

Challenges To Hart
Folley, Stack, Lane etc.
page 7

Vanity Of The Bonfires
Joe Keenan
page 13

Pay Talks
Labour Comment
back page

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

June 2006

Vol.21, No.6 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.20 No.6 ISSN 954-5891

Northern Ireland

The Assembly Assembled

The Northern Ireland Assembly has been assembled for a six-month session during which it will have nothing to do but sit. In November it will be obliged to nominate members to the Executive under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. If the DUP refuses to nominate Executive members at that point, the salaries of all Assembly members will cease to be paid, and there will be enhanced co-operation between London and Dublin in operating the Six County administration.

The elected Assembly in the Six Counties has no say in any of this.

The word 'democracy' continues to be used by the London and Dublin authorities with regard to it. Paisley says it is a travesty of democracy. And of course it is. But all that has ever existed in Northern Ireland, and all that could exist, is a travesty of democracy. Actual democracy is possible only in the political life of one or other of the states. Paisley himself understood this in the early 1970s when the old Stormont regime was stood down by Whitehall. He adopted an 'integrationist' position. This meant that Northern Ireland itself should be stood down—that the Six Counties should cease to be a separate body politic and should be governed within the general politics of the state. He did not spell out the details, but that was the only effective meaning of integration. He held that position for a few months, and then abandoned it without explanation. We assumed that somebody in the Whitehall power structure had a word with him behind the scenes. That is something that happened again and again in our experience. The Unionist mentality was strong-willed and purposeful when it came to offering resistance to Whitehall schemes, but was incapable of following through a positive measure when a powerful mandarin told them it wasn't on.

Wee Frankie Millar, who is now a political correspondent of the *Irish Times*, appeared to understand, when he was Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Party, that Northern Ireland could never be a democracy. He led a Unionist delegation to Whitehall shortly after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, and put it to Mrs. Thatcher that democracy in Northern Ireland, as connected with Britain, was possible only as part of the British political system. He gave a television interview when he came out of 10 Downing Street, and said that she told him integration was "not on". He was furious. But he took her word for it.

continued on page 2

Ruth Dudley Edwards *Infatuated With Eccentrics*

Ms Ruth Dudley Edwards in person inspires a number of adjectives—'frail' first and foremost. One thinks of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Other adjectives include: fragile, confused, nostalgic, brave, timid, hopeful, pessimistic... oh, one could ransack *Roget!*

She chose to devote her entire speech at the launch of her book in the Bookshop at Queen's in Belfast to a review in this journal (*Irish Political Review*) and to the absurd allegations made by 'a well-known eccentric' called Jack Lane. 'He may be here now!' she cried, with great bravado,

peering around a uniformly sycophantic Queen's academic audience. A shudder went round the room. But no, the Great Ogre was conspicuous by his absence.

But Ms Edwards had badly misjudged her audience. One could palpably sense their mystification. Who was this well-known eccentric? No-one in Belfast (that is, Queen's University) had ever heard of him. The jokes fell flat. There was a vague unease that such a Great Historian should spend so much time obsessively refuting allegations made by a nonentity in a

Nuclear Power:

Iran is not breaking the NPT
—but the US and the EU are

"Under NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] rules, there is nothing illegal about any state having enrichment or reprocessing technology—processes that are basic to the production and recycling of nuclear reactor fuel ..."

These are words of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, in an interview with the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* (6-12 April 2006).

Specifically, on Iran's enrichment programme, he told Reuters on 30th March 2006:

"Nobody has the right to punish Iran for enrichment. We have not seen nuclear material diverted to a nuclear weapon ..."

It could hardly be clearer. By engaging in uranium enrichment-related activities to produce nuclear fuel, as Brazil and Japan are also doing, Iran is acting within the NPT. And the IAEA has found no evidence that Iran is diverting nuclear material for weapons purposes. In short, Iran is not breaking any of its NPT commitments.

ElBaradei could have gone further and

continued on page 5

nonentity's magazine.

But refute them she did. How dare Jack Lane suggest that she was ashamed of her book, *Patrick Pearse: The Triumph Of Failure!* She was proud of it, stood over every word, . . . dammit, she was young and innocent when she wrote it, had no inkling of the trouble it might cause, particularly the bits about Pearse being unconsciously homosexual (sic), she was working at the Department of Trade and Industry, she was a lowly civil servant, she just wanted to get it right . . .

At this stage the present writer was so carried away that if he had looked round and caught Jack Lane standing beside him he would have punched him in the nose, the bastard!

continued page 3, col. 1

CONTENTS

Northern Ireland: The Assembly Assembled. Editorial	1
Nuclear Power: Iran Not Breaking NPT. David Morrison	1
Ruth Dudley Edwards, infatuated with eccentrics. Niall Cusack	1
Encirclement Of Russia. Report	3
Michael O'Riordan. Obituary Notice (Niall Cusack, S. Belfast Labour)	3
The Intelligence War In 1920. Brian Murphy osb (unpublished letter)	3
Editorial Commentary.	5
Shorts from the Long Fellow	6
Challenges To Peter Hart.	
1. Political Violence, dodging tough questions. Nick Folley	7
2. Peter Hart At Cork University. Michael Stack	8
3. Questions Of History For Peter Hart. Jack Lane (Leaflet/letter)	10
4. Peter Hart's Use Of Sources. <i>A view from Queen's</i>	11
The Iraq Psychodrama. Reader's Letter	12
The Vanity Of The Bonfires. Joe Keenan	13
Putting The Record Straight About John O'Mahony, TD. Joe Keenan	14
Commemorating The 1916 Rising. Ed Doyle (report)	15
Some Belfast Meetings. Conor Lynch	15
Bertie's 1916 Proclamation. Pat Muldowney	17
Film Reviews. Brendan Clifford	19
Connolly And MacSwiney Recalled. Manus O'Riordan	22
Ireland, Inside And Out. Wilson John Haire (part 2 of 1916 review)	24
The Israel Lobby. Norman Finkelstein (report)	27
Europe & Palestinians. Proinsias De Rossa MEP (report)	28
O'Connell's Legacy & 1916. Jack Lane (letter)	29
Redmond Prepares For Civil War. Pat Muldowney (letter)	29

Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney**:

Pay Talks: back page

Strange Support For Peter Hart! *Sean McGouran* p30

In terms of political calibre that is the great difference between Unionism of any variety and Sinn Fein.

Unionism opted for a make-belief of democracy, in a politically-separated 6 Counties, on the British say so. If we achieved nothing else during the past 35 years, we succeeded in getting that much across. Unionism opted for a make-believe of democracy with its eyes open—even when it understood that its own ascendancy could not be restored within the make-believe.

The *Irish Times* has undergone a great change in recent weeks. The most spectacular sign of the change is that Kevin Myers no longer writes its *"Irishman's Diary"*.

The function of the *Diary*, as written by Myers (an English Tory) was to outrage nationalist opinion. He systematically ridiculed everything that led to the separation of part of Ireland from the British state, with little or no concern about the truth of what he said. And he operated under the authority of the Directory which controls the paper, by-passing the Editor. The Directory gave him his head, and was willing to pay libel damages in order not to inhibit his flow. The reckoning must have been that, even if retractions had sometimes to be made, there would be a substantial net gain—a ratchet effect—of Britishisation of current assumptions in Irish political life.

But a time came when the ratchet would not move up another notch. The worm turned. The state decided to restore official commemoration of its foundation

—and decided that it was not founded by the Treaty but by Pearse and Connolly's act of terrorism in 1916. And the *Irish Times*, in accordance with prudent maxim of *reculer pour mieux sauter*, decided to pull its horns in for the time being. And so Myers has gone off to join the eccentrics on the *Irish Independent*, where his notions will have a wider circulation but less effect.

We assume that the *Independent* has a large body of Fine Gael readers of strong nationalist outlook. If so, we must assume that its readers do not read it, or at least do not read its columnists. And, if that is so, it seems that the old description of the average Fine Gaeler as being rich and thick still holds. So Myers will have a wider readership but will be less read. Or, if read, will be objected to more strongly.

The *Irish Times* is the paper. And, while pulling in its horns, it sticks to its agenda. On 13th May its front-page headline read: *Paisley Says Progress Hinges On SF Support For Police*. A headline on an inside article read: *There Is No Way Forward Without Resolving Police Issue*. Both articles were written by Wee Frankie. The message of the headlines—which are the most most important parts of newspaper articles these days—was that devolved government would be up and running at Stormont if Sinn Fein joined the Policing Board. The second headline was technically accurate, but would be read under the influence of the first, which was false.

Paisley would not move *without* Sinn Fein toeing his line on policing—but neither would he move with it. And the

PSNI had to be *embraced* by republicans:

"Joining the Police Board is not an act of supporting the police...

...there could be nobody in the government of Northern Ireland except they accept the forces of law and order. And by accepting them, they hand to the state all the information they have on lawlessness..." (13.5.06 IT)

The policing issue was just one of a series of demands which had to be met before he would move. The others were—

"The DUP contends "a democracy" cannot be built on what he says "is lacking" in the Belfast Agreement, and refers to his proposals to the British government for change.

"We have said, at the end of the day the IRA gives up all its arms, the IRA genuinely has no more truck with criminality, the IRA supports the police and called [sic] for its people to support the police... You do all that, but that is not sufficient.

"We must be able to build upon something that is a democracy...

"Paisley confirms this means provision for "collective responsibility" in any executive, "and especially the fact that you cannot forever be stuck, that you have to get agreement between two diverse agencies. There's bound to be a time when we have to go to a majority weighted vote. I am prepared to have a weighted majority. I'm prepared to go as far as any real democracy goes, but I'm not prepared to tie my country in with people who at the end of the day want to destroy it."

"I'm not sure where that leaves Sinn Féin. Does he mean they want to destroy his country? "Yes, their aim is a 32-county Ireland and they're not going to give that up." But it's a legitimate political aspiration? "Ach . . ."

[Paisley said the institutions must be final:] "that government must not be an interim government. They cannot tell me I must take a step, but it's only a step to another step and another step"

"...On one specific, he has previously said he would not accept the concept of co-equal First and Deputy First Ministers. Is that an absolute position?

"I can't see how you can have an absolute position with that {arrangement}, that before you can get agreement you have to have the agreement of a person who has already said 'this is only a step'..."

"Does the IRA have to disband? "I think they have, yes... the whole organisation of the IRA as an army . . . I say that that must change and we can't have them..."

"...Why not sit down and negotiate the terms face-to-face with Gerry Adams?

"...my principle says to me you don't negotiate with terrorists..."

Meanwhile Denis Bradley, the independent who took the lead in urging Nationalist representatives to join the Policing Board, has become disillusioned

continued on page 4

Ah, but then we went a trifle downhill.

Revisionist? A title of honour! "I wear the badge revisionist as a badge of honour! Patrick Pearse had a right to sacrifice himself but not all those civilians! If seven people can determine these things, the Continuity IRA has the right to style themselves the heirs of 1916. There is a flouting of democracy."

As regards the celebrations of 1916: "There is a small but adult debate this year: get rid of the lot or accept it all. It is a huge leap forward that the dead civilians were remembered by a minute's silence."

Ruth Dudley Edwards ended on a very dignified note, which I can't quite remember. There was quiet applause, which I had the bad taste to interrupt.

"Can I ask a question", I said, "what do you mean by flouting of democracy? Are you saying that the Easter Rising was a flouting of democracy? What democracy was there in Ireland or Britain in 1916?"

Ms Edwards was already quitting the podium but she muttered: "I don't want an argument!". I responded: "I don't want an argument either, I just want an answer to my question: what do you mean by flouting of democracy? When was the last General Election?" Ms Edwards muttered: "Home Rule was on the statute book", and turned her back on me. By this stage there was the sort of palpable embarrassment among the audience as when someone has farted in church: acute discomfort combined with lack of courage to speak.

Someone else (of no consequence) made a speech (of no consequence). People came up to me and congratulated me on my intervention, in low tones. "Speak to her!" they said, "she's really very nice when you get to meet her".

Sure enough, after the inconsequential speeches, I approached Ms Edwards and said to her: "So, what do you mean by

Encirclement Of Russia

Signs are that Russia is overcoming the faults of the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras. Alexander Solzhenitsyn (87) has told *Moscow News*: "Though it is clear that present-day Russia poses no threat to them, NATO is methodically and persistently building up its military machine." Signing up surrounding States "under guise of supporting democratic upheavals" was a plan "to completely encircle Russia". Putin was on the right path, but should push reforms through faster.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the Russian nationalist, warned a large audience in the Kremlin Palace that Tony Blair is trying to undermine Russia: "As long there is Great Britain, there will be a plot against us."

Manuel Sarkisyanz, author of *Hitler's English Inspirers*, informs us—

"The Russian edition is sold out. The book—said to be much liked by students there—serves as a basis for a university seminar in Moscow, conducted by Prof. Dr. Tatiana Goncharova..."

"I know of only one detailed Russian review—written approvingly, though not without reservations..."

"Most interesting is that a man considered to be an advisor to Putin, Gleb Pavlovskiy (president of the "Foundation for Effective Policy"), commented in the Internet as follows:

"Among the few books on contemporary history, is notable the work of Manuel Sarkisyanz: 'English Roots of German Fascism'... It is a paradox that the example of the British Empire in the 1930's provided stimulation for development of Nazi tendencies in Germany. The Nazis were inspired by British might. Here forces itself upon us a parallel to contemporary affairs...; How a society, remaining itself democratic, does stimulate in other societies unilateral totalitarian tendencies."

"This was published in Pravyi Forum ("The Right Forum"), apparently last June." (16.2.06)

flouting of democracy?" She turned her back on me, without dignifying my question with a reply. She got stuck in signing copies of her book. A woman with big soulful eyes turned them on me and asked me who I was. I told her (admitting in the process that I was not Jack Lane) that I represented the Aubane Historical Society. She asked me what I thought of *Patrick Pearse; The Triumph Of Failure*, and I said I thought it was a very good book. "But have you told Ruth that?" she waived. I took the hint.

On my way out, I leaned over and said to Ms Dudley Edwards: "It's a very good book". She shuddered and turned her back on me. Poor Blanche.

Niall Cusack

P.S. Ruth made it clear that her granny had the picture of Hitler in front of her bed, not beside it. So there. She went to sleep and woke up with Adolf's mug to inspire her. Ruth felt this needed to be clarified and now it is.

The Intelligence War In 1920

The following letter of 10th May was refused publication in the Irish Times

I write concerning Peter Hart's review of Michael Foy's book on Michael Collins's Intelligence War (Irish Times, 6 May). Commenting upon the killing of twelve British officers and two Auxiliaries on 21 November 1920 ('Bloody Sunday'), Hart writes: 'perhaps as many as half of those killed were not really intelligence agents at all. Rather than British intelligence being crippled, it was finally unleashed—to great effect—in the weeks following.'

This verdict on Bloody Sunday is at complete variance with the contemporary British military appraisal of the event. The *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland 1920-1921*, Volume Two, *Intelligence*, states that 'the murders of 21 November temporarily paralysed the special branch. Several of its most efficient members were murdered and the majority of the others were brought into the Castle and the Central Hotel for safety.' The final judgement of the *Record* was that the 'Secret Service was on the whole a failure in Ireland.'

It is difficult to reconcile this official assessment of Bloody Sunday and British Intelligence with the analysis presented by Peter Hart in his review. Hart's verdict is made even more difficult to comprehend by the fact that he has published the *Record of the Rebellion*, in edited form, and has affirmed that 'it is the single most important—and by common consent the most trustworthy—source we have.' Why, it appear reasonable to ask, has he rejected the evidence of this 'most trustworthy source' in relation to the events of Bloody Sunday?

Brian Murphy

Michael O'Riordan

"O'RIORDAN, MICHEÁL. May 18, Dublin. Connolly Column, XV International Brigade, fought and wounded on Gandesa Front, Battle of the Ebro, Spanish Anti-Fascist War. Former General Secretary, Communist Party of Ireland. *'Si me quieres escribir / ya sabes mi paradero / en el frente de Gandesa / primera línea de fuego.'* *Fighter against Fascism in Spain and Ireland. Adiós, companero! No pasarán!*

—N. Cusack, Chair, South Belfast Labour."

(This notice was placed in the *Irish News* and the *Belfast News Letter*.

The former printed the *fadhas*, the latter didn't.)

Editorial Note: It is hoped to carry an obituary next month.

Grinding Along The Fault Lines

continued

with it and resigned. And the SDLP representatives on the Board have not just joined the Unionists in opposing Restorative Justice, but are leading the assault against this alternative form of policing.

Peter Hain changed the balance of the Board away from elected representatives in order to give himself room for manoeuvre on the issue of community self-policing, but the new Board seems as obdurate as the old. How could it be otherwise when the SDLP seeks to make party-politics of the issue? The reason for its stance can only be that its presence in nationalist communities is so minimal that it would have an insignificant input to self-policing.

Restorative Justice is commonly dismissed as confirming paramilitary rule, but it is not that—though republicans are among a number of community activists involved. It deals with the sort of petty crime which can make life a misery. The Director of *Community Restorative Justice* in Northern Ireland, Jim Auld, explains that people appeal to CRJ "at the end of their tether", when:

"They have been to the paramilitaries, the Housing Executive or the police—all say it's not their role. What the paramilitaries are saying now is go to Community Restorative Justice... We get the residents group involved, the Church. If it's older kids we get youth clubs or a detached youth worker involved, depending on what is appropriate..." (Irish News 14.11.05). Restorative Justice is a replacement for the direct action to curb community disorder formerly meted out by republicans, however they are just one strand in CRJ in nationalist areas. Auld says:

"Republicans are in a majority in the estates where we work and a project won't succeed if they are seen to be dominated by a single group, no matter who..."
CRJ is overseen by an—

"outside evaluator, a criminologist from Michigan who is one of the world leaders in restorative justice, who at the start was ensuring {our} standards were appropriate.

"We went through our processes and matched them against the Vienna Convention on restorative justice. In the six years we have been up and running we have moved to 14 projects and running at about 1,700 cases per year, involving about 6,000 people.

"We train around 160 people a year as volunteers..."

The idea of CRJ is not merely punishment of wrong-doers but to make them aware of the effects of their actions and to help them to change their lives. The

other advantage is that offenders are not criminalised as they would be in mainstream justice.

All the SDLP can see, however, is that CRJ consolidates their decline as an expression of nationalist communities. As Alban Maginnis has said:

"Community Restorative Justice is about control and power, it's not really about justice" (IN 14.11.06).

What the Party now demands is that all "control and power" be reserved for the PSNI—an authoritarian position which can only hasten its decline as a political force.

Meanwhile there has been a strange turn of events within the Assembly that is doing nothing but sit. Its members had to sign on in order to sit. They were elected in ancient times (2003) and this is the first time that they have sat. In the signing-on David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist Party, the political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force, signed as UUP without resigning from the PUP, making it a kind of affiliated association of the UUP, like the Co-op Party in the Labour Party. Increasing the UUP Assembly presence by one entitled the Party to an extra Executive Department under the d'Hondt system, reducing the Sinn Fein entitlement by one, and altering the overall balance by one in favour of Unionism.

Paisley showed that he is in earnest about the formalities of democracy, insofar as they are applicable within the general make-believe, by making a formal objection to the Speaker of the Assembly against Ervine changing his designation after the election, even though the change is to the advantage of the Unionist interest as a whole.

And Lady Hermon MP, leader of the UUP in Westminster, had expressed her "distress" at the association of her party with a terrorist organisation which is not on Ceasefire.

Lady Hermon is Parliament leader of the UUP because she is its only MP.

And David Ervine is the only member of the PUP elected to the Assembly.

The membership of the Assembly derives from the election before last, and is clearly unrepresentative of public feeling as expressed in the last election—the British election which increased the Sinn Fein vote substantially, decreased the SDLP and decimated the UUP.

The Hart Debate on Indymedia

The debate on Peter Hart's use of sources can be accessed at:

<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/75885>

Editorial Commentary

DUP Ends Boycott Of British-Irish Body—thus wrote the *Irish News* on 12th April. In fact the Party has not rescinded its refusal to participate in the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body, which also includes representatives of the Welsh and Scottish devolved assemblies as well as of the NI Assembly (when operational). Jeffrey Donaldson, Peter & Iris Robinson, and Nigel Dodds attended the Killarney Meeting of the body to make a presentation of their case for amending the Belfast Agreement to make it more democratic and less representative.

IMC Last month we said that the next IMC report would reveal whether Lord Alderdice's 'IMC' was acting objectively or following Government instruction. Before the last report, the preliminary leaks were all anti-Provo. This time, with very little alteration in objective conditions, the leaks and reception of the new Report have all been the other way: *IRA No Longer A Threat: IMC* (22.4.06 IN); *IMC Report Will State Loyalists Still A Risk* (26.4.06 IN); *IMC Report 'Most Positive Yet' On IRA's Dismantling* and *IMC Exposes Loyalist Threat* (27.4.06 IN); *Report A 'Foundation Stone' For Powersharing* and *IMC Has Given Unionists An Opportunity They Ought To Take* (27.4.06 IT).

As to the issue of retained IRA weapons, which was blown up into a big story the last time in order to justify putting off action by the two Governments—that has now been buried: "*The precise quantity of arms held on to by some republicans was unknown and their retention was "against the wishes of the IRA leadership", it said* (IN 27.4.06).

Now it is time for the DUP to be put under gentle pressure—of course, not under the onslaught formerly directed against republicans. Even Interior Minister Michael McDowell has shut up about 'criminality': he has hands full forcing garda to accept a new police reserve force. But the DUP under Paisley says "*it will not be 'bullied' into settlement*" (25.4.06 IT). Time will tell.

Denis Donaldson In last month's magazine we reported that this British agent had been debriefed by the IRA. However, Gerry Adams has said that he was "*very unforthcoming about his activities. The party broke off all contact with him shortly after all this. He was told that if he wanted to make a full disclosure he should get in touch with us. He never did*" (*Village*, 6.4.06). Significantly, the article is called *Dead Men Tell No Tails*.

Incidentally, Donaldson was the first Northern Republican permitted to carry

a personal protection weapon by the PSNI. He had a 9 mm semi-automatic pistol and two licensed shotguns. *Phoenix* informs us that: "In some of the pictures published after his death a noticeable bulge can be seen under his left arm" (21.5.06). The magazine asks, *Where Are Denis Donaldson's Guns? Perhaps it should ask, 'Why Didn't He Use His Gun?'* The magazine also says Donaldson was visited both by former RUC CID detective Colin Breen (associated with the *Sunday World* revelations about the 'hideout'—see last month's *Irish Political Review*) and another British spook:

"Few know that the renegade... was contacted by another British agent days before the *Sunday Worst* [sic] made contact. This man, now in semi-retirement in west Donegal, approached Donaldson to have a "friendly chat". The agent (a former supergrass) had been familiar with the Donaldson cottage from the time years ago when IRSP member, the late Mary Reid, owned it. He is believed to have advised Donaldson that maverick republicans who believed he had betrayed them in the early 1980s (when he had access to IRA operational information, which he lacked in his later Sinn Féin years) were an imminent threat. Donaldson made plans to move to Dublin, but fatally delayed his departure by a week."

We therefore have two plausible theories—that Donald was killed by the British to prevent him giving away information about their Intelligence operations, or by mavericks. The two are not absolutely incompatible. Billy Wright was killed by the INLA while in the Maze Prison, but two years ago Justice Cory recommended a public inquiry be held to investigate allegations that the authorities colluded to make this possible. Wright was imprisoned on rigged charges and was threatening to spill the beans on collusion. As Gerry Adams says, *Dead Men Tell No Tales*.

Army 'Grooming' *"the British army in the north are to offer a prize fund for secondary schools to encourage them to participate in a competition under army auspices at Ballykinlar Camp"* (letter, IN, 28.3.06, Brian MacGiolla Pheadair). The writer was shocked to see a girl from an Integrated School wearing battle fatigues. The competition is to promote fitness and initiative.

SDLP & Parades A couple of months ago this magazine pointed out that the SDLP was acting in a sectarian manner under the guise of defending nationalism. A reader asked for examples. The latest instance comes in the Party's High Court challenge to two nominations to the 7-man Parades Commission by Peter Hain, David Burrows and Don McKay, both Orangemen. The SDLP complaint was

upheld by Justice Morgan in the Belfast High Court on the grounds that the appointments made the Commission one-sided, there being no equivalent appointments from the other side. Of course, there is no opposite number to the Loyal Orders: of its nature opposition to parades is very much locally-based. The *Irish Times* report noted—

"Mr Hain rounded on the SDLP in particular for mounting a campaign against Mr McKay and Mr Burrows. He contended that having Orangemen on the commission was designed to find a solution to the parades issue, and should at least be tested by nationalists as to whether it might work" (IT 20.9.06).

Euro 1,800 per person in the Republic is the price of Irish unity, according to UUP peer, Lord Kilclooney (II 26.4.06). We wonder what population figures he based this on? This figure will soon be history, what with immigration from Eastern Europe and the Northern 'peace dividend', which has seen Secretary of State Hain slashing the public sector and social services. The North is becoming more affordable every year! (Lord Kilclooney was John Taylor before his Ascension.)

Iran is not breaking the NPT —but the US and the EU are continued

pointed out that possessing enrichment and reprocessing technology for peaceful purposes is not merely legal under NPT rules, it is supposed to be an "inalienable right" guaranteed under the NPT to all signatories to the Treaty, Article IV(1) of which states:

"Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty."

In other words, those states that are seeking to prevent Iran from engaging in uranium enrichment to fuel nuclear power stations are acting contrary to the NPT. Iran is not.

So, since there is nothing illegal about enrichment under NPT rules, Iran is within its rights in refusing to accede to the demand that it suspend enrichment. To accede to the demand would be a voluntary act on the part of Iran, not an obligation under the NPT—IAEA resolutions say so explicitly.

What the US/EU are currently trying to do at the Security Council is to make it **mandatory** that Iran suspend enrichment—by having a Chapter VII resolution passed to this effect.

Another way of looking at it is that the NPT, an international Treaty with a

mechanism set out within it for its amendment, is going to be amended by the Security Council to remove the right of one, and only one, party to the treaty—Iran—to engage in nuclear activities for peaceful purposes. In other words, Article IV(1) will, in effect, become:

"Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty **except Iran** to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty."

At that point, Iran would be justified in withdrawing from the NPT, since rights that were supposedly guaranteed under it when Iran signed up to it in 1968 would have been taken away.

Before passing a Chapter VII resolution, the Security Council has to declare Iran to be a "threat to peace", despite the fact that it has no nuclear weapons and hasn't invaded another state in living memory.

The supreme irony of this is that the US/UK, which invaded Iraq in 2003 causing the deaths of tens of thousands of people, are taking the lead in the indictment of Iran as a "threat to peace". They invaded and occupied Iraq without being deemed a "threat to peace" by the Security Council, because both of them wield a veto on the Council. By the same token, Israel has never been deemed a "threat to peace" by the Council, because it has a veto-wielding friend in Washington—despite its possession of nuclear weapons, not to mention its invasion of every one of its neighbours at one time or another, and its annexation of bits of them.

There could hardly be a better illustration of the fundamental flaw at the heart of the UN system, where the five veto-wielding members of the Council can invade any country they like without fear of being deemed a "threat to peace", let alone being subjected to economic or military sanctions, by the Council.

The corollary of this is that, if the five veto-wielding members of the Security Council decide to gang up on an ordinary UN member, with no veto and no special friend with a veto, it can be declared to be a "threat to the peace" without the slightest justification. It remains to be seen if Russia and China allow this to happen to Iran.

David Morrison

NOTE.

This is an abridged version of an article published in the May issue of *Labour & Trade Union Review* (website: www.ltureview.com). The article can also be found at www.david-morrison.org.uk/iran/iran-not-breaking-npt.htm. Another website to check out is: www.thebevinsociety.com.)

Shorts

from

the Long Fellow

TALES FROM THE TIGER

Recently someone at work had a serious health setback. His kidney collapsed.

It seems that no night out is complete without taking a few ecstasy tablets. But it is a complicated manoeuvre. Once the ecstasy is taken and the user is lost to the beat of the music it is easy to forget about the bodily needs. Ecstasy when combined with drink causes chronic de-hydration. Some people in Dublin discos set the alarm on their Timex watches to remember when to take water to avoid any damaging consequences.

My work colleague had done well. He started off as a factory operative and was promoted to a position in the sales department. He was approaching 30 and had taken out a mortgage and was thinking of marriage when time ran out.

MORE TALES FROM THE TIGER

About three years ago this writer was looking to employ an office clerk. Having placed an ad on the FAS web site it took a week to find one suitable candidate. At the time I thought I was lucky.

A few months ago I went through the same routine. This time after 24 hours I had 36 applications. Most of the applicants were of Eastern European origin (mainly Poles), but there were West Africans, a Brazilian, a Phillipino as well as about half a dozen Irish.

It came down to a choice between some highly educated Eastern Europeans with good, but not perfect English, and some less educated Irish people. In the end I opted for a Slovakian.

THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

The above experience shows that the Labour market has changed radically in the last three years. The endless supply of labour has made this country a capitalist paradise. But it is difficult to say for certain whether this is in the interest of the country as a whole. Three years ago many Irish people of modest ability and educational attainment could aspire to jobs that were beyond their wildest dreams. That brief period may be coming to an end. (For example, one of the applicants was a cleaning lady in her late 30s who had done a FAS course but had no experience in an office environment. Such a person might have been successful three years ago).

On the other hand, there have been many Irish people in the last few years working at a level above their capacity. The influx of skilled labour from Eastern

Europe has alleviated this problem. Also, this influx, which is a great tribute to the communist education system, has facilitated economic activity, which would not otherwise be possible.

...OR LACK OF DEBATE

The recent immigration has given rise to hardly any debate. When the Labour Party leader raised the issue, his comments were ruled out of order by our politically correct media. Unfortunately when Fianna Fail does its thinking it doesn't happen through the media so it is difficult to know what is going on in their heads. However, it can be said that, as well as increasing the labour supply, the new immigrants are sustaining the building industry by building the infrastructure and then paying rent to the Irish landlord class.

But there may be more to it than that. About fifteen years ago the population was 3 million, it is now 4 million and in ten years it could be 5 million: a 66% increase in population in twenty-five years. Such population increases allow the political class in this country to have more influence in the world. It also allows infrastructure to be developed which would not be viable in a smaller population.

I suspect all of this was worked out in the Haughey era: the current crop of political leaders are just squatting on those political gains.

THE 1916 CELEBRATIONS

And seeing as the State has been so successful, why not celebrate the seminal event in the foundation of the State? Whatever about his motivations, there is no doubt that Aherne's decision to revive the 1916 celebrations has struck a chord with the people. When our West British media establishment could not hide from themselves the popularity of the event they suggested that we should celebrate something else such as Daniel O'Connell.

In the view of 'West Briton' the foundation of the state was a mistake. Therefore 1916 must be discredited and the 1918 Election is ignored. This leaves the problem of explaining our recent economic success.

THE CELTIC TIGER EXPLAINED (AWAY)

If the state has been such a failure, how can the economy be so successful? A new line being put in the letters page of *The Irish Times*, among other places, is that it was the natural order of things that the Irish economy should be successful. Our late blooming has been mere "catching up" from the damaging consequences of independence. But we are still independent. If independence had caused economic decline, prolongation would have exacerbated it. At this stage the arguments become a bit convoluted. Apparently, any moves in diluting our sovereignty were followed by periods of economic

growth. The Lemass/Whitaker plan and joining the EEC are given as examples.

But, of course, such developments can also be seen as reducing our dependence on the British market. There is no law requiring an independent state to be also "autarkic" or economically isolationist.

INDEPENDENCE

The 1916 celebrations and the debate about our economic success give rise to the question of when we achieved independence or, indeed, what is meant by "independence". In my view "independence" does not necessarily mean isolation. It has meant in practice reducing our dependence on our powerful neighbour. The 1916 Rising and then the 1918 Election and the War of Independence were steps on the road to independence. The 1922 Treaty negotiated under duress was another step, but we certainly did not achieve independence in that year. Our dependence on Britain for our agricultural exports existed long after independence. It was only in 1938 that the British left the "Treaty Ports". The decline in British as a world power gave Ireland greater room for manoeuvre.

Another point that is not mentioned is that, although the new leaders achieved some of the trappings of political independence in 1922, economic power remained with the old Anglo-Irish class. It was only in the 1960s that a new Catholic Bourgeois class emerged and the political personification of that development, Charlie Haughey, has never been forgiven for it. This is the context in which the economic performance of the State since 1922 must be judged.

THE COMMUNIST ALTERNATIVE

If this writer had the temperament for it, he might condemn the means by which the Catholic Bourgeoisie accumulated capital: tax evasion, property speculation etc. But it must be said that such means were far less bloody than the means by which their predecessors obtained economic power. And, in the absence of a non-capitalist alternative, the only sensible criterion for judging the new ruling class's actions are by the results. There is no doubt that this class has made a far better fist of the economy.

It was sad to hear the news of the death of Mick O' Riordan, who for a number of decades was the standard bearer of the left and whose destiny was to plough a long and lonely furrow in defence of communist values. Jack Lane remarked that one of the interesting things about him was that, unlike other communist leaders in countries with a stronger communist tradition than this one, he did not suffer a moral collapse with the fall of the Soviet Union. There was far more to him than that. He remained politically engaged until the end of his days. ■

Challenges To Peter Hart

Reproduced on page 10 is a leaflet distributed outside a meeting in Cork (and which also received publicity in the *Irish Examiner* and *Daily Ireland*). Two complementary accounts of the three talks given follow. Even though Peter Hart had a 'bit part' in the show, he was in many ways the 'main event'. People had come from far and wide to avail of a rare opportunity of challenging him. Though the time allowed for 'Questions' was brief, he cannot have felt too happy at their challenging nature.

After that we reproduce a correspondence between Jack Lane and a Queen's academic.

Political Violence

Or,

Peter Hart dodges some tough questions

The Irish Historical Society put on what promised to be a lively discussion (May 9th), the theme being *Political Violence*. I was more than intrigued to see that one of the speakers was a certain Peter Hart, whose name has been linked to controversy since he published his *The IRA And Its Enemies* in 1998. I had no intention of missing the opportunity to see and hear this man speak for myself.

First to the podium was Dr. David Edwards (University College, Cork) who discussed the period in Irish history from about 1534 to 1691. Thus he dealt with the Tudor conquest and subsequent Plantation of Ireland up to the Jacobite wars. He linked events in Ireland to contemporaneous events in Europe—principally the religious wars of the Reformation. He noted how at various times European and British armies were fighting their religious wars on Irish soil, an obvious example being the Spanish at Kinsale in 1601. Thus Ireland became one of the battlegrounds of Reformation and counter-Reformation Europe. By way of parallel today is how the US and Russia fought competing ideological wars in places such as Vietnam and Afghanistan. He qualified these remarks by adding that it is doubtful whether the Gaelic Lords saw their fight in terms of a religion, the obvious principal motive being resistance to dispossession and invasion.

He outlined how the two cultures viewed each other: the English settlers regarding the Irish as mere savages (think Spenser) while the Gaels viewed the English as upstart interlopers, a people without any ancient lineage. Dr. Edwards didn't specify this last—I understood it to mean the kind of genealogical lineage that would have made someone 'respectable' in Medieval Ireland.

Having outlined the main elements of the history, he pointed to the fact that the extraordinary violence and sectarianism of those times has been to a large extent, glossed over in Irish academic publications and other historical journals even up to recent times. Generally the approach has been to minimise English atrocities and massacres and to downplay the religious nature of the conflict. This posed an obvious question as to why that should be, and Dr. Edwards went some of the way to answering it by concluding, firstly, that it was a reaction to the Catholic Nationalism of the 19th century—so evidently partisan it required a 'balance' in academia lest the academic be accused also of bias (sound familiar?). Secondly, there may have been more political reasons, 'to decommission our early history' as Dr. Edwards put it, so as to pursue present day political ends; whether to encourage peace and reconciliation by not raking up the past, or to undermine support for nationalist ideologies. He concluded by saying historians had a duty to write the past as they discovered it—warts and all—and to rise above contemporary political considerations.

Prof. Richard English (Queen's University Belfast) followed, looking at more modern political violence in Ireland. In particular he was interested in exploring why political violence is resorted to at some times and not at others—in other words, what makes the ground fertile for political violence? By way of example he noted how Ruari O'Bradaigh's rhetoric fell on deaf ears in 1962, yet by 1972 the IRA had more recruits than it could use. The answer to this to me seemed so obvious as to hardly warrant a reply, yet Prof. English in my mind failed to see the obvious. He spoke of the IRA being unable even to 'defend' their areas (without pausing to ask whether the people simply could not find any better alternative—where's the 7th Cavalry when you need them?), and of how Britain's clumsy military response had made Ruari O'Bradaigh more relevant. Perhaps, but with all due respect to Prof. English, I couldn't help thinking how loyalist baseball bats and RUC batons drove the people into the arms of the IRA in the years between 1962 and 1972, and Ruari O'Bradaigh was simply the icing on the cake. But at least it was refreshing not to hear some one blaming 1916!

Prof. English also explored the idea of comparative and counter-factual histories, in other words not only comparing political violence in Ireland with other situations but also asking could the same things have worked elsewhere, and if not, why not? (an interesting kind of social science-mixed-with-history approach). It seemed he was also asking how historians could reconcile different historical perspectives that each make sense so as to help prevent

conflict. While a noble ideal, it seems to make history a political tool—even if a beneficent one—and clashed with Dr. Edwards' admonition to historians to transcend political considerations.

The final speaker of the evening was Prof. Peter Hart (Memorial University of Newfoundland). While I am not a fan of his theories on IRA volunteer motivation or his accusations of sectarianism, I was nonetheless most interested in what he might have to say and how he might say it. I wondered if he felt nervous facing a Cork audience, given his well-publicised writings on Cork and the War of Independence. Indeed, prior to the speech, I had noticed a number of the audience in a huddle muttering about the 'perfidious Peter Hart' and thought to myself that surely I would see Prof. Hart 'ambushed' that very night!! Indeed such was the case later in the evening, but first he spoke without interruption, receiving a polite clap. If he was nervous he showed little outward sign except perhaps a slight restlessness prior to his turn at the podium. It also took him a while to settle into saying anything concrete so I found it hard to pin down his line of argument. He seemed to be saying that political violence in Ireland was not about power but more about ownership of the land. In short, that the War of Independence was basically a continuation of the 19th century land wars. He added that the other two motivations in the War were religion (with the definite implication that the IRA were sectarian—he repeated his claim that the shooting of a number of Protestants in Dunmanway in 1922 was a sectarian massacre) and the struggle for power over the State. He intended them to have the priority suggested by presenting them in that order.

Prof. Hart is miles off the mark in his assessment of the Tan War as a sectarian war—insofar as the Republican side is concerned at any rate. Apart from the fact that Meda Ryan has shown the Dunmanway Protestants to have been known informers and loyalists, the ranks of the IRA contained a fair sprinkling of Protestants. At a more basic level, as Joseph McVeigh has argued in *A Wounded Church*, both since the foundation of Maynooth and Catholic Emancipation, the Catholic Church in Ireland has been firmly on the side of the powers-that-be as long as its own interests were not being threatened. In short, Britain bought off the Church here in order to tap into its grip on the Catholic population. Indeed, the first challenge to the Church's authority in 20th century Ireland came from the IRA itself, whose members ignored its pro-British excommunication edicts and fulminating from the pulpit. Like Dr. Edwards, Hart argued that some of the violence in Ireland was overflow from conflicts in Europe. It was not exactly

clear to which period he referred, but it has been noted elsewhere (e.g. by President McAleese last January at the same university) that the militarism of the Irish Volunteers was nothing exceptional for its time. Prof. Hart only had about ten minutes to speak and these seemed to be the main points he was making.

Once all the speakers had had their turn it was time to invite questions from the audience. As usual in Ireland, when members of the audience spoke it was less to ask a question than to make a comment, but this ensured some lively discussion. One man spoke about political violence being a response to aggression by more militarily powerful countries, and cited the modern cases of Afghanistan and Iraq. It was reasonable, he suggested, to expect a population to hit back in whatever way it could if it were invaded, disenfranchised, or manipulated to suit imperial interests. His comments drew a loud round of applause from the audience. There were one or two other comments from the audience, and then it came: the Kilmichael controversy.

I had been wondering how this was going to be achieved, since Peter Hart had been careful not to mention it and the context of the talk didn't really allow for it. But the speaker got into his stride quickly, pointing out that all survivors of Kilmichael were dead by the time Hart claimed to have conducted at least one of his interviews. He called on Peter Hart to identify the anonymous interviewees, to retract his claim there was no false surrender at Kilmichael and clear the name of Tom Barry. There were good points and well made, but the speaker spoiled it somewhat by allowing his emotions get the better of him and not giving Hart a chance to reply. When I glanced at the row of guest speakers and chairman, their faces seemed to express a sense of the inevitable.

When Hart finally got around to answering, he said that the interviews he used had been obtained from tapes held by the Ballineen / Enniskean Area Heritage Group—the same ones used by Fr. Chisholm to ghost write Liam Deasy's account of the 3rd Cork Brigade of the IRA—and that he had been asked not to name the interviewees. That was as far as he was willing to go on the matter, other than say it he was dealing with some of the issues in an upcoming book. At least two questions immediately occurred to me: 1) if he was publishing all this shortly in a book, he should have been far more prepared to deal with at least some of the questions, the answers being fresh in his mind. 2) In his *The IRA And Its Enemies* (1998, p330) he clearly states that he interviewed 13 Cork IRA veterans between 1988 and 1994. These are the interviewees listed with the initials 'A' and another

letter—in other words, including the infamous AE—a Kilmichael scout supposedly interviewed on 19th November 1989, at a time when all Kilmichael participants were dead. By referring only to the Chisholm tapes, Hart was clearly trying to evade the issue, since one question had been put specifically about this anomaly. Was Peter Hart trying to suggest he had somehow 'interviewed' the Chisholm tapes? I might read a book, but I would never regard myself as having interviewed a book!

Hart also claims in *The IRA And Its Enemies* that use of the Chisholm tapes was given under condition of anonymity—is anyone willing to step forward and claim credit for this condition? It would be a most interesting development of the saga. It was in one of his interviews in *History Ireland* (see HI July/August 2005), I believe, that Hart claimed one reason for the anonymity condition was to protect the interviewees from possible repercussions when the topic is especially sensitive. It is most odd therefore that he extended no such consideration to the Dunmanway Protestants (and thus, their descendants), shot as informers in 1922, a step even Tom Barry was unwilling to take in his *Guerilla Days* [sic] when discussing the shooting of spies and informers, preferring simply to direct readers to contemporary newspaper accounts.

One of the most worthwhile comments of the whole evening came from audience member, Croistoir de Baroid, who simply said: "*I came here tonight hoping to learn something about political violence, and all I've heard about is the IRA*". It was hard to disagree with him. Firstly I found it difficult to understand exactly what the speakers were saying about political violence. I had supposed the talk to be an exploration of the causes. While some speakers touched on it—for example Dr. Edwards with talk of the plantation, Prof. English about the clumsy British military response in the North—I felt that perhaps as academics they were unwilling or unable to get to grips with the more qualitative area of human nature and emotions. Prof. English came closest when he spoke of Ernie O'Malley's reconciliation of his Irish/British identity through his resort to extremism (an analysis I don't agree with, incidentally). Croistoir put it most succinctly, speaking of what he, as a human rights worker on the ground in the North, had seen for himself: a boy of four years age been thrown over a wall and having his arm dislocated by the military, a child getting hit in the face by a plastic bullet while coming out of a chipper. Didn't the learned speakers think, he inquired, that such events would incline a person towards political violence? And that was the basic human level which I felt was missing from the analysis. Croistoir's question

was never answered, since the talk was wrapped up at that point by the Chairman, still reeling from the ambush on Peter Hart.

Nick Folley

Peter Hart At Cork University

9th May 2006

This meeting of the Irish Historical Society was held at Cork University and the theme was *Political Violence*.

Present were the Chairman from Boston College; Dr. David Edwards; UCC Professor Richard English, Queens University, Belfast' and Professor Peter Hart, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Professor Hart was very casually dressed in a bright Orange smock with his green vest showing underneath. The other speakers and the Chairman were dressed formally.

Dr. David Edwards spoke on the violent massacres by English soldiers in the period 1534 to 1691 in which the native Irish were driven from the land and by 1700 three-fifths of all Irish land was transferred to colonists. In addition, whereas before 1570 Ireland was almost totally Catholic, after that date the Protestant religion was the official religion imposed by English rule. None of the changes had occurred peacefully, Dr. Edwards remarked in surely what was ironic understatement. The Irish resisted and had to be forcibly compelled, and this resulted in some violent retaliation by the Irish. Henry VIII's troops carried out massacres at Maynooth and Carrigagunnell; there were the terrible massacres at Limerick and Rathlin; and others up to the killing fields of Aughrim in 1691.

Apart from O'Rahilly's study of the Smerick Massacre and one or two others, there was a purposeful and studious avoidance of reference to 16th and 17th Century massacres in academic circles in the earlier half of the 20th Century. Also, religious differences in early modern Ireland were not referred to. For example, the *Irish Historical Journal* founded in 1938 had many articles on early modern Irish history but massacres and religious problems were receiving minimal attention.

This can be explained, Dr. Edwards said, because heavily partisan Victorian historians had no difficulty with detailing atrocities in early modern Ireland by, on one hand Catholic Irish Nationalists or, on the other hand, Protestant English Colonists/Unionists, depending on which side the historians favoured—an approach which continued into the 1920s and 1930s. But evasion is not a good choice for historians because psychologists have shown that facing up to the actual facts of history, even though such facts may be unpleasant and difficult to accept, is a

contributory factor in negotiating peace. Each faction has got to understand the viewpoint of the other if peace is to be attained.

The Chairman then introduced Professor Richard English, Queens University, Belfast, who started with Donald Rumsfeld's now famous quotation: "*There are known knowns and there are known unknowns...*" He said we knew quite a lot about the men of the IRA—they were young, single, working class or middle class, in whom a Christian Brothers' education inculcated Irish nationalism, resulting in the escalation of violence in Northern Ireland from 1969 onwards. We knew that the IRA killed 232 persons in 1972 alone but yet Rory O Bradaigh had to abandon his IRA campaign in 1962 due to lack of support.

We knew that violence was not as a result of British rule—if it were—why did it not occur earlier? It was the result of other factors and it escalated due to the Paras going in. Things 'we know we don't know' included, for example, biographies not yet written. Just as there are no serious academic biographies of people like Liam Lynch and Dan Breen, there are a number of biographies yet to be written about the period from 1969 onwards which, when written, will give us insight into how and why certain decisions were arrived at by those in charge at the time. Then also there were the 'Dogs that didn't Bark'. Why, for example, did not revolutions ignite in 1803, 1848 and 1956? These questions needed to be studied and answered. Professor English said historians must study the works of other professionals, such as Anthropologists, Psychologists, Lawyers, and Sociologists to explain why history happened or didn't happen.

The central issue he emphasized, is how we prevent people who hold different opposing views from fighting, clashing and warring—he mentioned Thomas Hobbs in this connection. Why did Ernie O'Malley—a peaceful man—change over to be in favour of violence? Was it because he failed in his medical studies and joining in the Volunteers offered an alternative professional career? and was he resolving the cultural ambiguities in his life?

The Chairman then introduced Professor Peter Hart as Respondent who was to speak for ten minutes.

Professor Hart said he was not sure what a Respondent was expected to do and went on to say that his own field was early twentieth century Irish history which he said is difficult to cover in ten minutes. He said he always tells his students that there are four main influences on history:-

- Religion—religious differences, ethnic differences
- Land—control over it, extraction of profits from it, ownership of it
- State Power—expansion, colonialisation
- Injustice, perceived injustice.

Professor Hart said each of these can

cause violence but the most violence has been caused by religious differences and the perception of injustice. The Land War produced relatively little violence compared to the other factors. He said violence had declined steadily throughout the twentieth century. The two other historians on the platform nodded agreement with this patently untrue statement. (They blithely ignored two World Wars, several revolutions, civil wars, colonial wars, the Atom bomb, Iraq, Rwanda etc., etc.) Professor Hart rambled on about the philosophy of history to use up his ten minutes without contributing to the discussion on the agenda.

When the Chairman asked for questions, he said very pointedly: "*and could we have questions only and not comment*". The first speaker, John A. Murphy, ignored this instruction and said his name was—

"Johnny Murphy lately of this parish. Can I make a couple of points? My first point is that now I am studying the tithe collectors who were of course individual Protestants and it was these individually and not the English State, who were the agents of violence. My second point is the mistake made recently by the Government and opposition parties in commemorating 1916."

And Mr. Murphy produced his usual waffle about the Redmondites having secured Home Rule. He was allowed by the Chair to declaim his already discredited views for five minutes, presumably to use up the time of the meeting and of course his views were also held by the panel.

The next question was by Mr. Maurice Regan, who questioned Professor English and Professor Hart on their revisionist views as expressed earlier. His points were very well put, and were put as questions, but Professor English defused the questions by saying: "*I agree with you, I agree with you*" and Professor Hart said nothing.

Mr. Regan was loudly applauded after he has spoken. As each questioner had to give their names before they were allowed to say anything, the process became a way of jotting them down and was useful for getting to know people for afterwards. Mr. Sean Kelleher then directly questioned Professor Hart and asked him how had he managed to interview one of the survivors of the Kilmichael Ambush nine days after the last survivor had died and why did he quote only part of an official document when the part he did not quote did not support his case about the killing of Protestants. Loud applause greeted these questions.

Professor Hart did not deal with the questions. He waffled on about using tape recordings made earlier by a priest. ("*Did the tape recorder take you on the tour of the ambush site?*" someone asked). He said he had been told things by people who had asked him not to reveal their names and he said that he is writing another book giving the details about Kilmichael.

Everything was to be explained in that book and the here and now was not the place to go into it.

Another questioner asked why the title *Political Violence* was chosen for this meeting when the matters under discussion were not Political but were in fact violence arising from an oppressive colonial war waged on Ireland by Britain in the course of which Irish religion, freedom, and land were forcibly taken by the British. There was nothing political about it. It was a war of conquest and the Irish were defending themselves from the invader. This questioner was not answered except to say that Political Violence was the expression used by the Historians.

The Chairman then said he could only take two more questions—having only five minutes left. Again the two questioners wanted answers from Professor Hart about his historiographical methods. Cristoir De Baroid went into specific detail of the false surrender by the British at Kilmichael in which they shot dead two of Barry's men and Mr. De Baroid asked Professor Hart to agree with the two British reports and two Irish reports which confirmed this position. Hart did not answer. One of the questioners used the analogy of St. John's Gospel which he said does not mention the Crucifixion and asked Hart, did that enable him to state that it did not happen. The point of this was that Hart denies the "false surrender", because it is not mentioned in Liam Deasy's book. (Loud applause). To this Hart replied that it would be dealt with elsewhere.

The Chairman cut off the meeting at 9 pm, even though there were many more people in the audience with their hands up indicating their wish to participate. It was a most un-academic meeting. Two of the three speakers were quite clearly propagandists in the expression of their prejudices and members of the audience speaking together afterwards were amazed that so-called professional historians paid by the State from public funds could be so biased and one-sided.

Hart failed to answer his critics and showed himself to be totally indifferent to giving a reasonable explanation to any question put to him. Whatever his agenda is, it is not historical accuracy, as he was not the slightest bit embarrassed by obviously avoiding questions and being unable to answer them.

In conclusion, the reader no doubt will have got the impression that the very experienced academics at this meeting barely know their subject and the question must be asked, and is asked now, are we, the taxpayers who pay their salaries and expenses, getting value for money? As they say in the USA—are we getting "Bang for our Bucks" and in my opinion—we very definitely are not.

Michael Stack

Questions of History for Peter Hart

A letter to historians

The controversial revisionist historian, Dr Peter Hart, is to speak on "Political Violence" at the *Irish Historical Society* in UCC on Tuesday May 9th.

One of the events in Irish history, which Dr Hart made his reputation on, is the Kilmichael Ambush of November 1920.

Hart accused IRA and ambush leader, General Tom Barry, who stated that British Auxiliaries engaged in a false surrender leading to IRA fatalities during the ambush, of engaging in "*lies and evasions*". Hart alleges that Barry simply killed unarmed British combatants without cause.

In the hitherto accepted version, after the apparent 'surrender' and in the lull that followed, Auxiliaries killed IRA soldiers standing in plain sight to take the surrender. This caused Barry to issue an order to recommence firing until all the Auxiliaries were killed. Two British and two Irish sources from the 1920s and 1930s support Barry's account of the false surrender. It circulated freely in West Cork after the ambush. It was not regarded as contentious until Dr Hart arrived to challenge it 70 years later.

While the heat of battle and the fog of war has generated the heat and fog of this historical debate, it is important to state that Dr Hart uses Kilmichael to view the War of Independence as a sectarian war in West Cork. That is why the debate goes beyond arguments over what exactly happened at Kilmichael and Hart's directly quoted controversial contention in the *Sunday Times* (April 19th, 1998) that Tom Barry was "*little more than a serial killer*".

Peter Hart claims support for his view that Barry lied, as a result of interviews allegedly conducted in the late 1980s with those Hart claimed were IRA veterans who had participated in the ambush. The names of interviewees were anonymised by Peter Hart in his research findings.

This leads to an issue touched upon by Dr John Regan of Dundee University, in a recent review of Meda Ryan's *Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter* (Mercier 2003). Regan wrote: "*Hart was indeed fortunate in finding survivors of the ambush alive and lucid nearly seventy years after the event.*" Regan continued, "*one of whom he [Hart] notes visited the site with him*".

Dr Hart dates an interview with an ambush scout as taking place on November 19th 1989. The last surviving ambush participant, Ned Young, died six days earlier, while the last surviving Kilmichael ambush scout died in 1967. Meda Ryan has dated the time of death of all ambush survivors in the recently published (Mercier 2005) paperback edition of her *Tom Barry* biography. Her dating is in agreement with other researcher's findings on this point.

References

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- Hart, Peter, Meda Ryan, et al, in *History Ireland*, March-April to Sept-Oct 2005 (see full content at www.historyireland.com)

Dr Hart's persistence in anonymising his interview accounts means that unravelling the issue is problematic. We are dealing with an event that took place over 80 years ago in which all of the participants are deceased. Governments operate a 30-year rule on secret material, source material that historians usually crave. Dr Hart appears to be operating a 'perpetuity' rule in relation to his own secrets.

This is unsatisfactory. As Dr Regan noted "*The question pointedly raised is: Whom did Hart interview?... The issue of anonymity only becomes problematic if there were no bona fide veterans to interview*".

There are other problems with Dr Hart's approach, outlined recently over four issues of *History Ireland* (March-April to Sept-Oct 2005 – see historyireland.com) and centre on accusations that Dr Hart omits relevant information in original source material. For instance, an allegedly "captured" typed document now generally accepted as a British forgery, purported to be Barry's account of the Kilmichael ambush. Its true provenance as a forgery designed for a particular purpose would have been clearer earlier had Dr Hart published it in full, instead of quoting from it in a highly selective manner.

Similarly, Hart made an accusation of sectarianism in relation to Protestants shot near Bandon after the Truce in 1922, an act condemned by both sides of the then pre-Civil War Treaty divide. Hart used a British source (the '*Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*') to promote his view that these shootings, and others carried out earlier by the IRA, were simply sectarian and aimed at randomly selected Protestant victims. However, the source cited by Hart contained a following sentence contradicting the sectarianism point Hart made. Hart omitted it in his research findings. Research by both Meda Ryan (see above) and by Brian Murphy (published by Aubane), using original source material comprehensively reported, has further undermined Peter Hart on this point. Recently published and forthcoming work by John Borgonovo (published by Irish Academic Press) clarifies the position further with regard to sectarian loyalist activity in Cork during the War of Independence period.

In the interests of historical accuracy, perhaps some of these points could be addressed by Dr Hart, or participants at the event could address them to Dr Hart for reply.

I am sure all can agree that the questions are clear and they are important.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Lane, Aubane Historical Society,
Aubane, Millstreet, Cork.

Peter Hart's Use Of Sources A View From Queen's

The following letter was sent to historians at Queens University after the Cork meeting reported above. It elicited a response from a historian there who shall be nameless.

Dear Queens University Historian,

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Examiner* newspaper of Saturday May 6, 2006. The sources for the information it contains are in the attached PDF files. [These PDFs comprise the leaflet which appears on page 10, and Brian Murphy's IPR article of July 2005, *Peter Hart: The Issue Of Sources.*]

Perhaps you can help me. The subject of my letter, Dr Peter Hart, was unable to enlighten his audience in Cork last Tuesday as to his seeming ability to question the dead (anonymously). I was wondering if it might have been a talent he picked up at Queens or if there is a credible alternative explanation? Do you know?

Dr Hart informed his dissatisfied audience in UCC that all would be revealed in a book he intended to write, on 'Kilmichael'. Unfortunately, he has written it already. Perhaps Peter Hart has forgotten but Kilmichael featured prominently in his 1998 book, *'The IRA and its Enemies'*. Dr Hart interviewed an anonymous veteran of the famous War of Independence ambush at Kilmichael six days after the last veteran died on November 13 1989. That, at least, is Peter Hart's claim and it perplexes those of us who accept normal biological limitations. Perhaps Dr Hart wants a 'second attempt' at describing and detailing the battle, in the manner of a student who has been failed or disqualified at the first sitting.

I refer to other issues in my letter below and in the attached PDFs. If you are unable to help I will seek out instead the assistance of 'Mystic Meg'.

Jack Lane
Aubane Historical Society

Dear Mr Lane

The issues raised by Peter Hart's work on the war of independence continue to be debated by specialists. That debate will inevitably involve a careful re-examination of all disputes bits of evidence. Out of that process there will eventually emerge a reasonably clear consensus as to what can and can not be concluded about the period. That is the normal process of historical debate and revision. It is not one that can in any way be advanced by snide and offensive innuendo of the kind with which your message begins.

Yours sincerely
xxx

Dear xxx

Thank you for your reply to my email. You take a dim view of my approach.

However, I would like to explain the context and perhaps take issue with you on one or two points.

Peter Hart's work continues to be debated by non-"specialists"—by "specialists" I presume you to mean those who inhabit the environs of university history departments. It has given rise to controversy, but only after "specialist" historians in academic institutions refused to engage with, let alone debate, the deficiencies in his approach, not even when given an obvious opportunity to do so. I cite in this regard the review in the *Irish Times* by Richard English of Meda Ryan's *Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter* and Peter Hart's *The IRA at War 1916-1923* (January 17, 2004 - attached below). Meda Ryan's detailed differences with Peer Hart are dealt with as follows:

"She [Ryan] also takes issue on numerous occasions with Prof Peter Hart, author in 1998 of a brilliant and pioneering study of the Cork IRA. Hart's new book, *The IRA at War 1916-1923*, is a superb collection of essays about the Irish revolution, and it begins by asking some very important questions. Why, for example, was the 1916-23 revolution so violent? Why were the IRA much stronger in some parts of Ireland than in others? Is it appropriate to describe the IRA of these years as terrorists? Were Protestants ethnically cleansed from southern Ireland during this bloody era?"

While Ryan's book is dammed with faint praise in one preceding paragraph as "fascinating", there is not a single indication of what is at "issue" on the "numerous occasions" where Ryan exposes the shoddy nature of Hart's research and brings forward significant new evidence in the process. The criticisms concern as you are aware, the very issues that English Praises Hart for promoting, though the reader is none the wiser as to the criticism of that approach. Equally importantly, the rest of the review was an extended advertisement, with more superlatives as above, for Peter Hart's work from his Queens University colleague. This approach was deeply unfair and completely unsatisfactory. It was also, in my view, unethical. Such patronising support for a colleague and dismissal by silence of a critic is nauseating.

I might cite another example, Brian Murphy's 1998 review in *The Month*, of Peter Hart's *'The IRA and its Enemies'*. In that review Murphy indicated that Peter Hart deliberately misrepresented evidence from *The Record of the Rebellion*, by omission, with regard to IRA actions in shooting spies and informers in the West Cork area. Hart misrepresented the evidence in order to state a case that uninvolved Protestants had been shot. Hart continued to misrepresent the position in his editorship of *The Record* some years later and added further censorship to the catalogue of errors by leaving out an entire section, without informing the reader. The significance of that omission is clear from

Brian Murphy's comment on Peter Hart's use of sources (that accompanied my email to you). It forms part of a pattern, a form of "partisan ideology" to quote Richard English. As you are probably aware an *Irish Times* reviewer of Hart's editorship of *The Record* suggested that Hart was "disingenuous" in attempting to explain away his misrepresentation of *The Record* in his 1998 book.

Not until John Regan of Dundee commented on these points in his review (January 2006) of Ryan's biography of Tom Barry, was there a reaction from within history departments to the serious issues brought up by Ryan and Murphy.

Is it any wonder in the circumstances that families in West Cork are agitated that clear misrepresentation has been allowed to proceed unchallenged for so long within academia. This is particularly the case as Peter Hart responded in *History Ireland* to calmly and rationally argued comments and questions with insulting remarks. The term "snide and offensive innuendo" might properly be directed to those remarks. Did you take issue with Peter Hart in relation to those published comments? If so I am not aware of it.

If he was of a mind to, Peter Hart could resolve the 'interview with the dead' problem quickly. That he has not done so is a clear indication of a serious problem. Do you know at what point academic historians, the "specialists" I presume you are referring to, will address this point in their published deliberations?

I had thought of sending you a short reply, but since you had the courtesy to respond politely, despite my sarcasm, I thought I would have one more go at persuading you that the reputation of academic historiography is on the line on this issue. Perhaps you might ponder on this matter further. Thank you for reading this email letter.

Yours sincerely, **Jack Lane**
Aubane Historical Society
Aubane Millstreet Cork

The Dark Colours Of Patriotism

(The Irish Times January 17, 2004)
Two books examine the revolutionary escapades of Tom Barry and his IRA comrades
By Richard English

Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter By Meda Ryan, Mercier Press, 351pp. E30. The IRA at War 1916-1923 By Prof Peter Hart, Oxford University Press, 274pp. E25 I clearly remember the first time I read Tom Barry's IRA memoir, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*. It possessed all the arresting qualities of the rebel-told tale, with sincere and courageous patriots fighting an oppressive empire in a story of adventure, heroism and loss.

The two books reviewed here both consider those revolutionary escapades of Barry and his IRA comrades. Meda Ryan's fascinating biography, *Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter*, demonstrates her considerable and detailed knowledge concerning the famous Cork republican. It also reflects her profound sympathy and respect for the man about whom

she writes. She refers to Barry's "greatness" and to his "genius as a commander", and in chronicling his intriguing life she produces many valuable details for the reader.

She also takes issue on numerous occasions with Prof Peter Hart, author in 1998 of a brilliant and pioneering study of the Cork IRA. Hart's new book, *The IRA at War 1916-1923*, is a superb collection of essays about the Irish revolution, and it begins by asking some very important questions. Why, for example, was the 1916-23 revolution so violent? Why were the IRA much stronger in some parts of Ireland than in others? Is it appropriate to describe the IRA of these years as terrorists? Were Protestants ethnically cleansed from southern Ireland during this bloody era?

These and other questions are then systematically addressed in 10 essays which reflect truly formidable research (often involving systematically acquired statistical data). The book concentrates on revolutionary "violence, its practitioners, and its victims", and, as in Hart's previous work, victims are rightly central to his analysis. As a consequence, the book disposes of too romantic a reading of this troubled era. It coolly shows, for example, that the majority of the Irish revolution's victims did not die in military combat. Instead, the unpalatable fact is that (as in the recent Northern Ireland troubles) most revolutionary victims were civilians, non-combatants. So the Irish revolution tended not, in general, to be a story of brave combat between military forces, but rather something far more cruel and vicious: people tended to be attacked (by all sides) "while defenceless, alone, or in small groups".

Hart's book is shrewdly attentive to local variation, and it deals with the revolution north and south: "The revolution happened all over Ireland, and explanations of why and how must be applied in the same way".

Since he explores a wide range of categories of possible explanation and motivation (class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and so on), Hart's conclusions do subvert some comforting self-images, with orthodox readings - whether nationalist or unionist - relentlessly subjected to rigorous scrutiny. If ideologically neat explanations for events "fail to meet empirical and logical tests", Hart argues, "they should be discarded". Quite so. Thus the revolution appears in these pages not just as a national war of liberation against Britain, but rather as a series of overlapping conflicts.

Yes, there was conflict between Irish republicans and Britain; but also between rival ethnic groups in Ireland; between in-group and out-group within local communities; and between rival brands of Irish nationalists. To ignore any of these kinds of violence is to limit our understanding of what the revolution actually involved.

The tremendously impressive range of sources consulted by Hart, together with the cold clarity of his historical analysis, make this a book of great importance. Tested against the data presented in Hart's book, Tom Barry's own arguments certainly fray in key places. In her impressive biography, Meda Ryan cites Barry's claim that the descent into violence in the revolution was one in which "it was the British who set the pace". But, as Peter Hart's exhaustively researched figures convincingly show, it was the rebels who were responsible (rightly or wrongly) for initiating the violence which prompted escalation. The cold evidence

shows this to be the case in 1916, but also with the onset of the War of Independence in 1919. In another fascinating quotation deployed in Ryan's biography, Barry talks of the republican people and their reason to fight: "There were families who were very poor. When we went into some of these houses, it was painful to see these people, without shoes, with scanty clothing in the freezing cold, with little to eat".

Yet, Hart's research unambiguously demonstrates that the IRA and other militant republicans were in fact drawn from all classes, not particularly from the poor. If there were social groups which did make a disproportionate contribution to the republican struggle in these years, then Hart shows that such groups were not the poorest in society, but rather skilled tradesmen and artisans, and clerks or shop assistants.

Prof Hart argues that we should read the years of the Irish revolution through the lenses, not of partisan ideology, but rather of deep research, comparative analysis and honest interrogation. The results, as evident in his excellent book, are complex and sometimes disturbing. Much of the violence of this period was carried out against (often defenceless) minority groups within one's community: northern Catholics, southern Protestants, ex-soldiers, tramps, and other marginal people. Much, though by no means all, of this brutal violence was carried out by the IRA. Meda Ryan's biography suggests that Tom Barry should be seen as a "true patriot". This seems entirely fair to me. But it is important, as Peter Hart powerfully reminds us, to recognize that true patriotism possesses its own dark colours.

Richard English is professor of politics at Queen's University, Belfast. The paperback edition of his *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* will be published by Pan in March

Dear Mr Lane

No, by 'specialists' I did not mean people in academic history departments. It is not a distinction I think should be drawn. I have great respect, for example, for the work on African history of Thomas Pakenham. Closer to home Patrick Fagan has published important original work on eighteenth-century Ireland. Neither is an academic. What I was talking about was those whose job it is to work systematically on the primary sources, as opposed to trying to follow the controversy from outside. Most of these, in the nature of things, will be academics. But the academic world is not the closed, mutually supportive environment you seem to imagine. People approach their subject in terms of debate and challenge. Peter Hart established himself in his present position by challenging previously accepted interpretations. Now that his work is part of the standard literature, others will be looking critically at its conclusions and assumptions in the light of their own research. That is how the subject moves forward. As for Professor Hart's connection with Queen's, he was a lecturer here between 1998 and (I think) 2002. I know him as a colleague then, but have not seen him since. Hence my response to the suggestion of guilt by association in

your original e-mail.

I hope this clarifies matter.

Yours sincerely

xxx

Dear xxx

Thank you for that clarification.

The point I was making is that Peter Hart established his research as one of the "accepted interpretations" of his subject area by unorthodox means. I won't bore you by going over it again; you have the information in the documents I attached when I first wrote and in my last reply.

I hope to spark in your consciousness a desire to expose unacceptable unorthodoxy that tarnishes the profession for so long as it is ignored by the profession. I fully appreciate a desire on your part not to be associated with Peter Hart's methods. Indeed I have no particular desire to associate you with Peter Hart on the basis that he was a former academic work colleague of yours, but simply on the basis that he is a fellow historian.

Perhaps you do not feel the matter to be a pressing and doubtless you have your own important research to consider. I leave it for you to ponder at your leisure and, while I am sure you will conclude that source information should be represented ethically and interviews reported honestly, I wonder what you think should be done, by academics, to expose matters when integrity appears to be absent.

Thank you for having the courtesy to respond, despite (or possibly because of) my provocative approach.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Lane

Reader's Letter

The Iraq Psychodrama

Just a small point, in this month's IPR in *'The Psychodrama of Current Politics'*, re. Iraq it might have been worth commenting that if the US prides itself on its constitutional right to bear arms as the ultimate guarantee of a free people, the fact that every household in Iraq owned at least one AK47 should have given the Americans pause for thought. They didn't use them under Saddam, but they seem willing to use them now—what does that tell us? The Kurds, of course, were up in arms, but their problem was not so much Saddam as the Iraqi state—they have a similar problem with the Turkish state, but are not exactly getting the same encouragement from the West there as they did in Iraq. Despite the supposed commitment to Iraqi territorial unity, you now need a permit to travel to Iraqi Kurdistan from the rest of the country.

The Vanity Of The Bonfires

Though I must own to having indulged in much of what The Preacher of Ecclesiastes would have called Vanity, all of which Fra Girolamo would have put to a Florentine fire, my spirit has not been at all vexed thereby. Not by the vanities at any rate. I can't say the same of the preaching. Much vexed by preachers I've been.

(So now, hypocrite that I am, I commence to preaching.) In Florence at the turn of The Quattrocento, as Europe ebbed into a great new age of progress, a brand new sixteenth century of continent-wide slave hunts and frenzied genocide of the peoples of a brave new world, the Medici (this was when they were posing as just the leading officials of a notional republic) briefly gave way to a real Republic of born-again Catholics which, in the first four of its eighteen years (when it was a kind of democratic theocracy), set itself to providing the world with a wonderful wee foretaste of Calvin's Geneva.

In those days singing nuns were vowed to stability, but preaching monks were all over the place. The Dominican Friar Girolamo Savonarola preached the length and breadth until he finally settled in Florence in 1489 where he added prophesying to sermonising. First off he prophesied the death of Lorenzo il Magnifico (only the second in a series of Florentine honorifics 'il Magnifico' might as easily be translated 'the Second-Rate' as 'the Magnificent') who duly died in 1494 at the even then early age of 43 of some form of aggravated gout (aggravated as much as anything by the preaching and prophesying of the Friar). Also prophesied were the duly accomplished deaths of the Pope and the King of Naples and an unseasonal French invasion which Savonarola welcomed as heralding the rule under King Jesus of the Florentine Saints. And, Hallelujah! so it did.

There followed Savonarola's campaign to Save Florence From Sodomy which the Preacher pursued by burning Sodomites alive. And some minor and two major Bonfires of the Vanities.

The first Christian Bonfire of the Vanities was at Ephesus when the world's First Christian, the *post-facto* Apostle Paul, preached a holocaust of blasphemous books, idolatrous images, and all the vain ostentation of irreligious men and women there. Such bonfires are not exclusively Christian. There was for example an early

nineteenth century occasion when preachers of their native religion (described by the local government agent, Return Jonathan Meiggs, as mad prophets) encouraged Cherokees to make a conflagration of the commodities of white civilisation. The more boring fires in which only particular categories of books are burned don't count for anything much in this context.

Anyway, Savonarola's Bonfire of the Vanities is well described in George Eliot's *Romola* (which conflates the two great holocausts into one):

"She chose to go through the great Piazza that she might take a first survey of the unparalleled sight there while she was still alone. Entering it from the south, she saw something monstrous and many-coloured in the shape of a pyramid, or, rather, like a huge fir-tree, sixty feet high, with shelves on the branches, widening and widening towards the base till they reached a circumference of eighty yards. The Piazza was full of life: slight young figures, in white garments, with olive wreaths on their heads, were moving to and fro about the base of the pyramidal tree, carrying baskets full of bright-coloured things; and maturer forms, some in the monastic frock, some in the loose tunics and dark-red caps of artists, were helping and examining, or else retreating to various points in the distance to survey the wondrous whole...

"Approaching nearer, she paused to look at the multifarious objects ranged in gradation from the base to the summit of the pyramid. There were tapestries and brocades of immodest design, pictures and sculptures held too likely to incite to vice; there were boards and tables for all sorts of games, playing-cards along with the blocks for printing them, dice, and other apparatus for gambling; there were worldly music-books, and musical instruments in all the pretty varieties of lute, drum, cymbal, and trumpet; there were masks and masquerading-dresses used in the old Carnival shows; there were handsome copies of Ovid, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Pulci, and other books of a vain or impure sort; there were all the implements of feminine vanity—rouge-pots, false hair, mirrors, perfumes, powders, and transparent veils intended to provoke inquisitive glances: lastly, at the very summit, there was the unflattering effigy of a probably mythical Venetian merchant, who was understood to have offered a heavy sum for this collection of marketable abominations, and, soaring above him in surpassing ugliness, the symbolic figure of the old debauched Carnival.

"This was the preparation for a new sort of bonfire—the Burning of Vanities. Hidden in the interior of the pyramid

was a plentiful store of dry fuel and gunpowder; and on this last day of the festival, at evening, the pile of vanities was to be set ablaze to the sound of trumpets, and the ugly old Carnival was to tumble into the flames amid the songs of reforming triumph."

The first of the Bonfires was an unqualified success. The second followed a few years later in a doomed attempt to shore up Fra Girolamo's faltering popularity among Florentines grown bored with sanctity. That was an expensive flop which was quickly followed by a Bonfire of the Saints when Savonarola and his closest lieutenants were burned alive in that same Piazza della Signoria. And let our local homophobes take note of the truth of the old adage that he who lives by the flaming faggot shall die by the flaming faggot! Here endeth that lesson.

Moving quickly on then, from the sublime to The Twelfth.

Vulgar old Jerome's use of the Latin word *vanitas* to translate the Hebrew *hebel* seems fair enough to me, given that the vanity of which the Preacher spoke meant the futility of worldly displays of wealth, wisdom, beauty or power. Vanity of vanities saith the Preacher. All such is vanity.

And such now is the vanity of those boozed-up dressed-down processions which adherents of the Protestant religion (I'm happy to take Roy Garland's word for it that the loyal orders are religious institutions) engage in as very worldly displays of their power; most particularly the power to display their boozed-up dressed-down selves where their Fenian enemies live and supposedly put the fear of the Protestant God into them.

When the Billy Boys really could march up and down any traditional or otherwise route they wanted, filling each Fenian heart with fear as they went, those displays were hardly futile and vanity would not have been the word for them. But now...

Now that the Billy Boys march for the most part on Fenian sufferance or are shepherded shame faced and silent through grace and favour of the Parades Commission along roads they once staggered proudly, now vanity of vanities is all may be seen.

The good old days of Orange ascendancy were recalled by the *Irish News* this week in a daily feature by Eamon Phoenix which reprints and comments on the news of seventy or so years ago. So this was the

area of Belfast I've lived most of my life in as it was reported in the *Irish News* on 18th May 1937:

"A Catholic family has been forced to leave their house in Walmer Street in the Ormeau Road district owing to the attitude adopted towards them by their neighbours. They left at midnight on Friday in a taxi taking with them what belongings they could..."

"During last week two of the girls were forced to leave their employment owing to the tactics of a loyalist mob and were moreover badly beaten as was the mother who received among other injuries, a split finger and black eyes. Molly Corr, one of the daughters, a delicate looking girl of about 26, said her sister Eileen and herself were followed to their work during the week by local loyalists who made a demonstration outside their works..."

"On Tuesday evening, as her sister and herself were going home by the entry at the back, their dog ran to meet them. As it did so, a man in the entry went over to it and kicked it.

"My mother came out and spoke to him about kicking the dog and immediately a crowd set upon us.

"My sister Eileen was struck on the face and two men struck me and knocked me down. My mother was struck on the mouth and her lip was split. She also got a finger split in the struggle. We all got inside but later the crowd kicked in the back door. Some of them shouted, 'Burn the Fenians out!'"

"...Mrs Corr, who states that she was 32 years in the house, said they had often trouble before the Twelfth but nothing so serious as this.

"It was so bad that when we got things quiet on Friday night we decided to get away from the district. I was afraid of my life all the time" (*Irish News*, May 18 2006.)

Walmer street is about a minute's walk from the Orange Hall which still stands today on the front of the Ormeau Road. Then, coming up to The Twelfth, the area will have been covered in bunting and Union Jacks, as it was even thirty years ago. Today there's the odd few houses in a very few streets, lamp-posts are flagged in the early hours of the morning when there's no-one around, and the red white and blue displays in the couple of Protestant enclaves remaining are very half-hearted indeed. Below the Ormeau Bridge the road is almost completely Catholic and Orangemen don't set foot. Above the Bridge is now about 75% Catholic and amazingly tolerant of the level of Orange activity they permit to carry on around the Hall. And it may well be that they are so tolerant just because they are so well aware how much it galls the Billy Boys to be hemmed in and put up with.

The large Orange demonstrations that continue in solidly Protestant areas are irrelevant to the spirit of The Twelfth. The only processions which ever lifted that spirit and exalted the Billy Boys were the ones that brought them as close as they wanted to fill each Fenian heart with fear; marching up and down on the road to Portadown, or wherever else they cared. But there is little enough of that now. They can no longer walk where they care to, nor even where they dare to. Today it's a matter of them walking where they are inoffensive or put up with. And there is no exaltation in that. Only that vanity of vanities of which the Preacher spoke. Today its all vanity.

The end of Orange Ascendancy in the lacklustre vanity of its latter day bonfires has not been marked in any way in Nationalist politics. The SDLP and Sinn Féin both continue to act as though there is, lurking somewhere, however heavily disguised, some reasonable form of Protestant politics that can be negotiated with to a point of mutually beneficial compromise. There isn't.

The border that Craig and Dawson Bates conjured themselves to accept was just the right one for the Brethren to walk within, with just the right number of Fenians to be walked through and over. Not so many as to prove troublesome (they thought, and rightly so for long enough) but just a sufficiency to provide that amount of Exaltation on a Twelfth Day as makes an old Prod's life worth living. And such is as far as their notion of politics has ever stretched or ever will.

An ascendancy cannot be compromised with. It is either ascendant or its not. Today it's not. In becoming ascendant within the Twelfth Day walkable area of its power, Northern Ireland Protestantism exalted itself beyond the workaday world of practical politics. That was its choice in 1920 and it cannot be unmade for it now. All the wishful thinking of all the soft nationalists in all the world cannot unmake it now.

The workaday world of practical politics today is where stand the British Government, the Irish Government and the political expression of Northern Catholics. The one time ascendancy stands nowhere. It is doped up or dumbered down. And it doesn't count.

There isn't the glimmer of a worthwhile compromise to be made that can bring Northern Ireland Protestants into political alignment with Bold Fenian Men. It can't be done.

They want 1937 back but they can't have 1937 back. Political engagement with them should begin and end with telling them that and then move on to deal with the British and Irish Governments on the timescale and terms of Northern involvement in the political life of the Irish nation.

All else is vanity. Vanity of vanities. And excruciating vexation of spirit.

Joe Keenan

Putting The Record Straight About John O'Mahony TD

In an article in the April 2006 issue of the *Irish Political Review* (*Garrett FitzGerald And A Pack Of Misbegotten Lies*) I wrote that John O'Mahony, one of the TDs for Fermanagh/Tyrone attended and spoke at the Second Dáil. Which he did. I also said that he abstained in the vote on the misnamed Treaty. That was incorrect.

Looking through Rex Taylor's biography of Michael Collins (*Michael Collins*, 1958, the 1964 Four Square paperback reprint, page 259) I found the usual list of those who voted for and against mutilating the Irish body politic. Unusually, Taylor gives the English versions of the TD's names. And it turns out that Seán o Mathghamhna, who I never gave any thought to is John O Mahony. He voted and he voted the right way, which is to say he voted against the 'Treaty'.

So there you have it.

Joe Keenan

Commemorating The 1916 Rising

The following letter from Colonel Doyle appeared in the *Irish Times* (14 April 2006)

The more neo-colonial of the two recent letters from Maurice O'Connell (April 11th) brings to the highest level yet the fantasies built around Home Rule. It was, he tells us, "the final concession by the entire political and constitutional system, using due process, that Ireland did, indeed have that right to self-government". If one believes that, one will believe anything.

Under Home Rule foreign and military matters remained the function of the British government. We would again have become complicit in sordid affairs such as the Boer War with its terrible death tolls of women and children.

"Military necessity" has too long been an excuse for this kind of killing by neglect and bad staff work. Under Home Rule we would have participated, wearing British

uniforms, in the aerial bombing and machine-gunning that made Iraq what she became under British mandate.

One hopes that Mr O'Connell won't destroy his illusions by comparing the Home Rule Bill with the Treaty. Reading of the party political manoeuvring in Britain and the determined, but quiet attempts to repeal the Bill might complete his disillusionment. Prof Horne and Mr Kramer found no evidence of attacks upon nuns by German troops in 1914—but such attacks were the centrepiece of British recruiting propaganda in Ireland and the cause of Church support (although not, be it noted, by the Archbishop of Dublin, Ireland's most populous diocese).

To reverse a neo-colonial question: by what right were young Irish troops, in foreign countries, killing young Germans and Turks who had done us no harm? I am sorry if some friends may be hurt by this question, but it is time to deal with some of the more outrageous assertions.

Ed Doyle

1916 And O'Leary VC

In a piece of censorship duplicating that of Britain's Censor during the Great War, the *Irish Times* refused publication to this short letter

In your recent supplement on the 1916 Rising you re-print a British Army recruitment poster featuring 'O'Leary VC', commemorating the Victoria Cross won by Michael O'Leary on the Western Front in 1915. The British thought it would be a good idea to enlist his father's support in the effort to recruit more Irish cannon fodder. The decision had unintended consequences.

Frank Gallagher, Editor of the *Cork Free Press* during WWI, of the *Irish Bulletin* during the War of Independence, and later of the *Irish Press*, takes up the story:

"The news items which never survived the blue pencil of the British censor often decorated the newspaper office walls. The best was the recruiting speech of Michael O'Leary's father in his native Inchigeela. For incredible bravery, his son had won the Victoria Cross, and the War Office took the father on to the recruiting platforms, or rather platform, for he did not last more than one meeting. His speech, as the censor killed it, was something like this:

"Mr. O'Leary, senior, father of the famous V.C., speaking in the Inchigeela district, urged the young men to join the British army. 'If you don't', he told them, 'the Germans will come here and will do to you what the English have been doing for the last seven hundred years!'"

I am indebted to Manus O'Riordan, SIPTU's Head of Research, who re-tells the tale in the *Ballingeary Historical Society Journal*, 2005.

Niall Meehan

Reports

Some Belfast Meetings

THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

Easter for me was something of a festival of meetings and commemorations in Belfast. The first was a well attended meeting of the *Belfast Against the War Movement* (BAWM) addressed by David Morrison and an Iraqi woman. But more interesting and revelatory for me was the last meeting I attended—this time a BAWM planning meeting.

What struck me most was the strength of what I must call the imperialist instinct among most, though certainly not all, of those present. There was a real fear of being seen to support 'reactionary' Islam in Iran, and there was a particular hostility to Iran's new President. The domestic arrangements in Iran were being judged from the standpoint of British progressiveness,

(This is not a specific criticism of BAWM—far from it. I would like to deal with problems inherent in all movements trying to counter the drive to war which has grown so strong in Britain and America in recent years.)

Ever since the British State formally took over from the East India Company, the development of imperialism has required popular support on moral as well as economic grounds. And all the more so as British democracy has been steadily widened. The purpose of British attacks today on such places as Iraq, Iran, Zimbabwe, White Russia, Serbia, and so

on, would not be possible without a moral crusade. And this crusade has soaked into the minds of almost the entire British population.

The British system and culture are seen as morally superior to all other systems (except perhaps for systems that are still to come, that do not actually exist). The differences of opinion within Britain are about the means used to civilise the lesser breeds. They are about the balance between conversion and coercion.

Never mind that, for example, the Iranian Revolution was and remains popular in Iran. That it is the chosen mode of development for Iranians who have very clearly rejected the British or the American modes of development which were thrust on them for over a century.

(The response so far in Spain to the Madrid bombings may be instructive. There has been a Government led delving into the country's Islamic past and a huge improvement in relations with Islamic countries.)

As a Communist I am all for international solidarity. But international solidarity is virtually psychologically impossible in Britain and this problem gets worse as time goes on. The impulse to 'help others be like us' and not to recognize the validity in other cultures, other ways of people living their lives.

This is why Blair could ignore the million or so people who protested against the war in Iraq. And he, or Brown, or Cameron, will be able to ignore any protests against an attack on Iran.

This is the problem that has to be tackled by anyone who wishes to fight the ever-increasing tendency for Britain, and others, to wage war against states which resist the liberal imperialists. If people cannot bring themselves to wholeheartedly support the peoples under siege they are wasting their time.

Liberal imperialism is by nature murderous on a grand scale, and genocidal where simple mass murder is ineffective. That is a simple and horrible message which must be to the forefront of any effective anti-war protest. Britain cannot be trusted to interfere abroad without killing lots of people, because when it interferes abroad it is always to overturn the whole mode of existence of people who do not wish to change their ways.

That Protestant Ireland should be infected by the imperialist impulse is to be expected. In the South it had a master and slave mentality. In Ulster it had a frontier mentality. Now that it has had the stuffing knocked out of it, there may be scope for getting it to question what it is.

Over years of visiting Belfast, I am struck by the idea that the principal historical memory is less and less the Battle of the Boyne and more and more the Battle of the Somme. The Battle of the Boyne was celebrating the defeat of the Catholics. But they are, today, so obviously undefeated, remembering it becomes increasingly ridiculous. The Battle of the Somme was an act of mass martyrdom in an imperialist war which was successful in 1918-19. But like the Boyne it didn't

really settle anything, and its consequences are still being worked out.

What the Great War did do was to bring about the beginning of the end of the old British Empire at the same time as expanding it. The ideology of empire was severely weakened; and after its sequel, the Second World War, there arose British leaders who seemed to be reconciled to this—Macmillan, Heath, and Wilson.

Thatcher fought one war, the Falklands, and started another, the Gulf War. But both of these were of the old-fashioned type with limited and realistic objectives. One about the right of self-determination, the other about Britain's oil interests in Kuwait.

Imperialism as a political ideology and as a real menace did not revive until 1997 with the election of New Labour fired with a mission in the world. I don't know if Protestant Ulster can get enthusiastic about that.

Catholic Ireland, once its physical survival seemed to be permitted in the last quarter of the 19th Century, began also to be infused with liberal imperialist ideology. That is what the Home Rulers were all about. But, at least in the South, the Easter Rising and the necessity to fight a war for independence cured them of the ideology for a long time to come. (How the sustained ideological campaign By Britain in the South over the last decade will work out remains to be seen.)

In the North Redmondism persisted. And it is possible that Catholics would have become reconciled to the Union if they had been allowed to. Any chance of that is now most unlikely after nearly 30 years of war. The murals in West Belfast showing solidarity with a great array of causes around the world would have been inconceivable 30 years ago. But who knows? Hibernianism is still around in Catholic Ulster and even in the most senior ranks of Sinn Fein.

THE REPUBLICANS

Easter Sunday saw the usual Sinn Fein commemoration to the Republican Plot at Milltown Cemetery. Apart from the very smart IRA Guard of Honour and ranks of relatives carrying pictures of those killed in the war, it was all more like a public carnival. Masses of families strolling up the road—a happy chattering lot interspersed with some bands.

(I think I can now tell a Catholic band from a Protestant one by the shoulders alone. How Protestants can swing those shoulders all over the place without falling over defies gravity!)

I heard little of the ceremony itself as the public address system broke down—to the great amusement of the crowd. Before this, Gerry Adams praised the Volunteers for their courage in war and their discipline in whatever one calls the present state of affairs in the Province.

He reiterated that there would not be a United Ireland in defiance of the wishes of the Protestants. The urge to shout 'all of them?' was almost overwhelming. But then one is always tempted to shout when Gerry is giving one of his long speeches—if only to stay awake.

Just before Sinn Fein arrived, I caught the tail end of the INLA commemoration which was, surprisingly to me, quite well attended. And, like the Sinn Fein one, was composed of families and youngsters of both sexes. Later I looked at their memorial which was a sad affair—most names having 'assassinated' after them—in memory of the bloody feuds that consumed the INLA a decade or so ago.

Returning down the Falls Road I met the Workers' Party heading for their commemoration. They were in three columns of about a hundred each. Almost all middle-aged men marching smartly with no sign of any public following. Two of the columns marched behind Workers' Party banners, but the leading column was composed of men in dark suits who I assumed were the Official IRA. Given their ages and attire it looked more a body of men going to an undertakers' convention—which, unfortunately, may not be a bad metaphor. I'd had enough commemorations for one day and didn't follow them back.

Far more interesting than the events of Easter Sunday was a commemoration I was invited to the following Sunday in the Short Strand. It seemed that the whole community had come out and walked, rather than marched, through every street, to some open ground. There they paid tribute to a local man who had died on his way to meet Roger Casement in 1916. The local Roll of Honour since 1916 was read out and was very long indeed. I noticed it included a local killed in the Spanish Civil War. The speaker was the very impressive Lady Mayor of Tralee.

Afterwards there was a most interesting meeting of ex-POWs with a sprinkling of younger people. (It is striking at Sinn Fein gatherings in Belfast how many middle-aged men are there with very young families.)

There was no leadership present in the crowd of about 50. People spoke a little

about their prison experiences—but mostly about how they got involved in things in the first place. I hadn't known that the blanket protest in Armagh women's jail was not started by Republicans but by an innocent, uninvolved, woman who had been wrongly convicted. Or that the dirty protest followed the locking of the washing facilities.

One man, to general approval, explained why things happened the way they did—like the Civil Rights Movement. He quoted the Thunderclap Newman hit song, *There's Something In The Air*. He reminded us that 1968-9 was the era of American Civil Rights protest, the Vietnam War and riots in Europe. He remembered a pal of his having the chat-up line: *'What do you think of the situation in Rhodesia?'*

The reaction to the Civil Rights Movement brought people like him to the barricades to defend themselves—especially in an isolated enclave like the Short Strand. It later brought him into the IRA.

This magazine has long claimed that the war in the North was exclusively a product of political events in the North and not the product of a Republican campaign which it later only partly became. This was borne out by all the contributions at this meeting.

I have a badge inscribed *'Oglaigh na hEireann unbeaten army'*. But, given how the war started, the present superior position of Catholics in the North, and the demise of the Orange/Unionist institutions, it would be better amended to *'Oglaigh na hEireann—victorious army'*.

I also attended an SDLP conference on sectarianism and racism. But the details of this will have to wait for the next issue of the *Irish Political Review*.

Conor Lynch

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Bertie's 2006 Proclamation

Extracts from Bertie's 1916 Proclamation:

"The Government is committed to respecting all traditions on this island equally. It also recognises that developing a greater understanding of our shared history, in all of its diversity, is essential to developing greater understanding and building a shared future. The Government is marking the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in Dublin at Easter and the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme with a ceremony at the war memorial in Islandbridge on July 1st...

"The men and women of the 1916 Rising envisaged a new Ireland as a national democracy; an Ireland which, in the words of the Proclamation, 'guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens...

"It looked forward to the establishment of a native Government elected on the democratic principles of self-determination and government by consent. The 1916 rising set in train an unstoppable process which led to the separation of Ireland from Great Britain...

"For Unionism, it was an issue of loyalty to the Crown. For Nationalists the situation was more complex... The war was initially promoted by Britain as "the defence of little Belgium". It later evolved into one fought for the rights of small nations as expressed by President Wilson, and the principle of self determination for such nations, especially in the defeated central European Empires formed much of the debate at the subsequent peace talks at Versailles. For some Irish nationalists there was an irony in fighting in the British army for such a cause...

"The 1916 Rising was a seminal event led by men and women who held aspirations of a different type of Ireland, one which would guarantee religious and civil liberty and would pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation, and all of its parts. It occurred at a time of conflict on the international stage, resulting in Irishmen losing their lives on the Western Front, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and at sea. The Rising resulted in the loss of many lives, be they combatants or innocent civilians. We commemorate these events on this their ninetieth anniversary and mourn the loss of all those who died. ... The Battle of the Somme, whose 90th anniversary we commemorate this year, started on 1 July 1916 after an eight-day artillery bombardment of the German front lines. Despite 60,000 casualties in one day, no progress was made in the British sector and the battle continued until the following November when the weather intervened. The total number of casualties in the Battle

exceeded one million. This included some the deaths of 3,500 Irishmen from all parts of this island. However, to fully understand and do justice to the significance what happened at the Somme, we must look at the overall context of WW1 and its impact on Ireland and on the Irish participants...

"...Thomas Kettle, the former Nationalist MP for East Tyrone who served and was killed as a Lieutenant in the 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, believed that: "Used with the wisdom which is sown in tears and blood, this tragedy of Europe may be and must be the prologue to the two reconciliations of which all statesmen have dreamed, the reconciliation of Protestant Ulster with Ireland, and the reconciliation of Ireland with Great Britain." ... The virtual disappearance of the First World War from the version of Irish history taught to the first few generations of the new independent Irish state had the result that few are aware of the extent of the Irish participation in the actual fighting. The concentration on the experience of the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Battle of the Somme in Northern Ireland overshadowed the sacrifice of the Nationalist community...

"...When the Rising began on the 24th April, there were about 5,000 soldiers deployed in the Dublin area. An additional 1000 were immediately sent from Belfast and further thousands were dispatched from England. The 4th, 5th and 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers took part in the fighting as did a number of officers and soldiers who were on leave in Dublin at the time. It was generally accepted that the Irish Volunteers fought bravely and honourably. Prime Minister Asquith told the House of Commons that "they fought bravely and did not resort to outrage." The series of executions helped to swing Nationalist support away from the Parliamentary Party and behind Sinn Fein. ... When the soldiers returned to Ireland, they found a changed political climate. The election in December 1918 was a clear endorsement of Sinn Fein outside of the traditional Unionist areas. The sacrifices made in the war were sidelined in the southern provinces whereas the losses at the Somme became part of the heritage of the new Northern Ireland. Some ex-soldiers joined the IRA, notably Emmet Dalton who had served with Tom Kettle. He is on record as having no difficulty in fighting for Ireland with the British and fighting for Ireland against the British. Others joined the new Irish Army. On June 12th, 1922, the regiments which had been recruited in the new independent Ireland were disbanded. They were: The Royal Irish Regiment, The

Connaught Rangers, The Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment, The Royal Munster Fusiliers, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The Colours were received by the King and were laid up in Windsor Castle where they remain. ... There is no agreement on the total number of Irish soldiers who served in the British Army and Navy in the First World War. Professor Keith Jeffery gives a figure of 210,000. There appears to be a consensus that at least 35,000 died though the figure on the National War Memorial is 49,400. About 140,000 enlisted in Ireland during the war. The increase in 1918 is worth noting.

Period Recruits

Aug 1914 –Feb 1915	50,107
Feb 1915- Aug 1915	25,235
Aug 1915 –Feb 1916	19,801
Feb 1916- Aug 1916	9,323
Aug 1916 –Feb 1917	8,178
Feb 1917- Aug 1917	5,607
Aug 1917 –Feb 1918	6,550
Feb 1918- Aug 1918	5,812
Aug 1918 –Nov 1918 [3 Months]	9,843

The first year total of Irish recruits exceeded the total of the remaining three years of the War. As the War progressed, Irish losses were replaced by UK conscripts. For example, the percentage of non-Irish soldiers in the 1st Royal Irish Rifles, which was based in Antrim and Down, was 23% in 1916. One year later it was 52%..."

Comment

The remainder of the Taoiseach's 2006 *Proclamation* consists of details of individuals and events of the Rising and the Great War. The thrust of the statement is to give credence to the claim that the Great War fought by Britain was not for Imperial aggrandisement, but for the liberation of small nations; so those Irish nationalists and unionists who participated in it have an equal claim to be honoured by the Irish state.

It features Casement's failure to recruit an opposing Army out of Irish POWs in Germany.

The statement is remarkable, not so much for what it says, but for what it does not say. As a small illustration, among the ten thousand or so words of the Taoiseach's statement, the word "*republic*" appears just twice, while "*republican*" does not appear at all. This is amazing, considering that this concept is the nub of what was at issue at the time, and is still a very live issue. But, even worse, the statement makes no assessment of what was at issue in the Great War. It accepts uncritically the British Great War propaganda about small nations. It accepts the fact of warfare, and the slaughter, as practically a force of nature sent by God, and not a human contrivance. It is worth reading in full

(at <http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/index.asp?docID=2514>)

if only to observe this devious sleight of hand.

Taken at face value, this is a highly subversive document. It cuts away the ground on which the independent Irish State is founded. In effect, Irish independence has been put in question by Ireland's current leader. Could anything be more subversive than that?

However the new doctrine is fragile and unstable. It is not possible to sustain the position that Britain fought the Great War for reasons that most people could now support. So, as became increasingly obvious at the time, Irish nationalist participants in the Great War were duped. What happened to them should now be lamented, not celebrated.

The politics of Irish involvement in the Great War are incompatible with those of Irish independence. Every Unionist in Northern Ireland knows this and therefore, quite rightly from their point of view, they have no truck with Fenianism of any kind—except for the slick, over-clever, and rather shallow and dishonest unionists who engage with the notion of Irish independence in order to subvert it.

The new dogma is being sold as a way of promoting reconciliation with Unionism. But the best way for the Irish state to respect the Unionist/Redmondite Somme-fetish is to ignore it, just as the annual Donegal Orange gathering at Rossknolagh is ignored as a quaint local folk-festival, a cultural event of no political significance, so no harm comes to either side of that particular division. The new Somme-ophiles peddle their doctrine in the name of reconciliation between the popular traditions in Ireland. The futility of their approach—throwing the baby of Independence out with the bath-water of sectarian or national animosity—should be relentlessly exposed. The Easter Rising aimed at a society in which everyone could participate, whatever their religious persuasion. That is the way forward. It is perfectly feasible to have a reasonable and constructive orientation towards the Unionists on the basis of the Independence position.

Furthermore it is an insult to them to blandly assume that British-loyalist people resident in the island of Ireland (or indeed in Great Britain) are biologically incapable of rising above the Somme lunacy, and of growing out of this state of mind in the long term, and of engaging in some constructive manner with the Irish society all around them which identifies itself in

accordance with the outlook represented by the Easter Rising.

Which is not to presume that, in coming to terms with the reality of the Somme and British Imperialism—if they ever do—they are likely ever to empathise with the Easter Rising. What Unionists make of themselves is up to themselves. Accepting this and acting accordingly is the respect that should be accorded.

Of course it is possible—though we should not assume it—that the Unionists will never change, that they are doomed to a limited and stunted form of political existence for all time. It is an insult to ourselves to pretend that Ulster-Unionist political culture—such as it is—is anything but negative, limited and stunted. Ulster-Unionism is a deplorable atavistic throwback. But it is a fact; it exists; ways must be found to cope with the fact. Bertie's *Proclamation* will not do the trick.

If Unionism does not come to some accommodation with the ambient Irish society, especially Irish society in the Six Counties, then Irish society has to find ways of neutralising and insulating itself from the destructive effects of this state of affairs—such as the Harryvilles, Drumcree, Holy Crosses and the like, as and when they arise. Which is not to say that we should be preaching at, proselytising, or subverting the Unionists and their way of life by trickery like Bertie's bogus Somme-ophilia. Any such policy is counter-productive. Being British-loyalist is not the same as being stupid and gullible. The blanket refusal of Unionists to participate in Bertie's new-fangled Somme shenanigans demonstrates this.

On 21st May 1914 Sir Edward Carson emphasised the Plantation roots of the Ulster Covenanters:

"...They were put there to maintain their connection with you [Great Britain]. They have done it honourably, and will do it even at the cannon's mouth. Let us have no paltering with this subject. We are going now to finish it once and for all. If we go down, well, let us go down" (speech at *St. James's Theatre*, London, see *The Grammar Of Anarchy*).

The Somme has no resonance in Irish society outside the inheritors of the Plantation ideology, and popular feeling towards it cannot be manufactured by the new Great War propaganda. Unlike the Easter Rising there is only a negligible vote for Bertie—or anyone else in the Republic—in the Somme nonsense. Quite the reverse. So Bertie's subversive declaration is bogus and insincere and every Unionist knows that. Any expect-

ation that Unionists might be taken in by it and come trotting meekly down to Islandbridge to stand beside Bertie is hardly consistent with respecting all traditions in Ireland equally. The respect that should be offered to this people is not to treat its adherents like simpletons. Far from respecting all traditions equally, Bertie's 1916 Proclamation is offensive to one tradition and destructive to another.

What is to become of the inheritors of the Plantation British ideology in Ireland? It is impossible to predict, but one of the strongest areas of Plantation was the Laggan Valley area of East Donegal. Those who stayed on there after the 18th century emigration to America and the 19th century emigration to Canada, and after the 20th century separation from Britain, are still mostly Orange, still support Rangers, and still have a strong community and church-based life. They have strong personal connections with their kith and kin in Antrim, Down and elsewhere. They incline towards Fine Gael, but vote eclectically and are courted by other political parties. Sometimes they run community candidates of their own on a community issues ticket. There is evidently an accommodation with the independent Irish State.

Already it is possible to detect such tendencies among Protestants in parts of Northern Ireland, even among DUP supporters. Prizing certain personal (but not political) virtues highly, it may be that these tendencies will develop as more and more of the truth about the Dirty War comes out. Bertie's devious, tricky Proclamation is counter-productive. But, with a little bit of imagination, it should be possible to expedite among the inheritors of the Plantation British ideology such early developments of accommodation towards Irish independence.

The resurgence of British imperialism in alliance with the USA means that it is even more urgent now to have an orientation towards these developments which is workable and which is not subversive of Irish independence. Unlike the current position being propagated by Bertie Ahern.

The big weakness of the new pro-Empire doctrine is that it glosses over the bogus reasons that brought Irish nationalists into British Imperial war, and it misrepresents the Imperial purposes of the slaughter. Bertie's *Proclamation* is just a continuation of the trickery, lying and bad faith involved in the Great War, which was cut through and exposed by the Easter Rising.

Pat Muldowney

Film Reviews

John Borgonovo, in his review of *The Dawn* etc (*Irish Political Review*, April), comments:

"Each film opens with the guerilla war already in full swing, without addressing the IRA's initial destabilization of the country or its decision to employ physical force against the British Administration. Likewise, none of the films foreshadow the political issues that tore the country apart during the bitter civil war of 1922-1923."

Did the IRA destabilise the country? Or did the country destabilise itself by voting to establish itself as an independent state? Or was it the Government that was the destabilising force when it decided to carry on governing the country after it had lost any semblance of an electoral mandate?

Academic historians have had seventy years, since the making of *The Dawn*, to mull over these questions, but they have not done so. The result of the 1918 Election, held only six weeks after the triumphant conclusion of Britain's Great War, whose declared purpose was to establish democracy and rights of small nations to self-determination as fundamental principles of the world order, is treated by historians as a thing of no moral or democratic consequence. And, leaving morality and democracy aside, they have not even treated it as a causative influence on subsequent events.

Over the past thirty years they have usually written in a tone of high moral condemnation of the Provisional IRA over its lack of a majority electoral mandate in Northern Ireland, but they extend this tone backwards to the era of the War of Independence, when it was the British Government that acted without an electoral mandate.

If Whitehall had in January 1919 remembered the slogans under which it had caused millions of people to be killed since August 1914, and had set about applying those slogans to the affairs of its own state as well as the Hapsburg Empire, there would never have been an IRA. But I do not know of a single academic historian who has made this observation. Continuing British government of Ireland in the face of rejection by a democratic election is treated as morally unproblematical, while the decision on the Irish side to resort to the bullet when the ballot was ignored is treated as infinitely problematical on moral grounds.

It appears to me to be excessively critical of film makers seventy years ago

to reproach them for failing to do what academic historians have failed to do ever since.

When Dan Breen started the War of Independence, about three weeks after the Election, he acted on the assumption that the Government would treat the voting as a thing of no consequence. And he reckoned that, if the war against the British occupation was not started at once, the impetus given by the election would be frittered away.

Breen has been depicted as a mindless gunman, and the British description of him, comparing him to a sulky bulldog, is popular with historians. But it seems to me that he was unusually sensitive to political situations. And he had the will to act on his insights, whichever way they led. It was he who broke the Anti-Treaty taboo on entering the Dail in the mid-1920s and opened the way for De Valera.

I do not know whether in January 1919 he acted on a general understanding that the British state did not believe a word of its own recruiting propaganda about democracy and small nations, or in the three weeks since the Election he picked up particular signs from the Administration that the result would be ignored. Anyhow he went on the assumption that the election was a thing of no consequence for the British state, and he acted accordingly. And his assumption was not falsified by events.

In my search for comment by academic historians on the British response to the election result in Ireland, I found *The Irish Question In British Politics (1916-1926)* by C.L. Mowat, a History Professor in a British University and a fairly well-known historian a generation ago of British politics around the two World Wars:

"At the end of the [world] war the position was both the same and different. The same because the government was still led by Lloyd George and Bonar Law. This meant that there was no dangerous opposition over Irish policy; rather, it meant that the Conservatives as the majority party in the coalition, could veto any Irish measure which they disliked. The difference was that the Irish Nationalist Party virtually disappeared in the general election of December 1918 and that the successful Sinn Fein candidates, constituting themselves the Dail Eireann, declared war on Britain."

Now, it was news to me that the Dail declared war on Britain. I thought what it did was declare Irish independence, in accordance with its electoral mandate,

and appeal to the states of the world to secure its admission to the Peace Conference at Versailles.

I knew that the Unionist papers in Belfast said that the vote by the electorate was a declaration of war on Britain. But Unionist propaganda gave itself great latitude in such things. And a declaration of war by the Dail is something different in kind from a vote for independence by the electorate.

It is suggested by Professor Fitzpatrick's *kindergarten* of imaginative historians in Trinity that Sinn Fein wanted a fight with Britain more than it wanted independence, and that it only advocated independence as an excuse for a fight, but I do not recall any of them as saying that the Dail actually declared war.

To the best of my knowledge what the Dail did in 1919 was go about the business of governing the country, which is what it was elected to do. Dan Breen took it for granted that the British state would not allow it to govern the country, so he went to war simultaneously with the Declaration of Independence. If Britain had set about negotiating independence in late January 1919, I imagine that the Dail would have been bowled over with surprise, and would have agreed to a British demand that Breen should be brought to book for jumping the gun and murdering its servants.

If the Dail had declared war on Britain at the same time that Dan Breen was conducting the first ambush, then Britain has very little to answer for on the grounds of democracy and the rights of small nations in 1919-21. A state, even if it is a big one, which had a declaration of war made on it, less than a month after the election which de-legitimised its authority, and before it had engaged in any hostile action towards its former subjects, is, I would say, entitled to respond in kind, and to treat this newly-asserted political entity as a kind of frenzied rottweiler.

Now I cannot assert categorically that the Dail did not declare war. One has to be careful with negatives. I can only say that I never heard of it apart from this. And I know that De Valera, as President, was prepared to concede a kind of Monroe Doctrine to Britain with regard to an Irish Republic, which is about as far as one state can place itself from hostile intent towards another. (And the strange thing is that Dev's offer of Monroe Doctrine status provoked an Anglo-Irish cry of rage in the *Church Of Ireland Gazette* on the grounds that the original Monroe Doctrine was an intolerable interference with British Imperial sovereignty in the Americas.)

Mowat's article appeared in a collection

called *The Irish Struggle 1916-1926*, published in London on the 50th anniversary of 1916, under the editorship of Desmond Williams. The collection was based on a series of Thomas Davis Lectures broadcast on Radio Eireann in 1963-4. Such being the condition of academic scholarship, I think John Boronovo's criticism of those filmmakers for failing to indicate the origins of the War of Independence is rather harsh.

I think there is even less ground for his second criticism: that they failed to "*foreshadow the political issues that tore the country apart during the civil war*". It assumes that those issues were present in the War of Independence but were covered over.

I suppose this follows deductively from the description of the Treaty War as a Civil War. Civil Wars arise out of profound disagreement over the nature of the State: there was a Civil War in Ireland after the War of Independence; therefore there were profound disagreements over the nature of the State within which the forces that fought the War of Independence.

I began with that assumption a long time ago, but I found that, while it was easy to assert it dogmatically, it was difficult to substantiate empirically. It did not correspond with what I knew from experience through growing up a generation later in an area in which there was a fairly even split between Treatyites and Anti-Treatyites, or with what I found out later.

I recall the celebrations of 1948, when the Treatyites formally withdrew the state from the Commonwealth and declared it a Republic. It was not that this made any real difference. Fianna Fail had long since established the "*Dictionary Republic*"—which, despite the ridicule of the term, meant a real republic—and made membership of the Commonwealth a dead letter. The significance of 1948 was that the Treatyites availed of their first period in office since 1932 to free themselves from the incubus of a Treaty which was long since defunct with regard to the issue on which the Treaty War was fought. And the occasion was marked with a history of the War of Independence, produced by collaboration between Treatyites, Anti-Treatyites and Neutrals.

If Britain had recognised an Irish right of self-determination in 1921, and if those who had fought the War of Independence had then fallen out amongst themselves over how to exercise self-determination, that would have been a Civil War. But that is now what happened.

The Treatyites did not prefer domestic

self-government under the authority of the Crown and within the Empire to Republican independence. They did not fight for a connection with the Crown when a Republic was available as a free choice. They did not fight for the Oath because they preferred the Oath. They decided to swallow the Oath under pressure of a British ultimatum, when the alternative was a British war of re-conquest, conducted with all the military resources of the Empire, and with the concentration camp methods by which the Boers had been broken only twenty years earlier. And that is not the kind of thing that is usually meant by 'Civil War'.

When the rupture came there was no prior economic or ideological divisions which determined which way an individual would go. Kenneth Griffith made a television film about it some time ago, and a survivor recalled how on the morning the fighting started in Dublin he was still undecided which side he was on, and he still could not account for why he went Republican rather than Free State. I recall that some superior persons in Dublin 4 saw this as proof that the whole thing had been ridiculous. But what it proved was that the Treaty War was not a working out in conditions of freedom of pre-existing differences, within the forces which fought the War of Independence, about what they were fighting for. They had all agreed on what they were fighting for. What they divided on was whether, under threat of a major escalation of the British war in Ireland, they should accept half a loaf at the risk of getting no bread if they didn't.

The divisions took on something of a social and ideological character after the event. West British elements, who had been marginalised since 1918, flocked to the side of the Treaty, the Crown and the Empire. And, though there were few of them, they were immensely wealthy. But the division was determined in the moment of its occurrence by personal qualities, rather than social entities. Hence the Dublin man who still could not say sixty years later why he went one way rather than the other. The springs of purely individual action lie beyond discovery. In such a situation individual conduct is not predictable before the event. Therefore I can see no ground for a foreshadowing of the Treaty War in the War of Independence.

*

The Guardian (17 May) carried an article on a new film about the War of Independence (the first such film for 70 years, I believe, unless one counts *Michael Collins*). This quotes from an interview by Fiachra Gibbons with its scriptwriter, Paul Laverty:

"...it depicts a typically Loachian

collective struggle: an IRA "flying column" of young farm labourers, shopkeepers and workers who take to the hills during Ireland's war of independence to fight the locally recruited Royal Irish Constabulary and later the Black and Tans, the British army irregulars drafted from traumatised survivors of the trenches. The group's efforts to make a better world through revolution, however, are undermined from within and without: the column turns on itself in the vicious civil war that follows the signing of the 1931 treaty that left a quarter of the country still in British hands...

"While he was writing the script, Laverty (like Connolly, a Scot of Irish extraction) became convinced that the reason the history of this period has been obscured is because it is uncomfortable for everyone, Irish and British alike. "...People were fighting often for very different things. There were deep divisions between them, which could be exploited from the outside... We wanted to show, too, how democracy can be debased. The 1922 election that approved the Treaty is the basis of the Irish state. Yet the election was fought against the backdrop of the most appalling threats and bullying from the British government, who threatened 'immediate and terrible war' if the Treaty was not ratified..."

"No one", he adds, "ever talks about the 1918 election."

"That's not entirely true. Sinn Fein does. A lot... Democracy, it believes, was debased in 1922. That is why it has argued that, although it has never had more than 15% of the vote in the whole island since 1918, it is still the country's legitimate government. In Irish politics, you must always watch your enemies, but be even more careful of your friends.

"So is "The Wind That Shakes The Barley" "an IRA film"? It is and it isn't. It is a film about the IRA in the most heroic phase of its history, at a time when it had the overwhelming support of the Irish people—something that it has conspicuously lacked since. As such, it is unashamedly partisan. But the most devastating line in the film is delivered by someone who would normally be seen as the Loach class enemy: an Anglo-Irish landlord who berates the IRA men who kidnap him: 'God preserve Ireland if you lot gain control. It will become an inward-looking, priest-infested backwater.' Which is exactly what Ireland became.

"Laverty is acutely aware that the war of independence was, in many respects, a civil war, and that concepts of Britishness and Irishness were more elastic then. "The war started off against the local police before the Black and Tans were brought in. And you have to remember how many Irishmen, including republicans, fought for Britain in the first world war, and how many who opposed the IRA regarded themselves as Irishmen, and patriots even, for wanting to keep Ireland in the empire. The two countries were very

tightly enmeshed”...

"No doubt this film is Loach's pointed riposte to the Hollywoodisation of Michael Collins—who might have become Ireland's Franco had he not caught a stray bullet in 1922..."

"The present keeps butting into Loach's film in other tough ways, too. It is hard to watch the killing of the young IRA man without thinking of that other IRA informer, Denis Donaldson, who was dispatched with a shotgun by killers unknown last month in a lonely cottage in the mountains where my own grandfather sought refuge when he was a member of an IRA flying column during those first Troubles. His death has been preying on Laverty's mind, as have the parallels with the civil war brewing in Iraq, helped on by US divide and rule.

"In Ireland, though, the film will be taken mostly as a stomach-churning warning about how yesterday's freedom fighters can become tomorrow's oppressors—a lesson that will hit home more than anywhere on the Belfast estates controlled by paramilitaries, where those who speak out are intimidated, threatened with exile or worse.

"Before Loach began shooting the film, he was drawn into controversy surrounding the murder of Robert McCartney by drunken members of the IRA in Belfast. The prominence of the case, he told the BBC, was an example of "how news is spun"; Catholics murdered by loyalists, he claimed, never received such publicity. He had clearly never met the McCartneys nor their Short Strand neighbours, who are as republican as they come.

"Yet Loach's film turns on a moment when a "gombeen man" (a loan shark) is sprung from a Sinn Féin court run by justice-seeking women like the McCartneys, because the money he supplies to the IRA is seen as more important than principle. It is the point at which the flying column begins to divide, and where things begin to slide. If there are hard lessons to be taken from *The Wind*..., it appears even its maker has been big enough to heed them."

Whatever about Irish independence producing a "priest-infested backwater" (and in the backwater where I grew up, it was not the priests but the progressive laity that I experience as religious pests), a *Guardian* review of anything Irish can be relied on to be cliché-infested, even if written by somebody whose grandfather was in a Flying Column.

There can be few parts of Ireland that were more backwaterish than Slieve Luachra. It was self-absorbed: content with itself. It was inward-looking in that sense. It did not consider itself to be worthless, and therefore did not seek to borrow value from somewhere else—i.e., from England. The English had left less than a generation before I began to be aware of things, and they were not missed.

In fact they were pretty well forgotten in social terms, and were only remembered on certain occasions as Auxies and Tans who had been given a hiding. I knew of ambushes, but the landlords, who had been disposed of a generation earlier, were pre-history.

And that community, at the height of what is now depicted as the Dark Age, was avidly interested in the world. Its fault was that England did not constitute the world for it.

As to the Provos not tolerating dissent in areas under their hegemony: I spent twenty years actively dissenting from their course of action in a part of West Belfast where I might easily have been disposed of by them. To outsiders it looked as if I was intent on constructive suicide. But I never felt in any danger from them. I saw them, at close quarters, being formed in the Winter of 1969-70, and I knew that they were in earnest in what they set out to do; that they made sense to themselves and others in the community that produced them; and that, regardless of what elections said, they were representative of that community. But I was threatened by the other Republicans—the good ones who, through a series of metamorphoses, became the leadership of the Irish Labour Party—but fortunately there was a rumour that an Albanian submarine had supplied me with an arsenal.

But the most imminent danger was from Loyalists. What we were publishing could be construed as being in their favour, but the most obvious fact to them was that we were Fenians. A friend of mine was picked up at random and told he was to be shot. He was living in an area that was basically Protestant. (This was in the early 1970s.) He told them the incredible story that he supported Partition until such time as there was a Six County majority for unity, and said he could prove it to them if they went back to his room with him. They did so. He showed them a leaflet written by me with his name and address as publisher and persuaded them to read it. It bewildered them, and they didn't shoot him.

To the best of my knowledge the McCartney affair arose out of a drunken brawl, which the world heard about because the two Governments thought it could be propagandised into an election winner for the SDLP. Other incidents were brought out and publicised on television at the same time. The fact that the Sinn Féin vote still increased, despite a media barrage approaching totalitarian dimensions, and with the IRA under strict scrutiny, demonstrated its actual relationship with the community that produced it.

In the mid-1970s somebody approached Athol Street, asked to become a member, and suggested that we were well placed for spying and passing on information to the police. I couldn't figure out whether it was an approach from the police, or if it was the Provos checking that we actually were what we purported to be. Anyhow he was told that the Northern Ireland mess was caused by the state structure set up by Britain and that we would have nothing to do with futile attempts to deal with the resulting mess by security measures.

A further quotation from the *Guardian*:

"Loach and Laverty do not pass over painful truths. The seeds of doubt are planted early in the film when the doctor, Damien, the tragic hero... has to shoot the landlord and one of his own comrades who has been forced to become an informer, and wonders if "this Ireland we are fighting for is worth it"—a question that haunts everyone who "did their bit" in the North over the past 35 years. And the film makes it clear that it was the oath to the King—and not partition—that caused the civil war, something that northern republicans will find hard to swallow. *The Wind*... gives succour to no one—least of all to Gerry Adams, who could pass for Damien's brutalised brother Teddy (a clear cypher for Michael Collins, too), whose moral compass is skewed by the exercise of power and the promise of more."

When I first encountered northern republicans (in the late 1960s, when there were very few of them) I found them much better informed about the 'Civil War' than southern republicans were. In 1922 the Northern IRA inclined towards the Treaty, and Northern Nationalists in general, two generations later, were dismissive of the 'Civil War' because they knew that it had nothing to do with their predicament, and that it ended the possibility of the Free State doing anything much for them.

The comparison of Gerry Adams and Michael Collins is politically absurd. Collins in November 1921 in London took affairs into his own hands, acting independently of the Dail Government; browbeat his fellow delegates into signing the 'Treaty'; and split the Army which had brought Britain to the negotiating table. Adams did the contrary. Under pressure from the two Governments to cut loose and do his own thing, he insisted on only moving with the consensus of the Republicanism of the North, influencing its development but staying with it.

The IRA in its "most heroic phase" had "overwhelming support of the Irish people", which "it has conspicuously lacked since", says the *Guardian*. And yet, despite the overwhelming support of

the people, the war was a civil war!

The *Guardian* says Sinn Fein has never had more than 14% of the vote in "*the whole island*" since 1918. But "*the whole island*" has not been an electoral area since 1921. The 1918 Election was set aside by Britain—and it is entirely true that "*No one ever talks about it*": there is no history of that election, and the pretentious British Parliament has never been confronted with its response to it. The island was then split into two electorates. And the part of the country retained within the British state did not take part in the election of the Government of the state, but was given its own peculiar system, whose only possible outcome was the ruling of Catholics by Protestants.

If the island vote did not establish legitimate authority for island government in 1918, I do not see how a Six County vote established legitimate authority for what existed in the Six Counties after 1921. The Nationalist minority in the North was 33% and rising, while the Unionist minority on the island was 25% and falling (as a consequence of land reform and other measures that undermined the Ascendancy).

In 1919 there was going to be some degree of Nationalist self-government in most of the country, even though not what was voted for. The days of rule by a hostile caste had gone. But, in the North after 1921, in an undemocratic segment of a democratic state, a large minority was subjected to the rule of a hostile caste. And that was done at the end of the Great War for "*democracy and the rights of nations*" in which that minority had participated with a will.

In a world in which democracy is presented as the norm, and in which the norms of other forms of government have been destroyed, undemocratic government will have consequences, and especially so in an undemocratically governed corner of an otherwise democratically governed state, which is subjected to all the provocations of democratic political culture in the media of the state (such as election broadcasts of governing parties not running candidates in Northern Ireland), but deprived of a democratic outlet. I don't know what consequences it is reasonable to expect from such an arrangement, which is unique in the world. I only know what the actual consequences have been—and that it is entirely unreasonable to suppose that there might have been no adverse consequences. And I know that the *Guardian*, like the *Irish Times*, never allowed the actual situation to be described in its pages. Both of them prefer to depict Northern Ireland in emotional clichés.

There is a film that has never been made. It is about how Britain escaped civil war at home in the Summer of 1914 by starting a World War. Hollywood is capable of making such films about American affairs of state, but not Britain. The events of July-August 1914 have therefore never been assimilated by British culture. Not the least of those events was the moral collapse of the *Guardian* as a major institution of the Fourth Estate. It reached the apex of coherence and lucidity in late July and early August, and then collapsed into hysterical Jingoism after its own Party launched a war in complete disregard of its argument that there were no reasonable grounds for it, and that it would be criminal. It allowed itself to be hustled, and it has lived in evasions ever since, particularly with regard to Irish affairs.

It now tells us that the Irish War of Independence, fought to give effect to an electoral mandate, was a civil war because part of the apparatus of the British state against which it was fought was a paramilitary police force cum espionage system, most of whose personnel had been recruited in Ireland. But the RIC was in no sense a "*local police*": it was a centralised and disciplined organ of the British state in Ireland. It was distributed around the country on the principle that its personnel

in each area must be free of local connections. And they lived together in barracks that resembled garrison fortifications. And, when representative local government was set up around 1900, the RIC remained strictly a Dublin Castle operation. It was an occupying force recruited by an external power from amongst the natives, and was treated as such after the 1918 Election clarified the situation.

As to "*parallels with the civil war brewing in Iraq, helped on by U.S. divide and rule*": "*divide and rule*" is a British, rather than an American, mode of operation. In Iraq the US acted with a lethal naivety about democracy and its preconditions, assuming that it would emerge as a matter of course when the "*tyrant*" was overthrown, and the institutions of state which he had built up were broken down.

But what is called the Irish Civil War was calculatingly engineered by Whitehall. When it concluded that a substantial measure of self-government would have to be conceded, its object was to ensure that the movement which was obliging it to concede more than it had ever intended would not remain in being as a unified force to confront it as a recognised Government with an experienced Army.

Brendan Clifford

Connolly And MacSwiney Recalled At Easter Commemoration In Catalonia

During Easter weekend relatives and friends of British and Irish International Brigaders took part in a 70th anniversary 10 km commemorative walk across the Pyrenees mountains from France into Spain. On Easter Sunday, April 16th, a memorial plaque was unveiled in the Catalonian city of Figueres, at the Castell de Sant Ferran fortress where International Brigade volunteers had first mustered. What follows is the English-language version of the address of thanks given by Manus O'Riordan, in which the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising was also commemorated. The 90th anniversary of the execution of James Connolly fell on this May 12th .

Representatives of the *Generalitat* (Government) of Catalunya and of Figueres City Council; dear comrades and friends;

It is a great honour for me to speak here as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Brigade Memorial Trust of Britain and Ireland.

Many thanks for this memorial plaque in honour of the International Brigades!

I regret that I do not speak Catalan, and that I speak very little Spanish.

We are a group of English, Irish, Scots and Welsh. We are the children, grandchildren, relatives and friends of the International Brigaders who left their native countries 70 years ago in order to fight against fascism, in defence of the democracy of the Spanish Republic and

for the rights of Catalunya.

In honour of those brigadistas we have arrived here in Catalunya from France, going on foot across those same Pyrenees that they themselves traversed between 1936 and 1938.

For us, the greatest honour is that we have been accompanied here by three of those heroes:

two English Brigaders—our President Jack Jones (aged 93) and Jack Edwards (aged 91) ; together with the Irish Brigadier Bob Doyle (a lad of just 90 years!).

Apart from marking the 70th anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades, this year is a year of many other important anniversaries in the history of the struggle for freedom and

democracy. Two days ago—April 14th—saw the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the birth in 1931 of the second Spanish Republic, while tomorrow will see the celebration of the same anniversary of the restoration of the Generalitat of Catalunya on 17th April 1931. We are very much aware that the commemoration being held here today in the Castell de Sant Ferran takes place not only in a historic centre of the International Brigades but also in the same place where the Parliament of the Spanish Republic met for the very last time on Spanish soil, on 1st February 1939.

Today, Easter Sunday, my own native country of Ireland is also celebrating the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Proclamation of an Irish Republic and the Easter Week Rising that followed it.

The Vice-President of that Republic was James Connolly, the international socialist leader and General Secretary of my own labour union—originally the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, now known as SIPTU—as well as being the Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Citizen Army.

On 12th May 1916, strapped to a chair, so severely wounded that he was incapable of standing up, James Connolly was executed by the British Government, a crime comparable to the murder by the fascists of the President of Catalunya, Lluís Companys, on October 15th, 1940.

In honour of James Connolly's memory, Irish International Brigaders who fought in defence of the Spanish Republic named themselves the Connolly Column. These are the words inscribed on that memorial banner in Republican colours being held by my daughter Jess and son Neil:

*Connolly Column—
15 Brigada Internacional*

In the wake of that Easter Rising, Terence MacSwiney—a leader of the Irish Republican Army in Cork—was arrested and transferred to a prison in Britain, where he married his fiancée and comrade-in-struggle, Muriel. Following his release, MacSwiney was elected a Member of the Irish Parliament—Dáil Éireann—in the 1918 General Election, and he was also elected Lord Mayor of Cork in 1920.

Arrested yet again and transferred to a London jail, MacSwiney fought for his own liberty and that of his country by means of a hunger strike. He died after 74 days, but during those months the most profound solidarity with his struggle was to be demonstrated here in Catalunya.

The Catalan Trade Union organisation

CADCI wrote of MacSwiney in its journal *L'Acció* :

"This remarkable man, who from his prison cell displays, day after day, his unbending will to sacrifice his life on behalf of his ideal of nationhood".

On 1st November 1920, All Saints' Day, CADCI commemorated MacSwiney with a mass demonstration in Barcelona and, as *L'Acció* reported:

"The poet Ventura Gassol gave a magnificent reading of a most beautiful original poem exalting the supreme gesture of the Lord Mayor of Cork, producing among those present a deep emotion."

Based on the Catalan folk song *Lerida Prison*, here is a short extract in Catalan from Gassol's 1920 poem of internationalist solidarity with Terence MacSwiney ("*germà nostre*", "our brother").

{The poet speaks of how MacSwiney, his pale face frozen in the perspiration of death, has forced an opening through the walls of the great prison in which the heart of Ireland is overshadowed, and of how—by his inspiration to the people of Catalonia—the spirit of MacSwiney has also forced open their own imprisonment.}

*Al cor ombrós d'Irlanda
n'hi ha una gran presó:
que ja no hi queden presos,
que no n'hi queden, no.
MacSwiney, blanc de cara,
gelat encar de la suor de mort,
ha obert un esvoranc a les muralles,
i cel amunt se'ls va enduent a tots ...
Espirit de MacSwiney, germà nostre,
oh, si també ens obrissiu la presó !*

The widow of Terence MacSwiney greatly appreciated that demonstration of solidarity by Catalonia. Initially in the Communist Party of Germany, and subsequently in the Communist Party of France, the same Muriel MacSwiney was active as an anti-fascist militant during the 1930s and demonstrated her own solidarity in defence of the Spanish Republic. In later years she also became a good friend of many International Brigaders, especially my father Michael O'Riordan.

The members of British Battalion of the 15th International Brigade were internationalists, not only in their defence of the Spanish Republic, but also in their understanding of the national question in both Ireland and Catalonia.

One can particularly speak of such internationalism with respect to Sam Wild, the British Battalion's last commander as it fought on throughout the course of the battle of the Ebro. That English commander of Irish ancestry had both the

sense of history and the foresight to choose an Irish volunteer for a most important and symbolic act. On 25th July 1938, in the final military offensive of the Spanish Republic, the British Battalion crossed the Ebro at Ascó. And, on the other side of that river, on the Catalonian territory liberated at that very moment from fascist occupation, this Irish volunteer raised up the national flag of a free Catalunya!

This Irish International Brigader—fighting with the flag of Catalunya in his hand—was born in Cork, the city of MacSwiney. Today the same brigadista, my father Michael O'Riordan, is ill in a Dublin hospital. But he has sent to this commemoration, to all the peoples of Spain, and especially to the people of Catalunya—his second fatherland—his greetings and his love.

The internationalism of the British Battalion was also demonstrated by the homage paid by all to the memory of the Irish socialist James Connolly. That Battalion chose as one of its anthems a song that had originally been written by Connolly himself for the Socialist Labour Party in Scotland (and first published in Edinburgh, in *The Socialist*, May 1903). Before, during and after the battle of the Ebro, Connolly's song was to be heard ringing out in the mountains, in the valleys and on the roads of Catalonia.

I shall now conclude with that anthem of the 15th International Brigade's British Battalion, James Connolly's own *Rebel Song* :

Come workers sing a rebel song,
A song of love and hate,
Of love unto the lowly
And of hatred to the great.
The great who trod our fathers down,
Who steal our children's bread,
Whose hands of greed are stretched
to rob
The living and the dead.

chorus:

*Then we'll sing a rebel song
as we proudly march along
To end the age-old tyranny
that makes for human tears.
And our march is nearer done,
with each setting of the sun.
And the tyrant's might is passing
with the passing of the years.*

We sing no more of wailing
No songs of sighs or tears;
High are our hopes and stout our hearts
And banished all our fears.
Our flag is raised above us
That all the world may see,
'Tis Labour's faith and Labour's arm
Alone can Labour free.

chorus

Out of the depths of misery

We march with hearts aflame;
With wrath against the rulers false
Who wreck our manhood's name.
The serf who licks the tyrant's rod
May bend forgiving knee;
The slave who breaks his slavery's chain
A wrathful man must be.

chorus

Our army marches onward

Its face towards the dawn,
In trust secure in that one thing
The slave may lean upon.
The might within the arm of him
Who knowing freedom's worth,
Strikes hard to banish tyranny
From off the face of earth.

chorus

Manus O'Riordan

Book Review: *Six Days Of The Irish Republic* by L.G. Redmond-Howard. Aubane Historical Society

Ireland, Inside And Out

At the end of Part One of my review of the above I attributed the quote, or part of the quote, to Thomas MacDonagh when it should have been C.S.Parnell:

"No man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation... "

ROGER CASEMENT

L.G. Redmond-Howard, after his witnessing of the 1916 Uprising, moves on to paint a portrait of Roger Casement. With him living during that period he is able to enlarge on the capture of Casement after he landed from the German submarine off the West coast of Ireland. But before that he quotes from the *Sunday Herald*, an article by Louis McQuilland, the Irish poet and critic, and at one-time secretary to John Redmond (Redmond-Howard's uncle), of what Casement might have looked like during that period:

"One of the most pronounced of the Castilian type in Ireland, is Sir Roger Casement, who looks as if he had stepped out of a canvas by Velasquez."

I would have thought that was the Celtic look, even though he says the Casements were not of pure Celtic stock because they came from the Isle-of-Man originally. It is an island that had its own language, Manx Gaelic, an offshoot of old Irish, which is being revived. France is also mentioned in connection with the Casements background.

And:

"There has never been any been any feminine gossip attached to Sir Roger Casement's name, though he is a type which would appeal to many women by reason of its intensity."

Earlier Redmond-Howard writes:

"He had few friends, still fewer intimates, and he is probably destined to remain for ever more or less of an enigma."

Redmond-Howard had been to same-sex boarding schools while being formally educated and that would have been a decisive time for him to sort out his sexuality during the stormy days of

adolescence. Sexual identity could have become an issue for him. Personally I don't care if the so-called Casement Black Diaries are authentic or not. But there are question marks about how the British authorities have handled them down the years.

I don't think British Intelligence bodies could have avoided having homosexuals within their ranks by the nature of their recruiting from the elite universities during that time. Who you were and from what family you came from was more important then than that of sexual orientation. Since that time they have discovered the working-class and sexual prejudice has gone.

I have read somewhere that these gay members were used extensively at seaports, railway stations, and airports during the 1930s in order to identify members of their own sexual persuasion returning from holidaying in the North African city of Tangiers (a popular rendezvous for some of the gay community) so as to put them on file for the illegal practice of male homosexuality. So it would have been easy enough for British Intelligence, with this section of its personnel, to forge something like the so-called Black Diaries using the sexual imagery and language of homosexuality.

I am not particularly interested in a person's sexual affiliation but it was raised by the British State some eighty-eighty years ago to discredit Casement, and recently by their surrogates in Ireland in an effort to discredit Patrick Pearse, so it must be answered.

Most important of all was Casement's service as British Consul in various European colonies which resulted in his reports on what he had seen. The Peruvian Amazon Company and Latin America stands alongside the former Belgium Congo in genocidal terms. It is stated by Casement, in a report on the years 1900-1911, that an output of 4,000 tons of

rubber cost the lives of 30,000 Putumayo Peruvian Indians. It is still—and will always be—difficult to read about the unbelievable murderous treatment of these workers—their wives and their children also being forced into this kind of labour in order to bring the British shareholder yet more spoils. The book has a sickening chapter on these atrocities.

Roger David Casement had a Protestant father, also called Roger, and a Catholic mother—Anne Jephson from Wexford. She died when he was a baby. His father died when he was ten. After that he was brought up by Protestant paternal relatives in Ballymena in the North of Ireland. He had a sister called Nina and two brothers called Charles and Thomas. I couldn't find from other sources anything much about the early life of the Casement family.

Ballymena is today mainly Ian Paisley country with Aoghill as its rabidly poisonous anti-Catholic centre. Catholics living there among what is still called the Ballymena Scotch would be in a totally different position than those living in the Catholic heartlands of West Belfast, Tyrone and South Armagh. But there would still be Catholic/Protestant alliances on a personal basis, even in this area, as the Protestant population is too complex to accused of any one thing.

Not long ago there was a proposal to give Liam Neeson, a native of Ballymena and a highly successful Hollywood actor, the Freedom of Ballymena. This was turned down by the Town Council, obviously on religious grounds. His mother still lives there and she was quoted as saying he was never interested in this dubious honour.

When I was being brought up as a Catholic in the then mainly Protestant Carryduff in County Down (my parents fled Belfast in 1938 to escape the debt collectors and bailiffs) I would begin to puzzle over why some rural Protestants were so sectarian and why others didn't even have a hint of it. The McKeown family were an example of total non-sectarianism. They go back to the Eighteenth Century in Carryduff. One of them was the local blacksmith who made pike heads for the 1798 Rebellion and was almost hanged for it. Yet others whose forebears also took part in that rebellion turned out over the years to be fiercely and aggressively anti-Catholic. These Protestants of Carryduff unlike so many others of their faith throughout the Six Counties, are aware of their family history. 1798 to them in this area of County Down is Protestant history. 1798 Wexford doesn't usually figure in their thinking and if a few are aware of it is distorted into some sort of sectarian rebellion with the Protestants as the losers.

Catholics living in Carryduff and the outskirts back in 1938-1945 scarcely numbered a hundred (now 6,000). Living in such close proximity to the majority Protestant population we had to be sensitive to the differences between Protestants for our own survival. They couldn't just be labelled and dismissed like they usually are in the Catholic heartlands. Some of those belonging to the Orange Order wanted you dead (they tried that a couple of times), while other members would stop and offer you lifts on their tractors or in their cars. You began to realise there was such a thing as a decent Orangeman. Catholics in the heartlands, having very little contact with Protestants, might be outraged at such a notion.

When Brendan Clifford said he saw the Protestants at one point as a separate nationality he was right in thinking that. They could be very critical of England but that didn't mean you, as a Catholic, could find common cause with them against the Brits, as some Nationalists used to think or hope.

Not only do many Catholics in areas like West Belfast not understand Protestants they don't understand the Catholic outside their own area. I found the *Andersonstown News* to be a ghetto paper and sectarian at times. Even Father Des, the iconic Nationalist priest, who writes for the paper on a regular basis, could have his sectarian moments when mentioning the Belfast shipyard. He wished the worst for it when it was thriving and practically sneered when it was on its knees. No mention of how the Catholic Church failed to organise mass activity for jobs there and in other industries monopolised by a Protestant workforce. Instead it was jobs by stealth.

When we did eventually get a Catholic Church in Carryduff the priest told one of my sisters, who had just come out of secretarial college, that he could apply on her behalf for a job in the Stormont civil service as he knew her to be a devout Catholic.

He was also aware that isolated Catholic families were unlikely to be engaged in Nationalist politics through being constantly under scrutiny by the RUC, the local B-Specials and other members of the community they came from. But, ironically, my sister, in the meantime when she had filled in the application forms and was waiting a few months while references were being checked, converted to a DIY tin church sect of rabble-rousing Protestantism and failed to get the job.

Joe Cahill, the prominent Republican, worked in the Belfast shipyard as a joiner in the 1950s. Before he died in July 2004 of asbestosis, having contacting the

disease through the working conditions, he sued his former employer Harland and Wolff, the shipbuilders, and was awarded £30,000 compensation. He was probably working there thanks to Billy Sinclair, the communist secretary of the Belfast Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers who was able to get Catholic woodworkers into the mainly Protestant but hundred per cent trade-union organised shipyard by stealth, though from a different direction this time.

In a once marginal Unionist/Nationalist area a Unionist candidate, during the early 1950s, won a Stormont seat by offering newly-built Belfast Corporation houses or flats to Catholics who voted Unionist. This news was circulated around the New Lodge Road, by active Unionist Party workers who approached Catholics living in poor accommodation. This Unionist candidate also happened to be running the local Post Office in this mainly Catholic area and was therefore in a good position to make offers as he dealt with the customers. Protestants, also living in poor accommodation in the area, complained about being dumped for Catholic votes— which proved it wasn't a secret but a *fait accompli*, most likely approved of by Stormont. The Catholics getting a house or a flat then went on to vote Unionist, seeing it as a good deal. But at the next election he was out. The Catholics felt they had met their obligations.

Getting to know the ropes—as it was called—was how Catholics got jobs and houses. Everyone worked the system, Catholic and Protestant. At times it was the Catholic who was the most important in keeping Stormont going. But when they decided it had to go it had to go.

Most Nationalist newspapers don't take kindly to being reminded of various things that don't quite fit into the sectarian mould.

The shipyard pogroms of June 1920 in which most of the Catholic workers were expelled was still within living memory when I started in the Harland and Wolf shipyard in 1946. My father, an apprentice joiner in the Workman Clark shipyard, witnessed expulsions there and was appalled at the atrocious violence in some cases. He, along with his workmates, could do nothing as a number of Protestants who protested at this happening to Catholic workmates were threatened with also being thrown over the side of the ship and pelted with heavy rivets while in the water.

Nevertheless, a number of Protestant workers were forced out for their sympathies.

Many Protestants I worked with were still condemning what had happened. The Black Squads—so-called because of the grime associated with their work—riveters, platers, caulkers and other iron-

trade workers, were the main shock troops in this expulsion. At least one member of each gang was armed with the large point-forty-five revolver, which was a standard RIC/RUC issue. This minority of the workforce remained the most radicalised section of the Protestant workforce right into the period I worked there. Despite this many Catholics fought to get back into the shipyard and those who did manage that had the silent approval of the majority and the active support of leftist union leaders.

The most belligerent of the Black Squads then went on to try and intimidate communists and other left-wingers during the early 1950s but this was a failure as most of them were Protestants, and they fought back vigorously. Their next would-be victims were the young English lads who had come to Belfast to avoid National Service in the British Armed Forces. They became the new *taigs*. These lads, not understanding the all-Ireland code of not informing, complained to the shipyard management who put a stop to this intimidation through the threat of sacking.

Against the background of the 1920s pogroms was the IRA War of Independence. In Belfast, trams coming from Protestant areas and having to go past certain Catholic streets were liable to be sniped at indiscriminately. My father recalled his mother, aged around forty-seven and dressed in her finery, refusing to lie down on the floor of the tram, like the other passengers, when the tram conductor called out that they were approaching a danger street.

Generally in the Catholic heartlands the entire Protestant community is still condemned right up to the present day about the anti-Catholic pogroms which happened eighty-five years ago. This helps to keep the sectarian pot boiling.

And certain sections of the Republican Movement have a long way to go before they begin to attract the Protestant, if ever. Ceaselessly mentioning Protestant heroes from 1798 will do nothing. Nor will the mixed schools, mixed sports groups or other mixed social groupings financed from Whitehall as a *civilising* exercise to soften Protestant and Catholic identity. The two now intensely polarised communities are probably a much more honest reflection of how things really are today. It is rock bottom time but with the Catholics now able to hold their own against the odds.

So, what made Roger Casement, a Protestant from Ballymena, into such a legendary figure for Nationalist Ireland? Redmond-Howard wonders at that as well.

There are rumours that his mother had him secretly baptised a Catholic as an infant or that he converted to Catholicism before being hanged. Prominent Catholics

of the period could have started that rumour in order to fully make him one of their own. Either that or prominent Protestants wanted to disown him. But the fact is he was too totally engrained as a Northern Protestant already for a last minute conversion to make much difference. Redmond-Howard does make a guess at Casement's experiences in the colonies as turning him into a Nationalist. But I doubt that. What made Major Bunting's son die for Republicanism as a Protestant? What made Bobby Sands' father remain a Protestant?

Why did my father marry my Catholic mother and agree to her bringing the five of us up as Catholics, but still remain a Protestant. When I was a teenager our mutual atheism and communist ideas still kept us divided for beneath his communism there still lurked 1912, which he remembered vividly as a twelve year old. Later I was to discover—or own up to the fact—that beneath my communism there lurked Catholic Nationalism.

My father never did tell me that his family had signed the Ulster Covenant against Home Rule. I went online not long ago and found out that they had, except for my paternal grandfather. Their signatures were there as if they had been handwritten only a few hours ago. An elderly family friend had told me that my grandfather had also signed but his name doesn't appear on the Ulster Covenant website. Though he was dead before I was born I was aware that he was a Donegal Protestant. Maybe he backed the Home Rule Bill. If so he was unlikely to have passed on this information to his fiercely Loyalist Sion Mills wife and their Belfast-born three sons and two daughters.

Redmond-Howard has his doubts about the Home Rule Bill when he quotes:

"Not only, as the founder of Sinn Fein observes, was such a Constitution inferior to the pettiest Diet in the Central Empires with each power of veto hanging over its head like the Sword of Damocles, but it was inferior to those of the Colonies who have control over their own customs and armed forces for their protection." And:

"Under the Home Rule Act, Ireland is forbidden the right of the pettiest State, runs one striking leader in *Nationality* (March 31st, 1917) the right of maintaining a territorial force. It is forbidden to make political treaties, it is forbidden to make commercial treaties, it is forbidden to make treaties with the British Colonies, it is forbidden to make navigational laws, it is forbidden to make quarantine laws, it is forbidden to mint money, it is forbidden to use any weights or measures other than what England uses, it is forbidden to appoint tax collectors, it is forbidden to collect its own taxes, it is forbidden to receive them into their own Exchequer until they have been sent to London and it is

there decided how much shall be sent back, it is forbidden to protect its own industries, it is forbidden to charge customs on any article not taxed by England, and it is forbidden to levy an export tax on Irish produce—in a word, it is forbidden to exercise every right and power and every function of a free nation."

Brendan Clifford has written some very sharp comments on the period. His preface, *The War And The League Of Nations*, sets to rights Redmond-Howard's perception of the world during his time.

IRELAND & THE LEAGUE

What I found in this part of the book was the world-view that Redmond-Howard had developed, namely the condition of Ireland vis-à-vis Ireland and the rest of the world. Maybe it was the turbulence of the 1914 War and how it affected the European nations that forced this issue. After that this interest in Europe seems to have disappeared from Irish politics, only re-appearing as part of Cold War politics with the monolithic Soviet Union on one side and the USA equally made monolithic, with the incorporation of its West European allies and the rest of the so-called free world which included the minority white-controlled apartheid South Africa and the enslaved colonies of Africa and the Far East.

The only time I read of Ireland being compared with other European countries was when I read the Comintern reports during the early 1950s in such papers as *For A Lasting Peace And A People's Democracy*. Redmond-Howard does a similar job in a Chapter 4 headed *Ireland & The Nations*. He begins with Poland and Ireland. Like a lot of people in Catholic Ireland Poland to us was another Ireland. I managed to step outside the communist world, on occasions, especially when working with Poles in London, and see an occupied country, a country sinned against continually, a Poland divided by the Nazis and the Soviet Union at one time. Oddly enough Redmond-Howard has similar sympathies despite this contradictory statement:

"Just as Ireland was once greater than England, so Poland was at one time stronger than Russia, a great kingdom that stretched almost from the Black Sea to the Baltic. In 1609, Ladislas, son of Sigmund III, of Poland, was crowned Czar of Russia, but this short-lived ascendancy was followed by a terrible revenge.

"This took place under Peter the Great (1689-1727) and Catherine II (1762-1796), with three successive spoliations of Poland, 1772, 1793 and 1795."

I'm still trying to figure out when Ireland rendered a similar situation on England. When, in English history, did an Irish king sit on an English throne?

All I can say is that Poland's leadership almost destroyed its own people with its adventures. Irish sympathy for Poland even enters the biography of Countess Markievicz. But she had authentic romantic reasons for this because of the man she married.

The *Irish Political Review* and publications from Athol Books took up and revived the position of Ireland and the rest of the world, especially Europe. They began to put out alternative ideas after examining the real reason for the two of the more recent world wars. One interesting revelation was that of the Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920 which ended in the Soviet loss of great expanses of territory to Poland. This wasn't regained until the Soviet-Nazi pact was signed. Then there was Poland's adventures into Czechoslovakia and neighbouring countries in 1938 when it still had sympathy with Hitler. And, as for today, where do we find overseas Polish troops but in Iraq?

The Poles I met in the past had a special place in their hearts for the Irish. They too seem to have their myths. What a pity when myths appear warmer and more human than the truth. Though I will say, having visited Poland during the Gomulka period, that Polish exuberance and love of life seems as near to the Irish character one as you can get.

Redmond-Howard also examines Ireland and Belgium, Ireland and France, Ireland and America, Scandinavia and Ireland, Germany and Ireland, and Austria-Hungary and Ireland, which I read with a lot of interest. He was the man on the spot at the time. He no doubt had a lot of energy and ability to research relentlessly to produce this very dense work.

THE PLAY

Finally, in this volume, there is the one-act play called: *An Irishman's Home or The Crisis*, which Redmond-Howard wrote in collaboration with Harry Carson, the son of Edward Carson, around 1914. I will be brief as there is already an able analysis of the play by Brendan Clifford in the book.

Home Rule is being forced on Ulster (a nine-county Ulster?) by England with its gunboats firing into the city of Belfast from what can only be Belfast Lough.

I don't think either men knew Belfast very well. The play gives the impression that Belfast was a small town with a main square. An area of the city is described as the Catholic quarters. Maybe they were thinking of the Lough-side town of Carrickfergus, twelve miles north of Belfast (where King William the Third of Orange landed in 1688). In that town there still exists the nameplates outlining the old Irish Quarter, Scotch Quarter and English Quarter.

The play leaps from 19th Century melodrama to an attempt at being a Shavian play (George Bernard Shaw). In many Shaw plays the butler, the binman, or the local ratcatcher suddenly start talking bourgeois twaddle as the playwright knew absolutely nothing of working-class life. Similarly in this play James the butler begins spouting empty mindless witticisms like:

"A servant's profession is like a soldier's, sir; he has no politics, he's paid not to think."

The butler in the same scene then goes on to try and prove he has no politics by saying:

"I only wish we could close the House and lock up every Parliamentarian for a year and have free Guinness and compulsory rag-time all over the country during the time."

The future Blackshirts and Blueshirts would have approved.

The butler, described in the stage directions as making an unconscious *faux pas* (by forgetting his station in life?) is talking to Sir John Redferne described as a General in command of the Northern Division in Ireland—a soldier and a gentleman hating all politics. (If you believe that you'll believe anything.) He is on the edge of resigning from the British Army. Shades of the Curragh Mutiny, as Brendan Clifford in his comment on the play suggests?

It's impossible to sort out who wrote what between Redmond-Howard and Harry Carson but the authorial voice seems to be mainly Redmond-Howard's. Anyway, both men were forecasting English gunboat play on an Irish city and, though it turned out to be the wrong city, they should still receive top marks for trying. I don't know if the play was ever performed. That could have been difficult even for those times when a large cast was possible on stage. As well as having a cast of nine leading protagonists it has servants, Orangemen, Nationalists, Volunteers, soldiers and what is described as a mob. In other words what could amount to a cast of fifty to a hundred for a one-act play that might run anything from forty-five minutes to an hour. Only a government-subsidised theatre could mount such a production. But it could still be performed as a play for radio where the unseen actors can take on many roles and voices. And, with sound effects, its performance could reveal a lot more than merely reading it could do. An interesting curiosity piece for our times.

Brendan Clifford says, in the postscript, that Redmond-Howard continued to write for the next thirty years though producing nothing of the quality that appears in this book. So, he lived through the great Sinn Fein landslide victory of 1918, the War of Independence and its aftermath and apparently made no comment on these events.

Nevertheless we can be thankful for this good patch in his life.

Six Days Of The Irish Republic, written in the immediate aftermath of the 1916 Uprising, throws new light on a major event and brings back to life people like Connolly and Pearse and those throughout Ireland who gave everything for the Republic. The three other sections of the book fleshes out the world around them.

Wilson John Haire
1st May, 2006

Report

It's Not Either / Or The Israel Lobby

Norman Finkelstein intervenes in an American Internet debate about whether America is acting in its own interests in the Middle East or whether it is being manipulated by the Israel lobby:

...giving primacy to either the Israel Lobby or to U.S. strategic interests... isn't, in my opinion, very useful.

Apart from the Israel-Palestine conflict, fundamental U.S. policy in the Middle East hasn't been affected by the Lobby. For different reasons, both U.S. and Israeli elites have always believed that the Arabs need to be kept subordinate. However, once the U.S. solidified its alliance with Israel after June 1967, it began to look at Israelis and Israelis projected themselves as experts on the "Arab mind". Accordingly, the alliance with Israel has abetted the most truculent U.S. policies, Israelis believing that "*Arabs only understand the language of force*" and every few years this or that Arab country needs to be smashed up. The spectrum of U.S. policy differences might be narrow, but in terms of impact on the real lives of real people in the Arab world these differences are probably meaningful, the Israeli influence making things worse.

The claim that Israel has become a liability for U.S. "national" interests in the Middle East misses the bigger picture. Sometimes what's most obvious escapes the eye. Israel is the only stable and secure base for projecting U.S. power in this region. Every other country the U.S. relies on might, for all anyone knows, fall out of U.S. control tomorrow. The U.S.A. discovered this to its horror in 1979, after immense investment in the Shah. On the other hand, Israel was a creation of the West; it's in every respect—culturally, politically, economically—in thrall to the West, notably the U.S. This is true not just at the level of a corrupt leadership, as

elsewhere in the Middle East but—what's most important—at the popular level. Israel's pro-American orientation exists not just among Israeli elites but also among the whole population. Come what may in Israel, it's inconceivable that this fundamental orientation will change. Combined with its overwhelming military power, this makes Israel a unique and irreplaceable American asset in the Middle East.

In this regard, it's useful to recall the rationale behind British support for Zionism. Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann once asked a British official why the British continued to support Zionism despite Arab opposition. Didn't it make more sense for them to keep Palestine but drop support for Zionism? "Although such an attitude may afford a temporary relief and may quiet Arabs for a short time", the official replied, "it will certainly not settle the question as the Arabs don't want the British in Palestine, and after having their way with the Jews, they would attack the British position, as the Moslems are doing in Mesopotamia, Egypt and India". Another British official judged retrospectively that, however much Arab resentment it provoked, British support for Zionism was prudent policy, for it established in the midst of an "uncertain Arab world a well-to-do educated, modern community, ultimately bound to be dependent on the British Empire". Were it even possible, the British had little interest in promoting real Jewish-Arab cooperation because it would inevitably lessen this dependence. Similarly, the U.S. doesn't want an Israel truly at peace with the Arabs, for such an Israel could loosen its bonds of dependence on the U.S., making it a less reliable proxy. This is one reason why the claim that Jewish elites are "pro"-Israel makes little sense. They are "pro" an Israel that is useful to the U.S. and, therefore, useful to them. What use would a Paul Wolfowitz have of an Israel living peacefully with its Arab neighbors and less willing to do the U.S.'s bidding?

The historical record strongly suggests that neither Jewish neo-conservatives in particular nor mainstream Jewish intellectuals generally have a primary allegiance to Israel in fact, any allegiance to Israel. Mainstream Jewish intellectuals became "pro"-Israel after the June 1967 war when Israel became the U.S.A.'s strategic asset in the Middle East, i.e., when it was safe and reaped benefits. To credit them with ideological conviction is, in my opinion, very naive. They're no more committed to Zionism than the neo-conservatives among them were once committed to Trotskyism; their only *ism* is opportunism. As psychological types, these newly minted

Lovers of Zion most resemble the Jewish police in the Warsaw ghetto. "Each day, to save his own skin, every Jewish policeman brought seven sacrificial lives to the extermination altar", a leader of the Resistance ruefully recalled. "There were policemen who offered their own aged parents, with the excuse that they would die soon anyhow." Jewish neo-conservatives watch over the U.S. "national" interest, which is the source of their power and privilege, and in the Middle East it happens that this "national" interest largely coincides with Israel's "national" interest. If ever these interests clashed, who can doubt that, to save their own skins, they'll do exactly what they're ordered to do, with gusto?

Unlike elsewhere in the Middle East, U.S. elite policy in the Israel-Palestine conflict would almost certainly not be the same without the Lobby. What does the U.S.A. gain from the Israeli settlements and occupation? In terms of alienating the Arab world, it's had something to lose. The Lobby probably can't muster sufficient power to jeopardize a fundamental American interest, but it can significantly raise the threshold before U.S. elites are prepared to act—i.e., order Israel out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as the U.S. finally pressured the Indonesians out of Occupied East Timor. Whereas Israel doesn't have many options if the U.S. does finally give the order to pack up, the U.S. won't do so until and unless the Israeli occupation becomes a major liability for it: on account of the Lobby the point at which "until and unless" is reached significantly differs. Without the Lobby and in the face of widespread Arab resentment, the U.S. would perhaps have ordered Israel to end the occupation by now, sparing Palestinians much suffering;

In the current "either-or" debate on whether the Lobby affects U.S. Middle East policy at the elite level, it's been lost on many of the interlocutors that a crucial dimension of this debate should be the extent to which the Lobby stifles free and open public discussion on the subject. For in terms of trying to broaden public discussion here on the Israel-Palestine conflict the Lobby makes a huge and baneful difference. Especially since U.S. elites have no entrenched interest in the Israeli occupation, the mobilization of public opinion can have a real impact on policy-making—which is why the Lobby invests so much energy in suppressing discussion.

Norman Finkelstein's most recent book is *Beyond Chutzpah: On the misuse of anti-Semitism and the abuse of history* (University of California Press). His web site is www.NormanFinkelstein.com.

Report

Europe's actions threaten more chaos for Palestinians

The following letter appeared in *The Guardian* on 9th May

On reading your report on prime minister Ehud Olmert's cabinet (May 2) I was left dumbfounded. The killing of a 41-year-old innocent woman bystander by Israeli troops in the West Bank was relegated to the last paragraph when surely it should have been in the opening paragraph. It leaves the false impression that Palestinians object to the withdrawal of Israeli settlers from the West Bank. It ignores Olmert's wider plan to annex the Jordan Valley, already well advanced. It does not explain that the settlements he proposes to strengthen, contrary to international law, are in the West Bank. It goes on to leave the equally false impression that the illegal "security wall" is to protect the minority of settlers he proposes to move from the West Bank to the Negev. In fact it is part of Israel's unilateral plan to render the international road map for a two-state solution null and void by creating a new border extending Israeli territory beyond the '67 "green line".

The combination of more than 700 checkpoints which Palestinians have to negotiate every day of their lives; the so-called security wall which cuts deep into the West Bank; the almost completed separate road systems there, one for Palestinians and one for the (illegal) Israeli settlers; the annexing of large swaths of Palestinian land by expanding existing settlements and creating new settlements, including in parts of East Jerusalem, is creating facts on the ground which will prevent the emergence of an independent, viable Palestinian state at peace with Israel. And not a single EU state is shouting stop.

Instead, we threaten Palestinians with even greater chaos, because in desperation they chose Hamas as their government. I recently returned from a visit to the West Bank as part of a cross-party group of MEPs. I am convinced that Europe, by its decision to block funding to the democratically elected Palestinian Council, and by its failure to insist that Israel also comply with democratic norms and international law, is in the process of turning a crisis there into a catastrophe.

Proinsias De Rossa MEP
Republic of Ireland, Labour Party

O'Connell's Legacy And 1916

This letter was published in *Village* magazine, 18th May 2006

It seems that for Maurice O'Connell an electoral mandate is all important when military action is taken without it, but is unimportant when military action is taken to implement an electoral victory. The Easter Rising was wrong because Pearse and Connolly had not won an election, but the War of Independence was also wrong even though it was fought to give effect to an election result which the British Government refused to heed.

He derides my description of the Ulster revolt against Home Rule: "*Jack Lane builds a picture of a massive Ulster Volunteer Army willing to die rather than submit to Rome (sic) Rule.*" (Village, 11 May)

Does he deny that an illegal army of 100,000 was raised in the Protestant parts of Ulster in 1912/13, armed with guns imported from Germany, officered by senior personnel of the British Army and supported by the Opposition Party, whose leaders said civil war was preferable to the implementation of Home Rule?

He also seems to have a problem with tenses, being unable to distinguish past from present: "*Armchair revolutionaries love shedding large quantities of blood, preferably that of civilians.*" I thought we were discussing things that had already happened. The blood shed in 1916 and 1919/21 has long since dried, never to be shed again.

When the shedding of blood began again in 1969, it was in entirely different circumstances. And I wasn't an armchair revolutionary. I helped to defend West Belfast against the Unionist/Loyalist pogrom in August 1969 and then I and other comrades-in-arms proposed that the Ulster Protestant community should be negotiated with as a distinct nationality. Some of today's most prominent revisionists denounced us then as being nothing short of traitors to the historic nation.

Inspired by your photo of the statue of his ancestor, Daniel O'Connell, in O'Connell St., Maurice eulogises on his role in Irish History. We are presented with a man who:

"Above all (he) laid the foundations for an Ireland which would be ruled, within the context of the supremacy of law and constitutionality, by the people. If I am to be convicted of revisionism, let it be, not to the Union or some Ballingarry cabbage-patch borrowed 19th century fantasy nationalism, but a super-revisionism back to his vision of an Ireland that was (incidentally) inclusive, European and global."

Perhaps it is because I was not reclining in an armchair in academia but was on the ground in Ulster, that I find the idea of Daniel O'Connell as an "inclusive" reconciler quite absurd. The profound rupture between the emerging national Ireland and the Ulster Protestant community began with O'Connell's ignorant abuse of the Presbyterian reformers who had supported Catholic Emancipation but did not follow him instantly into the Repeal Movement. In the process he created the infamous concept of "*The Black North*."

O'Connell condemned the use of force for political ends when it was directed against the British State in Ireland, but not when the British State did it around the world. But he gained Emancipation by means of an implied threat of force. He tried the same thing again in 1843 at Clontarf, but then told the people to go home when the government did not back down a second time. So his message for 1919 was that the people who had voted for independence should forget that they had voted when the Government just carried on governing. But they choose to re-enact the "Ballinacorney cabbage patch" on a larger scale. That led to an independent state that has now nearly a century of successful, and ever more successful, constitutional national development behind it—something that never before happened in Irish history.

The great lesson of the previous attempts at constitutional national developments under British Rule, personified by O'Connell and Redmond, was that they never succeeded and were killed off by force—in 1843 and 1912.

Harking back to the might have beens of Daniel O'Connell's world may be understandable in terms of personal ancestral piety for Maurice but for the rest of us it would be indulging in make-believe.

Jack Lane

Redmond Prepares For Civil War

The following letter appeared in *Village* magazine on 18th May

In the House of Commons debate on the Home Rule Bill, Redmond declared that Britain's position in Ireland was based not on democracy or popular consent, but on force. There is nothing shocking about this. It was merely a statement of the obvious.

Easter 1916 was a momentous military occasion. But Easter 1915 saw an event described in the London *Times* as the largest military display that Dublin had ever witnessed. To get a further sense of Redmond's understanding of things, consider his speech after the great Easter

1915 review of an armed muster of 30,000 National Volunteers: "*It was not until the threat of physical force was being used to prevent the final success of the peaceful constitutional movement that the Volunteers were brought into existence... The question is whether we will defend ourselves if necessary, or not... The policy of the Volunteers will be to uphold the national rights of Ireland and to make certain that force will not be allowed to rob us of victory.*"

Redmond's speech was followed by John Dillon's: "*For the first time in 120 years a great body of armed and drilled men, under nationalist leadership, was marched through the capital of Ireland. For 120 years such a thing would have been a weighty criminal offence... When an hour comes to make the supreme appeal to the National Volunteers ... when the National Volunteers may be again summoned to this capital and shall march, all armed and disciplined, and drilled, through the streets of Dublin ... it will become manifest to every politician, be he English or Irish, that Ireland free and indivisible must be conceded, or we will want to know the reason why.*"

So the Redmondite view was that, physical force having been initiated by unionism and its allies, they were themselves preparing for a resort to military methods.

A readiness to go to war in an effort to obtain sovereignty outside the Empire is one thing. Colonial intransigence has forced many countries down this road. But it is evident that Redmondism was prepared to plunge the country into further warfare for the paltry objective of a subordinate parliament, a mere county council without control of its revenues and foreign relations. Such a modest objective was hardly worth fighting and killing for. So it must be concluded that it was the Redmondites who were the most belligerent, and who had the least aversion to bloodshed in Ireland or anywhere else.

But perhaps Redmondite blood and thunder were merely ill-judged bluster, not to be taken seriously? I'm afraid not. After all, it was Redmondism which committed Ireland to the criminal slaughter of Flanders and Gallipoli on behalf of the genocidal British Empire. Alignment with a power which for the past three hundred years has been more or less constantly making war in other people's countries—for democracy, world peace, tolerance, fair play, the underdog, the opium trade—is hardly a recipe for peace. Is it any wonder Redmondism was rejected?

Pat Muldowney

NOTE: Readers wanting further information about Redmond's belligerency should turn to

HART continued

Historical Society, Meda Ryan and a few others, are a powerful faction able to browbeat 'courageous' 'intelligent' historians.

The opposite is the truth. Hart was the protégé of David FitzPatrick of UCD and of Roy Foster of Oxford (possibly the reason why the OUP published his books). When *Aubane*, Meda Ryan and others exposed his "examination" of Kilmichael as largely fictional (it included interviews with the dead), his protectors left him hanging in the wind—which repelled people who might have enjoyed witnessing *Aubane* bite the dust. Apparently the Collins book is a fine piece of work. Hart has clearly drawn lessons from his adventures in Irish 'historiography'. Don't assume your readers are morons, is one, and another is that powerful figures in academia, like Foster and FitzPatrick are not to be trusted. They guided him to rubbishing *Kilmichael*, and his enthusiasm nearly led to his destroying his reputation and career practically before they had properly started.

Derry Chambers flounders around some more. It is difficult to pin down what he has against the Collins book. His major objection to the outcome of the national liberation war is that the young men who fought it lived on into ripe old ages—and that they had to accept that England had defrauded them. He seems to be objecting to the social outcome of the war of independence, but it is hard to pin down what he wants. It is not Bolshevik socialism, but the "*ideals of the 1916 proclamation... equal treatment for all the children of a sovereign nation*", for which the Volunteers fought.

However, generally speaking, most of the Volunteers were happy with their lot in the dictionary Republic. Even those forced into economic exile took pride in their achievements, a small pastoral economy had to be built up slowly into something more substantial. This is the sort of thing Derry Chambers may be railing at, but after eight centuries of British intervention in Ireland, the great part of the south and west was only just leaving a feudal economy (without the feudal social infrastructure) when independence was won.

Seán McGouran

Pat Walsh: *The Rise And Fall Of Imperial Ireland*, s available through the Athol Books website, or can be ordered through bookshops.

PAY continued

share—this year it was 5 per cent.

The deal, the result of two years' talks, also increases entry-level pay scales by 15 per cent. This means that those starting their careers will start at Euro 21,637 on a scale that goes up to Euro 41,700.

Salary levels for officer grade will rise by 7.5 per cent, starting at Euro 34,645 and rising to Euro 51,365. The assistant manager scale also increases by 7.5 per cent. It will start at Euro 40,089 and rise to Euro 59,011.

Both the bank and the Union confirmed yesterday that the deal was independent of the national pay agreement, Sustaining Progress, which ends this month.

The benefits will be paid in addition to any pay increases agreed in the successor to Sustaining Progress. The AIB spokesman said that these would be paid "as a matter of course".

During the talks, chaired by Kevin Foley of the Labour Relations Commission (LRC), trade unionist Dave Hughes represented the IBOA and Bernard McGinty of employers' group IBEC represented AIB.

The Trade Union intends seeking similar deals from AIB's competitors. General Secretary Larry Broderick said yesterday that it had written to the other banks seeking an immediate review of their scales.

"We will be pressing claims where appropriate in the coming weeks," he said.

The deal hinged on workers agreeing to the voluntary performance-related pay system. Bonuses will be tied to targets set yearly by AIB's Board.

DON'T DO AS I DO!

AN ANALYSIS

"But the relevance of the deal from the point of view of everyone else is that both the bank and the union, the Irish Bank Officials' Association (I.B.O.A.), happily admitted yesterday that the agreement was over and above the terms of Sustaining Progress.

"And for good measure, the terms of any successor to the national deal will be paid as a matter of course to bank staff, in addition to the deal announced yesterday.

"So, it is totally independent of any national pay deal, whatsoever.

"What is significant is that the bank is an influential player in I.B.E.C., which represents employers in the multi-sided

horse trading officially called 'social partnership talks'.

"I.B.E.C. will be arguing for pay restraint when negotiations on a successor to Sustaining Progress get under way in earnest. Its reasons are sane, and probably reasonable, as they relate to costs, competitiveness and growth.

"But you could argue that the fact that one of its key members is displaying less restraint than it should actually weakens I.B.E.C.'s case somewhat. Obviously, neither the bank nor I.B.E.C. would say that.

"According to its spokesman, AIB is being generous because it wants to attract and keep good people, something that is difficult to do in the current climate.

"One way of interpreting that is to say that if your services are in demand, and you've got a union that knows how to negotiate, then you too could get a better deal than the one agreed by the social partners.

"Not only that, Son of Sustaining Progress looks set to take this into account. Along with an opening gambit of a 10 per cent pay rise over two years, the unions could also look for a local bargaining clause. This will give individual unions and branches liberty to pursue claims themselves.

"The IBOA isn't waiting. Its general secretary, Larry Broderick, said it has begun looking for similar deals from the other banks in which it has members. Not only is social partnership in its grave, the IBOA-AIB pay agreement looks like the first shovel of earth to be dumped on its coffin."

(Barry O'Halloran,
Irish Times, 22.4.2006).

Strange Support For Peter Hart!

A tabloid journal *Ireland/FROM BELOW*, subtitled *Reporting Community Struggles*, costing Euro 2, and dated November 2005, has on page 15 a review of "Peter Hart's controversial histories of 1916-23" (a box at the end names *Mick: The Real Michael Collins, The IRA at War, 1916-1923*, and *The IRA and its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork 1916-1923*. One might expect a severe scrutiny of this material from a publication called *Ireland From Below*—which lists a number of anarchist, or semi-anarchist groups and publications in its 'Directory'. The reviewer Derry Chambers is disappointed by Hart's Collins book, and reviews the book he ought to have

written.

Hart used public records, open to any one who wants to investigate Collins. This led to "official", "sanitised" biography. Instead, Chambers wants questions to be asked about Collins's fathering of "illegitimate children" and Lloyd George's use of this information in the Treaty negotiations. Chambers also wants to know whether or not Charteris was working for Collins. (This personalising of matters seems to be a ploy to isolate Collins, and present him as revelling in "political stardom" and membership of a "revolutionary elite", but Collins was not quite 32 years old when he died.) The reviewer mentions the fact that all four officers accompanying Collins at Béal na Bláth were former members of the British Army, hardly an unusual matter in Ireland post-Great War. He effectively accuses Emmett Dalton of being Collins's assassin, but brings forward absolutely no evidence to make the claim credible.

The review is schizoid: he sentimentalises the Volunteers at length, quoting Seán Ó Faolain's autobiography *Vive Moi*, but describes Hart's *The I. R. A. and its Enemies: Violence And Community In Cork, 1916-1923* as "intelligent" and "courageous". This apparently examined the "myths surrounding the Kilmichael ambush". Derry Chambers mentions some graffiti about the ambush—"send back the empties, we'll fill them again" (this could mean anything). Collins apparently "laughed" at this, along with the participants after the event "in celebration after Kilmichael", which leads one to ask: was he capable of bi-location? Collins ran his part of the war, largely supply and intelligence, from Dublin.

Hart also "exposed the attempted ethnic cleansing of Protestants from Dunmanway", that 'attempted' is a weasel word. He seems not to be prepared to write that the person who put a stop to the harassment of the Protestant people of west Cork was the commander at Kilmichael, Tom Barry.

There is more weasel language; Hart may be, in the *Mick: The Real Michael Collins*, covering himself against attack from the "local establishment historians", who raised a hue and cry about his *Violence...In Cork* book. Hart's books are published by the OUP (Oxford University Press) and Macmillan; he is a member of the 'establishment'—in two continents. He is an Adjunct Professor at Memorial University, Newfoundland. The tortured phrase is an attempt to pretend that Aubane

continued on page 29

PAY continued

associated issues. These include the duration of any new agreement, pension reform, and the Unions' demand for a local bargaining clause that would allow them to pursue 'top up' pay rises from highly-profitable employers.

A consensus has already emerged that a new national partnership programme, setting out broad social and economic objectives, should run for 10 years.

Employers want the pay element to cover a three-year period and they are supported in this by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern: *"To be going through this process in any shorter period of time would be just unnecessarily painful for everybody involved"*, the Taoiseach stated.

Union leaders, however, have expressed a preference for a shorter pay deal of perhaps two years, or even just a year's duration.

Linked to this is the thorny question of whether any new deal should include a local bargaining element, which is a priority objective of private-sector unions.

They argue that it is wrong that employees in hugely-profitable sectors, such as banking, must accept modest pay increases tailored to suit the needs of hard-pressed manufacturing companies.

IBEC is strongly opposed to such a provision, however, insisting that unions can have local bargaining or a national agreement, but not both.

Union sources have indicated that, in the absence of a local bargaining clause, there is no chance of them agreeing a deal longer than 12 months.

The two sides concur on the need for pension reform, but disagree over how it is to be achieved.

ICTU favours mandatory occupational pensions, but this is opposed by IBEC on cost grounds. It is seeking the introduction of a tax credit to encourage those on lower incomes to contribute to pensions.

The parties hope that the talks will be concluded before the Biennial Conference of *Impact*, the State's biggest public sector union, which opens in Killarney on 24th May 2006.

Impact General Secretary, Peter McLoone, is a key figure in the talks in his role as current ICTU President, while both the Taoiseach and ICTU General Secretary, David Begg, are also due to address the Impact Conference.

LABOUR STANDARDS: DOCUMENTATION

Employers could be imprisoned for failing to maintain employee records under the draft terms of the new social partnership agreement.

In a significant shake-up of labour laws, the burden of proof in cases of non-compliance with labour laws would shift to employers.

The failure of companies to maintain appropriate statutory employee records would become an indictable offence punishable by fines and/or imprisonment.

The new measure underlines the seriousness of the transgression and would prevent a repeat of the Gama dispute involving Turkish construction workers, according to sources close to the talks.

"Every employer must keep records on employees," said one source.

"That includes details of pay and conditions of employment, and other information that is necessary so that adequate inspections can be carried out. This will expressly be provided for in the legislation.

"The Gama case could not arise again because the implications would be quite horrific in terms of fines."

Fines for failing to comply with employee records have not yet been agreed but are expected to run to a six-figure sum.

Meanwhile, the agreement will also try to prevent a repeat of the Irish Ferries dispute—where an employer tries to replace a workforce with cheaper labour. This will be addressed by a new panel to investigate complaints, and the intervention of the Labour Court.

In such cases, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment will also be able to penalise companies by withdrawing a state-funded rebate for statutory redundancy payments from employers. This would constitute a substantial penalty as the rebate accounts for 60 per cent of the redundancy payment.

Companies in breach of regulations could be required to pay higher compensation for unfair dismissal amounting to up to five years' salary to replaced employees.

However, employer sources stressed the new measures only applied to compulsory collective redundancies for the purpose of replacing a workforce with workers doing the same job.

The new legislation would not apply to the employment of agency workers on a temporary basis for business needs, or to the use of outsourced or contracted labour. Employers have been concerned that new

regulations would thwart their flexibility to restructure through redundancies. Multinationals in particular fear any restrictions in their ability to expand and scale back human resources based on cyclical changes.

"This legislation will apply only in a very exceptional set of circumstances, which is a collective redundancy situation," said one source representing employers in the social partnership talks.

As stated above, the draft terms agreed on displacement and the enforcement of labour standards will only be fully agreed when the full social partnership agreement is finalised.

The new pay deal will stick very close to anticipated inflation rates, currently standing at 3.8%, it will be staggered and renegotiated every 18 months to two years.

That would allow the Government's preference for an unprecedented 10-year agreement to be finalised—a move which it is hoped would deliver industrial relations stability.

THE BANKS AND IBEC

Whether IBEC likes it or not, individual employers have been known to pay over the national pay rise when it suited them, despite their negotiating body insisting on pay restraint.

A precedent already exists to that effect, and it will be difficult to argue against.

The Unions are insisting that provision should be made for companies who can well afford to pay over the odds.

The most glaring example of course is the recent Allied Irish Bank agreement with the bank workers' union, the Irish Bank Officials' Association.

The State's biggest bank has agreed a pay deal with its workers that steps entirely outside the terms of the national agreement.

Staff in the Republic's biggest bank have voted to accept a generous pay deal that will add at least 2.5 per cent to their wage packets, and a bonus scheme that will increase them by a further 4 per cent on average, but which offers a maximum of over 7 per cent. Pay scales within the bank have also been boosted.

AIB and the Irish Bank Officials' Association (IBOA) have agreed a deal that will see staff get a 2.5 per cent rise in pensionable pay across the board, and give them the option of joining a generous bonus scheme.

The general pay rise will be backdated to the first of this month, and the bonus scheme will mean average extra payments of 4 per cent. Staff already get a profit

continued on page 30



Pay Talks

The pay aspect of the Social Partnership talks got under way on 2nd May 2006—more than six months after they were first scheduled to start. The current phase of negotiations are the longest Partnership talks in the near 20 years of the process.

Talks were originally scheduled to begin last November in order to have a new social partnership deal in place before the current agreement—*Sustaining Progress*—expired at the end of last year. However, the onset of the Irish Ferries scandal, in which the company sought to displace Irish workers with cheaper agency crews from abroad, sparked the largest partnership crisis in almost 20 years of agreements.

The Irish Ferries dispute saw the largest Trade Union marches in recent history as SIPTU and then the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) voted to withdraw from talks. Finally, after months of intense negotiations, the Government's top industrial relations troubleshooting body, the National Implementation Body, brokered a deal allowing social partnership talks to recommence.

However, before agreeing to re-enter talks on 8th February 2006, Unions obtained a Government commitment that the issues at the heart of the Irish Ferries scandal—jobs displacement and the protection of workers' rights—would be discussed before core elements such as a pay deal be finalised.

Those discussions proved far more difficult than anticipated, as employers resisted measures that would increase their administrative burden and increase costs.

After almost three months of tough discussions, the ICTU executive decided enough progress had been made on

employment rights to allow the mainstream talks proceed.

Although none of the measures will be copper-fastened until an overall final agreement is concluded, Unions have guarantees of a range of improvements.

Those include a far stronger labour inspectorate with the number of labour inspectors to be trebled to 90 personnel and a new statutory body, the Office of the Director for Employment Rights Compliance, to police employment legislation.

In addition there will be a dramatic increase in penalties for those convicted of breaching labour laws and new legislation to deter employers from making workers redundant to replace them with cheaper labour.

LOCAL BARGAINING

The ICTU claim the conditions for a "generous" wage settlement have never been better.

It is seeking compensation for inflation of about 3.5% as well as being rewarded

for productivity improvements in the region of 2.5% per year.

The Unions are seeking to negotiate a pay deal that is skewed in favour of those on low pay and are trying to ensure low paid workers receive a larger-than-average pay increase.

This has been rejected by the Employers' body, IBEC, which says the main focus must be on restoring lost competitiveness.

IBEC claim that the country's economic competitiveness had been considerably eroded in recent times.

In manufacturing, 30,000 jobs have been lost in the past four years, while there had been a 20% increase in manufacturing costs, IBEC said.

"Any increase in pay will have to be kept low against this backdrop", an IBEC spokesperson stated.

In a pre-talks statement, ICTU Economic Adviser, Paul Sweeney, said Irish business had "never had it so good".

"Many firms are enjoying double-digit profit levels, while businesses here pay far less tax and social contributions than their European counterparts. They can afford a generous wage settlement," he said.

This contrasts with the view put forward by IBEC in a paper presented at the beginning of partnership negotiations in February.

It said the deterioration in Ireland's cost competitiveness had undermined the ability of many companies to compete in international markets.

Mirroring Mr. Sweeney's language, IBEC also claimed that, with unemployment at just over four per cent, Irish workers had "never had it so good".

As well as wage increases, significant disagreement exists over a range of

continued on page 31

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