsidy amounts to 0.92%. This is quite a small difference when it is considered that the average US farm is ten times the size of the average EU farm. One of the objectives of the CAP is to preserve the family farm. The corresponding figure in 2003 for the EU was 1.26% (i.e. the subsidies as a percentage of GDP decreased). But as Noel Treacy, the Minister of State for European Affairs, pointed out the OECD figures for 2004 were 1.16% for the EU and 0.93% for the US (*The Irish Times*, 15.10.05). So the gap narrowed in 2004. From 2000 to 2004 EU subsidies declined as a percentage of GDP, while US subsidies increased.

It is interesting that *The Irish Times* journalist is so quick to take the British Prime Minister's side against Bertie Ahern. Even more curious is the intervention by the OECD which used its own out of date figures to criticise Ahern's case.

HOLY SHOW PART 2

The Irish Times, of course, has been making a "*holyshow*" of itself for years. There may be a more pompous document than the Memorandum and Articles of Association of *The Irish Times Trust Limited*, but this writer is not aware of any.

HARNEY'S HOSPITAL BEDS

Last year the Minister for Health Mary Harney promised 1,000 new Private Sector hospital beds. These were supposed to free up existing public resources. The private sector would complement the public sector. But Joan Burton of Labour has exposed this fairy tale.

The proposed phase 2 development of Connolly hospital in Blanchardstown has been shelved. This was to include new hospital beds, operating theatres, and services for children and cancer patients. Burton believes that the reason for this decision is linked to plans to develop a private facility on the Connolly site (*The Irish Times*, 15.10.05).

The private sector is not supplementing the public health service, it is colonising it.

The new private sector hospitals will not replace existing private beds in public hospitals on a one to one basis. The reason is that the new private hospital beds will only be used for "*elective surgery in less complex and more profitable areas*" (*The Irish Times*, 26.11.05). So the public hospitals will have to retain private beds for procedures on which the new private sector investors can't make a quick buck.

The Irish Times report indicates that an ICTU-commissioned study found that there are "*less acute hospital beds in the State now than in 2001*". The study also found that Government claims of an increase in "*day beds*" of 475 since 2001 can be explained by the department's "*redefinition of trolleys, recliners and couches as day beds rather by the addition of extra treatment places*".

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Yet more evidence of the disastrous policy of Public Private Partnership. The

Ringsend sewage plant built in partnership with Ascon, Black & Veatch and Anglia Water has had “intermittent odour problems” since it opened in 2003 (*The Irish Times*, 24.10.05). An extra 5 million euros of public money will be required to rectify the problem.

MAHON TRIBUNAL

Last month we noted how the Moriarty Tribunal has descended into farce. It now turns out that the Mahon Tribunal, investigating planning irregularities, is also running into trouble. Developer Tom Gilmartin’s allegations of political corruption against another developer, Owen O’ Callaghan, have been found to be inconsistent with private statements Gilmartin made to Tribunal lawyers. The problem is that these “private” statements were not made available to O’ Callaghan and therefore he was deprived of making a proper defence. O’ Callaghan has quite reasonably applied to the High Court to bring proceedings against the Tribunal “further inquiring into or making any findings on allegations made against him by Gilmartin”. (*The Irish Times*, 29.11.05)

COMPETITION AUTHORITY

This column has already noted the attacks by the Competition Authority on attempts by the Credit Unions to organise insurance for its members. The Competition Authority has also threatened legal action against collective agreements between Hospital Consultants and Health Insurance companies (mainly the VHI). Its latest right-wing initiative has been to declare illegal any trade union representation for actors, musicians and other freelance workers.

“It says such workers are independent contractors and are therefore to be regarded as ‘undertakings’ under the terms of the 2002 Competition Act. The Act, it says, prohibits ‘undertakings’ from entering into anti-competitive agreements.” (*The Irish Times*, 24.11.05)

When will this ideological madness end? Apparently not soon! The Government has increased the Authority’s funding by 15% for 2006.

FRENCH POSTSCRIPT

Confirmation of the *Irish Political Review*’s view on the French riots has come from an unusual source. A document from the French Intelligence Service published in the *Parisien* states:

“The urban uprising had neither an ethnic nor geographical cause. The rioters were acting against their condition of social exclusion from French society”. (cited by *l’Humanité*, 10.12.05)

Good to see the class struggle is alive and well in France!

Alex Maskey by *Barry McCaffrey*
The Brehon Press £7.99

The Sinn Fein Mayor

I found this book slightly disappointing, though I am not sure that I am entitled to—it essentially ‘does what it says on the tin’—the sub-title is *Man And Mayor*. There are some oddities in the book; Loyalists meet in a South African town called ‘Bloomfontane’, various Royal personages are described as ‘commander-in-chief’ of British Army Regiments (they are Colonels in Chief which are honorary positions). McCaffrey gets his history wrong, claiming the Special Powers Act[s] were introduced in the late 1920s and early ’30s. The Unionists enacted Special Powers in the extremely early days of ‘Northern Ireland’. There were plenty of precedents, in the long history of ‘coercion’ legislation by ‘Dublin Castle’ and Westminster. (In 1928 they abolished PR in elections for their wee Parliament. It was an anti-Labour and anti-Prohibitionist move rather than anti-Nationalist—even the Redmondite remnant was abstentionist at the time. The number of Nationalist seats never changed in the whole history of ‘Northern Ireland’. The Nationalist Party rarely had to fight an election, its ‘Stormont’ MPs had walks-over until 1969 when most of them were replaced by ‘Civil Rights’ candidates.) These things, individually, are peas under the mattress, and may be a trivial complaint, but a whole packet-worth of peas could give you a bad night’s sleep.)

Another slight oddity in the text is the common Sinn Féin inability to see other people’s perspective, though McCaffrey does, in filling in background, point out that the war was still in full swing in the early days of Alex Maskey’s sojourn in Belfast’s City Hall. Some of the Unionist behaviour was understandable—if oafish, and in the long run apolitical and counter-productive. Abolishing the office of ‘Alderman’ was childish, especially as the Republicans did not give a toss about it, as was keeping Sinn Féin off Council committees. The latter problem was resolved by taking the Council to Court—all of the non-Unionist parties had to drag Belfast City Council into Court in the course of the anti-Sinn Féin / anti-’Hillsborough Accord’ campaigns.

Another SF oddity is the generous application of the word ‘bigot’ to Unionist opponents. George Seawright is described (by Seán McKnight) as “an honest bigot” because he spoke to the early Sinn Féin

Councillors. Admittedly, it was to say that he wouldn’t mind shooting them, but as they had ‘backgrounds’ themselves, it seems to me a rather pedantic use of the word. (Under the bluster, like a lot of DUP people, Seawright was Old Labour in practice. The *Just Books* / Print Workshop ‘anarchists’ in the mid-1980s campaigned for the George VI Memorial Hall in downtown Belfast to be converted into a centre for young people in the Market area. When it got to be discussed in City Hall, the Unionists opposed giving money to Fenians (it was quite as crude as that), the only Councillor of any persuasion to support the idea was Seawright. His reasoning was that the people of the Market were quite as deserving of recreational space as any other citizens, that the youngsters had nowhere else to go other than the streets, loitering outside the pubs and bookies, all of which were dangerous occupations anyway. The *Just Books* people never quite got over the trauma of support from such a quarter.)

Other than the above, this is a superior ‘scissors-and-paste’ job, and a great many matters which readers may have forgotten, or not have known of are put down in chronological order. Alex Maskey had been the victim of assassination attempts nine times so far (despite which he was not allowed to carry a ‘legal’ weapon—and certainly was unable to carry an illegal one. He was excluded from the protection afforded and paid for by the Northern Ireland Office, despite the attacks on his house (and his family), partly because he refused to allow the RUC into his home. Maskey’s reasoning is that the police would have been more interested in incriminating him (or setting him up for assassination) than in protecting his family.

The long section on the work of the Military Intelligence ‘spook’ Brian Nelson bears out Maskey’s analysis—British Army ‘securocrats’ and RUC Special Branch essentially ran the UFF as an anti-Catholic murder squad. ‘Anti-Catholic’ on the grounds that they appeared to take the attitude “*Yabba-dabba-doo! Any Fenian will do!*”—the adult, sophisticated, slogan of Billy Wright’s Mid-Ulster UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force, later to become the Loyalist Volunteer Force / LVF. The LVF became enthusiastic drug-pushers and allegedly wound-up their organisation in late 2005, because the UVF was killing its membership. They have probably dissolved into the UDA / Ulster Defence Association, of which they were a ‘wholly-owned subsidiary’, the UFF (Ulster

Freedom Fighters) being the UDA's 'armed wing'. Given that the UDA was a military organisation in the first place, having a specialised 'armed wing' seems a bit surplus to requirements, especially given that the 'political wing', the Ulster Democratic Party, was dissolved and replaced with a few relatively articulate front men.

Barry McCaffrey notes that the UDA was not made illegal until the 1990s, and that another aspect of Unionist hypocrisy in City Hall was that they backed the UDP Councillor for Deputy Mayor, as well as Hugh Smyth of the UVF-oriented PUP (Progressive Unionist Party) as Deputy Mayor, and then Mayor.) He does not, and this is Sinn Féin's style on such matters, acknowledge that Hugh Smyth made a valiant (and successful) attempt to be a 'Mayor for all of the City'—and citizens, or that the PUP Councillors took some risks in, for example, backing a St. Patrick's Day festival. It was turned into a triumphalist Nationalist rally, but the PUP voted to subsidise further festivities, despite being out of step with the rest of the Unionists.

Alex Maskey was the first Sinn Féin Councillor in Belfast, taking his seat in 1983, on the resignation of the IRSP's Gerry Kelly. The IRSP / Irish Republican Socialist Party (a breakaway from 'Official' Sinn Féin) allied with the INLA/Irish National Liberation Army, the rump of the Peoples' Democracy, and an independent 'Anti-H-Block' candidate Larry Kennedy (who was assassinated by the UFF—allegedly) 'kept the seats warm' for Sinn Féin after the second Hunger Strike (of 1981 / 82). Sinn Féin's strategy was to use the council elections of 1985 to advance their 'ballot box and Armalite' strategy. It could not let the seat be taken by a minor Nationalist party (as PD and the IRSP are described), so Maskey became the Daniel in the (cowardly) lions' den: he was joined by more and more Sinn Féin Councillors over the years. Sinn Féin became the largest City Hall party some time before he became Mayor in 2002.

He was a thoughtful and 'inclusive' Mayor, and some of the Unionist opposition have admitted that he was much better than they had hoped (or feared?). He says in an interview recorded here that the city is not made up of just Papes and Prods. He met with practically every minority in the city. He also went out of his way to involve himself with various sporting events. Standard photo opportunities you might think, but DUP Councillors have a habit of broadcasting their (insanely

bigoted) views on non-Christian religions, non-Pinko-Gray 'ethnics', and non-British sports, to the world and her husband.

Eight quid is not a bad price for a 232-page, well-designed and printed book, with a number of glossy photographs—but it does not have an index, and as noted above, has some easily rectified oddities

in the text (a further oddity is the lack of a Euro price). But the meat of the matter, Maskey's days in the Council and as Mayor are very well written and documented. I read the substantial part of the book in one sitting.

Seán McGouran

Northern Nationalists In The Dáil: Under-Represented, Mis-Represented, Un-Represented Part One

De Valera And Partition

The October 2005 editorial, *A Visionary Republican?*, was for the most part as clear and incisive as ever. One paragraph however is dull as ditchwater and clear as mud. And a big red herring is floundering about in the mud. This is the paragraph I'm referring to:

"We...tried to get the 6 counties incorporated into the democratic structures of the state which held them. Dev did not do that. But, only on the basis of an excessive rationalism, beyond the scope of practical politics, could he be criticised for not doing so. Statesmen cannot rise above the interests of the states which they lead. They are tied to their states, whatever altruistic postures it might be fashionable for them to strike. They either serve their states well or badly. It is hardly conceivable that Dev did not see that the 6 counties might have been governed in a way that did not generate communal antagonism as a matter of course, but it would {sic} not his business to urge that they should be integrated politically into the British state. And, if he had done so, his proposal would have been rejected by all parties in the 26 country state, without being heeded by Britain, which had set up that atrocious system in the North for an ulterior purpose, and not because it did not know what it was doing. Dev concentrated on the affairs of the State of which he was leader, and he achieved its independence."

I've seen and heard de Valera criticised for many things, but never before for failing to advocate the political integration of Northern Ireland into the United Kingdom. It's the one charge against which there seems little if any need to develop a defence for him. But here for perhaps the first time, is the charge, no sooner stated than rebutted. It was, as the defence so eloquently argued, none of his business. So, no doubt about it, *Eamon de Valera Is Innocent, OK.*

But there is another, formally very similar, charge which has been laid at de Valera's door and which has never adequately been answered, about a matter which certainly was his business. De Valera did nothing to accommodate the Northern

nationalist minority within the political structures of the developing Southern state. More than that he actively connived at their exclusion from those democratic structures.

The Northern Ireland Parliament was opened by King George VI on 22nd. June 1921. Soon after, on June 24th, Lloyd George wrote to de Valera inviting him, "with Sir James Craig, the Premier of Northern Ireland", to a conference in London "to explore to the utmost the possibility of a settlement".

De Valera accepted, in a letter dated 8th. July 1921 (Craig refused the invitation). A truce was immediately declared to begin at noon on July 11th. Lloyd George and de Valera then met in London on July 14th, 15th, 18th, and 21st.

On July 20th, Lloyd George sent de Valera a document containing "the proposals of the British Government" which included the following conditions in respect of partition:

"The form in which the settlement is to take effect will depend upon Ireland herself. It must allow for full recognition of the existing powers and privileges of the Parliament of Northern Ireland, which cannot be abrogated except by their own consent. For their part, the British Government entertain an earnest hope that the necessity of harmonious co-operation amongst Irishmen of all classes and creeds will be recognised throughout Ireland, and they will welcome the day when by those means unity is achieved. But no such common action can be secured by force..."

"The British Government will therefore leave Irishmen themselves to determine by negotiations between themselves whether the new powers which the Pact defines shall be taken over by Ireland as a whole and administered by a single Irish body, or be taken over separately by Southern and Northern Ireland, with or without a joint authority to harmonise their common interests. They will willingly assist in the negotiation of such a settlement, if Irishmen should so desire."

De Valera's reply "...on behalf of the ministry of Dáil Éireann" was delivered to Downing Street on 10th. August 1921. With regard to the Partition conditions this stated:

"As regards the question at issue between the political minority and the great majority of the Irish people, that must remain a question for the Irish people themselves to settle. We cannot admit the right of the British Government to mutilate our country, either in its own interest or at the call of any section of our population. We do not contemplate the use of force. If your Government stands aside, we can effect a complete reconciliation. We agree with you 'that no common action can be secured by force.' Our regret is that this wise and true principle which your Government prescribes to us for the settlement of our local problem it seems unwilling to apply consistently to the fundamental problem of the relations between our island and yours. The principle we rely on in the one case we are ready to apply in the other, but should this principle not yield an immediate settlement we are willing that this question too be submitted to external arbitration."

Just over a week later, on August 22nd, those same proposals were debated in a secret session of the Dáil and the Ministry's judgement and its actions were endorsed unanimously.

The view of those engagements which de Valera wished to commend to posterity is certainly that reported in the bible of Fianna Fáil orthodoxy, Dorothy Macardle's *The Irish Republic*, which I have followed so far:

"De Valera returned with his colleagues to Ireland. The proposals, forwarded to him in Dublin, were discussed by the Republican Ministry at a full meeting. They were rejected, with varying degrees of disfavour. The majority were confident that Dáil Éireann, when it met in August would endorse the rejection unanimously. Even without the other restrictions proposed on Irish independence the British insistence on giving the Belfast Parliament power to partition Ireland was enough to render these proposals utterly unacceptable" (Corgi edition, 1968, page 445).

But, in fact, De Valera had not indicated to the British Government that its "*insistence on giving the Belfast Parliament power to partition Ireland was enough to render these proposals utterly unacceptable*". The truth of the matter was a good deal more ambivalent.

On July 21st. Lloyd George had written to the King describing de Valera's attitude to partition as this was outlined in their talks. According to Lloyd George, de Valera was willing to accept...

"...the status of a dominion sans phrase on condition that Northern Ireland would agree to be represented within the

all-Ireland parliament. Otherwise, de Valera insisted that the only alternative was for the twenty-six counties to be a republic" (quoted in T. Ryle Dwyer, *Eamon De Valera*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin 1980, 1988, page 43).

That he was prepared to use Irish acceptance of the fact of partition as a bargaining counter in a strategy to achieve Republican status for the remaining 26 counties was confirmed by de Valera in the secret Dáil session of August 22nd, during this exchange between himself and Deputy J.J. Walsh:

"Deputy J.J. Walsh asked if they understood that under no circumstances were they prepared to give any sanction to dual nationality in this country.

"An Tuachtarán replied as far as dual nationality was concerned, they never recognised it, but that fact would not prevent the British government from establishing it. For his part, if the Republic were recognised, he would be in favour of giving each county power to vote itself out of the Republic if it so wished. Otherwise they would be compelled to use force.

"Deputy J.J. Walsh said he disagreed with that policy and he would move a motion later on."

In the event Walsh simply seconded a motion moved by Seán T. O'Kelly which entirely endorsed the actions of the President and Ministry.

The main ground of de Valera's acceptance of the inevitability of partition was a clear-headed assessment of the limits placed on Sinn Féin's negotiating position by the very simple and brutal realities of the balance of power between Ireland and England. He had no illusions about England's willingness to use its overwhelming strength against the independence movement. In the same debate of August 22nd. de Valera brought deputies slap bang up against the reality of the British dreadnought:

"The new war if it comes would be on a different basis to the one past. It would be taken as a definite attempt at reconquest. There was not a government in the world that would not do something to prevent the falling away of portion of its territory. The governments of the world would realise that and would be very slow to step in. He did not believe he was too pessimistic when he said that England would be given as free a hand to deal with Ireland at the present time as she was given to deal with the Boers in the South African War. Unfortunately they were very far away from living in a world where moral forces counted. But the practical question is at the moment brute force and they should realise that the moment England thought she was in danger of losing Ireland, a thing she considered particularly precious to her, she would face the world's odium to crush Ireland to the earth.

"In the Southern States of America

there were many who still held on to the cause of the South and they well remembered Sherman's march. But there was no use facing war again unless they in Ireland were prepared for a Sherman's march. They should not come to a decision without realising what the position was."

The only deputies who seriously addressed the dichotomy raised by their President between a Republican and a United Ireland were Walsh, Alex MacCabe of Sligo, and a Deputy Collivet about whom I know nothing else (not even his Christian name). The force of "*Otherwise they would be compelled to use force*" was not, as de Valera everywhere and really otherwise recognised, an option.

Seán Milroy, who represented Fermanagh and Tyrone in the second Dáil (the constituency didn't exist in the first Dáil and had been abandoned to Partition before the third poked its head up through the slough of post-Treaty despond) said that talk about the six counties was getting away from the "*real business*".

Next day, when de Valera presented the Ministry's draft reply to the Dáil, J.J. Walsh said he "*was anxious to have the question of Ulster fully discussed and asked for an opportunity to discuss it*". The President "*said he would try and find an opportunity for it*". Somehow or other the opportunity just never arose.

The great majority of Dáil deputies clearly had as little interest as Milroy in getting away from the real business. The North was never the real business. And, given that the six counties were never going to buy into even the milk and water, British in all but name and nativity, kind of unity that the British were prepared to negotiate about with some pretence of seriousness, the North was never even the unreal business.

So, I hope it is clear that I am not condemning de Valera for realistically taking the side of thorough-going republicanism as against an anodyne unity under detailed British supervision. Where I blame him is where he took his stand on an anti-partitionist rhetoric which he knew to be false and used it to stoke up the subjectivity of his drive to build a republican free state. And also used it, with rare skill and imagination, to bludgeon Northern nationalists into a useless sentimentality that just got young republicans killed and imprisoned (by de Valera as much as by the Unionists). I blame him for that. I condemn him on those terms; terms on which, standing to one side of himself as his own better nature, he would have condemned himself.

Returning to de Valera's formulations of his view of the partition question. He stated to Lloyd George that, if the six

counties refused to join the other twenty-six in an all-Ireland parliament, the twenty-six would have to constitute themselves as a republic. He told the Dáil that so long as the republic was recognised he would be in favour of giving each county, really just the six usual suspects, the power to vote themselves out of said republic. Either way he was declaring that his republicanism would stop at the border, or rather that it wouldn't stop at joining in creating the border. He was going farther even than Redmond's United Irish League (the Irish Parliamentary Party) was prepared to go in 1914 and 1916.

In March 1914 Redmond swallowed Britain's then "*last word*" and accepted a form of Home Rule out of which any of the usual suspects could opt for a period of three years. From that point the rate of Northern recruitment into the Irish Volunteers greatly exceeded that of the South. Little realising where Redmond would finally send them to do and die, those Northern Volunteers clearly joined up to fight Ulster exclusion. That is why the Redmondite leadership refused to distribute arms to them. At the start of the Great War Devlin was forced to hand out 800 rifles but, cute hoor that he was, kept back the ammunition. Eamon Phoenix cites G.F.H. Berkeley, Belfast organiser of Redmond's National Volunteers, to this effect on page 18 of *Northern Nationalism*, adding that the Home Rule leaders wanted the Northern section of their own movement to wither for fear of its reaction to Ulster exclusion. (Redmond was requiring them to fight the recalcitrant Prods when Home Rule had been achieved, but in the meantime was desperate to keep them in line.) He neglects to point out further how his hero Joe Devlin managed to have that threat eradicated on Flanders' fields. Great fella the same wee Joe.

The apparent triumph of Redmondite Home Rulers in the first years of the Great War, sending hundreds of thousands of their supporters to die for King and Empire in France and Gallipoli (the triumphs of Suvla and Sudelbar), should not obscure the fact of their political eclipse in that same period in the west of the fourth green field.

By June 1915 the National Volunteers were finished in County Tyrone, where a Conference at Omagh of senior clergy and nationalist politicians repudiated exclusion and later provided the post-1916 Sinn Féin leadership in the North.

Only days after Redmond accepted the three year exclusion of the Six Counties as Britain's "*final word*" on the subject, Britain informed him that the period of exclusion had been doubled to six years. After the Rising, on 23rd. June 1916, a Northern Nationalist Conference was

held in St. Mary's Hall in Belfast and voted 475 to 265 in favour of a temporary exclusion of the Six Counties which were to continue to be ruled from, with continuing representation in, Westminster. Both Redmond and Devlin had to threaten to resign to get that vote and what they got was a split between Antrim and Down which stood with Devlin, and Tyrone Fermanagh and Derry which were all the more ready to move to Sinn Féin.

A month after that Conference, on 22nd. July, Lloyd George finally informed Redmond that the six counties would be permanently excluded and would have their own parliament with the scale of Irish representation at Westminster being drastically reduced. The spent force that was Redmond pledged to fight that bill to the death.

Redmond corpsed in March 1918. Politically he had been dead since June 1916, and it was his acceptance of Partition and West Ulster's rejection of his acceptance of Partition that killed him.

I assume that de Valera learned the lesson of that and applied his learning in the negotiations with Joe Devlin in advance of the 1921 elections to the Northern Ireland Parliament and the Second Dáil, both of which were held under the auspices of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. The *Irish Political Review* has previously (September 2004) published the correspondence between Collins and de Valera of January 1921 which examined various strategies for the coming electoral contest in the North. Collins was clear about the need for Sinn Féin to fight both the Unionists and Devlin's Redmondites. De Valera's view was made manifest in his negotiations with Devlin. As I wrote in that earlier article:

"In the event, following a meeting between de Valera and Joe Devlin in February 1921, Sinn Féin and the Hibernians fought the northern elections together, allied on the Sinn Féin programme of self-determination and abstentionism. De Valera did not make attendance at Dáil Éireann for successful candidates a condition of the Pact, and the Hibernians simply stayed at home waiting out their abstentionist pledges.

"Though Sinn Féin secured twice the vote of the Devlinites each party to the Pact won six seats (the Unionists won the remaining 40 of 52). Four of the Sinn Féiners (but none of the Hibernians) were elected on the first count. Those four were de Valera in Down, Collins in Armagh, Griffith in Fermanagh & Tyrone and MacNeill in Derry. The other Shinners elected were Seán Milroy and John O'Mahony in Fermanagh & Tyrone."

Devlin later (in a letter to James Dillon, 22 April 1921) stated that, but for the pact with de Valera, his nationalists would not have won a single seat outside

Belfast. I suspect that is exactly how de Valera wanted it. There was only one Northern representative in the second Dáil who owed his membership of the Dáil to his Northern constituency. That was John O'Mahony. All the rest, including the Northerner MacNeill, also represented Southern constituencies. The nationalists ignored the Dáil and the Dáil ignored them, just as it ignored Northern Sinn Féin. The leadership of the Home Rule Party was constantly harassed on Partition by Northern representatives and members who were deeply imbedded in the structures of the party. The Sinn Féin leadership had outmanoeuvred its Northern component onto the sidelines and the outskirts of its political life where it was no more than an occasional nuisance (begging time and again to be consulted about its future, time and again being told to mind its own business). That is what de Valera achieved in 1921. I can't believe it was an accident but rather that it was an element of the Partitionist strategy which he announced later that year, first to the British Prime Minister and then to the Dáil. Sinn Féin had the freedom, which the Home Rulers never had, to ignore Northern nationalism and deliver it into a Partition settlement. That was de Valera's design and achievement.

There is a great deal more to be said on both sides of this question. Most particularly de Valera's attitude(s) to Northern representation in the Free State and Republican Dáils will have to be described in detail. For the moment I'll finish with a few final points about de Valera and partition.

On 26th. January 1939, with a general European war imminent, the Seanad debated a motion in the names of Senators MacDermot and Alton that:

"...the policy of the Government in regard to the question of Partition ought to take more serious account of the sentiments and interests of the majority of the people in Northern Ireland."

The debate ran on over a couple of days with a break in the middle and on the last day (7 February) de Valera descended from the Dáil to deliver a simply stunning forensic analysis of the whole Partition question. It was very impressive, and very partitionist. In the course of it de Valera argued:

"...if force is going to be ruled out and if we have to appeal to common sense and to goodwill, then we have to inform common sense. We have to give the facts. We have to say to the British, as we say to our own people who may not clearly understand it, that there is an injustice at the present time being done to a large section of our people who are entrapped in that territory and held there by force. If we do not make that clear, definitely clear, we are simply sitting down and

being content with a position which is a dangerous position that ought not to be allowed to continue one moment longer than it can be helped.

"We have tried to inform British opinion on that particular matter, and we have gone further in so far as by public statement we can do it. We have tried to inform our own people, not merely here, but our own people throughout the world wherever they might be, wherever they have a voice, and wherever they could bring influence to bear, that there is an injustice being done in our country at the present moment, an injustice which, I say, would justify the use of force if it could be effective. I do not want, and I am not advocating, force—I hope that that is clear—because I do not think it would succeed. I do not want it. I do not think it would be right. I think it would embitter relations which were improving. I do not want it, but I do want the injustice to be known all over the world and to be removed. I want to have the Irish people all over the world using whatever influence they have to try to bring Partition to an end. That has been, in the main, the Government policy—to bring that fact home to the British Government, to ask them not to continue doing the things which they are doing in the way of perpetuating this division, for which the Irish people hold them responsible.

"... The Irish people wish the British, if they have no interest in Partition, not to give any active assistance in keeping people out who want to come in. They are keeping people out who want to come in. They are keeping out the people, again I repeat it, of South Down, South Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry, and all that area. There is not the slightest doubt about it that if there were not British military forces in those areas, those people would move to come in with us, and we would certainly take them. Britain, then, cannot wash its hands either of the responsibility for enacting Partition or of the responsibility for keeping it, particularly in its present form.

"... Now, is it only the British who have a responsibility for the continuance of it? I do not want for a moment to say that. Again, if there was not this division here in our midst, the British could not use it. There is, of course, and it is foolish to blind yourself to that, just as it is foolish to blind yourself to the other aspect of it. There are people here with a very different outlook from that of the majority. They occupy a certain area—it is a small area in the country. Their ideals deserve the fullest possible consideration. When we had, as the Government in 1921, responsibilities in that particular matter, we were prepared to go to any distance that was reasonable to give satisfaction to their point of view. When Fianna Fáil became the Government, and we came to frame a Constitution, we kept in mind the possibility of making concessions to those whose outlook on certain matters differed from ours. But we could not

proceed along the line that was proposed by Senator MacDermot. A minority has rights; a minority's viewpoint deserves careful consideration. I think that, in so far as it is possible to meet them, an effort to meet them should be made. But, again, I say there are limits to that and that the majority have their rights too.

"For instance, speaking for myself—I am not talking about Government policy in the matter, which has been largely embodied in the Constitution—I would not to-morrow, for the sake of a united Ireland, give up the policy of trying to make this a really Irish Ireland—not by any means. If I were told to-morrow: 'You can have a united Ireland if you give up your idea of restoring the national language to be the spoken language of the majority of the people,' I would, for myself, say no. I do not know how many would agree with me. I would say no, and I would say it for this reason: that I believe that as long as the language remains you have a distinguishing characteristic of nationality which will enable the nation to persist. If you lose the language the danger is that there would be absorption.

"One of the sad things for me all the time is that there has not been a fuller appreciation of that fact amongst the young people of the country. I imagine, if I were a young man, that there is nothing to which I would devote myself so much. I can say this, that, after the Treaty, when Cathal Brugha and I felt that there was an end as far as our efforts for trying to get the freedom we wanted at that particular time were concerned, the two of us came to an agreement that there was only one thing to be done, and that we should do it immediately, and that was, to try to bring about the restoration of the language. I feel that to this day, and I hope that I am right in it

"Certainly I do not think it is a point of view I am going to change. I believe that the restoration of the national language is the surest guarantee that this nation will continue to exist. Much as I would desire to see unity—and I told you it was because of Partition I came into politics—much as I would desire to see that, which, as far as I am concerned, would be the crowning of anything I ever attempted as far as practical political action was concerned, I would not grasp even that at the cost of losing the opportunity of restoring the language. Therefore, I would not pay that price.

"There is another price I would not pay. Suppose we were to get unity in the country provided we were to give up the principles that are here in this first Article of the Constitution—the 'sovereign right of the nation to choose its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economic, and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions'—I would not sacrifice that right, because without that right you have not freedom at all. Although freedom for a part of this island is not the freedom we want—the freedom we

would like to have, this freedom for a portion of it, freedom to develop and to keep the kernel of the Irish nation is something, and something that I would not sacrifice, if by sacrificing it we were to get a united Ireland and that united Ireland was not free to determine its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other countries, and, amongst other things, to determine, for example, whether it would or would not be involved in war. Our people have the same right as any other people to determine these vital matters for themselves and they ought not to surrender them in advance to anybody or for any consideration. Certainly, as far as this Government is concerned, we are not going to surrender that right—for any consideration, even the consideration of a united Ireland."

People who foolishly assume an identity of interest between republican and nationalist ideology and aims should be hit repeatedly over the head with the text of that address which makes it clear that an independent republic could not have been achieved within the thirty-two county state that was the *sine qua non* of nationalism. De Valera's republicanism was not the extreme uncompromising form of nationalism that the term is inevitably and erroneously taken to represent.

Republicanism and nationalism are political contraries. Or at least they were political contraries until Adams and McGuinness in ending the war fused those irreconcilables. Until recently practical republicanism was practically partitionist. Practical anti-partitionism was practically anti-republican. If you want to understand the political revolution the Provos have been and are now in the process of making first understand that crucial distinction. Most of the rest of current Irish politics, including the deep confusions that essentially define it all, follow from that basic simplicity.

One last plunder of Eamon Phoenix's *Northern Nationalism* and that's me drained of this for now.

Early in the Second Great War, with nobody in Ireland too impressed with the phoniness of it, a deputation of Northern nationalists, noting that de Valera had claimed a "*moral right to speak for all Ireland*", went South to seek guidance from himself and Sean T O'Kelly. The deputation included Cahir Healy, Peader Murney and Father Coyle.

The undated minutes of an "*interview between An Taoiseach and a northern Nationalist Deputation*" record de Valera arguing that "*the retention of the 26 county status was considered to be of such value that the loss of it could not be risked in any effort to reintegrate the country...*" (quoted in Phoenix, op cit, page 389). Minutes, as anyone who has taken or

tried to act on them will know, are rough and ready at best, but that has the ring of truth and chimes in with the de Valera of 22nd. August 1921 and the de Valera of 7th. February 1939. And the de Valera of many times in between when urgent requirements of the moment distracted him from anti-partitionist rhetoric. It is entirely consistent also with de Valera's line after he had indisputably won his Republic and a Fine Gael led administration had at last proclaimed it.

With the Republic firmly and safely established de Valera still wanted the North as far away from him as he could have it and it and him still on the same island. Of which more later.

Part Two

Collins And Partition

The Treaty was signed in London on 6th. December 1921. One day later a deputation of Northern Nationalists, representing both Sinn Féin and Joe Devlin's surviving remnant of Redmond's United Irish League (aka Home Rule Party, aka Irish Parliamentary Party, aka Anti-Partition League, aka Nationalist Party), arrived in Dublin with a request for advice.

In the first instance they met Eoin MacNeill, one of Sinn Féin's Northern refugees who had a second Dáil seat North of what was fast becoming the border.

MacNeill was considered by the powers that be in the Dáil to be an expert on the North, partly because he had been born there, mainly because he had had the good sense subsequently to make his home in the South. He was chairman of the Dáil's Ulster Committee which had supposedly been set up to develop arguments against partition for use in the Treaty negotiations. The Secretary of the Committee was Seán Milroy, another northern refugee who also had Dáil seats on either side of the Black Pig's Dyke.

During the Dáil debate of 22nd. August 1921 (in secret session) on the Ministry's reply to the British settlement proposals, Milroy had derided J.J. Walsh's concerns about partition as getting away from the real business. This plus his having been born in the North and having had the sense

to get out of it, qualified him to develop the Republican Government's policy on Partition.

The Ulster Committee was set up a day or two before the treaty negotiations began in September 1921. Cahir Healy revealed, after MacNeill later achieved the Boundary Commission fiasco, that he had proposed the delegates in London be advised on partition by a small committee of northern nationalists who actually lived and worked there. This proposal was vetoed with extreme prejudice by MacNeill and especially Milroy. (Healy in a letter to the editor of the Irish Statesman, 4.12.1926, cited by Eamon Phoenix in a note to page 150 of his *Northern Nationalism*.)

So, in default of giving advice on how to avoid partition, northern nationalists travelled south to get some advice on what to do about the reality of partition. And MacNeill was as ever full of it, outlining the details of what he called a 'practical programme of passive resistance': non-recognition of the northern parliament, non-recognition of the courts, non-payment of taxes, and non-acceptance by Catholic schools of Protestant money (essentially non-payment of Catholic teachers, very practical that). This was a programme that was passive to the extent of being MacNeill's personal opinion. He stressed to the deputation which was seeking advice from the leaders of the Republican Government of Ireland that he was speaking for himself alone and not in any way for the Cabinet.

The following day the delegation met the leader of Sinn Féin and the Republican Government, who also refused to speak to them in other than a personal capacity. Eamon Phoenix indicates that he went on to endorse MacNeill's personal opinion as being his personal opinion also. Enda Staunton's account of the meeting (in *The Nationalists Of Northern Ireland*, page 47) suggests that de Valera's endorsement of MacNeill persuaded the delegates that they had nothing to fear from the Treaty. Certainly they returned North with no official advice but a couple of private opinions from MacNeill and de Valera (the views of themselves alone) that led them to carry the nationalist north in support of the Treaty.

Now, that is really an astonishing state of affairs. Sinn Féin was the party of Dáil Éireann from which the Government of the Irish Republic was drawn. Its fundamental position most unequivocally was that a 32 County Irish Republic existed and was governed from within Dáil Éireann.

Eoin MacNeill was a member of that government. Eamon de Valera was the head of it. On no other political matter than partition would MacNeill, let alone de Valera, have had private opinions. They were public representatives who were members of a revolutionary government. Everything was policy. Except the North. That was a matter of private opinion.

The idea that de Valera would have felt unable to speak for his government on a matter of land arbitration at the back of Musherá is absurd. That he could only offer his private opinion on something that went to the heart of the legitimacy of his government is... well, its just one of those things.

Everyone to the south of the Black Pig's Dyke knew that Ireland was going to be partitioned. And every one of them knew they had to pretend that it just wasn't going to happen. When it did happen everyone to the south of the Black Pig's Dyke knew that it would last. And every one of them knew they had to pretend that it just couldn't and wouldn't last.

So far as Southern nationalism was concerned the one crucial point about partition was to keep Northern nationalism in the dark about it. Which is why the Ulster Committee was headed up by Northern refugees whose relief at having escaped the place was not in the least bit tempered by any fellow feeling for those they had left behind. The refugees were party to the pretence.

(Nobody hates the North so passionately as a Northern Catholic who has managed to get out of it. What is a love/hate relationship *in situ*, once expatriated, very often becomes pure hatred. Seán Moylan and Seán McEntee both trooped dutifully behind de Valera and voted against permitting Northern representatives to darken the doors of Dáil Éireann. The difference between them is that Moylan wouldn't have followed de Valera in excluding Kilmallock where he was born. I have no doubt that for McEntee excluding Belfast was pure joy.)

Sinn Féin was determined to avoid the fate of John Redmond whose party was destroyed by himself and Joe Devlin in 1916 on the issue of partition. Partition was an issue that Redmond, whose United Irish League was an all-Ireland party in a way that Sinn Féin never was, simply could not avoid the rows and controversies of. Sinn Féin deliberately kept its Northern membership at arm's length in order to keep its policy on Partition (which was a fixed determination not to have a policy

on Partition and as far as possible not to think about or mention Partition) under wraps.

Joe Devlin had helped Redmond destroy the UIL in 1916 but Joe Devlin survived with a remnant of the Party intact in the North. He survived because Sinn Féin was determined not to replace him. In 1921 de Valera negotiated Joe Devlin's survival with him. He could easily have left Devlin with West Belfast and taken the rest of the North. He could easily have split the constituencies with him on the understanding that successful UIL candidates would take their seats in the Dáil. But he did neither. He split the constituencies with Devlin on a nod and a wink and the satisfaction of keeping the North at arm's length.

In the correspondence between de Valera and Collins in advance of those negotiations, which was reprinted in this magazine in September 2004, Collins had preferred strengthening Sinn Féin organisation and fighting every winnable seat. Which was the last thing that de Valera wanted. A strong Sinn Féin organisation in the North would have carried with it the strong possibility of shipwreck on the reefs of Partition, which is certainly the first thing a strong Northern Sinn Féin organisation would have brought to the reluctant attention of the Sinn Féin leadership and which couldn't have been fobbed off with glib assurances as the weak Northern Sinn Féin organisation, part of an unnecessarily divided Northern nationalism, so successfully was.

As against my praise of Collins in September 2004 I now have to revert to 1066 and all that. Collins was wromantic but wrong. De Valera was, albeit repulsive, nonetheless right.

And Collins, in the wake of his and Eoin O'Duffy's Border War of 1922, came to a position that was if anything even more repulsive and no more right than de Valera's.

(Bearing in mind always, as we all do, that right and wrong are mere figures of speech in the context of bourgeois politics and are employed here only to give a feel for the milieu. The real point is the narrative which if unengaged is just unengaging. And wromantic and repulsive are entirely objective categories of thought which no materialist need ever apologise for.)

The Border War ended, with the bulk of the survivors of the Northern IRA transferred into the Free State Army, at a meeting of its leaders in the officers' mess

of Portobello Barracks chaired by Collins at which Collins declared that once he had sorted out his dissidents he would tell Lloyd George where to put the Treaty. That was on the second of August 1922.

In his *Michael Collins*, Tim Pat Coogan quotes Thomas Kelly, Divisional Engineer of the 2nd Northern Division, on this:

"The only statement of importance now was the final summation and decision of Michael Collins. His final words remain clear and distinct in my mind to this day. He said with this civil war on my hands, I cannot give you men the help I wish to give and mean to give. I now propose to call off hostilities in the North and use the political arm against Craig so long as it is of use. If that fails the Treaty can go to hell and we will all start again" (page 383).

After Collins' death Seamus Woods wrote to Mulcahy:

"The late C-in-C outlined the policy we were to adopt—one of non-recognition of the Northern Government and positive resistance to its functioning. At the same time, from the military point of view we were to avoid as far as possible coming into direct conflict with the armed forces of the Northern Government, and any action on our part would be purely protective" (quoted *ibid.* page 383).

But, and the industrious Mr. Coogan does not mention any of this at all, on July 24th 1922 Collins had sent a very special agent, Great War veteran, Captain Edmund Loftus McNaghten, described by Eamon Phoenix as a leading Ulster Protestant Nationalist, from his home in England into the North.

Collins' verbal briefing of his special agent (on the 24th) was supplemented with an obviously written for the record memorandum (on the 27th):

"You will understand from my conversation what our feeling in the matter is—that we wish very heartily for a united Ireland—that there is a general desire among thinking people to deal in fair terms with our north-eastern fellow countrymen. You will recollect what I said in relation to the question of getting the maximum value from the anti-partition feeling which undoubtedly exists among certain elements in the north east which are, for the moment, not in agreement with us politically. The real need is to do something to consolidate this feeling, to bring into closer association the parties

who have a common disinclination towards division of the country so as to avoid what will be to them and to us a real catastrophe" (quoted in Staunton, *op cit*, page 74).

While in the North McNaghten met with Devlin and his remnants, the Unionist Party's Catholic hangers on and Unionist Party bigwigs like Andrews, Dawson Bates and Craig himself. He was simply gathering local colour to add a tint of plausibility to an on the spot report of what Collins had told him he wanted to hear. And what Collins wanted to hear was the sheerest nonsense. So that's what he got from his special agent.

On August 7th., McNaghten reported that he had discovered . . .

"... amongst the prominent businessmen on both sides... a practically unanimous detestation of anything in the nature of the permanent partition of Ireland" (quoted in Phoenix, *op. cit.* page 248).

Collins and O'Duffy's Border War had been a disaster leading to the annihilation of the Northern IRA. It hadn't moved the Unionists one iota. Not an inch in fact. So now Collins had decided to learn that the Unionists had not needed to be moved even that inch, they all being closet nationalists anyway. All the Provisional Government had to do was stand back and give the Unionists space to access and embrace the bright anti-partitionist angels of their better natures.

Enda Staunton gives a more detailed account of McNaghten's mission and report that might make all this a little clearer.

"The upshot of his report was firstly that a 'practically unanimous detestation of partition' existed among the prominent businessmen of both sides. Little by little this discontent among the Protestant section could be utilised by the Dublin government. *Festina Lente* ('hasten slowly') was the recommended motto. Secondly, a unanimous desire for peace existed as well as a genuine willingness to recognise the ongoing injustices endured by the minority... Thirdly, there was an 'earnest desire' that Catholics should take their seats in the northern parliament where they would be guaranteed a warm welcome. Among the Catholic business and professional class the support for attendance was 'almost universal'. The only condition which they attached was the support of the government for the

redress of their grievances.

... "Fourthly, it was represented to Collins' emissary both by Catholics and Protestants that 'in order to pave the way for a United Ireland' a small representative conference of Craig, Devlin, Collins and 'one or two others interested' should meet and formulate an agreement on common matters to be approved by both parliaments. After a time the mutual association would lead to greater confidence, they felt.

"... McNaghten left believing that the nucleus of a provincial parliament 'existed in the growing pride felt in the Belfast legislature and the nucleus of an all-Ireland one in the Council of Ireland'. His final recommendation called on the southern government to utilise the feeling among political and business figures of the unionist community which tended towards Irish unity. In the case of the latter group he relied on 'stern but simple facts of economics to push them in the required direction'.

"A third string to our bow,' he claimed, was 'our own people domiciled within the jurisdiction of the Belfast government - theirs will be an insistent voice crying in the wilderness... when the Boundary Commission had concluded its deliberations'. He went on, 'There may be a reconstruction of the policy of Catholic abstention from the Belfast parliament... with the House of Commons as a pulpit they could preach the gospel of unity and preach it more powerfully than from any other forum... Huckleberry Finn... asserts that 'some fleas is good for dogs'; some form of opposition even if it occasionally causes irritation will be good for the Belfast parliament and logically such opposition should come from the Catholics and Nationalists.' With this current of protest augmenting the other two, it would, he concluded, 'become a raging torrent which no government will be able to withstand'." (Staunton, op. cit, p. 75-77)

McNaghten reported on August 7th 1922.

On August 1st. a Cabinet sub-committee had been established to reconsider the Provisional Government's policy on the Belfast Government and the "North-East question" in general. On August 11th., another Northern expatriate (but a Protestant this time), Ernest Blythe, then acting Minister for Home Affairs, presented its interim report as a memo to the Cabinet.

The wonderful world of whimsy, which

Collins had Captain McNaghten weave for him, was all there for the company to marvel at. The intellectual (intellectual here used in its subsidiary sense of fantasy wish-fulfilling) underpinnings of all this:—The Provisional Government was to cut adrift the local authorities in the North which had been persuaded to pledge allegiance to Dáil Eireann. Nationalist MPs were to be told to take their seats in the Belfast Parliament. And the IRA, such of the IRA as might have survived Collins' Summer offensive, was to disband.

On August 19th., Blythe's memo was adopted (my notes from Phoenix have it "more or less") as Provisional Government policy.

Coogan, not having mentioned the shuttle diplomacy which Collins employed the good captain to undertake on his behalf, exonerates Mick from any awareness of, let alone complicity in, the new policy:—

"The joint report, presented on 19 August, was in effect a condemnation and complete overturning of Collins' policy. The central recommendations were:

'As soon as possible all military operations on the part of our supporters in or against the North-East should be brought to an end... The line to be taken now and the one logical and defensible line is a full acceptance of the Treaty. This undoubtedly means recognition of the Northern Government and implies that we shall influence all those within the Six Counties who look to us for guidance, to acknowledge its authority and refrain from any attempt to prevent it working.'

"The policy document set out at some length both the reasons for the volte face and the steps to be taken to achieve it:

'The results of the General Election and the still more important results of the offensive against Irregulars put the Government for the first time in a position to decide freely upon its policy in regard to the North-East.

'... Nothing that we can do by way of boycott will bring the Orange party to reason... Their market is not in our territory. Our boycott would threaten the Northern ship-building industry no more than a summer shower would threaten Cave Hill... the same may be said of the linen industry... pressure must be absolutely normal and constitutional. The use and threat of arms must be ruled out of the dispute...

'The events of the past few months have done much towards fixing the Border where we cannot consent to its being fixed. It is full time

to mend our hand... Payment of teachers in the Six Counties should immediately stop... We should stop all relations with local bodies in the Six Counties. Catholic members of the Northern Parliament who have no personal objection to the Oath of Allegiance should be urged to take their seats and carry on a unity programme... precautions should be taken to prevent border incidents from our side. Any offenders caught by us should definitely be handed over to the Northern authorities...

'Catholics in the North... should be urged to disarm "on receiving satisfactory assurances from the British". Prisoners in the North should be requested to give bail and recognise the courts. The outrage propaganda should be dropped in the twenty-six counties.

'Heretofore our Northern policy has been really, though not ostensibly, directed by Irregulars. In scrapping their North-Eastern policy we shall be taking the wise course of attacking them all along the line... The belligerent policy has been shown to be useless for protecting the Catholics or stopping the pogroms. There is of course the risk that the peaceful policy will not succeed. But it has a chance where the other has no chance. The unity of Ireland is of sufficient importance for us to take a chance in the hope of gaining it.

The first move lies with us.'

"The Cabinet decided that 'a peace policy should be adopted in regard to future dealings with North East Ulster' and negotiations were authorised on outstanding educational matters, 'subject to... obtaining the approval of the Commander-in-Chief'. Collins was not present and may never have read the document. Notification of the 'peace policy' decision was sent to him on the 21st and he was killed the next day. The day after he was buried it was decided to circulate the memorandum 'to all Ministers'. It was adopted as Government policy both by the Provisional Government and, with minor alterations, by all administrations in Southern Ireland since" (Coogan, op. cit. pp. 384-5).

That last sentence there is nonsense. Saorstát Eireann cannot be said to have recognised Northern Ireland until the collapse of the Boundary Commission. Northern Catholic MPs were not instructed to take their seats in the Belfast Parliament. In fact in November 1922 a two day conference of northern nationalists was called by Cosgrave's Government. It met in the Mansion House, was chaired by Seán Milroy, and endorsed the old abstentionist

line. Even the relatively minor point that prisoners should be requested to recognise the courts and take bail was not followed through.

Now if the memorandum policy of August 1922 was really a (very courageous) condemnation and overturning of Collins led by (the not notoriously courageous) Big Ernie Blythe, we would have to expect that Collins' death would have removed the one obstacle to its successful implementation (and strongly suspect that Big Ernie had a pudgy hand in the ambush at which Mick perished). But Collins' death was the end of the substantial initiatives contained in the memorandum.

So, the policy of the memorandum was Collins' policy. Following his death his colleagues lacked the nerve to follow through with the radical elements of it. *Quod Erat Demonstrandum.*

In December 1922 Eoin MacNeill allowed his, let's call it civilised distaste, for the friends he left behind him to break through, writing of border nationalists as "the fear-the-worst crowd (whose) one idea is 'we are going to be betrayed' by everybody" (quoted in Phoenix, op.cit). But then they **were** betrayed by everybody. Within three years the cock crowed thrice for MacNeill himself.

On 20th. October 1924 one of the fear-the-worsters, Cahir Healy MP, not long off the Argenta [internment ship, ed.], wrote in the *Irish News* a diatribe against Free Staters and anti-Treatyites both, describing Northern Nationalists as "sick to death of Dublin intermeddlers, none of whom cared a straw what happened to the six county nationalists. They simply play them off as a pawn in the southern game..." (quoted in Staunton, op. cit. page 88, in his notes he gives the date as October 21st.).

Writing as William Allen, the Leveller Edward Sexby published a pamphlet calling for the assassination of Oliver Cromwell. He called it *Killing No Murder*. In their dealings with the North both Southern sects were working from a text that might easily have been titled *Abandonment No Betrayal*. Each of them and all of them.

Certainly Collins and de Valera both.

Joe Keenan

Executed At Dawn, Ambushed In Kilmichael **The following letter by Niall Meehan was submitted to The Irish Times on 2nd December, but did not receive publication**

There is a point to the campaign to seek a pardon for Irish soldiers in British uniform in WWI, unjustly shot by their own officers for such offences as failing to salute, fall in, or put on a cap. The reason lies not in the fact that execution was just another act of butchery in the midst of "one of the most utterly barbaric episodes in history", as Kevin Myers correctly describes the First World War (November 29th). It is because these were acts of rebellion and insubordination by the ruled against the butchery of rulers. Imperial arrogance resulted in 30,000 British casualties in the first hour of the Battle of the Somme. It conditioned soldiers to walk silently into a wall of bullets and exploding artillery shells. Certainties as to the demeanour of "those who die as cattle", as Wilfred Owen put it, were to be undermined by soldiers rebelling against mass suicide. The official response was swift, it was brutal and it was official murder.

Poets like Francis Ledwidge and Wilfred Owen, who for different reasons articulated their disillusion with the war, or those whose opposition took the form of insubordination should be remembered and honoured equally for their capacity to protest in the midst of horror and irrespective of the harsh and brutal consequences. Any stain as is officially recorded against the character of those no longer willing to act as pliant cannon fodder should be removed. Kevin Myers is wrong to oppose this campaign. If the cause of the Irish, who suffered execution disproportionately, succeeds, it will put a crack in the wall of official indifference. That outcome should not, as Kevin Myers suggests, be derided.

Kevin Myers is also wrong in what he says about the Irish War of Independence and the IRA's Kilmichael Ambush, lead by former WWI soldier, Tom Barry. On January 29th 1992 Kevin Myers apologised for a previous Irishman's Diary accusation that Terence McSwiney plotted the assassination of the Bishop of Cork. Placing the untrue allegation in the public domain was, as Kevin Myers later admitted, the work of Dublin Castle's "propagandist" Basil Clarke. If he examines the Kilmichael ambush aftermath in greater detail, Kevin Myers will find the same handiwork worming its way through history to influence the unwary. Kevin Myers might then revise his support for Peter Hart's insupportable allegation that Tom Barry lied and invented his account of the British Auxiliary false surrender. Historians Meda Ryan and Brian Murphy have researched and made this point as "reasonable people". I suggest that Kevin Myers consults their work. **Niall Meehan**

L'Humanité Correspondence

An Algerian Debate

The following letter from Jules Molina (Essonne) appeared in the *L'Humanité* (19.11.05) criticising a review which appeared in *Le Monde*. It shows that the Algerian war remains a sensitive point in French politics.

LETTER

Le Monde in its 5th November 2005 edition, under the signature of Jacques Charby, published a so called "review of the Henri Alleg book *Memoire algérienne*". It is clear that the author cannot forgive Henri Alleg because he remained loyal to the communist ideal. It is obvious in Charby's long "indictment" that his sole aim is to "prove" with the aid of edited quotations taken out of context that the Algerian Communist Party (PCA) and the French Communist Party (PCF) were always opposed to the struggle for Algerian independence.

I reply that I was a member of the PCA and then the PAGS (Parti de l'avant-garde socialiste which succeeded it) from 1946 to 1990 and like a lot of my comrades I was arrested, tortured, charged with "weakening the internal security of the State", and imprisoned. Hundreds of others were interned in camps or expelled by administrative decisions. Jacques Charby knows that several dozen PCA members died in the resistance and that others were killed by the OAS.

Regarding the PCF, which I have been a member of since I arrived in France, I can say that it is the only party to have always

proclaimed its anti-imperialism and it did not wait until the 1st of November 1954 to bring aid and assistance to the Algerian patriots, communists and nationalists in the struggle for the liberation of their country. Many of its members were tried and imprisoned for their support of colonised peoples. No one can deny that in the course of decades of great work that the PCA and PCF could have done more, indeed made errors. Henri Alleg speaks of them several times in his book and it's at the very least surprising that the author has nothing to say about these. Finally, Jacques Charby takes the communists to task, but has not a word of condemnation for the imperialist behaviour of the other parties: of the "right" and the "left" during the long colonial history of France and in particular the Algerian war... (Translation)

COMMENT

It is difficult to disagree with any of the above letter. However, as it indicates, the PCF made errors. Jean Paul Sartre was probably correct to criticize the party for its "pacifism": it condemned the independence movement for "terrorist" acts. So, even though it supported independence, it opposed the means by which independence would be achieved. In recent times I notice some of the same weaknesses. In my view *l'Humanité* was far too quick to join in the chorus criticizing the recent speech (26.10.05) of the Iranian President Ahmadinejad regarding the state of Israel.

John Martin

Letter To The Editor

The Milwaukee Leader dated 28 Oct 1929

I spent a long weekend recently in Washington, DC, to see the sights of the US capitol. Several of the museums in the city are run by the Smithsonian foundation <http://www.si.edu>. From one of these museums (I cannot recall which one - it may have been the Smithsonian National Museum of American History <http://americanhistory.si.edu>), I purchased a reproduction (by M-C Associates in Silver Spring, Maryland) of the newspaper 'The Milwaukee Leader', edition October 29, 1929, Vol. 18 - No. 275.

[If any Internet web sites quoted here do not work then they can still be pulled via cache at <http://www.google.com>]

I bought the newspaper for my father because of its headline of 'BILLIONS LOST IN NEW STOCK CRASH'. My father now retired and since the mid-1990's a stock market 'bear', used to work in the financial city in London, UK.

Glancing at the newspaper, I realised that it was politically socialist.

I obtained some background on the newspaper and its founder Victor L. Berger from <http://www.shsw.wisc.edu/oss/lessons/www/pdfs/berger.pdf>. Berger was born in Austria-Hungary. He emigrated to the US at the age of 18. "He arrived in Milwaukee in 1881 and became active in several German-American organizations that

thrived in the city. He contributed articles for a German-language newspaper and taught German in the city's public schools. Berger became a U.S. citizen in 1886. By the 1890s Berger had become actively involved in socialism and the labor movement. He left teaching to work as a newspaper editor and political organizer. In 1901 he helped found the Socialist Party of America. The Socialist Party lost many of its members following the declaration of war. Berger remained anti-war; however, concerned about the crackdown on dissenters, he became more cautious in Leader editorials. Nonetheless, the postmaster general removed the Leader's second-class postal permit, effectively banning it from the mail. Local patriotic organizations pressured businesses to stop advertising in the newspaper. In 1918 federal officials indicted Berger on charges of conspiracy, accusing the ex-congressman of using the newspaper to hinder the war effort. These challenges did not stop Berger from launching a campaign for Congress. Newspapers refused to print Berger's political advertising, and the Socialists were unable to rent meeting space for rallies. A week prior to the election, the federal government announced additional charges against Berger. Nonetheless, voters in Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District returned Berger to the U.S. House of Representatives. Declaring that he had provided aid and comfort to the enemy, the U.S. House of Representatives refused to permit Berger to take the oath of the office. The congressional seat remained vacant. In the months following the armistice Berger remained embroiled in legal struggles. In early 1919 federal judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis sentenced Victor Berger and four other Socialists to twenty years in prison on charges of conspiracy, stating afterwards that the law did not permit him to "have Berger lined up against a wall and shot." The U.S. Supreme Court eventually heard the case and overturned the conviction, yet charges were not dropped until 1923. Voters returned Victor Berger to the U.S. House of Representatives in three consecutive elections in the 1920s. He fought the repeal for Prohibition and anti-lynching legislation and was a leading advocate of civil liberties legislation. Microfilm copies ... (of The Milwaukee Leader - RB) ... can be found in the Wisconsin Historical Society Library."

More information and a picture of a poster of Berger are available at <http://www.shsw.wisc.edu/wisconsinstories/documents/berger/victorl.htm>, and <http://www.wisbar.org/wislawmag/archive/history/berger.html>.

To the left of the title of my copy of the newspaper is the block "'Woe unto you who build your palaces with the sweat of others! Each stone, each brick of which it is built, is a sin!" - Book of Enoch.' Under the title of the newspaper is "Enawed by Influence and Unbribed by Gain".

The general impression of the newspaper is one of fewer illustrations (all of them black and white) than in US newspapers of today. In the edition that I have, all illustrations, both cartoon and photograph are white people. Before I read about the political background of the newspaper and its founder, I assumed that this was due to either racism, or to Milwaukee then having a very small black population (the latter was certainly true - see below), or possibly both.

http://www.shepherd-express.com/shepherd/21/34/cover_story.html by Rachel N. Anastasi mentions "A Report (by Ruth Zubrensky) on Past Discrimination Against African-Americans in Milwaukee, 1835-1999. She is looking for a publisher for the 89-page report that chronicles the causes and effects of discrimination in employment, education and housing through nearly 165 years in Milwaukee." Quoting Zubrensky: 'Milwaukee's black population "did not exceed 1.5 percent of the city's population until World War II. In 1910, out of a population of 980 blacks, there were 48 professionals and proprietors. September 16, 1924 Milwaukee Journal story

about realtors who discussed confining blacks to a certain part of the city. The intentional segregation of African Americans can be traced to a meeting of the Milwaukee Real Estate Board in 1924 when the members discussed "the advisability of restricting the Negro population in a certain area on the West side. The members say that the Negro population of the city is growing so rapidly that something will have to be done."'

I can recall seeing on television recently a discussion where one of the experts mentioned that not too many decades ago the mainstream US newspapers would only very occasionally mention American blacks. The same expert said that this self-censorship resulted in the fact that no US newspaper covered at the time the mass movement of blacks in the 1900's from the southern US states, to the northern states' large cities such as Chicago.

I could find in the newspaper only one very small article that referred to blacks. It quoted Miss Marion V Cuthbert, dean of the Negro institution Telladega college, Telladega, Alabama, as saying "The young negro is frequently well educated, yet business doors are closed to him and most of his aspirations cannot be realized because of prejudice against his color."

One of the stories on the front page was the conviction the previous night of 54-year-old Greek multi-millionaire theatre magnate Alexander Pantages for the "criminal assault" (rape) of 17-year old dancer Eunice Pringle who had applied to him for booking her dance act. The jury had deliberated for 53 hours. The article starts on the front page with both parties depicted.

The Pantages story has a later twist. <http://www.ytdk.com/framed.htm> in "How Joe Framed an Innocent Man" quotes from "The Sins of the Father by Ronald Kessler, and "The Kennedy Men: Three Generations of Sex, Scandal, and Secrets" by Nellie Bly. "In February 1929, Joe Kennedy made an offer to buy the Pantages theater chain ... from ... Alexander Pantages ... Joe's innate arrogance was now rampant ... Kennedy threatened him by boasting of his influence in the banking and movie businesses. Soon, Pantages found his theaters were being denied first-run blockbuster features from major studios, but that was only the beginning. ... Eunice Pringle ... told police ... Pantages was convicted and sentenced to fifty years, but the verdict was overturned on appeal, on the basis that it was prejudicial to Pantages to exclude testimony about the morals of the plaintiff. The court found her testimony "so improbable as to challenge credulity. At the new trial, Pantages' lawyers reenacted the alleged rape and showed that it could not have occurred in the small broom closet the way Pringle had described it. The jury was also shown how athletic Pringle was, casting doubt on her claim that she could not fight off advances by the slightly built Pantages. The second jury acquitted Pantages, but because of the notoriety, his business had plummeted. A few months after Kennedy's final offer of \$8 million, Pantages was forced to sell out to Joe's RKO for \$3.5 million. Two years after the acquittal, Pringle told her lawyer she wanted to come clean. Stories began circulating that she was about to blow the lid off the rape case and name names. Suddenly, she died of unknown causes. The night she died, she was violently ill and red in color, a sign of cyanide poisoning. On her deathbed, Pringle confessed to her mother and a friend that Joe Kennedy had set up Pantages.

In exchange for their perjured testimony, Kennedy had paid \$10,000 to Pringle and her agent and lover Nicolas Dunaev. Joe had also promised he would make her a star. Pringle, however, never became a star, and Dunaev never gave her her share of the money."

Minor items in the newspaper included Milwaukee's first newsboy's strike announced by the Newsboys' Protective Association, and an undercover prohibition agent going on trial for the

killing of two farmers during a liquor raid.

Five women from Orange, New Jersey, were reported as having been poisoned by pointing brushes with their lips as they painted luminous watch dials using paint containing radium. One was already dying. The women had settled their claims for (each ?) \$10,000 cash, and \$800 annual pension.

Two country boys were fined having been caught doing mashing (mixing crushed grain with warm water prior to illegally fermenting alcohol) in the city. Prince Bernard von Buelow, the German empire's fourth chancellor, had died. A senator from Wisconsin, under investigation by a committee, alleged that one member of the committee had used a capitol policeman to drive him on private trips.

"BILLIONS LOST IN NEW STOCK CRASH. BANKER'S AID FAILS TO END SELLING WAVE. United States Steel Leads List in Plunge. . . Banking support, which came in to protect the market in the desperate downward lunge last week, was unable to prevent today's break, which accompanied frenzied trading. At 1:15 p.m. business was growing in volume. More stock was thrown on the market with each price reduction and the decline appeared to be gaining momentum each minute. . . "blue chips" were battered. millions of dollars were deducted from values which had been set up in rallies. today's losers were not the little fellows. The wealthy were getting a real dose ."

The execution neared of a former professor who murdered his "co-ed inamorata".

Six inches of water downed a baby girl.

The Women Voter's League discussed whether competing armaments of the "great nations" provided security or encouraged a mind-set for war.

"Auto and taxi collide, four person's hurt".

A touring Zionist cooperative organization speaker, Dr. Yehuda Mileikowsky, blamed recent Arab-Jewish friction on upper class 'offendi Turkish-Arab absentee landowners' (his words from different quotes) trying to stir up conflict between Jews and non-landowning Arab farmers. He denied that the friction was due to racial antagonism or religious fanaticism. In the photograph, he is shown as balding with a goatee beard (reminding me a bit of Lenin). He depicted the non-landowning Arab farmers as being impoverished and living in filthy conditions, and describes Jews as bringing 'European living conditions'. Perhaps strangely from the perspective of our times, the article refers to Mileikowsky as a 'the Palestinian'. It quotes him as saying "We have not taken or grabbed the land"

Of Labour Zionists such as Mileikowsky, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/zionism-pal-isr-primer.html says that the difference between them and Vladimir Jabotinsky's Revisionist movement was that the latter "(declared) openly (my emphasis - RB) the objective to establish a Jewish state".

A soviet steamship, with flags at half-mast, returned 88 American bodies from the 1918-1919 Archangel campaign.

"Duce Boasts of Italy's Strength After Seven Years of Fascism". There was an inside column titled 'Socialist News', with short news paragraphs as regards socialist branches.

The editorial reminded the federal government that "82 percent" of its income "is spent on past and future wars".

A paid advertisement column titled "WANTED - MALE HELP", one of the entries saying "ATTENTION. MEN TO DRIVE TAXI CABS."

Robert Burrage

· Biteback · Biteback

John A. Murphy On Peter Hart

The two letters below were sent to the The Sunday Independent. Neither was published.

John A Murphy tells us:

"Peter Hart is a young Newfoundlander who holds a chair of Irish Studies in his native land.

His research speciality is the revolutionary period 1916-23 and his publications, including *The IRA and Its Enemies*, have got up the noses of his nationalist critics, especially followers of Tom Barry, whose account of Kilmichael ambush Hart has challenged. This controversy rumbles on in recent issues of *History Ireland*." (Sunday Independent, 13 Nov. 2005)

Professor Murphy knows very well that there is a lot more at stake in the controversy over Peter Hart's views on Kilmichael and Tom Barry than something that has simply 'got up the noses' of nationalists and one would normally assume that a Professor of history would be keen to explore and explain the controversy and give his views on it.

Hart, inter alia, described Tom Barry as a "liar" and as a "serial killer" who shot surrendered British troops in cold blood at the Kilmichael ambush of November 1920. Hart quoted an ambush participant anonymously, but dated the interview six days after the last Kilmichael participant died on November 13, 1989. Hart also said he spoke to an anonymous ambush scout, but the last scout died in 1967. Hart also claimed to have "unearthed" an unsigned typed document said to be by Barry and captured by the British, but failed to quote sections indicating that it was a forgery. Does Professor Murphy accept or 'challenge' this methodology? All the indications are that he accepts it.

Hart quoted the "trustworthy" *British Record of the Rebellion* to bolster his accusation that the War of Independence IRA were sectarian, but omitted the very next sentence of that report contradicting the point (and one that mentioned Bandon specifically). In publishing later an edition of the *Record of the Rebellion* Hart left out an entire section, "the People", detailing British forces' racist and sectarian views of the Irish. In other words, Hart promoted a view of republican forces as sectarian but censored evidence, from British sources, that the British were. Does Professor Murphy accept this methodology as well?

Peter Hart has not yet answered these specific points raised by Meda Ryan, Brian Murphy and others on the interview dates and on his omissions. Does Professor Murphy not think it is about time Hart answered these questions? Professors are supposed to be rigorous about such things. Surely Professor Murphy should not allow a reputation for flabbiness on his part to gain ground by appearing to condone an approach to history writing that has now been very publicly discredited in the pages of *History Ireland*. Jack Lane (14.11.05)

As one who has challenged Peter Hart's account of the Kilmichael ambush in two contributions to "History Ireland", I strongly object to John A. Murphy's trivialisation of that controversy as being supposedly between Professor Hart and "the noses of his nationalist critics, especially followers of Tom Barry" ("Sunday Independent", November 13). Since Professor Murphy attended a 1982 lecture by me in Cork's Connolly Hall that was held under the auspices of Socialists Against Nationalism, he has long ago heard my denunciation of Tom Barry's nationalist red-baiting campaign during the 1946 Cork By-election. He has moreover now read in "History Ireland" of how, on my last encounter with Tom Barry in 1975, I refused to have anything to do with the General because of our diametrically opposed views on the Northern conflict. "History Ireland" has also recorded my 2004 conclusion that Barry himself bore full responsibility for the IRA murder of Admiral Somerville in 1936.

Being neither a nationalist nor a follower of Tom Barry, I have nonetheless refused to tolerate the character assassination of him for supposedly being guilty of having committed war crimes during the War of Independence ambush at Kilmichael. Professor Hart's contention, in "The IRA and its Enemies", that Barry was such a war criminal, is "supported" only by questionable hearsay evidence from long dead anonymous "witnesses" whom he still refuses to name. And having twice directly posed the question in "History Ireland", I have twice been refused any answer by Professor Hart, as to why, in quoting extensively from a British-sourced document purportedly authored by Barry, he omitted a key sentence erroneously detailing the Republican casualties of the Kilmichael ambush that demonstrably proved that Barry could not possibly have authored such a "report".

Regarding his new biography of Michael Collins, Professor Hart announced that he would refuse to go down "the black hole of uncheckable documentation" and would disregard "letters purportedly written by Collins" that could not be further authenticated. These are indeed admirable principles of biography that should, however, have also been employed when writing of Tom Barry. I do not know what Professor Murphy's derisive reference to the "History Ireland" controversy tells us about his views on the standards of intellectual rigour that should be demanded of modern day academics in his field, but surely an elementary sense of justice should at the very least balk at the conviction of Tom Barry for "war crimes" concerning which no credible supporting evidence has been advanced. Manus O'Riordan (15.11.05)

Labour Pains continued

Professor Tom Garvin has been lauded in recent months for his fierce and courageous exposure in his new book *Preventing The Future : Why Ireland Was So Poor For So Long*. But if the politicians, the priests and the public servants were cowardly and morally spineless—were they much different from the intellectual cream, the academics. What academic or group of academics had the courage to speak up and light the way forward—you must be joking—they were even more craven and spineless than their lay and spiritual leaders.

What's happening today is unprecedented in terms of immigration—when Immigrants went to Chicago, Vancouver, Auckland, they were paid the rate for the job—this is the fundamental issue in the so-called debate on Immigration, if you can call it a debate.

Trade Unionists are not opposed to fair opportunity, equality and integration. If you encourage immigration, treat these people as equals, as neighbours, as New Irish—providing them with all the same rights and entitlements as Irish men and women : NO MORE, no less. It will cost, but only economically and are we not rolling in 'dosh' just now?

But so far as Senator Maurice Hayes' *'Multiculturalism'* is concerned, he can stick it where the monkey stuck it nuts. *'Multiculturalism'* is only another middle-class slogan, sounds good but has no substance, just like New Labour.

Only a small minority of immigrants will ever attain the middle-class status—the success or failure of integration falls on the acceptance or otherwise by the working class of these people.

There is no way you will have integration if East Europeans are turned into second-class citizens and that's what they will be if they don't get the same wage rates and conditions of Irish workers.

This of course, runs counter to IBEC's plan for the full implementation of Ireland into a unique Globalisation model! Well, too bad.

And by the way: has anyone given the immigrants a choice? We are bombarded by the likes of Pat Kenny of RTE talking about Polish plasterers willing to work for six euros an hour.

Kenny says thousands of Poles are working in the construction industry. Is

that so—at six euros or less an hour—Pat could you tell us as a good Dublin petty bourgeoisie, why the prices of houses in Dublin have not fallen dramatically with such a cheap labour force. The Gombeen Republic has never been more alive, they just could not resist the opportunity to exploit the most vulnerable.

Sir A.J.F. O'Reilly, the West British baron, who owns the *Evening Herald*, has a 12-page supplement in the Polish language each Friday night in his gutter tabloid. When did you last see a paragraph in Gaelic in that organ? His publications spend vast columns denigrating our native tongue! Self-loathing it's called.

AUSTRALIA: ATTACK ON WORKERS

In November, 2005, the Howard Liberal Coalition Government in Australia unveiled new Industrial Law proposals in the Canberra parliament. These proposed laws were to replace an Industrial Relations system which have served Australia for nearly 100 years.

Historically, the Australian States as well as the Commonwealth Government have had separate industrial relations systems, which developed from the earliest years of Australian Federation in 1901.

In essence, the Howard Government aims to abolish the State systems, shift employees off awards onto workplace agreements, remove the power of the Industrial Relations Commission to set minimum pay rates and shift it to the new Fair Pay Commission.

Under the new system, the negotiations will be transferred to ordinary workers, who will have to become industrial relations experts overnight. They will have to navigate their way through a minefield of minimum conditions, minimum and award classification wages, and entitlements (which can be bargained away), even before getting down to determining actual wages, which can be negotiated either individually or through a collective agreement.

It seeks a cultural change in the workplace where individuals have to individually press for a rise or a change of circumstances—based on the mistaken belief that there is a level playing-field at the bargaining table between a 19-year-old uneducated person and a multi-national conglomerate.

The new system is clearly intended to marginalise Trade Unions.

* Billy Attley, the former General President could not make it to the great day of protest on 9th December 2005, but

we forgave him. Billy was the recipient of an honorary fellowship from the National College of Ireland for his contribution to Irish society.

Former Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds was present to present the citation for Mr. Attley, said

"The trade union activist had lived a life of protracted endeavour. 'His legacy is seen all around us today in the modern society we have had the good fortune to enjoy.' Mr. Reynolds told the audience: 'Few would doubt the critical role played by Billy in fostering the climate that allowed this economy to flourish.'"

The ceremony took place at the International Finance & Services Centre, Dublin.

* We had winners and losers in December's great industrial battle with Irish Ferries, but there is no doubt there was one big Trade Union winner on Xmas Eve, 05, when it was announced that Peter McLoone, the General Secretary of IMPACT and President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has been appointed as the new Chairman of FAS, in succession to Brian Geoghegan, former director of Economic Affairs and Research with the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC).

"As leader of one of the State's largest public service trade unions, Mr. McLoone played a key role in the drive for the benchmarking pay deal for State employees, which added over one billion euros a year to their wages." (Irish Times, 24.12.2005).

* "Tomorrow is not a public holiday and workers do not have an automatic right to a day off, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has warned.

"A common misconception is that, as New Year's Day falls on a Sunday this year, the public holiday automatically carries over to the following day. This is definitely not the case," said the Department.

"Whatever about private sector workers, the Department has decided to exercise it's 'discretion' with regard to its own staff who, along with all other civil servants, will not have to be back behind their desks until this Tuesday. The same applied last Tuesday, December 27.

"The vast majority of the country's 30,000 civil servants also availed of their additional 'privilege day'. In line with most other departments, Enterprise did not re-open last week until Thursday, 29 December. Privilege days were agreed back in the 1930s and were originally designed to give civil servants enough time to return from rural areas to Dublin after the holidays. The two privilege days—one at Christmas and one at Easter—have since been formally agreed and are additional to annual leave entitlements" (Sunday Tribune, 1.1.2006).

Labour Pains continued

affiliates, associate or otherwise are bound by the new deal.

It is imperative that we also face up to the social disaster that was the decision to give full access to the Irish labour market by workers from the new EU Accession states in May 2004.

The real beneficiary here has been the employing class, especially the 'Gombeens' element. And if we have to put it up to the so-called liberal elements and the multi-cultural lobby, so be it. Trade Union spokespeople throughout the protest marches were almost apologising for fear their quest for rights and justice for workers, including migrant workers might feed a form of xenophobia.

Did anyone seriously examine the prospect of almost 70 million people being free to compete against the existing two million pool of labour available to this country's employers.

"A situation akin to the Mississippi engulfing the

Liffey has arisen" (Letters, Irish Times, 19.12.2005).

"Up ahead, as the crowd snaked past Government buildings and into Merrion Square, where no one paid much attention to the speeches, a few Dublin Bus workers—some of the 2,500 taking part—were grimly discussing the behaviour of a "foreign national" driver who continued to drive his route during the march.

"Every foreign national refugee in Dublin Bus gets two years' tax allowance... That's discrimination and no one knows about it. Of course that's why he went on working." What would they do to him? "We won't talk to him." "Nearby, four black bus drivers walked together, with a clear agenda. "This march is about protecting our job and our future. This job is all we know. This is all we do. It's how we feed and clothe our family. Irish Ferries used to be a big company like Dublin Bus before it was privatised. If that is accepted, no one is safe." The four radiated pride that one of their number had managed to acquire a house, a car, a family.

"They had heard about the other "foreign national". They didn't think it was about money. More probably, it was about fear of losing his job. "He is on a year's probation period and perhaps he thinks he can't say no. Of course he would not lose his job. But maybe he

does not know that." (Kathy Sheridan, Irish Times, 10.12.05).

This will be Jack O'Connor's first occasion to lead SIPTU into new Partnership talks. He shouldn't only have his laptop on the table; he should make sure he has a good pair of hob nails boots on as well, and start stamping on a few pairs of hush puppies and they may not be all be on the employer's side, either.

Turlough O'Sullivan, the Director General of IBEC has laid it clearly on the line:

"Irish industry is now caught in a dangerous pincer movement. Our costs are rising at an alarming rate, while at the same time international competition is so intense that we have to reduce the prices we charge.

"While costs have been exploding factory gate prices have been falling—by almost 12 per cent—over the past five years. This squeeze cannot continue. It is not sustainable and must be addressed in the next agreement. Can you imagine trying to run your household on this basis?

"All costs to business must be hauled back if we are to compete successfully and prosper. If we can broker a deal with Trade Unions that will enable Irish businesses to compete successfully and secure the jobs in our economy, then it will be worth the effort. If not, the entire exercise is futile. Partnership is not an end in itself.

"If any party decides to abandon partnership then this should follow rational discussion on the key issues; it should not be based on a single dispute between one company and one union. Negotiation on the basis of preconditions will not be acceptable in future.

"The partnership approach is not simply based on a narrow economic agenda, but includes wider social issues. It should be obvious to all that social benefits can only be paid for if we run a successful economy. Nobody owes us a living.

"A successful outcome to any future partnership negotiations hinges on all parties having a realistic goal and working to achieve that. Our goal is to continue to develop this era of Irish prosperity. All involved in the negotiations must focus their minds on this imperative. Excessive wage increases would price us out of the international marketplace and put thousands of jobs at risk. Genuine leadership from politicians, Trade Union leaders and others should be grounded in this reality." (Irish Times, 16.12.2005).

For eighteen years 'Wage Control' in the form of Social Partnership made an enormous contribution to the creation of

wealth in this state. The elements who have benefited most significantly want to forget the role played by Trade Unionism. It is not dissimilar to the manner in which the Dublin establishment are treating the Republican Movement now that the IRA have forsaken the armed struggle. We can now be taken for granted.

SENATOR MAURICE HAYES:
IMMIGRATION ISSUES

"Score draw comes after hard-fought ferry brawl", writes Senator Maurice Hayes, in his own *Irish Independent*, well he is a director of Sir A.J.F. O'Reilly's Independent News & Media PLC:

"It would be a pity if the very genuine urge for protection which brought people onto the streets should become a demand for the exclusion of foreign workers.

"We are a country which requires immigration and we should welcome this and make the best of it. For better or worse, Ireland has set its sights and based its economic future on openness and the free movement of labour and capital and on multi-culturalism" (Irish Independent, 15.12.2005).

Of course, like a plethora of other media commentators, Maurice wouldn't have a blind notion of the immigrant psyche. We know how 'open' and 'free' these people were when the island was haemorrhaging in the recent and not-so-recent history of the state. They couldn't get us out fast enough. At least when we went to London, Chicago or Melbourne, we were paid the rate for the job—Maurice's buddies have plummeted a new depth in the art of labour exploitation in their endeavour to drive wages down and roll back other hard won gains. His own company are at the same game, down-sizing and outsourcing. So is the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Examiner*, not that you will ever read about it in their own publications.

This writer saw rows of homes empty overnight, poor creatures with their families in trail making for the Derry boat in the dark of early morning to avoid the social shame of not hacking it on this glorious island. And by Jesus, nobody shouted stop.

Even in 1991, a leading presidential candidate was telling us that the island was too small for the current population.

And take a look at the cowardly shrimps that stayed: As they jockeyed and jostled their way into secondary and tertiary education to aspire to the safe comfort of government jobs.

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Labour Pains continued

to the resumption of sailings.

“Brendan Hayes, vice-president of Siptu, said the “negotiated settlement” would provide a framework for the protection of workers in the company, and for the “viable operation” of the ferries business into the future.

“He said Siptu had secured substantial increases in the rates of pay originally proposed by the company, keeping them up and above the national minimum wage. It had also secured agreement protecting the terms and conditions of staff who wished to remain with the company.

“Similarly, it had secured the reopening of the redundancy offer, as well as crewing ratios and terms and conditions for officers and ratings which were higher than those originally proposed by the company.

“Alf McGrath, Irish Ferries’ director of human resources, said the agreement would last three years initially. However it would contain a mechanism for this to be reviewed during that time, or renewed when this period had expired. He said cost reductions of Euro 11.5 million per year, “purely down to labour costs” was “not an untidy sum”.

“The company, for its part, liked the binding arbitration element which is, in effect, a no-strike clause and guarantees it industrial peace for the next three years at least.” (Irish Times-15.12.2005).

The decision to re-flag gives the game away: if the company didn’t reflag, the Latvian workers would come under the Employment Equality law and would be entitled to be paid the same rate as Irish workers.

SEAMEN’S UNION OF IRELAND

Robert Carrick, General Secretary of the Seamen’s Union of Ireland, also welcomed the agreement. But stressed that those people getting a redundancy payment, as well as the foreign outsourced crews, would be particularly happy.

“I’m happy enough with it, but I could be a bit happier.”

We are informed that the General Secretary of the Seamen’s Union of Ireland, Robert Carrick retained his contract of employment with Irish Ferries when he left to take up his post as full-time secretary of the SUI; that he was entitled to the full redundancy package for all his years of service, including the period of his current stewardship as general secretary of the SUI.

According to the ICTU Executive Council *Report 2001, 2003*, the SUI had an affiliation of 520 members. With the current round of redundancies at Irish Ferries, it surely spells the end of that Trade Union which was founded in 1959.

Mr. Carrick wants to represent the new Latvian crew who are displacing almost all of his members on Irish Ferries’ ships. However, it is unlikely the SUI will secure union recognition for these contract workers.

“Some SUI members are employed as mast riggers by RTE. In the 1960s and ’70s, the SUI was headed by the colourful William Stacey, Snr. and then by his son, William Stacey, Jr. in the 1980s” (Sunday Tribune, 18.12.2005).

A.D.M. LOCK-OUT: CORK 2003

IBEC and other industrial commentators keep referring to the Irish Ferries dispute as a ‘once-off’ but the breach in ‘social partnership’ was well signalled before that.

The most shameful episode in Ireland’s industrial relations records for 2003, was the ADM Lock-out of 80 Trade Unionists and the subsequent laying-off of another 80 by the giant multi-national, Archer, Daniels Midland (ADM), for 134 days. ADM is one of the largest agricultural processing companies in the world. In the United States, it employs 24,000 people.

Mr. Micheal Martin, TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and his political friends would have regarded ADM as a model company, the essence of what ‘social partnership’ was all about.

Under the Republic’s Tax-Dumping policy of 12.5% corporate tax, ADM was one of the most profitable US companies in Ireland. Worker output at the plant in Ringaskiddy was 25% higher than that of any of their many equivalent plants in the States. And still it did not satisfy the employer.

The remarkable aspect of that dispute was not that the ADM workers were locked out for 134 days, which was 12 days short of the 146 in Larkin’s great 1913 battle, but that such a dispute and behaviour by a ‘maverick’ employer was allowed to go virtually unchallenged by the entire Trade Union movement.

ADM tore up and trampled on every conceivable principle of industrial relations and it was allowed to get away with it.

A more sinister aspect of the dispute was the covert role played by a main pillar of national partnership, the largest employer body, IBEC, of which ADM was a member. ADM appeared to be encouraged by the Fianna Fail/PD government, especially by Ms Mary Harney, the Tanaiste and IBEC’s ‘eyes and ears’ in the Cabinet.

The message was clear: teach the Trade Unions a lesson!

Minister Martin has been mouthing himself in the course of the Irish Ferries

dispute, particularly after the large turn-out on 9th December 2005, when approaching 100,000 turned out to march—but he was a real quiet boy when the 134 day lock-out took place at ADM in his own Cork South-Central constituency. Martin and company cannot wait to get another bout of ‘Social Partnership’ up and running again. ‘More Workplace Inspectors’ he says and we are on our way!

Many of the ADM workers were Trade Unionists with a long service, a number had approximately 30 years. They were told to either take the minimum offer of redundancy or commence employment under the new regime and work their service out to their 65th year. Does it sound familiar?

Despite accepting much inferior rates of pay and conditions in 2003, the ADM workers did not save their jobs. In September, 2005, the us multi-national shut-up shop with the loss of 160 jobs and headed elsewhere.

They pulled another knack during redundancy talks, threatening the workforce that if a third party were called, i.e. the Labour Court, ADM would duly reduce the Redundancy package on offer. Unintimidated, the men went to the LRC but in the end they lost a week for each year in their final Redundancy package. No doubt this was an illegal stroke by the company but they got away with it. Other companies, of late, have exercised this ploy also.

Labour Comment has learned that the O’Flynn family of Fermoy, through their company, South Coast Transport have paid 20 million euros for the ADM site, including a major jetty in Cork Harbour. In 2003, South Coast Transport purchased the 100 acre site of the Mitsui Denman plant which closed down in Little Island for 15 million euros in December, 2003.

They intend to use the sites to landfill construction waste.

‘PARTNERSHIP’ AGREEMENT

If the ICTU go for a ‘Partnership’ deal, the Benchmarking aspect will have to be sorted out and equally a series of Price Control mechanisms put in place—we don’t for a second doubt the sincerity of the huge public service turnout on 9th December 2005, but we doubt whether the fate of Irish seamen were foremost in the minds of many of those marchers. Peter McLoone could hardly “*calm his deep despair*” that ‘Partnership’ might collapse altogether. But all turned out roses for Peter. (See Below).

One more thing: the Trade Unions should demand that if IBEC is a broker in any new ‘Partnership’ deal that all IBEC

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“The interests of capital and the interest of wage-labour are diametrically opposed to each other” ... “To say that the interests of capital and the interests of the workers are identical signifies only this, that capital and wage-labour are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other” (Marx).

The Worst has yet to come!

“Eighteen years and six deals later, partnership process is envy of developed world” states Turlough O’Sullivan, Director General of the business and employers’ organisation IBEC (Irish Times, 16.12.05). This was in the aftermath of the settlement of the Irish Ferries dispute, which saw 540 seafarers made redundant.

But of course, Mr. O’Sullivan was at pains to state that the ferry dispute was a once-off and confined to the maritime industry. He believes that but we don’t.

The one abiding lesson out of the Irish Ferris debacle is this—the leopard never changes his spots, no matter how often he may ‘reflag’ them.

Mr. O’Sullivan continues:

“Some lessons should be learned from the Irish Ferries experience. The dispute has shown us how even the most intractable and highly charged dispute can be resolved within the partnership model. The National Implementation Body, which has representatives of both Ictu and Ibec, devised a formula the Sunday before last which formed the basis for the eventual outcome. It is a pity that it took so long to give effect to the spirit and intent of that formula.

“When a matter is of national interest and jobs in many sectors are at stake, it is neither defensible nor strategically wise for the company involved not to engage in public debate. Of course there was misrepresentation and misinformation, but by vacating the public stage, the company was partially to blame for this. *Union leadership should never again allow itself to be manipulated by elements within their ranks who are not working towards realistic objectives that are in the public interest.*

“For politicians, there is something to learn as well. Never again, I hope, will we see them jump into a delicate dispute with no understanding of the facts and realities and no contribution to offer to constructive bridge-building. The wider community is not impressed with them” (Irish Times, 16.12.05).

If the Trade Union movement proceed to negotiate an arrangement similar to the last six agreements, then the demise of the movement in the workplace will proceed apace. An element in any future agreement must ensure that Trade Union members feel a distinct and personal ownership in the process.

As a force or an influence in our society, the standing of the Trade Union movement is at an all-time low. In the 70s and 80s, not a single debate on economic or social issues was complete without an opinion being sought from one or other of the main Trade Unions or the ICTU. Today, the media just ignore us.

There was a time when RTE gave a full week’s coverage to the annual conference of Congress—Professor Brian Farrell would host a 30-minute review of each day’s business—now we don’t even have an annual conference. Many of the major unions have followed suit.

“The stock market value of Irish Continental Group, the parent company of Irish Ferries, rose Euro 13.5m to over Euro 250m yesterday, as the market digested the details of the agreement reached with Siptu and the Seamen’s Union of Ireland in the early hours of yesterday morning.” (Irish Independent, 15.12.2005).

FERRY DEAL: THE MAIN POINTS

- Irish Ferries can proceed with its plan to outsource crews on its Irish Sea vessels.
- Its new seafarers must be paid at least the Irish minimum wage—this is about twice what had been proposed.
- Crews will also have more time off than initially planned.
- The company will “reflag” its vessels to another state.
- Pay and conditions of seafarers will be underpinned by a binding agreement grounded in Irish law.
- Industrial peace is guaranteed for at least three years, with any issues in dispute going to binding arbitration.
- Existing ships officers and ratings who wish to remain with the company will have pay and conditions protected.
- The firm will achieve savings of Euro 11.5 million a year, rather than the Euro 15 million expected under the initial outsourcing plan.
- All personnel, on returning to work, to be treated “as if this dispute had never happened”.

“Both sides in the Irish Ferries dispute were yesterday keen to stress the merits of the agreement which led

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