

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

November 2006

Vol.21, No.11 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.20 No.11 ISSN 954-5891

## 'Without Prejudice' . . .

### Dr. Paisley And St. Andrew's

If there is a St. Andrew's Agreement, nobody knows what it is. Except perhaps the Democratic Unionist Party.

A month ago it appeared that Paisley was being cornered. But he escaped from the corner by refusing to play. He said he had been given 'Get Out Of The Corner' cards by Blair, which entitled him not to play.

An Agreement of sorts was made. The DUP claimed that this Agreement broke the Good Friday Agreement and superseded it. There is substance to its claim.

The Dublin Government conceded the DUP claim in effect by saying that the new Agreement should be put to referendum. The British Government wants to fudge the matter and does not want a referendum. And the organ of the British Government in the Republic, the *Irish Times*, is therefore against a referendum. And there are indications that the Taoiseach, despite his spectacular victory over the *Irish Times* and its followers over the means by which he financed his separation from his wife, appears to have decided to submit to the *Irish Times* on the issue of a referendum.

The position of the DUP as we write is that it accepts the St. Andrew's Agreement, as an essential alteration to the Good Friday Agreement, but is not obliged to implement it because of private agreements it has made with Blair.

If it rejected the St. Andrew's Agreement, the alternative of a kind of joint authority by London and Dublin would be put into operation. It does not want that. But neither does it want to sit in government with Sinn Fein. So it agrees to what was agreed at St. Andrew's, but insists that there is a set of further conditions to be met before the St. Andrew's Agreement becomes implementable.

The probability is that Blair did make side-agreements with Paisley which enable him to agree and disagree simultaneously. It is what Blair did with Trimble in 1998.

We did not expect the GFA to work, because 'the Northern Ireland state' is not a viable

*continued on page 2*

## The Fourth Estate

or

### The Dung Beetle ?

Friday the 13th (of October) was unlucky for some. It was the day of the report that saw Fianna Fail soar in the polls after all that had been thrown at it by the *Irish Times* and its parrots in the Dail over Bertie's gifts/loans/"payments". The chief parrot, Mr. Rabbitte, took the greatest fall.

Geraldine Kennedy wailed editorially:

"A poor reflection of ourselves: What sort of people are we? We know now. The findings of the latest Irish Times/TNSmrb opinion poll show that two out of every three voters believe that Bertie Ahern was wrong to accept €50,000 from his friends while he was minister for finance in 1993. He was also wrong to accept £8,000 sterling from the Manchester function in 1994.

"And yet, the Taoiseach, Mr Ahern, has increased his satisfaction rating by one percentage point to 53 per cent, the highest of all party leaders. More dramatically, Fianna Fáil support has received a huge boost. It is up eight percentage points since the last Irish Times poll in May. Support for Fianna Fáil has reached its highest level - 39 per cent - since the last general election."

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## UCC Medical School v. The 'Gentle Black-and-Tans'

In the production notes for the *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* the film's principal star Cillian Murphy says of the leading character played by him:

"Damien is a medical student at University College Cork ... The medical faculty in UCC was very political and largely Republican".

An insight into the manner in which that school had in fact functioned during

the War of Independence as a unit of the IRA in its own right can be found in the unpublished memoirs of Jacob Lentin (1904-1988). A medical doctor in England since 1926, by the time that an 80 year old Lentin sat down to write his memoirs he had also come to be both thoroughly and narrowly British in his general outlook on life. Notwithstanding his expression of such insular prejudices, Lentin yet remained refreshingly honest in his recall of how changing circumstances had successively unfolded during the course of his childhood and youth in Ireland:

"At the time I was born in Limerick

(in January 1904), there were anti-Semitic riots, led by Father Creagh ... It was only police protection that saved the mob from breaking into the house and thus saving my life ... At that time there were two to three hundred Jewish souls in Limerick, most left on account of the riots, and when I was growing up there were only about ten Jewish families left ... (In 1915) I was refused admission to the Christian Brothers School because I was Jewish, although my two elder brothers had gone there already".

If the gradual erosion of anti-Semitism in Limerick during the decade after 1904 had allowed for the free education by the

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

Recalibrating And Deconstructing Dan Breen

Constitutional entity. Nothing dependent on it can work. But we thought it might have been strung out for longer if the two real Governments had a will to manage the affair from the outside. This would have required the British Government to keep pressure on the Unionists to go through the motions of working the Agreement. No pressure was required on the other side, the SDLP being all too eager to go through the motions, and in fact to behave as if shadow was substance.

But Whitehall did not keep up the pressure on Trimble after forcing him to assent to the Agreement. In fact Blair gave him a letter which superseded the Agreement in effect, for the purpose of getting the Unionist electorate to vote for the Agreement as modified by that letter. This set the pattern for the subversion of the Agreement by Trimble under a flimsy pretext of implementing it. And finally the Agreement was done away with by Dr. Reid, who revoked the devolved Government and the Assembly under cover of allegations against Sinn Fein that were never made good in the form of actual convictions, and that the Government now wants to forget.

This conduct by Whitehall was not met with counter-pressure from Dublin. In fact Dublin played along with Whitehall in all of this, bending over backwards to 'Save Dave' from Paisley. The notion that Trimble wanted to implement the Agreement, but was inhibited by fear that Paisley would profit if he did so, could only be held by people who had never taken enough interest in Ulster Unionism

to have any insight into its dynamics.

From 1937 to 1998 the Constitution of the Free State asserted sovereignty over the whole of Ireland. (The 26 Counties was generally referred to as the Free State by Northern Catholics. Unionists seemed to like the name it gave itself in 1937—*Eire*—as indicating another place. Some Unionists also seemed to like calling it the Republic, as indicating it was a Fenian place apart, which had nothing to do with them. The 1949 declaration by the Fine Gael-led Coalition, that the Free State was a Republic, did not change the name it was given by the 1937 Constitution, so it remains *Eire*, even though that name fell out of general use and only appeared on stamps and suchlike, though the Irish Government appears to be promoting the name *Eire-Ireland* in Europe.)

In 1998 the sovereignty claim of the 1937 Constitution was repealed by the referendum which sanctioned the Good Friday Agreement.

It would have been consistent with the repeal of the sovereignty claim if Dublin had begun to act in the interest of the Nationalist minority in the North, and had confined itself to exerting counter-pressure against the British Government in support of implementation of the Agreement as signed. And it would have been consistent with the old sovereignty claim if it had sought to act impartially between both communities in the North. But its conduct has been almost the reverse of this. For most of the 60 years of the old Articles 2 & 3 Dublin was exclusively concerned

with its national minority in the North, even though asserting that the Unionist community was also part of the nation. But, after relinquishing its claim on the Unionists in 1998, it began bending over backwards in a futile attempt to conciliate them, and even to understand them.

But there has been no conciliation, no appeasement, because there has been no understanding.

Despite the implication of national difference in the terms of the GFA, the 'two nations theory'—which is a blatant fact rather than a theory—continues to be denied. And it has recently been denied in hysterical terms by Senator Mansergh—adviser to Taoiseachs—in letters to the Belfast *Irish News* which we reprinted last month. Does he suppose that, in the close atmosphere of Belfast, what he writes in the Nationalist paper remains unknown to Unionists.

We cannot imagine what the Senator hoped to achieve by active engagement with internal politics in the North. Perhaps, in pouncing on Liam O Comain, he thought he could crush dissident Republican opinion about the GFA in the North. And perhaps, by engaging with Brendan Clifford, he hoped to frighten O Comain by pointing out the company he was in on certain matters. That shows how little he was attuned to the internal life that developed within the bizarre Constitutional entity called Northern Ireland, where everybody already knows everything, and anything that is said by anybody is noticed by everybody, and whose public opinion is not manipulable—Well, Unionist opinion was manipulated in 1998 by Blair and his egregious spiv, Tom Kelly. But that was soon put to rights.

Northern Ireland is No Man's Land. It has never formed part of the political life of the state which holds it. It was held firmly for that state until those who held it got out of hand in 1969, provoking a defensive insurrection by the Catholics which led to the abolition of Stormont in 1972. The Free State claimed sovereignty over it, but backed away from any action in support of that claim in 1970, having inflamed the situation by an irresponsible speech by the Taoiseach in 1969. It again toyed with intervention in 1972, during the week following Bloody Sunday, but then backed away for good, though maintaining the claim until 1998.

Senator Mansergh, in his irresponsible letters to the *Irish News*, dates the founding of a democratic State in the 26 Counties to 1922, thus placing a massive question mark over the history of his own party which was formed out of a rejection of the Treaty as undemocratic. And he denies to the Northern Catholic community the right to declare war on its own behalf, appearing to arrogate that right to the Free State.

But the Free State gave up that right in substance in 1970, and in form in 1998.

The Northern Catholic community has always (since Northern Ireland was concocted) been excluded from the political life of the State which holds it. And that State, as if in recognition of that fact, refrained from conscripting it for war in 1939. The 'Northern Ireland state', insofar as it was ever a state, ceased to be so in 1972.

Where then does the right to declare war with regard to the condition of the Northern Catholic community reside, if not with itself?

We are not suggesting that the Northern Catholics should now return to war. We did not encourage that war in 1970, when many who now indulge in hysterical denunciations of it did. But it cannot be that a community which, in the democratic era, is excluded from the political life of the state is thereby excluded from all right. If we take the ideologist of the Glorious Revolution in earnest, that community resumes its natural right to act for itself. And you really cannot have July 12th without John Locke—the bathwater without the baby.

We took Locke's view of the matter as being appropriate to the Northern Ireland situation back in the seventies (when it was invoked by Paisley and rejected by Enoch Powell) and applied it to both communities. It is time the 26 Co. State summoned up the moral and intellectual backbone to apply it to the Provo war. It would then be able to meet Whitehall on its own ground.

\*

An instance of the profound ignorance of the Dublin establishment regarding Northern Ireland has recently come to our notice, in the form of a book by Professor David Fitzpatrick, who runs a revisionist factory in Trinity College. His book, *The Two Irelands 1912 : 1939* was published by the Oxford University Press a few years ago. It sets out a scheme of history in which 20th century Ireland was the site of two revolutions, which led to the formation of two states, both states fighting civil wars in the course of consolidating themselves:

"While governments in each state asserted their power with considerable effect, their subjects did not in general secure the civil liberties promised by the two revolutionary movements. Furthermore the political alignments cemented in the two civil wars continued to dominate political debate, restricting the opportunity for social and economic reform. Freedom had been subordinated to a pursuit and defence of power" (Preface).

The Unionist opposition to Imperial Home Rule in 1912-14 might be described as a rebellion. But a revolution? It was a

## US military spending accounts for half the world's total

*World military expenditure in 2005 is estimated to have reached \$1.12 trillion.*

This is according to the *Armament, Disarmament And International Security 2006 Yearbook*, issued by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute on June 12th.

The eighth chapter of the book focuses on military spending. It says that the figure corresponds to 2.5 per cent of world GDP or an average spending of US\$173 per capita. World military expenditure in 2005 presents a real increase of 3.4 per cent since 2004, and of 34 per cent over the 10 year period from 1996 to 2005. The USA, responsible for about 80 per cent of the increase in 2005, is the principal determinant of the current world trend, and its military expenditure now accounts for almost half of the world's total.

According to the SIPRI press release, the process of concentration of military expenditure continued in 2005 with a decreasing number of countries responsible for a growing proportion of spending: the 15 countries with the highest expenditure now account for 84 per cent of the total. The USA is responsible for 48 per cent of the world total, trailed by the UK, France, Japan and China with 4 to 5 per cent each. The rapid increase in the USA's military spending is to a large extent attributable to the costly ongoing military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

... Meanwhile, military research and development spending is also increasing. For example, in the 2007 budget, research and development expenditure will reach reaches US\$7.3 billion.

... Georgia's military spending has increased by 143 per cent, while Azerbaijan and Armenia have increased theirs by 51 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. It's estimated that Georgia's rapid increase in military spending relates to the containment of the separatist tendency in Abuhazi and South Osetia.

Some countries, such as Russia, which has spent a lot of money on research and new weapons in recent years, have increased their military spending to establish their status and power in the world. Japan also registers a considerable amount of military spending; its budget in 2006 is estimated to be US\$1.2 billion.

People's Daily Online

[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/20/print20060620\\_275620.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/20/print20060620_275620.html)

conservative rebellion against a Parliamentary reform, and in support of the *status quo*.

Its opposition to the independence mandated by the 1918 Election was not even a rebellion—not in Professor Fitzpatrick's scheme of things. It might be described as a rebellion against the Irish democracy, but Fitzpatrick does not recognise the 1918 Election as establishing any legitimate authority in Irish affairs. He recognises the British state as having legitimate authority to govern Ireland despite the electoral mandate for the establishment of independent government in Ireland. So did the Ulster Unionists. They acted against the will of Parliament in 1912-14. But they acted with the will of the British Parliament in 1919-21, in its efforts to suppress the Irish democracy as expressed in the elected Irish Dail. And they did not in 1921 demand a wee Government for themselves. It was given to them without being asked for.

In 1912-14 they had made arrangements to set up their own Provisional Government if the Home Rule Bill was enacted and an attempt was made to implement it. But Home Rule fell by the wayside when war was declared on Germany. The Unionist Opposition agreed to the formal enactment of the Home Rule

Bill to help with recruiting in Nationalist Ireland on the condition that it would be suspended until after the War, and even then would not be implemented without alteration.

In 1915 the Unionists became part of the Government, and they were the dominant party in the Coalition formed in 1916. And the *Government* set about suppressing the 1919 Dail with the support of the Ulster Unionists. And, while the Ulster Unionists voted against the Bill which established a Northern Ireland Government, they agreed to operate it once the scheme was enacted.

So where does Professor Fitzpatrick get his Northern Ireland revolution? There wasn't even a rebellion. There was only Loyalty.

And the scheme of two civil wars is as insubstantial as the scheme of two revolutions. In the South Sinn Fein was divided and made to fight against itself by the threat that, if it did not agree to operate a Government under the authority of the Crown, there would be a comprehensive British re-conquest by means of "*immediate and terrible war*".

Call that a civil war if you will, even though both sides wanted the same thing—an independent republic. But there was no corresponding war within Unionism. In

the North there was only suppression of the Army which sought to give effect to the 1918 electoral mandate.

In the North there was no revolution, no civil war within the revolution, and no state except the one that had always been there. It would be strange therefore if 'civil war political debate' had prevented social and economic reform. But it didn't.

Northern Ireland was excluded from the political life of the British state though remaining within it. Its 'political debate' was pretty dreadful. But social and political reform did not depend on political debate within the North. It came to the North as the outcome of the political debate in the rest of the state.

That indicates how political debate in Northern Ireland was doomed to futility. Nothing depended on it. The *measures* of social reform came to it as a product of the state from whose politics it was excluded. It was excluded from the politics that produced the measures, and that would undoubtedly have given rise to a substantial body of cross-community political unity if it had been included.

And it was even worse than that. Jack Beattie was elected to Westminster in 1945 to take part in the great social reform as a member of the Labour Party. The Labour Party refused to admit him. But he voted with Labour against the Tories on all those measures, while the Ulster Unionists voted against.

Beattie was also a Stormont MP. And he looked forward to fighting the Unionists there on the same measures. But what happened was that the Unionists re-enacted at Stormont as a matter of course all the social reforms which they had opposed at Westminster.

And that is how it always was in Northern Ireland. It was an integral part of the British state for social reform, and many other purposes. And then it had its own redundant politics, which could never be anything but a communal squabble within which no development was possible.

And the strange thing is that Professor David Fitzpatrick does not seem to have an inkling of the real situation!

\*

Brian Feeney, formerly of the SDLP and latterly an independent Nationalist commentator in the *Irish News*, recently referred back to the campaign to get the North included in the party politics of the state which governs it (*Politics Here Remain Firmly Stuck In Allegiance*, 27.9.06 *Irish News*). He ridiculed the idea that it would have made much difference if the 6 Counties had been governed within the politics of the state. What the people were concerned about was *allegiance*, and they would not have been diverted from this by the politics of Labour v Tory to decide the governing of the state.

But, when that campaign was live, the SDLP did not act as if it thought its success would make no difference. It was hysterically opposed, and it obviously felt that a large body of Catholic opinion would immediately have availed of the opportunity to engage in the politics of the state by way of the Labour Party—Old Labour, as it was then.

"*Allegiance*" politics persisted for three generations because nothing else was possible. But the Jack Beattie affair showed that Catholics and Protestants would have taken part together in the party-politics of the state if they had not been structurally excluded.

The attitude of Sinn Fein was quite different from that of the SDLP. It was not provincialist in principle, as the SDLP was. Its ideal was to bring the North within the political life of the Irish state, and it did not cut off its activity at the Border. The SDLP was fixated on

Northern Ireland politics, which in themselves are necessarily futile.

The SDLP would certainly have gone into decline—or would never have existed—if the 6 Counties had not been excluded from the political life of the state. It warded off that danger. But it went into decline anyway—making way for the party which is actively attempting to bring the 6 Counties within the political life of the other state.

Democracy has to do with states—not about striking moral attitudes in a political vacuum. Our concern was to democratise the North. We were indifferent about which state it was done in.

"*Allegiance*" politics in No Man's Land, outside the political life of both states, is what the SDLP was about. And it is what Dr. Paisley is about. And it must be admitted that he is doing it rather better than the SDLP did.

## Agreement At St. Andrew's "Daft", "crazy" and "unworkable" ?

The Agreement at St Andrew's presented by the British and Irish Governments set out the core changes and steps to be taken to restore the political institutions in Northern Ireland. The core issues are: support by Sinn Fein for policing, and proposed accountability measures in the Executive, Assembly, North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and British-Irish Council (BIC) to meet the concerns of the DUP.

The changes to the Good Friday Agreement are set out within 5 Annexes and are summarized at the end of this article.

### GENERAL COMMENTARY

**Stability / External Pressure:** Northern Irish communal based politics is dysfunctional in respect of the disciplines of governing. With the possible exception of Sinn Fein (evolving as a potential junior party of Government in the Republic of Ireland), the Northern Ireland parties cannot evolve as genuine governmental parties. They are there to represent 'their side'. As such the Executive, if formed, will require almost constant external pressure from the two Governments (and perhaps the US, the EU and others). It will not be a stable arrangement, and will require the regular investment of significant political capital by British and Irish governing parties to '*keep the show on the road*'.

The leaders of the two parties that will run Northern Ireland still have not met, shaken hands, collaborated in any way or agreed on any measure (other than

unilaterally with the Government).

**Shared Future:** The Shared Future document (this is the document which declared that "*separate but equal is no longer sustainable*") agreed by the British Government in March 2005 will almost certainly be a dead letter. It can be assumed that a sectarian carve up of resources will become the norm again. The effective state funding of communal / sectarian politics will also aggravate tension in the society—with up to 500 people directly paid to represent the communal interest.

### ANNEX A ISSUES

**Accountability:** The accountability measures agreed are identical to those published in the earlier 'Comprehensive Agreement' of December 2004. These, in essence, seek to address DUP concerns on the autonomy of Executive Ministers and the inability of the Assembly or the Executive to countermand Ministerial decisions within their own 'fiefdom'. The concern is that the language in the Agreement is from the British school of '*creative ambiguity*' and is capable of a range of interpretations. It may be possible for the British legislation of the Ministerial Code to clarify this issue, but legislating for the Code will represent a difficult tightrope to walk.

In essence, the DUP trenchantly asserts that the changes to have curbed the ability of (Sinn Fein) Ministers to take autonomous Ministerial decisions. Sinn Fein consider that Ministerial autonomy remains largely intact. Both cannot be

simultaneously correct.

At minimum, it can be anticipated that the Programme for Government, which does require cross-community consent, will be haggled over in minute detail and will provide ample opportunity to 'deadlock' the institutions.

Sean Farren of the SDLP has recently described the changes proposed by the DUP as "*daft*" "*crazy*" and "*unworkable*"—and capable of bringing about gridlock in the institutions.

**Efficiency Panel & the Review of Public Administration:** One real democratic gain under Direct Rule has been the provision for a new '*grown up*' framework for local Government. This was to have provided additional and strategic Council powers to 7 new 'super Councils' (replacing the current, toothless, 26 Councils), within a statutory 'political fairness' framework. The Efficiency Review Panel will almost certainly seek to increase the number of Councils, undermining their scale and delivery capacity and returning to the diseconomies of the current system. The crude motivation is the retention of the parties' councillor base. The loss of the RPA (although not a perfect reform) will be a significant price. The RPA proposals could have evolved into a useful framework within which to develop progressive local political activity.

**Community designations:** Within the Assembly, the sectarian designations system (and a voting mechanism which formally discriminates against any nascent 'third strand') remains wholly intact, stimulating a 'two tribes' outlook. With the *de facto* state funding of communal based politics, it can be taken for granted that community polarization—which has markedly increased since the 1994 ceasefires—will continue and possibly accelerate. Sectarian geography is likely to harden further.

#### ANNEX B ISSUES

**Anti Poverty and social exclusion Strategy:** It is unclear why the publication of this Strategy should be a British Government function. Such a strategy was published by Mo Mowlam in 1997 and has made little or no impact. The local Northern Ireland parties may be ill-suited to produce such a strategy, but it ought to be their job to do so.

**Bill of Rights Forum:** It should be noted that Northern Ireland has already had 6 years of consultation on the Bill of Rights. This is within the dispensation of the British Government to deliver, although it is probably not minded to legislate on the matter—and wedded to the unwritten British Constitution. A Forum is likely to be a talking shop unless it is given a very tight remit and short time limit to produce its views.

#### ANNEX C ISSUES

**Endorsement:** There is contention about the means by which these new provisions are electorally endorsed. The DUP require an election to move into a 'mandatory' government—as well as to 'clean out' the communal Protestant stable. Taoiseach Ahern may like a referendum in the South for purely electoral gain. With the Southern election likely by May 2007, a referendum following March would allow Fianna Fail to claim to have 'sorted' the North. The Republic's Attorney General will give advice on the Constitutional necessity of the Referendum, should matters proceed.

#### ANNEX D ISSUES

**Financial Package:** The potential financial package is predicted on the "*process of necessary reform*". This is code for the particularly brutal and aggressive programme of privatization led by the Strategic Investment Board which has resulted from the **Reinvestment and Reform Initiative**—agreed by all parties in the last functioning Executive, probably without realising what they were unleashing. The Chancellor will meet the Northern Ireland parties in early November and again stress that the package will come as an ideologically dogmatic form of extremist Thatcherism—or not at all.

**Rate Capping:** The cap on rates proposed, although argued on the basis of people who have a valuable capital asset (a big house in a well off area, for instance) will disproportionately benefit the richest in society—probably focused on the most valuable 1-2% of homes. Although it will be hard to resist a "*Parity with Great Britain*" argument, this will not be a progressive step, from a democratic socialist perspective. As few people fully understand the mechanics, the measure will be of electoral benefit to the DUP—that '*Paisley fixed the rates for us*'.

#### ANNEX E ISSUES

**Policing and Security:** There is no agreement on a date for the devolution of policing and justice, which will represent a significant hurdle for Republicans. There are many reservations about the British statement on the handover, to MI5, of national security in Northern Ireland. Concern will remain about the degree to which British security services holding a lead role in intelligence, through MI5, could act to undermine a fragile local democracy. Since the Good Friday Agreement, the experience of those who have had relatives murdered by the security forces—through the Stevens, Corey and Barron reports, as well as those who have sought redress through the Police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan, have all failed to get adequate information from British security services. The involvement

of MI5 at the "*unique interface in Northern Ireland between national security and serious/organized crime*" would, most likely, widen the prospect for undermining confidence in locally accountable policing.

#### SIDE DEAL ISSUES

**Academic Selection:** The side deal to remove the ban on academic selection, to keep the DUP onside, represents a shoddy piece of vandalism of many years of painstaking educational reform work. As the divisions on academic selection within the main parties reflect communal patterns, with Unionists advocating retention of selection (despite Protestant working class areas suffering most under the current selective, and socially segregated system) and Nationalists advocating change—this provides for effective deadlock on a core educational issue.

#### FINAL COMMENTS

The St Andrew's process may represent the last throw of the dice for '*Northern Ireland-ism*'. No major British or Irish Party has, to date, been willing to face the basic, dysfunctional nature of communal/sectarian based politics. Unless Sinn Fein make a breakthrough within the Republic's 2007 election, politics in Northern Ireland will remain disconnected from the business of Government of either of the two sovereign states who, effectively, sponsor the process. The continued indulgence by both Governments of dysfunctional politics indicates that no main political party in Britain or Ireland has been able to stand out from the crowd and put communal politics on short notice. For the moment, developing an inter-governmental alternative to '*Northern Ireland-ism*' is being trumped by 'arms length'

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#### SUMMARY OF MAIN PROVISIONS

##### ANNEX A Practical changes to the operation of the Institutions

###### Strand 1

- \* Provision of a Statutory Ministerial Code:
- \* New system of Assembly Referrals for Executive Review
- \* Amendments to the Pledge of Office
- \* New provisions on appointment of Ministers in the Executive
- \* Functions of the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (transferring functions of OFMDFM)
- \* Committee of the Centre: to be put on statutory basis
- \* Institutional Review Committee to be formed
- \* Efficiency Review Panel, to be appointed by OFMDFM
- \* Repeal of Northern Ireland Act 2000 (ie the 'Mandelson Act')

- \* Community Designation: restricting MLAs from changing designation, in the manner previous undertaken, chameleon like, by the Women's Coalition.

### Strand 2 and 3

- \* New Executive role in preparation for North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and British Irish Council (BIC) meetings
- \* Circulation of NSMC and BIC decision papers to Executive, and potential provision for Executive discussion (based on interpretation of accountability measures) on same.
- \* Statutory obligation on Ministers (or nominees) attendance at NSMC and BIC meetings
- \* Review Group on a) Efficiency of implementation bodies and b) the case for additional bodies
- \* Annual Assembly / Oireachtas scrutiny of implementation bodies
- \* Aspiration for a North South Parliamentary Forum
- \* Provision for Independent (civic society) Consultative Forum
- \* Suggestion by 2 Governments to facilitate a standing secretariat for the British/Irish Council
- \* East West Inter Parliamentary Framework

### ANNEX B Human Rights, Equality, Victims and Other Issues

- \* British Government to publish an Anti Poverty and Social Exclusion Strategy
- \* British Government to legislate for a Victims Commissioner for NI
- \* Establish a Forum on a Bill of Rights by December 2006
- \* Preparation of a Single Equality Bill for the incoming Executive
- \* British Government to legislate for an Irish Language Act
- \* Aspiration to enhance Ulster Scots language
- \* British Consultation with parties on the Terms of Reference for Parades Review
- \* British guidance for employers to reduce barriers to employment & re-integration of prisoners
- \* 50/50% police recruitment to lapse when the Patten target of 30% Catholics in PSNI is met
- \* Additional powers for the Human Rights Commission
- \* Legislation by the end of 2006 for access to EU Nationals to posts in NI Civil Service
- \* Westminster NI Grand Committee to meet in Northern Ireland

### ANNEX C Financial Package for the Executive

- \* Chancellor Brown to meet all parties
- \* Consider further North South economic co-operation & joint investment initiatives
- \* Introduce a cap on domestic rates under new Capital Values system
- \* Introduce further rate reliefs for low income pensioners

### ANNEX D Timetable for Implementation

- \* 17 October New Programme for Government Committee meets
- \* 20/21 October: Westminster legislation
- \* 10 November: Indications by the parties of general assent

- \* 24 November: Assembly meets to nominate FM/DFM
- \* January: IMC Report
- \* March: Electoral endorsement
- \* 14 March: Executive nominated by party leaders
- \* 26 March: Power devolved, d'Hondt run

### ANNEX E Future National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland: Paper by British Government

- \* Responsibility for National Security matters (these are not devolved matters) in Northern Ireland passes to MI5 in late 2007
- \* PSNI co-located with Security personnel
- \* Security Service and Ombudsman's Office to seek agreement on Ombudsman access to sensitive information
- \* Publication of 'high level' MoU's between PSNI and Security Services
- \* Commissioners to oversee covert work in Northern Ireland
  - Intelligence Services Commissioner
  - Interception of Communications Commissioner
  - Surveillance Commissioner

- \* Investigatory Powers Tribunal (complaints against security services)
- \* Consideration of how Parliamentary Intelligence & Security Committee should focus on Northern Ireland
- \* Government acceptance of 5 key principles set out by PSNI Chief Constable

**Side Deals:** In addition to the 'Agreement at St Andrew's' by the two Governments, the British Government has confirmed that it agreed a 'side deal' with the DUP to the effect that the provisions in the 2006 Education Order to outlaw academic selection education at secondary level (Northern Ireland retains a discredited '11+' test to facilitate the continuation of selective (grammar schools). It has been further speculated (by Frank Millar in the Irish Times, amongst others) that a British side deal with Sinn Fein may include the 'On the Runs' issue and a side deal with the Irish Government on facilitating speaking rights in the Dail for Northern MPs in line with the All Party Oireachtas Committee report on the constitution.

## UCC Medical School v. The 'Gentle Black-and-Tans' *continued*

CBS of both of his elder brothers, what was it that had changed for Jacob in 1915? He himself could not explain it, but the reality was that British imperialist war hysteria had now nurtured a resurgence of anti-Semitism, with the Redmondite *Irish Independent* leading the way with such headlines as *Germans In Ireland—Looking For The Spies—Russian Jews Arrested* (August 13, 1914). And a Redmondite Christian Brothers Superior accordingly made Lentin's Russian Jewish immigrant parents pay the price for that Imperialist War.

In the aftermath of the defeat of Redmondism in the December 1918 General Election, as well as of the War of Independence that followed, there had also been a regime change elsewhere in Limerick. Lentin recalled:

"Later (in 1922), some seven years after (being refused admission), when my younger brother Louis had to leave the Model (primary school), there was an unexpected knock on our front door. A new Superior from the Christian Brothers was there. He apologised to my parents for the treatment I had received from them previously and said it would be a privilege if my younger brothers would attend the school, which they did with great scholastic success".

In the meantime, Jacob Lentin himself had become a student in University College Cork's Medical School. He recalled:

"Some of my experiences in Cork must be told. At that time, 1920, the Irish were fighting against British rule, and as

a young student, I was expected to join the College Battalion of the IRA, or be sent to Coventry by the other students. One had to take an oath of allegiance to the IRA. I can well remember being called out of bed at night-time, and being driven with others in the dark, and told to burn down some large country mansions which belonged to the English gentry. This we did, as we had to obey orders. I also remember on another occasion being beaten up by the 'Black and Tans' with a cane, and called an 'Irish Bastard!' whilst a patrol of the Welsh Fusiliers stood by and did nothing to stop it. The 'Black and Tans' was an auxiliary British force made up of ex-criminals and the like, that had the freedom to do as it liked in order to intimidate the Irish. On another occasion, about 1921, two policemen were shot dead near the University. Without further ado, the bodies were taken to the dissecting-room at the medical school, where I and several other students were ordered to skin them so that they could not be identified. This we did and later dissected them as normal cadavers. They were the best specimens we had ever had, as they were two young men in peak physical condition."

"One evening I was instructed to deliver a written message to a certain address. As I was walking down the street, I saw the 'Black and Tans' searching everyone. Before they came to me, I went into the lavatory of the Imperial Hotel, tore the dispatch into pieces, and flushed them down the toilet. On emerging from the hotel, I was stopped and searched. Of course they found nothing on me so they let me go.

Several nights later, I was taken out on a lorry in the middle of the night, and taken to a house somewhere in the country, where I had to face a court-martial for not obeying orders, i.e. for not delivering the dispatch. I was warned that the penalty could be 'death', as a state of war existed and I had not obeyed orders. I pleaded that it was better to have destroyed the message rather than let it get into the hands of the enemy. After much deliberation, I was let off

with a caution, and warned that in future I must always obey orders".

And so was demonstrated full equality of treatment and service in the ranks of the IRA during the War of Independence!

**Manus O'Riordan**

**Manus O'Riordan's series, *To Be Or IRB*, will be continued next month.**

personal rancour because a Fianna Fail Justice Minister tapped her phone to try and establish the source of damaging leaks of confidential Cabinet business. The tapping was done because there was a well-founded suspicion that more than robust investigative reporting was at issue: that there was active interference by a foreign Government in Irish political affairs. (One of the other phones that was tapped at the time was that of Bruce Arnold who, though he uses the royal 'we' in his articles, meaning the Irish people, consistently reflects the interests and values of his native Britain.)

## The Fourth Estate or *The Dung Beetle* ?

*continued*

The *Irish Times*—which has the pretensions of a State, rather than estate—thought it had found the semblance of an issue to bring down yet another Fianna Fail Taoiseach. As it said on 28th September, "*The removal of a Taoiseach from office can be a long and painful process, as both Charles Haughey and Albert Reynolds found to their cost...*" But this time the people let the paper down. It was felt that Bertie Ahern had erred in accepting help from his friends at a difficult period in his life, but that this was a minor infraction. It was realised that, if he had been corrupt or self-serving, he would not have needed the relatively minor sums involved to finance his separation.

In the Opinion Poll held in the midst of the furore, it was Ahern's political detractors that took a fall. Unfortunately, there was no question in the poll about the role of the *Irish Times* in the affair.

Eoin Ó Murchu, probably the only commentator in the Irish media worth a damn, got it right in his column in the *Village*. He pointed out the double standards of Geraldine Kennedy, who praised Justice Finnegan for sending the Rossport Five to jail to uphold the rule of law, while breaching that august principle and breaking the law herself. He continued:

"So one rule for the Rossport Five but another rule for the *Irish Times*. But why should we be surprised? This rag has always considered itself above the law because the law is made by the mere Irish, and we all know which way they vote.

"The arrogant humbug of D'Olier Street is, indeed, hard to take; but when will our politicians stop dancing to that west British tune and start arguing with passion and commitment about the things that matter, that affect the lives of real people?..." (*Political Farce Overshadows Real Issues*, 5.10.06; has he been downgraded by Vincent Browne, the Editor, since writing this? He no longer seems to have a page in the magazine).

Geraldine Kennedy commented on the people's verdict:

"This poll presents a snapshot of the state of the parties at a particular time but, given the events of recent weeks, it does much more than that. The culture of nods and winks and looking the other way is alive and well in Irish democracy. Among a significant sector, however, it reinforces the case that the public interest requires vigilance, investigation and continuing scrutiny.

"If the rest of us "look the other way", it won't be long before the culture of corruption engendered by Mr Haughey will resurface. But, regrettably, this poll would indicate that this does not seem to matter."

This is the most unmitigated nonsense. This poll reflects the public mind, that of the democracy—which retained a sense of proportion in face of a media onslaught on a decent man. The people are berated by the secretly financed arbiters of ethics for their common sense—but the Democracy is now to be put under surveillance!

She continues:

"The Fianna Fáil party will be astonished by the finding that Mr Ahern, acting solo on matters of personal and peculiar ethics, has given the party the lift which had evaded it in the last year or so. The party now has the highest rating since the general election result in 2002."

This suggests that Fianna Failers know as little about the public mood as the Editor of the *Irish Times*.

Fianna Fail, being a proper political party, does not live by public moods and opinion polls—it sees its job quite rightly as the maker and shaper of those moods and the resultant polls and elections. It does not merely reflect what's around them. If it did, it would never have come into existence in the first place. The Party created the conditions that produced the results of this poll so how in the world could it be astonished by it?

The fact is that Geraldine Kennedy brings to the West-British traditional anti-Fianna Fail bias of the *Irish Times* a special

### THE NORTH

The timing of Geraldine Kennedy's campaign to oust the Taoiseach raises further questions. The attempt to destabilise the Government came in the run-up to the St. Andrew's Talks. The Belfast *Irish News*, which has difficulty with the niceties of 26 County politics, took the accusations against Ahern at face value. It carried two pages of commentary hostile to the Taoiseach. This was accompanied by a half-page colour photograph showing a small number of demonstrators holding a huge banner in front on Leinster House, carrying the words *JAIL The Corrupt Politicians*. The demonstrators belonged to the *People Before Profit Alliance*, a minute group. The *Irish News* story was entitled *Ahern Apology Cuts No Ice With Angry Dail Opponents* (4.10.06).

This was the background to Ahern's mission at St. Andrew's. Tony Blair had no such problems—even though British police have been arresting donors to the British Labour Party who paid for peerages, and are continuing their enquiries. Nor has much been made in the British press of the expensive holidays the Prime Minister has accepted from such as Berlusconi of Italy (imagine if Bertie had done the same!—but of course his modest holidays within Ireland are only another reason for holding him in contempt), or the 'gift' Berlusconi made to the husband of one of his Cabinet Ministers—a sum large enough to pay off the substantial mortgage on one of her residences. And there has been little notice taken of Cherie's antics in shamelessly using her position as Mrs. Prime Minister to make money. One of her stunts has been to mount highly-paid lecture tours in the colonies.

It would be a very strong man indeed who would be at his negotiating best with the trickiest politicians in the world—Tony Blair and Ian Paisley—after being put through the mill at home. So the question arises, why did Geraldine Kennedy choose to time her revelations as she did? And why did she sensationalise a rather minor matter in tabloid manner?

## PUBLIC INTEREST

The case made by Geraldine Kennedy, and by those who support the *Irish Times* attempt to destabilise the Government and the Northern Peace Process, is that the public interest demanded that certain facts be made known. But did it?

The information used to stoke up a campaign of character assassination by the *Irish Times* was already known to the proper authorities, the Mahon Tribunal. It was up to Justice Mahon to put it into the public domain in his report, if he felt the political health of the country required it. Geraldine Kennedy usurped the role of the Tribunal Chairman in this instance.

Furthermore, if it is given that the Tribunals are in the public interest—which would be the position of the *Irish Times* and its liberal retinue—how does it serve the public interest to undermine the work of the Tribunals by publishing information privately given to it by witnesses and by people under investigation? Is such publication likely to encourage others to provide personal details to the Tribunals, information which, though not criminal, would be embarrassing if it got out? And surely it is up to democratically-established Tribunals to decide what information should be put in the public domain and not a newspaper which has no public standing and which is not accountable to the Democracy, but only to a secretive oath-bound directorate?

There is also the consideration that the people can put corrupt politicians out of power at election time. Tribunals have to justify their activity to the Dail and to the Courts. But where is the accountability for the *Irish Times* and the rest of the media? Why should proprietors worry if the Irish political system is degraded and decent politicians brought into disrepute? Scandals sell papers.

The 'fourth estate' has made itself the ruling estate and grown into a monster. Now that the secular power of the Church is gone, the *Irish Times*, with its shadowy governing structures, remains the glaring exception to the principle of government by the people, for the people.

## THE COURTS

Geraldine Kennedy is now before the Courts for subverting the Mahon Tribunal by publishing evidence given to it in confidence and for destroying the evidence which might help to identify her informant.

But we fear that the Irish State does not have the self-confidence to prosecute this breach of the rule of law in the same way as Geraldine Kennedy praised it for doing when the Rosspoint Five were on the spot.

Here is how 'Goldhawk' of *Phoenix* magazine summarised the present legal state of play:

"It seems to have escaped the attention of most commentators that Mahon went for the softest of options [in dealing with

Ms Kennedy's crime], despite his 'enormous concern'. Mahon could have proceeded to the High Court to seek a conviction and penalty or have referred the case to the DPP. Instead, he merely requested the High Court to demand what he has already demanded, namely the identification of sources and production of documents that he knows do not any longer exist..." (20.10.06).

The Tribunal put two Fianna Fail politicians in jail for failing to give it enough information—even though they had not been convicted of any crime. But when an overt criminal act is committed, and one which strikes at the root of its ability to function, it soft-pedals. Quite simply, the Government and the Judge are afraid of the *Irish Times*—which has hegemonised the media in general. If Geraldine Kennedy was treated by the same standards as are applied to every other person in Ireland, there would be a media onslaught. In this instance *Phoenix* astutely calculates that the matter is going to be lost in a legal maze.

Goldhawk continues:

"Crucially, the case will not be heard for many months and certainly not before the Supreme Court hearing on November 27 when Mahon's appeal against the High Court ruling in favour of the *Post* will be heard. If Mahon loses that, his case against the *IT* will be significantly weakened. And if Mahon does win against the *IT* in a case some time next year, it will be appealed to the Supreme Court." (We will come back to the issue of the *Business Post* versus Mahon Tribunal in the next issue of this magazine.)

In fact, *Phoenix* has a political agenda not that far removed from that of the *Irish Times* itself. Goldhawk concludes: "*she is a greater scourge of Fianna Fáil than any of the wet opposition politicians in the Dáil*". Hitting Fianna Fail is elevated into a worthy project in its own right, regardless of the public interest or good government.

As a journal which depends on selective sensationalist revelations, *Phoenix* clearly wishes to see its mentors in the *Irish Times* off the hook. But just where the *Phoenix* is coming from is shown by the fact that when Jack Lane offered it the newsworthy scoop of the 'White Nigger Letter' (see below), which showed the *Irish Times* in its true colours, the magazine showed absolutely no interest. Of all the Irish national papers, only the *Sunday Independent*, for all its faults, took it up. So much for 'investigative journalism'!

## THE DUNG BEETLE late of d'Olier St.

The more I read the *Irish Times*, the more I am reminded of a wonderful piece of Irish literature—Geoffrey Keating's Preface to his book on Irish History. He wrote his book about 400 years ago in

revulsion at the existing written histories of Ireland, which had all been written by Englishmen. He says:

"The English historians... when they write of Ireland seem to imitate the dung beetle, which, when enlivened by the influence of the Summer heat, flies abroad, and passes over the delightful fields, neglectful of the sweet blossoms or fragrant flowers that are in its way, till at last, directed by its sordid inclination, it settles on some nauseous excrement."

The dung beetle and its inclinations are alive and well in the editorial room of the *Irish Times*.

With Madam on her high moral horse it seems useful to remind readers of a short correspondence with her about what is known as the "White Nigger Letter": to show just how committed the *Irish Times* is to investigative journalism. In this letter, which was released to the public in the Public Record Office at Kew, the British Ambassador reports to Whitehall on contacts with her paper's modern creator, Major McDowell. The Major was arranging for instructions from Whitehall to guide the editorial policy of the paper in the critical period of 1969. Ambassador Gilchrist reported McDowell's abuse of his then Editor as a "*white nigger*" for being unduly sympathetic to the natives.

When I sent a copy of this letter to Editor Geraldine Kennedy, her response was to protect her employer, Major McDowell, rather than to vindicate a predecessor, Douglas Gageby.

I sent her a copy of the released document when it was put in the public domain in Ireland in early January 2003 by this magazine. I sent it to her on the 10th and Madam replied on 15th, saying she was "*unable to confirm its veracity*". Naturally there was no report about it in the *Irish Times* at this point. Later that month the *Sunday Independent* covered the story of the letter and so Madam was forced to deal with it on 27th January—but she did so in a way calculated to minimise its impact. Instead of reproducing the letter, she carried Major McDowell denial that he ever called Gageby a "*white nigger*". The rebuttal was mixed up with the subject matter of the letter in such a way that readers were forced to absorb the rebuttal along with the damaging information. This is a trick of propagandists down the ages.

The implication of the Major's denial was that, for some reason, the British Ambassador in a confidential report to Whitehall told a pack of lies.

Editor Geraldine Kennedy did not publish the letter. But, over a year later, when the story was well and truly known and had been put on the agenda again by Martin Mansergh, she told her readers, on 23rd April 2004 that "*The contents of the letter in question were published on*

January 27th 2003, as soon as its existence was drawn to my attention."

Readers can judge what to make of this assertion. Does Madam suffer from that selective amnesia, which Madam and her paper are so diligent in reporting? (They are so diligent and helpful in these situations that they even add the stutters, stammers, hhhmmms and aaahhs, as when reporting Ahern's TV interview.) How thorough Madam can be when others are put on the spot and then suddenly forgetful, shall we say, when her own conduct is at issue!

The history of that letter is a good illustration of how the self-proclaimed 'journal of record' acts when something occurs that might adversely affect itself. Apparently, its investigative journalist failed to find the letter when it was first made available in the PRO at Kew in January 2000, though another reporter does (and suppresses the information). When it is brought to Madam's attention she does not report it on lame grounds. She later reports a denial of its contents; then she asserts that she published its contents as soon as the letter was brought to her attention.

Is this the way a paper of record serves the public interest? Surely it is plain to see that it is the *Irish Times's* own private interest that is its paramount concern, and all else is pure and simple hypocrisy on its part. It is rather sad to see so many others falling for the humbug.

What is even more serious is that Ahern's Government recently agreed to subsidise the paper in a one-million Euro project to ensure that *The Irish Times* is available electronically in all libraries for students studying Irish history—the journal that clearly suppresses documents, destroys documents, and has the nerve to keep calling itself a 'journal of record'. The effect of this official endorsement, which has been granted to no other paper, is to give a massive boost to the *Irish Times* and its shadowy backers against other papers produced in Ireland, past and present.

Has Fianna Fail's eyes been opened by this latest episode? Will it cancel the gift it is making to a criminal newspaper? Don't hold your breath.

**Jack Lane**

#### Editor's Note

Olivia O'Leary, who is both a BBC and an RTE political commentator, and who should therefore know what goes on in the political life of both states, made the absurd statement on Radio Eireann in a kind of Thought For The Day on 17th October, that a British Government Prime Minister in Ahern's position would have resigned without question, but that we do these things differently in Ireland. Is it conceivable that she has not noticed how the Blairs have exploited the Prime Ministership to make money hand over first, with scarcely a murmur of criticism?

## The correspondence with Madam is reproduced below:

10th. January 2003.  
Ms. Geraldine Kennedy  
Editor  
The Irish Times  
Dublin

Dear Ms. Kennedy,

### WHO DIRECTS YOUR PAPER?

I enclose a copy of a publication (Irish Political Review, January 2003) that contains an extraordinary document concerning the running of your paper, The Irish Times.

As you can see, it is a copy of a report by the British Ambassador in Dublin in which he outlines the arrangements made with the owner of your paper, Major McDowell, to have the paper's content directed from No. 10 Downing St.

Do you accept this is a genuine document?

If you do, can you say if these arrangements are still in place and, if not, when were they rescinded?

I am sure you will understand that readers of your newspaper, as of any newspaper, are entitled to know by whom, and in whose interest, the newspaper is run.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Lane  
Aubane Historical Society

15th January 2003

Dear Mr. Lane,

I can assure you that no such arrangement is in place for the running of The Irish Times. The ownership of the newspaper is vested in The Irish Times Trust since 1974.

I am unable to confirm the veracity of the letter to which you refer. We published a story that Major McDowell was prepared to act as "a link" to encourage North/South contacts on the release of the British Cabinet papers in January 2000.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Kennedy  
Editor.

31st. January 2003

Dear Ms. Kennedy,

Thank you for your letter dated 15th January 2003. You are not able to tell me when the arrangements made by Major McDowell with No. 10 Downing St. were rescinded so I can hardly accept your assurance that they are no longer in place. Moreover, your reference to the Irish Times Trust being in charge of the paper would confirm that the arrangements remained in place. It is well known that the Irish Times Trust was a unique institution of its kind in

that it was designed and set up to ensure that the Trust, and therefore its paper, was under the control of a single individual, Major McDowell. I understand that he remains President for life of the Trust. The Trust ensures that his writ runs and as he originated the arrangements with Downing St. it is just not credible that he used his own Trust to undo his own efforts. Au contraire, I would say.

Also, I find it amazing that you cannot confirm the authenticity or otherwise of the document concerned, or even give an opinion on it, although you and your paper were aware of it for over 3 years. You have not taken the trouble to clarify the matter in all that time! This shows an incredible lack of curiosity on your part about the running of your own paper. Your paper gave a misleading account of the relationship between Major McDowell and Downing St. in January 1971 in only reporting a reference to him as simply wishing to be a 'link' between the two governments. You were given an opportunity to rectify this deceit and instead you now repeat it and obviously condone it.

Your paper investigates and reports extensively on a host of issues, many of which are of considerably less significance than what is contained in the Ambassador's letter (the publications of this tiny local history group, for example). You are now shown to be very selective indeed in your investigations, reports and in the issues that seize you.

Your predecessor, Mr Gageby, the object of Major McDowell's barrack-room abuse in the document, was clearly kept in ignorance of the paper's direction arranged by its owner but you are clearly determined to be wilfully ignorant of the facts of the matter and their consequences. You are in denial. This must be a unique attitude for the editor of a paper that claims to be national, investigative and a journal of record. You and your paper are no longer credible in respect of any of those attributes.

This is all the more disappointing as it was generally assumed that your appointment as editor was made on the basis of your reputation for good news reporting and it was expected that you would take The Irish Times in that direction. This incident shows that you have not done so and the deceit and evasions you have practiced about it makes the high moral tone you adopt editorially on other issues appear very hypocritical indeed as your reporting clearly stops short where your own vested interests are concerned.

Yours etc.,  
Jack Lane

***The contents of the letter in question were published in The Irish Times on January 27th, 2003, as soon as its existence was drawn to my attention. - Ed., IT.***

(Irish Times letters, 23 April 2004)

# Shorts

from

## *the Long Fellow*

### CHARLIE BIRD

It's a long time since this writer has looked at the *Late Late Show*, but the edition of 29th September was quite interesting even if most of the guests were there to flog their books.

I have no intention of buying Charlie Bird's book, but he did say something interesting about the Haughey era. According to Charlie, all the journalists, including Charlie himself, were scared of Haughey. The only exception was Vincent Browne. Apparently, although Haughey was small in stature, he had an aura about him which intimidated many journalists. All of this sheds an unflattering light on how the said journalists descended like jackals when the former Taoiseach was in his declining years.

### GEORGE GALLOWAY

The highlight of the show was George Galloway's bludgeoning to death of *Magill* Editor Eamonn Delaney. There is nothing like a good scrap on a Friday night and all of this before pub closing hours!

In his exchange with Galloway, Delaney mentioned that Sadaam Hussein was a kind of Hitler who had invaded two countries. When he was saying this I was trying to think of what countries he could mean: Kuwait and Iran?

But Kuwait was siphoning off oil from Iraq's wells. It is well documented that Iraq put out diplomatic feelers and was given the green light by the American Ambassador, who was shocked that she herself as well as Iraq was duped, and spilled the beans to the American media about the cause of the first Gulf War.

As for the Iran-Iraq war, America backed Iraq against Iran because Iraq was seen as a bulwark against Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic fundamentalism. And does Delaney or anyone else believe that America would not have invaded Iran if its recent invasion of Iraq had not gone so badly?

Delaney also said that Hussein gassed his own people, killing hundreds of thousands. Galloway suggested that his figures were a bit mixed up and that this was the number of Iraqis killed after Hussein was toppled. But what could Delaney have been talking about? Could it have been the killing of the Kurds who were encouraged by America to rise up against Sadaam Hussein during the first Gulf War and were then left high and dry by George Bush Senior?

The shamelessness of this pro-American propaganda is staggering. I sincerely hope that *Magill* magazine is backed by the CIA, because if the Editor of this magazine is articulating this rubbish all by himself and without any financial compensation it is a very sad state of affairs.

### NORTH KOREA

There is no doubt as to which State is the most dangerous in the world. In an article in the *New York Times* (11.10.06) ex-President and winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize Jimmy Carter described the deterioration in relations between the United States and North Korea.

About ten years ago the North Korean leader Kim-II-sung invited Carter to his country. With the approval of President Clinton an agreement was negotiated under which North Korea would cease its nuclear program and inspectors from the atomic agency would return to its country to ensure that its spent fuel would not be reprocessed. It was also agreed that direct talks would be held between the two Koreas. Carter described as follows how relations broke down after initial success:

"The spent fuel (estimated to be adequate for half a dozen bombs) continued to be monitored, and extensive bilateral discussions were held. The United States assured the North Koreans that there would be no military threat to them, that it would supply fuel oil to replace the lost nuclear power and that it would help build two modern atomic power plants, with their fuel rods: an operation to be monitored by international inspectors. The summit talks resulted in South Korean President Kim Dae-jung earning the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize for his successful efforts to ease tensions on the peninsula.

"But beginning in 2002, the United States branded North Korea as part of the axis of evil, threatened military action, ended the shipments of fuel oil and the construction of nuclear power plants and refused to consider further bilateral talks. In their discussions with me at this time, North Korean spokesmen seemed convinced that the American positions posed a serious danger to their country and to its political regime."

Carter goes on to suggest that the North Korea's resumption of its nuclear program was "*ill advised*". But what right has anyone to criticise a small country's defence arrangements when threatened by the most powerful and dangerous country in the world?

### THE AMERICAN DREAM

But it is doubtful whether the current incumbent in the White House is too worried about peace. All that matters is that the American political model prevails over all others. However, it seems that for many Americans the dream has turned to a nightmare. Joseph E. Stiglitz, another

Nobel Prize winner (this time for Economics) made the following comment recently about the United States:

"The income of the lower classes has reduced by 30% in the last thirty years. It used to be said that children would have a better life than their parents. It is now the opposite. The American dream as described by Horatio Alger was that anyone, whatever his means could get rich and even become President. The statistics show otherwise. Bush did not come from a poor family in contrast to Truman who was an exception" (*I'Humanite*, 22.9.06).

### FAILED COUP D'ETAT

It remains to be seen what the fallout of the latest attempt by *The Irish Times* to undermine a Fianna Fail-led government will be. The Chairman of *The Irish Times Ltd*, Brian Patterson, has recently resigned and been replaced by Irish Life & Permanent supremo David Went. Patterson was a former Chief Executive of the Wedgwood division of Anthony O' Reilly's Waterford Wedgwood Group. The O' Reilly family also runs Independent Newspapers and when Patterson became a Director of *The Irish Times Ltd* the Articles of Association of that company had to be changed to take account of Patterson's financial interest in a rival newspaper.

When Patterson was appointed the suspicion was that he was there to disentangle the company from the control of *The Irish Times Trust Ltd* and thereby help Executives make a financial killing by selling the newspaper. Presumably that plan has now fallen by the wayside.

### BYE BYE GERALDINE

Meanwhile, as the contempt of court proceedings against Kennedy and *Irish Times* journalist Colm Keena trundle through the High Court, it will be interesting to see what happens if Kennedy loses. The Articles of Association of that company prevent a Director convicted of an indictable offence from continuing to hold office. They also state that the Editor must also be a Director.

Kennedy's opening statement to the Mahon Tribunal was that the source of its story was "*unsolicited and anonymous*" (*The Irish Times*, 29.9.06) which begs the question why the source has to be protected. How can an unsolicited source impose conditions of confidentiality, especially an "*anonymous*" unsolicited source?

If the Court finds against Kennedy, would *The Irish Times Ltd* Directors go to the trouble of changing the company's Articles of Association or would they look at it as an opportunity too good to be missed? This column thinks it knows the answer.

Bye, Bye, Geraldine.

## A Carrolling Professor

Carroll Professor Roy Foster has shot his bolt, and so has master-historian Peter Hart who interviews the dead. It is therefore natural that Foster should criticise the film, *The Wind That Shakes The Barley*, for the fact that the script is not based on Hart's vision of how the IRA made war in Cork of how the IRA made war in Cork after Britain rejected the verdict of the ballot box as a basis for a settlement of the Irish question.

In a belated review, published in the Autumn 2006 issue of the *Dublin Review*, Foster writes:

"With skill and empathy, Hart traced a picture which reproduces fault-lines of class resentment, religious and ethnic antipathy and local power-struggle, existing along with more identifiable war of liberation against the traditional oppressor..."

Is this an acknowledgement that Britain actually was the oppressor? Or does "traditional oppressor" mean that it wasn't an oppressor, but that a habit of describing it as such had set in? And what is the war of liberation "more identifiable" than?

And what wars of liberation had there been in the world before 1919 to make the concept familiar?

The array of new states established in Eastern Europe in 1918-19 were not the product of wars of liberation, but were constructs of the Imperialist Powers that won the Great War for the purpose of breaking up the defeated Powers. The Czechs had not fought a war of liberation. They had fought for the Austrian State against Britain and France. But, when Austria was defeated, a dissident Czech group was established as the State of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France, and was declared to be a national state, even though it was obvious that it wasn't—and it was incapable of behaving as a national state when its moment of truth came in 1938.

The Poles did fight for a national state in the Great War. But Pilsudski's Legions, like Connolly's Citizen Army, went to war as an ally of Germany and Austria, against the *Entente* Powers—Pilsudski against the Russians, Connolly against the British. But a Polish state was nevertheless established by the triumphant *Entente* in 1919, while Britain made war on the Irish who had voted for independence. Why this difference? Because the Tsarist state had collapsed and had been replaced by a Communist state, and a Polish state was required as a buffer against revolutionary Russia, whereas the independence of

Ireland would have served no purpose of the British Empire.

And what other war of liberation had there been in the world before 1919? The Serbian presumably, but it doesn't do to mention that these days. The Greater Serbia movement provided the occasion for the Great War on Germany in 1914, and was therefore a Good Thing then, and Kosovo was its sacred heartland. But it doesn't do to remember that now.

And there had been a sort of Greek war of liberation during the years before 1914, when much Turkish territory was conquered. But Greece refused to continue this war of liberation when Britain urged it to in 1914, after Britain had declared war on Turkey. The Greek Government refused to join the War and go for Constantinople. But Britain recalled it to its national duty by invading it and setting up a puppet Government which joined the War.

But the major war of liberation before 1914 was the Indian Mutiny of 1859. But it was a criminal offence to describe that as a war of liberation. V.D. Savarkar did so in a book published in 1910 and he was sentenced to transportation for 50 years a penal colony. The proper way to describe the Mutiny was as an outburst of savagery which had to be suppressed by stern measures—by a great civilising slaughter.

So wars of liberation are not necessarily Good Wars. Indeed, they may be amongst the worst of all wars. I have heard Ben Bradshaw, a British Government Minister, describe his war to destroy the Iraqi state as a war of liberation.

I do my best to grasp the value system within which I live—or, to put it philosophically, in the language of Heidegger, the most durable and widely-read philosopher of the 20th century—into which I was thrown. And I would appreciate an authoritative classification of wars, and a list of the Good and Bad Wars in each class. E.g—

the Irish War of Independence—a war of liberation — a Bad War;

the World War launched by Britain in 1914—a war of liberation—a Good War. That seems to be in accordance with the way these two wars are dealt with by people in authority in Ireland these days. But it would be useful if they said it out straight—as in *1066 And All That*, a much-ridiculed, though widely-accepted, manual of morality.

Professor Foster is a person in authority. And the *Dublin Review*, being

in receipt of public funds from the Arts Council, is part of the Establishment. And I think they owe it to us to tell us what to think—"This is good" ; "That is bad", with a couple of simple sentences in each case that we can repeat in support of what we are told.

There is an old republican notion that the public should be supplied with information which it might reason upon and form its own conclusions. But the time when something like that happened has long since passed away. The investigation and publication of facts, with minimal prejudice, is no longer the business of the Universities or the press. What we get from them now is prejudice with a minimal garnishing of facts. Another name for this pre-empting of facts by authoritative opinion is dogmatism.

I do not criticise the current system chiefly because it is dogmatic, but because the dogmas are half-baked and have a very short shelf-life. I remember when the right idea of the Irish War of Independence was that it was a war of genocide. That must have been 5 or 6 years ago. But already it has become something else. Foster doesn't mention genocide now, and Hart denies that he said it.

And what was it on the other side? The British in the film, says Foster—

"resemble Nazi stormtroopers with Yorkshire and Geordie accents. That is fair enough. The atrocious actions of the Black and Tans are a matter of record, and their murderous saturnalia probably did more than anything else to turn public opinion against Britain's rule in Ireland. But Loach's film, by beginning sharply in 1920 with no background information whatsoever, contrived to give a completely misleading idea of the historical situation in Ireland at the time."

The "misleading idea" consists of two "facts":

"First that the IRA resistance was created in response to the Black and Tan reign of terror. This is, of course, an exact reversal of chronology. The Anglo-Irish War began with the shooting of policemen early in 1919, a process escalated by the radical wing of the Volunteers and opposed by those in the movement called contemptuously 'the politicians'. After a year of inept counter-measures, Lloyd George's government embarked on a disastrous policy of recruiting mercenaries and, later, of 'reprisals'... The second lesson slammed home by Loach is that those who opposed the Treaty did so for reasons of socialism, 'democracy', and anti-partitionism... Socialist politics had long since taken an acquiescent back seat, and it is significant that Dan and Damien talk reverently of Connolly's part in the 1913 lock-out and the Citizen Army, while Larkin (whose relationship to nationalism is much more problematical) is never mentioned" (p45-6).

Beginning at the end: Larkin had been out of the country for six years by 1920, and those six years were momentous, and people not involved in them, and not kept in mind by events, would have tended to be forgotten. If Larkin had been in the film, he would have been an intruder.

Somebody told me long ago that Connolly had arranged for Larkin to go to America on an important mission so that Connolly himself would have a free hand as a revolutionary. It made sense to me at the time. I don't know if it is a view that still holds up.

Larkin was an agitator—a superb agitator by all accounts—but he was not a revolutionary—not even when he became one of the 16 masters of the world as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. (I think it was 16.)

Comintern activity, in Ireland, the USA, and Britain, was agitational in substance regardless of its preaching of revolutionary theory. A revolution is a political act which asserts itself as an alternative state and follows through to the best of its ability on that assertion. Agitation, however vigorous, acts on an existing state, and modifies it—or perhaps destroys it, if the state fails to accommodate it.

In that period Rosa Luxemburg, for all her theoretical writings about revolution during the preceding generation, was an agitator against the new German Republic, which was at the mercy of the victorious British and French. And the Republic was so weak that her agitation, conducted in accordance with a theory of spontaneous revolution, threatened to destroy it. She established no independent ground against the new Republic, which was governed by the other wing of her own party. She did not present herself as somebody who would undertake to govern Germany under the Armistice conditions. She pursued a spontaneous theory of revolution agitational against the Right Social Democrats who had enacted a kind of revolution almost despite themselves. And they allowed elements of the disintegrating army to kill her as a necessary act of state.

Lenin was a revolutionary. Rosa Luxemburg, in her disagreement with Lenin, rejected his revolutionary mode, and when her moment came she was only a destructive agitator.

By the same token, Connolly was a revolutionary, though not a Leninist one, while Larkin, though a Leninist, was not a revolutionary.

Danton was a revolutionary. So were Bishop Burnet and his colleagues in 1688. And so was De Valera.

When Larkin returned to Ireland, as a Leninist revolutionary, after the Irish revolution, the main thing he did was split

the Transport Union, which had expanded greatly during the revolutionary years when he was away, and was therefore a union appropriate to the state in which it functioned.

Foster's argument that Loach engaged in a "*reversal of chronology*" depends on his own exclusion of a rather important fact, which is mentioned by Loach. He says that the activity of the Black and Tans "*did more than anything else to turn public opinion against Britain's continuing rule in Ireland*". But the Irish electorate had voted against Britain's continuing rule long before there was ever a Black and Tan in Ireland. And the IRA was only formed because Britain refused to abide by the decision of the ballot box.

He says it was "*fair enough*" for Loach to present the auxiliary police forces as Nazis with Geordie accents, because they engaged in a "*murderous saturnalia*". But, unless he accepts that in doing so they acted as instruments of state policy, it is not fair enough. The Nazi police were not freebooters. They did what they did for the purpose of imposing order on the anarchy of German democracy. And when elements of the Brownshirts themselves became an element of disorder they were crushed.

I think that Whitehall knew very well what its police were doing in Ireland, and could have stopped them if it wanted to, and that the police are for that reason fairly depicted as Nazis. But Foster's language is deliberately evasive, making room for the view that the police in their "*murderous saturnalia*" were out of control. But if they were out of control, they were not Nazis.

We're talking about 1919-20—the years when Britain's victory in the Great War for democracy and the rights of nations bore fruit in the establishment of the League of Nations. Britain was then the centre of the world, and the world was waiting for signs from it that would give definite shape to the new order. And what matters most is not that a few hundred, or a few thousand people were killed or roughed up by the police in Ireland, but that the thing was done in the service of a British Government that decided to take no account of the election in Ireland, while supposedly having brought about a World War for the purpose of establishing a democratic order in the world, which would make the sacrifice of 10 or 20 million lives worthwhile.

If it is "*fair enough*" to depict the British police in Ireland in 1920 as Nazi stormtroopers, that can only be because they were instruments of a state policy which it is fair enough to describe as Fascist. And I think that is fair enough. The War Coalition in the immediate post-war years had a broad Fascist streak in it;

its Irish policy and its Indian policy are fairly described as Fascist; the example it gave to Europe was Fascist; and there was a vigorous fascist element in the popular British culture of those years—it appeared in full-blown form in the first couple of *Bulldog Drummond* novels, which should be treated as social documents rather than thrillers. (The author, 'Sapper', was an army officer who during the war had written some of the less racist and Jingoist war literature. The early *Bulldog* novels have to do with Bolshevik subversion by way of Ireland, with a poem of James Connolly being quoted—*We Only Want The Earth*, as far as I recall—and the international Jewish conspiracy.)

When the back-bench Tories pulled the plug on the Coalition in 1922, Fascism declined in Britain, the conduct of the Empire became confused, and the period of contradictory foreign policy fumbblings began that led to the second World War. And Churchill, the only remnant of the Coalition who retained a prominent position in the life of the state, was distinctive as a forceful Imperialist and an overt supporter of Fascism, who held himself ready to save the Empire by becoming its Fascist leader. A chapter of accidents—or fiascos—led to him playing a different part.

Churchill's last achievement in Ireland was what is called the *Civil War*—the strangest Civil War ever fought, since the parties that fought each other were in agreement about the state they wanted. They wanted the Republic, which they had proclaimed in 1919. The only difference between them was over whether to submit to the British ultimatum to form a new Government under the authority of the Crown, or face a British campaign of reconquest with all the military force of the Empire. And it was Churchill who forced Collins to fire the first shot by threatening that, if he didn't, the British Army would take events in hand.

Loach's film is entirely mistaken in presenting the Treaty War as a class war in which differences which had been present ever since 1918 came to the surface—and therefore as a genuine Civil War.

[It must be said, however, that he also conveys the view that it was a fratricidal war—in which brother literally fought brother on the pragmatic issue that half a cake is better than none: Editor]

Foster quite rightly dismisses the view of the Treaty War as a class war. But a few paragraphs earlier he had praised Hart's "*picture which reproduces fault-lines of class resentment, religious and ethnic antipathy and local power struggle*" within the "*war of liberation*". Did he forget he had written this when he came to dismiss Loach's presentation of the Treaty War as

arising from a class conflict which had been suppressed during the Independence War?

Loach's view has this to be said for it: large property interests, and ideological interests connected with Britain, aligned themselves with the Treaty Party, once the Sinn Fein split was accomplished. For example, the *Church Of Ireland Gazette*, which had seen no moral force of democracy in the General Elections of 1919 and 1921, and the Local Elections of 1920, and had ridiculed the Dail, suddenly became morally indignant that the narrow Dail majority for the Treaty, achieved by the Imperial threat of immediate and terrible war, was not taken as binding by those who opposed the Treaty. The free democracy of earlier years had counted for nothing with it, but the terrorised democracy of 1922 was sacred to it.

Interests which had been against independence supported the Treaty very enthusiastically. But submission to the Treaty ultimatum was not brought about by those interests. It could not be because they had no presence within the independence movement.

The split occurred within Sinn Fein. It was brought about by the terrorist or Fascist ultimatum of the Coalition acting on individuals in the Sinn Fein leadership through their personal qualities rather than their class qualities.

It is often forgotten what Cathal Brugha was. I was very surprised over forty years ago to find that he was a manufacturing capitalist—the only one in the Sinn Fein leadership that I know of. Yet the Treaty was absolutely out of the question for him. And Barton and Childers were of the landed class.

On the other side there was Collins, who had been a Post Office clerk.

And it seems to me that, without Collins—the hard man of the independence movement—the Sinn Fein split could not have happened—or at least not as it did. Griffith did not have the weight to do it.

Collins denied that he was intimidated into signing the Treaty. And I think he told the truth. The Dail majority was intimidated by the threat of immediate and terrible war. So was the electorate. But Collins saw the threat as an opportunity. He decided during the London negotiations to make his own deal, and to make it good in the manner of Napoleon, or of Bismark. At the eleventh hour he pre-empted the Dail Government, presenting it with an accomplished fact which it read about in the newspapers. And I think that was a major influence on the subsequent course of events.

**Brendan Clifford**

**PS** Foster likes to use fashionable words with little concern for sense or meaning. "*Solipsism*" has been in academic fashion in recent years. In this article he refers to the "*solipsistic disillusionment of the Truce which lead [sic] to the Treaty*" for those who had fought a war to give effect to the electoral mandate. I suppose that statement conveys some ideas to the minds of diligent readers of the *Dublin Review*—or at least some feeling to their hearts which serves in place of an idea. But, if one is not entirely satisfied with it as mind-boggling mood music, what meaning is to be found in it?

Solipsism is the idea that there is no objective world beyond one's ideas. So were the Republicans deprived by the Truce and the Treaty of the belief that the world existed independently of their ideas, or of the belief that it did not? Were they disillusioned into solipsism or out of it? Did they suddenly in the second half of

1921 discover that the world did not exist, or that it did? I find it hard to imagine that those who took on the military power of the British Empire ever doubted the existence of a world outside their own heads.

In actual revisionist use, solipsism seems to mean a willingness to take on British military power in order to give effect to a democratic electoral mandate; and therefore to have doubts, not about the existence of the world, but of the omnipotence of British power in it—to doubt that Britain and the world are one, and that Britain is the agency of Providence in the world.

**\* Envoi: Taking Leave Of Roy Foster, reviews of his made up IRISH STORY, by E. Herlihy, B. Clifford, D. Alvey, & B. Murphy osb. Index. 204pp. ISBN 1 903497 28 0. Aubane Historical Society. June 2006. E15, £11**

## 10th Annual Roger Casement Symposium , 21 October 2006 Some Highlights

### CASEMENT AND ALSACE-LORRAINE: BRENDAN CLIFFORD

Brendan Clifford described how these overwhelmingly German speaking territories had been annexed by the new German state at the end of the Franco-Prussian war. This war had been initiated by France under Napoleon III to serve French strategic interests. France felt uncomfortable with a new powerful state to its east and set out to destroy it. The attempt failed. Alsace-Lorraine in consequence of the Prussian victory became part of the German Empire.

The two provinces eventually enjoyed home rule or what we today would call devolved government. There was no militant movement within the territories demanding reunion with France. Before WWI they were settling down under German rule. When they were returned to France post WWI they did not enjoy as much autonomy, France being a centralised state, and this became a cause of friction.

The treaty between Britain and France, the *Entente Cordiale* of 1905, was ostensibly about cultural and economic exchange but it had its secret military aspects. Plans were laid out whereby British forces would fight beside the French in a coming European war against Germany. These plans facilitated France in pursuing its territorial claim more seriously.

French irredentism which was encouraged by Britain brought about

WWI.

Casement had written about the Alsace-Lorraine dispute in *The Crime against Europe*. He praised the way the people of the region had prospered under German rule and noted how it had been granted home rule under the German Empire.

### A FORGED DOCUMENT IN MI5 FILES: KEVIN MANNERINGS

This talk was centred on the formerly classified intelligence files related to Casement concerned with him as a subject for investigation and his arrest, interrogation and imprisonment.

Starting out, Mannerings explained how the lack of corroborative evidence outside the infamous 'Diaries' initially prompted him to suspect they might be forged. He referred to how Casement had campaigned against the sexual exploitation of the Amazonian Indians and the resultant spread of sexually transmitted diseases. This was a stance at variance with his characterisation in the 'Diaries' as a sexual predator who groomed young boys. Among the intelligence files he had found a poem was a "*crude copy*" of a poem by Casement which had been published in 1914 in the *Irish Review* and which was titled *Lost Youth*. An original handwritten copy is in the National Library in Dublin, seemingly donated by Gertrude Parry who was the executrix of his will. A copy of this was also displayed to the conference.

The poem in the files is signed "*Roger Casement*" at the bottom, but the signature

is wholly different from Casement's signature. The signature however is similar to that of a cousin of the same name who resided in Ballycastle, Co. Antrim. A sample of the signature of the Ballycastle Roger Casement, taken from the *Ulster Covenant*, along with the signature from the poem, was displayed to the meeting.

An explanation for this is that at one time the authorities had confused the two men of the same name and so had sample signatures from each. A mix up had caused a signature similar to that of the 'wrong' Roger Casement to be appended to a forged poem. The poem text is written in handwriting which approximates to that of the famous man. It is claimed in the files the poem was on its way by post to Mrs. Alice Stopford Green, a long time friend and supporter.

Why would anyone wish to forge a poem such as this in the circumstances of Casement's trial and imprisonment? The speaker theorised that, after he had been condemned to death, it was contrived that a security breach had occurred regarding the prisoner. A condemned traitor was debarred from posting outgoing communications and letters after his trial and sentencing. A "*breach of security*" would provide an excuse to monitor and interfere with communications between Casement's supporters who were trying to organise a campaign for a reprieve. It, also, would provide an excuse to cut off access to the condemned man.

From the floor it was suggested there might be a less dramatic explanation. The so-called signature might simply have been added later by a bureaucrat for administrative convenience. The poem text could have been written down by anyone. Perhaps, we were looking at a copy and not an original. There was argument and counter-argument. The speaker explained that there was a contemporary file where the Intelligence Agent Frank Hall represented the poem and signature as being written in Casement's own hand.

*Pink Coating on some 'black diary' pages, another bizarre twist to the tale*

Kevin Mannerings provided interesting information on the pink glue-like substance which covers about 10 pages of the 1910 'Diary' and most of that for January 1911 and a few more 1911 Diary pages. It has previously been represented as a form of restorative treatment. Thanks to his queries to the Public Record Office in Kew, it now transpires this substance is *polyvinyl acetate*. This was added in 1972 at a very difficult time for Anglo-Irish relations. Further investigations revealed that this substance is not one normally used for purposes of preservation and restoration of hand-written matter. Contact with a laboratory in London brought out the response that testing for evidence of erasure followed by interpolation using

Ramon Spectroscopy would not provide a reliable reading where pages were coated with this substance.

The *polyvinyl acetate* is found on pages where there are indications that erasure could have occurred.

#### THE IRISH BRIGADE IN ZOSEN: PADRAIG O CUANACHÁIN

It is sometimes remarked about the Irish Brigade, which Casement tried to raise among Irish prisoners of war in Germany, is how small a force it was, consisting of about 52 volunteers. One explanation is that Irish prisoners of war then in Germany would have been politically Redmondite and would not have been fully in sympathy with Casement's cause. However, politics was not the only or main reason for enlistment. Men sought escape from economic privation. There would be no wish to volunteer for further military action.

In 1918 an Archdeacon Duggan, working among Irish Catholic POWs in Germany, questioned ex-members of the Irish Brigade. He learned that, at a time when recruitment for the brigade was progressing slowly but steadily, a German officer intervened and announced that recruits would get double rations and the rest half rations. This caused recruitment to collapse. Now joining the Brigade appeared to be a type of "souperism" and lost its appeal. The German officer had no understanding of the Irish mentality.

Archdeacon Duggan's experiences are recounted in a book *Archdeacon Duggan In Peace And War* by an author named McCarthy. Duggan was an army chaplain in both world wars.

The Brigade was joined by seekers of adventure, by patriots, and by those who were indifferent but would do anything for a change from the boredom of imprisonment. Two stood out. One was Quinlisk, who was later to operate in Ireland as a British agent. Another was Beverley, who travelled by submarine to Ireland with Roger Casement under the name of Bailey and who turned traitor as soon as he was captured. There is an unconfirmed story that he made his way back to Zossen, Germany (where the Brigade was based), where he believed he had a woman waiting for him. In the meantime she took up with another man and Beverley, dejected on discovering this, committed suicide.

The Brigade developed a reputation for rowdy behaviour. There were melees with German troops. One member died of illness in March 1916 named Houlihan. There was a monument erected over his grave which stood until 1951. A local History Society located the grave and discovered a photo of the monument.

A contributor from the floor explained that recruitment to the Brigade would be

hampered by fears of jeopardising entitlement to army pay which for POWs was paid to their families at home. Joining the Brigade amounted to desertion and so once the news trickled back the financial support went.

Tim O'Sullivan

**\* Alsace-Lorraine And The Great Irredentist War** by *Brendan Clifford*. With extracts from *Casement's Crime Against Europe*, and works by *Rene Bazin, Coleman Phillipson* and *Nicholas Mansergh*. ISBN 1 874 157 17 0 48pp. *A Belfast Magazine* No. 30, Oct. 06

## Pope Benedict And German Gold

Dave Alvey noted in October's *Irish Political Review*, in his report on the Greaves Summer School, that someone had put to him the argument that "*the Pope had been in receipt of funds from the German State*". It would not be right to let this statement about Pope Benedict and his peace initiatives from 1915-18 go uncommented upon.

I presume the original source of this unattributed view is Dragan Zivojinovic's *The United States And The Vatican Policies*. Zivojinovic, the US Serbian writer, alleged that the Papacy was predisposed to Germany in the Great War because the Vatican was dependent on fund raising by the Catholic German Centre Party leader, Matthias Erzberger. His argument was that the dire financial position of the Vatican in 1914 made Benedict dependent on Erzberger, and hence Germany. And so Benedict and his peace efforts were paid for by German gold.

This, of course, is a different thing than saying that the Pope was financed by the German *state*. Erzberger did not represent the German state but only one party in it. And deriders of Benedict's peace plans and German peaceful intentions have always argued that Erzberger was not as influential a force in German political life as Benedict supposed.

But examination of the Vatican finances by other historians has found the Vatican's financial standing to have been relatively sound during the war. So there does not seem to be any evidence of financial dependency in the relationship.

John Pollard, the Cambridge historian, recently wrote that Pope Benedict's position was essentially derived from his mentor, the Sicilian, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro:

"the essence of Rampolla's strategy was that Germany, a Prussian, Protestant power, needed to be balanced by Catholic, cosmopolitan Austria. Again while it is true that the inflow of monies from Peter's Pence was disrupted due to the war, at a time when the Vatican was spending enormous sums on relief work, it is also the case that Benedict received increasingly large sums from the United States, but no one has suggested that he was in any way influenced in his policy towards that country as a result" (*Benedict XV—The Pope of Peace*, pp89-90).

In fact, the Germans viewed Benedict with suspicion in 1914 and the Austrians would have vetoed him in the Papal election if Pius X had not abolished the Hapsburg prerogative of veto in 1904. They saw Benedict as pro-French like his mentor, Rampolla.

There are other reasons to suggest the view of Benedict as a paid servant of Germany is mere propaganda. For one thing Benedict's policy coincided with Erzberger's at various points in the war. Erzberger wanted to keep Italy out of the Allied ranks for obvious reasons. Italy had been an ally of Germany and it was Britain's objective to seduce her away from the alliance and into the Allied embrace.

Benedict opposed Italian participation in the war because he saw that the war would be disastrous for the political and social fabric of Italy—and for the Vatican, as a result. At the same time the British were offering massive bribes, financial and territorial to the Italians to come in.

History vindicates Benedict completely.

You could only condemn Erzberger and Benedict if you believed it was a good thing that Italy came into the war—as Britain, and John Redmond, did. The Allies expected the new Pope, Benedict XV, to become an ardent crusader against Germany by issuing propaganda on their behalf. But the Pope declined to join their crusade.

Erzberger was the chief force for peace and accommodation in Germany during the war and the promoter of Papal peace initiatives there—particularly the great one of 1917. So it can hardly be argued that his influence on the Papacy—if there was one—was in pursuing a particularly German design unless you are arguing from the British position that the war should have gone on, no matter what the consequences for Europe, until Germany was crushed. If Erzberger and Germany were for peace, and the Pope took the same view, a portrayal of Benedict as a pawn of Germany can only be based on a British worldview and mindset.

There is only one reference to

## Is The Irish Times A British Paper?

The following letter from John Martin was submitted to the *Irish News* on 10th September, but was rejected.

Martin Mansergh's denunciation of Brendan Clifford and his colleagues (*Irish News*, 7/9/06) is a continuation of a debate which occurred two years ago in the letters pages of *The Irish Times*. That debate was cut short prematurely when the "Irishness" of various Anglo-Irish writers was in danger of spilling over into a discussion of the "Irishness" of *The Irish Times* itself.

On the face of it the idea that *The Irish Times* is "a British newspaper in Ireland" is an outrageous assertion. In normal circumstances such an accusation could be dismissed out of hand as being unworthy of comment. The problem is that Jack Lane, one of Brendan Clifford's colleagues, unearthed documents in the Public Records Office in Kew indicating that an *Irish Times* director, the Belfast born Major Thomas McDowell, wished to place that newspaper under British State influence in 1969, a crucial time in Anglo-Irish relations. One of those documents written by the then British Ambassador Andrew Gilchrist indicated that at a lunch in October 1969 McDowell described his then Editor, Belfast born Douglas Gageby, as being a "white nigger" on Northern matters.

Major McDowell subsequently became the most powerful man in *The Irish Times* and is currently the Honorary President for Life of *The Irish Times* Group.

When the controversy first emerged in 2003 McDowell denied that he used the term "white nigger" about anybody and also denied that he wished to place *The Irish Times* under British State influence. In short, McDowell was asking us to believe that the British Ambassador had lied about McDowell's approaches.

In commenting on this controversy, Ronan Fanning, the Professor of Modern History at University College Dublin expressed the following view on the matter:

"...even if one subscribes to the cynical definition of an ambassador as someone who is sent abroad to lie for their country, the notion that an ambassador – above all an ambassador in so supremely professional and hard-nosed a diplomatic service as the British – would lie to their own government simply beggars belief" (*Sunday Independent*, 2/2/03).

Martin Mansergh is, of course, entitled to his opinion, but in the light of the evidence, I cannot agree that the notion that *The Irish Times* is a British newspaper in Ireland is "ridiculous".

This letter elicited the following response from the Editor of the *Irish News*, dated 13th September

Hi John,

Thanks for your message. I would not dispute anything you say, but it is not our normal policy to carry letters which are essentially about another newspaper. If you wish to address any of the points outlined by Martin Mansergh in our columns, please feel free to submit a contribution.

Noel Doran,  
Editor,  
*The Irish News*.

Erzberger in Denis Gwynn's *The Vatican And War In Europe*. It concerns the period immediately leading up to Benedict's Peace Note of 1917 when Mgr. Pacelli had been given assurances by the Kaiser and the German leadership that they would be favourable to a peace based on general limitation of armaments, international courts to settle disputes, restoration of Belgian independence, and the Alsace problem to be settled by international agreement:

Party, under Erzberger's leadership, was agitating openly for peace. On July 19 a resolution proposed by him in favour of a moderate peace was passed by 212 votes to 126, although the actual leader of the party, Dr. Spahn, had spoken strongly against it. That vote gave immense encouragement to the movement organised by the Socialists of Sweden and Holland, led by Branting and Troelstra, to organise an International Socialist Conference in Stockholm in favour of peace "without

annexations and without indemnities". The German socialists were strongly in favour of the Conference, and it was supported by Ramsey McDonald and the English Labour Party" (pp46-7)

Readers can decide for themselves whether they consider any association between Erzberger and the Pope to have been a good or bad thing.

As for the Germans being "*bad diplomats*". How could they compete with Britain in this field? They had been a state for only forty years against Britain's centuries of diplomacy, with its attendant skills of duplicity and perfidy that the English had perfected. The Germans were too inexperienced in the diplomatic arts of double-dealing and double-cross—as many, including the Italians, French, and Arabs, found out to their cost after the war.

The great problem in adopting the

British view of the Great War is how to justify rejection of Benedict's peace efforts and how to handle the much greater support that existed for peace from the outset of war in Germany. If one takes the view that Britain was correct to defy the peace initiatives, and to wage war to the end (1918-19), one must accept that the catastrophic destruction of European stability and the rearrangements of the Middle East were the worthwhile results of total victory. Then there is the little problem of the rest of the catastrophic twentieth century to explain.

Pat Walsh

**\* Britain's Great War, Pope Benedict's Lost Peace: How Britain Blocked The Pope's Peace Efforts Between 1915 and 1918 by Dr. Pat Walsh.** ISBN 1 874157 14 6. 60pp. ABM No. 27, March 2006. E6, £4.

## British Newspapers On Ireland

### Part 2

Last month I referred to a 'State pogrom' in August 1969. This may read oddly, but the persons responsible for what happened in Belfast, in particular, in 1969 was the Government of the UK, in particular the Cabinet. The British Cabinet system was designed to run a world-empire, the notion that it did not know what was going on in Northern Ireland, a part of the State is absurd. It is absurd in theory, and it is even more absurd in practice. By May 1969, there was a sub-committee made up of bureaucrats from the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence, and persons seconded to 'Stormont'. They provided *daily* reports of what was happening in The Province. These were largely provided by the RUC, and verged sometimes of the absurd, ranging from shootings to kids giving the Peelers the fingers outside a chippie on a Friday night. There were plans, drawn up in May 1969, to—essentially—hand over the running of the Six Counties to the army. (This material is available in the National Archives in Kew.) The Cabinet was wholly responsible for what happened in Derry, Armagh and Belfast in August 1969.

Beresford homes in on what the blurb refers to as "Propaganda, bombs and poems...", he explains that 'propaganda' is not a Bad Word—instancing Roman Catholic church's Propaganda Fide. Which may, or may not, be a subtl[ish] tickling of British liberal prejudice (the *Grauniad* carried pages of abuse after Benedict's lecture in Regensburg. It included a page of seriously bad people, including Pius XII, whose reputation has been defended

by more Rabbis than Romans, this may be an optical illusion, but Jews are clearly not convinced of his wickedness.) Beresford has been 'reporting' Ireland for decades now, here is his third paragraph: "In Ireland names seem, at times, to be everything. Eire is, to Republicans, the '32 counties' or southern Ireland. Northern Ireland is Ulster or the six counties."

There is more on this theme. It is just a pity that Beresford is either the victim of coarse editing—or has written genuine drivel. 'Éire' was the name of the twenty six county State from 1937 to 1948, though Bertie Ahern seems to have decided that the name of the State is now 'Éire/Ireland'. 'Southern Ireland' was very rarely used in the Wee Six, 'Free State' was what most people called it. 'Northern Ireland' consists of six counties, and is called 'Ulster' by Unionists probably out of nostalgia for the days when they hoped for the whole historic province to fall into their hands. Or, more likely, because they haven't a clue about Irish history or even geography.

Beresford supplies a fair amount of history, Yeats's *Easter 1916* sums the thing up—the Rising being propaganda of the deed "martyrdom... trump card where propaganda is concerned." He does not mention the fact that the insurrectionists could quite easily have been put in prison. Nobody needed to be executed. The Rising was planned in an entirely military spirit, Plunkett, Pearse and Connolly looked forward to the creation of—at least—dual power in most of the island. It need hardly be mentioned that John McBride was "a wife-beater and a drunk" (is there any free-standing evidence for this?) and "a

veteran of the Boer War". The implication is that he was a type of turncoat. There is no mention of the fact that he fought for the Orange Free State. This may be sloppy writing but the impression that McBride was a dishonourable person is left for the unwary reader.

There is more of this sort of thing, British paratroopers "ran amok" in Derry in 1972 on Bloody Sunday. The shooting was planned well in advance, and it is difficult to believe that Beresford has not seen the television dramatisations and documentaries about Bloody Sunday, or reported on the interminable Savile Inquiry. A staging of the latter had a good run in London.

The Hunger Strikes "...were a propaganda battle, planned and fought out like one of those awful games of chess in which the human pieces, when taken, actually die." (Is Mr. Beresford telling us that this sort of thing is a regular occurrence in the English Home Counties, or is this more drivel?) Apparently "80 years before [Bobby] Sands began his fast Yeats wrote a play in a hunger strike which was almost chilling in its anticipation of 1980-81", there is no indication of the play's title, maybe he is getting his Great Hungers and Hunger Strikes in a muddle.

The article ends in a piece of howlingly comic English snobbery, "the last of the hunger strikers" (meaning the last to die) was Mickey Devine. He is an example of the "scarifying effect" (whatever that may mean) of "martyrdom". This is because he had been a "petty criminal" whose "wife had abandoned him for an ice-cream man", presumably the latter person sold ice cream. Why is the fact that Devine had been a bit of a hood, and that his missus left him, brought up here? What relevance do these facts have to the matter Beresford is ostensibly discussing? Devine had the discipline and fortitude to see his hunger strike through to the bitter end.

Beresford may not want to acknowledge it but such behaviour does wipe out any trivial defects in his background. It is also a fact that apart of Sands, very few of the Hunger Strikers are really remembered outside of their own home areas, or organisations. It is pretty obvious that Beresford has not done any research on the question of the Hunger Strike. There is no mention of MacSwiney, nor of the fact that Irish Republicans have regularly used the 'weapon'—Sands and Devine were in a tradition of more than a century's standing.

Bobby Sands's victory in the Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election is described as "startling". Republicans won the seat on a regular basis for most of the history of 'Northern Ireland'. They did not bother going to Westminster, and it was only the strange conditions created by the State-pogrom that led to 'Unity' candidates to sign-in to the House of Commons.

Frank MacManus, whose death caused the by-election, rarely darkened the doors of the place, only going over now and then to protest at some of the more blatant bits of British misbehaviour in his constituency. The Unity candidates, even Bernadette Devlin, were essentially 'keeping the seat warm' for Sinn Féin.

Beresford and the rest of the British (and adjectivally Irish) media were 'startled' only because of their conviction that Irish history began in 1969. They covered their ignorance by claiming that in essence nothing had happened for centuries. Thus the tired joke about putting

their watches back by three hundred years. The UK's Cabinet looked the other way for half a century before 'Northern Ireland' blew up. It blew up, not because of the IRA, which as a military force barely existed in 1969, but because of the contorted form of government foisted on the place. If Establishment journals like the *Guardian*, and institutions like the British Library, are not prepared to face the facts of the case, we can only be thankful that the Provisionals are able to recognise and bear the burden of a 'moral onus'.

Seán McGouran

## Irish Oil And Gas — Time For A State Company?

In relation to our rich store of offshore oil and gas Ireland should change tack and, even at this late stage, follow the Norwegian example by establishing a State company along the lines of Statoil. That proposal will make immediate sense to anyone familiar with the international market in natural gas over the last ten years. If the Irish political class had remained true to its national revolution we would now have politicians with the confidence and imagination to take on such a project.

But since Charles Haughey is no longer around, and since imaginative political initiatives which were his forte are now disapproved of, there is unlikely to be any takers for an *Irish Statoil*. Instead the leaders of the main parties will spend the next year searching for an elusive 'big idea' that might win them media attention in the general election campaign. Of course there won't be any 'big ideas', only PR gimmicks that generate media chatter.

Yet there is a compelling logic about the success stories of the state-owned oil and gas companies of Russia, Norway, and Algeria, the main players in the current European market. The relevant companies are: Gazprom (Russia), Statoil (Norway), and Sonatrach (Algeria). All three are sophisticated international business organisations that raise additional funds for investment through national and international stock exchanges. Gazprom and Sonatrach have already reached agreement on how they can co-operate to extract the highest price from the European market. Statoil is keeping its distance from the other two for the moment but its future participation in a European oil and gas cartel cannot be ruled out. There is a nice irony about the prospect of privatised

Europe being held to ransom by a cartel of successful state companies.

Of the three companies Gazprom is the most political. The Russians make no secret of how Gazprom is run in accordance with Russian national strategic considerations rather than purely economic criteria. At an important international Gazprom negotiation last year, participants were surprised to see the company represented by none other than Vladimir Putin himself. And the more that Gazprom stands free market ideology on its head, the more successful it becomes. The money earned from the sale of Russian gas internationally goes to the Russian State and people. Much of the pipeline transporting the gas is owned by Gazprom, and the company has in recent years begun to buy up the West European companies who distribute the gas to the consumer, in other words it is chasing the real money. In this way it is following the example set by Statoil for Norway and extracting the full value of Russian gas for the Russian State.

The most recent development in the Irish natural gas industry could not provide a greater contrast. Last year the Irish Government sold eighty per cent of the license for exploring the 'Dunquin area', a coastal area south west of Kerry to *Providence Resources*, a company controlled by Tony O'Reilly, the owner of Independent Newspapers, and twenty per cent to a Scottish company called Sosina. Providence and Sosina subsequently sold eighty per cent of the license to ExxonMobil, the US petroleum giant. The nature of the deal is succinctly described by Colm Rapple in an article in *Ireland on Sunday* as follows:

"The drilling has yet to start but seismic exploration has already

pinpointed two large oil and gas prospects under the seabed some 200 miles south west of Kerry. O'Reilly's company Providence Resources estimates that they could contain over 25 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas and over 4 million barrels of oil. That's very big, even by international standards.

"Providence has got someone else to foot all of the exploration costs including exploration wells costing up to €40 million each. The deal highlights the ridiculously generous terms at which the Government is giving away rights to our potential oil and natural gas reserves. A little over a year ago it gave Providence Resources and a private Scottish based company, Sosina Exploration, an exclusive licence to explore and exploit the so called Dunquin area off the South West coast. Now those two companies have sold an 80% share in the licence to ExxonMobil. Under the deal Exxon will bear all the exploration costs while Providence and Sosina simply sit back and look forward to a 20% share in any find."

Rapple is a former *Irish Press* journalist with a reputation for straight talking: he is unusual in having a clear sympathy for Joe public without having an ideological axe to grind. His article has been published on the *Shell to Sea—The West's Awake* website which is associated with, if not published by, the Rossport Five Campaign. He was also interviewed on RTE radio about the article. In concluding the article Rapple doesn't pull any punches:

"Had it (ExxonMobile) been of the same mind fourteen months ago when the licence was first issued, it presumably would have been willing to do a similar deal with the State. Instead of giving the licence to Providence and Sosina who have no direct experience of drilling offshore Ireland, energy minister Noel Dempsey could have dealt directly with the giant ExxonMobile keeping the 20% stake for the Irish people.

"It may well be that ExxonMobile would not have been interested at the time. Maybe the current deal reflects the changing environment for energy pricing. But either way the deal is a fact and proves conclusively that the current terms applied to offshore licences are far too generous. It's time the Government looked for more.

"But it's failing to act. Mr Dempsey is getting ready to issue new licences to another large tract of the offshore area ranging from due west of Clare to north of Derry. When he sought applications he promised that the licensing terms first introduced in 1992 would apply. But no application has yet been accepted and given the sharp rise in energy prices he should renege on that promise.

"Under the current terms, the oil companies effectively own any oil or gas they find. The State gives up its ownership rights and the oil companies simply pay tax on their profits at the rate of 25%. But before they are deemed to

have made any taxable profit they can write off all exploration and developments costs and the estimated costs of eventually shutting down the wells at some stage in the future. It has been estimated that many finds would be at least half depleted before the State would get a cent in tax revenue. And there is no requirement on the oil companies to land any resources found in Ireland. Oil could be piped up into tankers and shipped straight to Britain or even the US.

"Noel Dempsey can look for more and get it. The Providence deal proves that."

That generous tax regime for oil exploration companies was introduced in 1992 by Ray Burke. Burke was subjected to a lot of criticism for introducing that measure but the criticism was refuted by a letter in the *Irish Times* from the Chief

Executive Officer of one of the oil companies. He said that if Burke hadn't reduced the tax rates set by Justin Keating in the seventies, no company would have looked at exploring Irish offshore waters. He summed up the choice facing the Irish Government as follows: either stick with Burke's generous tax measures or go down the Norwegian route of getting the Irish State to form its own exploration company.

Colm Rapple undoubtedly has a point in pressing Minister Dempsey to reset the licensing and tax regulations to be less generous but, whatever the Minister does, he will be at the mercy of huge international companies or, in the case of O'Reilly, homegrown oligarchs. The Norwegian option, in these days of comparative wealth in the public finances, deserves very careful consideration.

**David Alvey**

his criticism of the public sector in his speech:

"To seek to set the public sector workers against those of the private sector is dangerous. To try to characterise civil servants as privileged is unfair."

In Irish and British terms Sarkozy would be considered a centrist. Indeed he might even pass for a "social democrat", but in the French context he is unmistakably on the Right. His long-term objective is to roll back the profound political and social changes of the Mitterand era. The Communist Party has also accused him of historical revisionism. Part of his agenda includes minimising the significance of historic events such as the French Revolution. One of his ideological mentors is the unsuccessful right-wing presidential candidate of the 1980s, Edouard Balladur, who wrote an influential book entitled *The End Of Jacobinism*.

**SEGOLENE ROYAL**

Although Sarkozy has a demagogic political style, he is undoubtedly a political heavyweight, which is more than can be said for his presidential rival Segolene Royal. Apart from her attractive media-friendly appearance, Royal's appeal rests on the indisputable fact that she is not Nicholas Sarkozy. Despite current opinion poll indications, in my view this will not be enough to win an election for the most powerful post in Western Europe's only independent nuclear power.

A bit like our own Enda Kenny and Pat Rabbitte, she has tried to make a virtue out of saying as little as possible on policy matters. When asked about her view of Turkey's application to join the EU her reply was: "*My opinion is that of the French people*". (I take this to mean she favours a referendum on the issue.)

She has been accused of being "*Blairite*". The basis for this is an interview in the *Financial Times* in which she complimented the British Prime Minister. She has also criticised the 35-hour week. But in my view, she doesn't have the missionary zeal of Blair. Unlike Sarkozy, she will not attempt to dismantle the French welfare state. However, neither will she resist globalist trends, which tend to undermine the social gains of the Mitterand era.

**THE LEFT-WING ALTERNATIVE**

If Sarkozy and Royal are ratified by their respective parties, the contest between these two candidates will not reflect the divisions in French society between those who want to embrace globalisation along Anglo-Saxon lines and those who wish to preserve *l'exception Francaise* or the specifically French way of life. To judge by the result of the referendum on the EU Constitutional

## French Politics

A brief review of the current French political scene would not inspire much optimism for those wishing for an alternative to the international neo-liberal consensus. The two most likely presidential candidates in next year's election are Nicholas Sarkozy of the right wing UMP and Segolene Royal of the Socialist Party.

**NICHOLAS SARKOZY**

Although the UMP can claim to be in the tradition of Charles de Gaulle, Sarkozy represents a break from Gaullist principles, in particular in relation to foreign policy. He has been described as America's favourite French politician. In a recent speech in the US, he criticised "*French arrogance*" in the foreign policy sphere; in particular, referring to France's position on Iraq, he said: "*it is not appropriate to seek to embarrass your allies or rejoice in its difficulties*". He went on to say to his sympathetic American audience: "*I often feel like a stranger in my own land*" (*L'Humanite Dimanche*, 24.9.06). On domestic policy he favours privatisation and the ending of the 35-hour working week. Also, *a la* Ireland's Michael McDowell, he is against "*egalitarianism*" and is in favour of a part-time voluntary reserve police force. Other policies include the introduction of juries along Anglo-Saxon lines.

The leader of the Communist Party, Marie-George Buffet, has described Sarkozy as: "*le petit Bush Francais*". And there is no doubt that many of his ideas have a distinctly American flavour. However, he has all but abandoned his policies on what the French call

"*communautarisme*". (The nearest word I can think of to translate this concept is "*multi-culturalism*", or the idea that immigrants do not have to embrace the host country's values. The French perceive this as an Anglo-Saxon approach.)

Sarkozy received the loudest cheer for the following part of a recent speech on the immigrant issue:

"... Welcoming, but not to those who wish to live in France without respecting her laws, her customs, her traditions... She does not want those who do not respect her. She does not want those who do not love her. France will never renounce 2,000 years of Christianity, two thousand years of spiritual values and the values of civilisation" (*Le Monde*, 14.10.06).

It seems that in the era of the "war on terror" even the Right has to recognise the merit of the traditional French approach to immigration, although Sarkozy unlike most French politicians emphasises "*Christian*", rather than the more inclusive "*Republican*", values in order to appeal to National Front voters.

Sarkozy also appears to have moderated his policy of positive discrimination, which many French people fear would lead to the ethnic style politics of the United States. Referring to this issue he said:

"...it does not have to be based on ethnic criteria which would be the negation of the Republic, but on the basis of social, economic and educational criteria" (*Le Monde*, 14.10.06).

Doubtless in an attempt to appeal to the middle ground, Sarkozy even softened

Treaty, the latter group is in the majority in France and yet both Sarkozy and Royal were on the losing side.

The French Communist Party was the most coherent and united party on the "No" side of that referendum, but communists accept that a communist candidate will not be successful in the presidential election. Indeed, since the 1960s when the party was the largest in France with about 25% of the vote, the French Communist Party, like its Italian counterpart, has accepted that it could not be in government on its own or hold the highest office. Partly, this was because of internal conditions, but also it was accepted that the US and its allies would not accept a communist government in western Europe just as the Soviet Union at that time did not accept capitalist governments in eastern Europe.

The Italian CP responded to this by its policy of "*historic compromise*", which involved a coalition with the Christian Democrats in order to break that party's monopoly of power since the Second World War. That policy, which involved a suspension of democracy, ended with the emergence of terrorism and the assassination of the Christian Democratic leader, Aldo Moro in 1978.

The French "*historic compromise*" involved backing Mitterand, a socialist with economic policies similar to the Communist Party. The effect of this was to disastrously undermine the electoral base of the CP by giving the Socialist Party credibility. Nevertheless, it could be said that the French "*historic compromise*" was of much greater benefit to the working class than the Italian equivalent.

The French CP's electoral free fall since the 1970s has been accompanied by a diminution in its preponderant influence on French cultural life and the Trade Union movement. But it remains a substantial element in French society. Bernard Thibault, the leader of the CGT (the largest Trade Union), is not a CP member, which would have been unheard of 30 years ago. Nevertheless I have the impression that he is surrounded by CP members and has limited room for manoeuvre.

There are some signs of a modest communist recovery. As well as the successful campaign against the EU Constitutional Treaty, the Communist daily newspaper *l'Humanite* is one of only two French newspapers that is increasing its readership (the other is the Catholic newspaper *La Croix*).

Despite its leadership role in the defeat of the EU Constitutional Treaty, most members of the CP would be happy to put back another "Mitterrand" rather than put forward their own leader, Marie-George Buffet, in the presidential election. The

problem is that no such "Mitterrand" has emerged. The most impressive opponent of the EU Constitutional Treaty was Laurent Fabius. But Fabius is not liked. He is considered a "Caviar Socialist" (apparently the "smoked salmon" variety of socialist doesn't exist in France). He was also indirectly associated with the import of blood contaminated with the AIDs virus.

My own theory is that Fabius rose too far too fast. He was one of the youngest ever Prime Ministers of France. If his political progress had been slower there would have been time to knock the arrogance of youth out of him and his political standing now would have been higher.

So much for what might have been. The difficulty for the French Communist Party is that no credible socialist candidate has emerged that could be relied on to provide an alternative to the neo-liberal tendencies which are undermining the specifically French way of life. The following article appeared in *l'Humanite* (26.9.06). It gives a flavour of the debate which has been taking place in the pages of that newspaper. It is written by Gilles Alfonsi, who is a member of the National Committee of the French Communist Party. It is interesting for what he says as much as how he says it. His opening quotations from a recent decision of the communist congress seem to indicate that the French CP is reserving its position. These are the types of debates that are taken for granted by *l'Humanite* readers, but are unknown to readers of Irish or British daily newspapers.

#### **Impasse of a Single Candidate by Gilles Alfonsi**

Twelve regional secretaries of the Communist Party have just published in *l'Humanite* (20.9.06) a contribution which prompts several remarks. They imply that at the congress of last March "*a candidate from the French CP is a necessary asset for mobilising against the Right...*"

In fact the Congress decided precisely this: "*we put up for debate our conviction that a communist candidate at the presidential election will be the most effective for carrying this union (of the left), while noting its diversity, because of its popular base, that it represents the left, and in the country the precise content of its political project allows a genuine break with the logic of neo-liberalism*".

But the motion emphasises: "*no party can claim to rally the left around it or its own project by calling for the public to support it*". In other words, the Congress did not make a communist candidate a precondition for uniting the left.

Our comrades support their proposition of entering into the campaign by deciding quickly on a candidate thus: "*the CP must*

*fight clearly for its ideas*", "*the CP must raise the level of debate*", "*communism must not reduce itself to anti-liberalism*", "*the French anti-capitalist left wing movement is not homogeneous*".

But this is not at issue in the current debate. We all agree with these points. However, one can wish to fight for one's ideas with complete clarity and remain perfectly inaudible. One can wish to mobilise the population and find oneself all alone. The conditions in which we find ourselves are and will be determinant.

The question is to know if we think it is necessary or not for an anti-liberal mobilisation to re-orient all of the left and if we think it is possible to change political realities. If we think it, we must designate a candidate who is capable of mobilising the largest amount of anti-liberal sentiment while constructing a campaign to break with the Presidential system (instead of contenting ourselves with its functioning). The campaign against the Constitutional Treaty showed that we are perfectly capable of being ourselves within a broader movement.

Finally, it is the characteristic of a movement that it includes a diversity of points of view: let us make this diversity an asset rather than a handicap.

The most significant thing about our comrades' approach is that which they don't deal with: not a word about the victory of the 29th of May [in the referendum on the European Constitution] and on the idea of prolonging the "no" of the left by a political construction; not a word on the engagement of communists in local communities (up to 400 at present), while establishing our strategic orientation; neither is any lesson drawn from the score of 3.7% obtained by our party in the 2002 presidential election, as if the result of that campaign was irrelevant; nothing or almost nothing on the refusal to try again a pluralist left. Finally, nothing on the stake for the party which is never better than when it builds with others.

A so called "*quick establishment of a campaign*"? It is the story of a driver who when faced with an obstacle accelerates while blowing his horn.

### **The Contention Of The Poets An essay in Irish intellectual history by John Minahane**

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**ISBN: 0 9522582 4 2**

## BREEN continued

guerrilla warfare'... There are stories going round Dublin of fights he had all over the city—the Custom House in particular... What positions exactly did Michael Collins hold in the army?... Did he ever take part in any armed conflict in which he fought by shooting; the number of such battles or fights; in fact, is there any authoritative record of his having ever fired a shot for Ireland at an enemy of Ireland?" (p127, 2006).

"Shortly before this, Eamon O'Duibhir met up with Michael Collins for the last time: 'He said jocosely to me, 'Eamon, do you know what was the worst thing you ever did in your life?' I told him I could not pick one out of many and then he said, 'Bringing Seamus Robinson to Tipperary'" (p136, 2006).

### DAN BREEN ON SLAVERY

He returned to a favourite theme, the past slave mentality of the Irish: "The greatest kick I ever got was trying to get that slave-mindedness out of our people, trying to elevate them from the craven attitudes of which I saw them. When I was young the people were slaves to everyone and they were sat upon by everybody from the time they started. If they didn't have a cap to lift, they'd have to lift a handful of their hair. I detested that. I could never accept it—not even when I was a little boy. I could not and would not conform to this tyranny" (p184, 2006).

### DAN ON DUBLIN

"He'd started a love affair with Dublin before he'd settled there. Now that he was living on the city's perimeter, he had caustic things to say about it in his journal: 'Dublin is Dublin and it is still the Pale. The Anglo blood is hard to change. You may change one or two of them but the great majority will always be anti-Irish. They tasted the ways of empire and served it for a way of life—so they can't ever change. The Castle catholic is far worse than the Anglo type. The crown servants are at heart loyal to the English. The bishops and clergy were ninety-nine per cent on the side of the enslavers" (p185, 2006).

### DAN BREEN: THE LABOUR PARTY

"The new men in the Labour Party are a very poor type of manhood. They are one and all a gang of chancers with no interest in Ireland or the Irish people. They want a plaque put up by that crowd to the great James Connolly. What an insult to a great man and what he stood for! Connolly was FIRST Irish and he wanted his country free from the slave chains of England.

"When that job was done he wanted a

social system set up for the benefit of all our people—not for the benefit of one section, one party" (p185, 2006).

"Although Dan announced that 'It is time to close ranks' Labour felt the need to organise independently outside the national movement. Dan lost the election to the Labour candidate and, probably as a result of this, he had a life-long dislike for the Labour party" (p47, 1981).

"The Labour Party man, however, was having none of this. He announced that he was 'not afraid of Dan Breen or of his gun levelled at my temple'" (p135, 2006).

The Labour Party man who defied and eventually defeated Dan Breen in the June, 1922 General Election for Waterford/Tipperary East constituency was Nicholas Phelan, who took the fifth and final seat. Dan just missed out. John Butler, who later joined Fine Gael took the second seat for the Labour Party in that June 1922 election.

"The absence of these enterprising young men from their homes in Tipperary hit their relatives hard. Treacy and Breen were the main providers for their respective families. Eamon O'Duibhir was summoned to Dublin in 1919 by Tom Johnson and William O'Brien from the Labour Party. Acting on behalf of the National Aid League, they offered him £200 to help meet his expenses. He turned it down but was advised by the Labour men to find out if anything useful could be done with the money back in Tipperary. He discussed it with Cumann na mBan and they pointed out that certain local families, such as Dan Breen's mother, were in a very bad way financially. National Aid gave O'Duibhir some money for these families; Mrs. Breen got £80." (p91, 2006).

William O'Brien, the General Secretary of the ITGWU, was to cross electoral paths with Breen on many occasions. O'Brien was elected for Dublin South in 1922, defeated in 1923. In June 1927, Wm. O'Brien took the fifth seat of seven in Tipperary. Dan was ignominiously defeated on that occasion standing on an Independent ticket. In September, 1927, Wm. O'Brien lost his Tipperary seat. Dan Breen didn't go forward.

In 1932, Dan topped the poll for Fianna Fail. Wm. O'Brien didn't go forward. In Tipperary constituency in 1937, Dan topped the poll again, and Wm. O'Brien for Labour took the last seat. In 1938, with near 10,000 first preferences, Dan topped the poll and Wm. O'Brien lost, dropping out of electoral politics altogether.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH

## Military Aspects Of Ireland's Arms Crisis Of 1969-70

by  
*Angela Clifford*

One of the best-kept secrets of recent decades is the 1969-70 military policy of Jack Lynch's Government, improvised during and after the 'Siege of Derry' and subsequent disorders in the North. The Army was for the first time in fifty years ordered to the Border. The cover story was that Field Hospitals and Refugee Camps had to be established for Northerners. In fact, the mobilisation was comprehensive and the two Army Reserve Forces were brought into play.

A study of released Secret official documents, some 30 of which are reproduced here, reveals that the Army was ordered to prepare to arm the Northern Ireland minority and to provide military training. It was also ordered to prepare for military operations in Northern Ireland. It took these orders seriously and set about special training and re-equipment. For the first time in half a century, there was military thinking about Northern Ireland.

This policy lasted from mid-August 1969 until Jack Lynch changed tack, created the Arms Crisis in late April/early May 1970, and criminalised some of those who had been implementing Cabinet policy. He ousted his Minister for Justice (Micheal O Morain); dismissed two Cabinet Ministers (Neil Blaney and Charles Haughey); arrested James Kelly, the Intelligence Captain chiefly concerned with liaising with Northern Citizens' Defence, along with John Kelly, a Northern Defence Committee leader, as well as a Belgian businessman who was only marginally involved, Albert Luykx. The accusation was that they had been conspiring to illegally import arms. The documents in this book prove beyond doubt, however, that the arms importation was part of Government policy.

The political theatre of the Arms Crisis changed the medium of political life in the South, and set going a new political and military departure in the Northern Nationalist community.

Arms Crisis Series, No. 2. Index.  
162pp. ISBN 1 874 157 16 2.  
*A Belfast Magazine* No.29. 2006.  
E10, £7.50

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## BREEN continued

An ardent catholic, Robinson's views were neither inclusive nor egalitarian. He later wrote to Frank Gallagher that the IRA members of his generation were, 'the normal, natural (common) sensible people in Ireland. All others must be objected to as in some degree abnormal, unnatural; that, because we youngsters were normal, that is without a taint of heresy or near heresy, natural or theological, we were Irish separatists'."

"The somewhat less exotic citizenry of south Tipperary—many of whom would never have travelled far from home other than on a day trip to local cities like Limerick, Waterford or Cork—eventually found Robinson hard to take. He regularly prefaced his many expressions of opinion with phrases like 'as they say in France'" (p43, 2006).

Reading this, you would get the impression that Robinson was in his Sixties—he was little more than four years older than either Breen or Treacy. Robinson was barely 30 years of age during the War of Independence, but he had a wealth of experience behind him—Treacy would have been well aware of that.

### SOLOHEADBEG

"Robinson maintained that, 'After tea the two of us [Treacy and Robinson] went out to the haggard where he told me of the gelignite that was due to arrive at Soloheadbeg Quarry in three weeks time... he added that there would be from two to six guarding the cart, that they would be armed and that there was the possibility of shooting. 'Good', said I, 'go ahead but under the condition that you let me know in time to be there myself with a couple of men from the local battalion... men with whom I would go tiger hunting'" (p53, 2006).

"Robinson claimed that Treacy asked him if they should get permission for the action from Volunteer GHQ in Dublin and that he (Robinson) replied, somewhat jesuitically, 'It will be unnecessary so long as we do not ask for their permission. If we ask we must await their reply'" (p53, 2006).

### SOUTH TIPPERARY PROCLAMATION

"Robinson had certainly joined them by the time Treacy called a meeting of brigade officers at Donnelly's of Nodstown, near Cashel, on 23 February, 1919. At that gathering, Robinson drafted the proclamation which ordered all British military and police forces to leave south Tipperary under penalty of death. It said that all upholders of the 'foreign government' found in the county after the date would be held to have forfeited their lives. GHQ refused to ratify the proclamation, pointing out that the Third Tipperary Brigade was effectively making policy on the hoof and on behalf of the entire revolutionary movement.

Breen, in *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, said that, 'We could not understand their reluctance, seeing that ours was the only logical position.'

"The proclamation—despite the Dublin objections—was distributed throughout the brigade area. Robinson said that it was intended to put things on a war footing" (p65, 2006).

### KNOCKLONG:

#### RESCUE OF SEAN HOGAN

"While all this was going on, Robinson seems to have kept his distance. He may not have been a coward, but neither does it seem that he was much use in the heat of battle. Desmond Ryan, in his hagiographic account of the adventure, *Daring Rescue of Sean Hogan at Knocklong Station* is soothingly discreet about Robinson's input: 'Panic still reigned and it was some minutes before Robinson could discover the actual position. He saw, however, that the worst had not happened. He prepared to intervene as soon as he could with effect... A thought flashed into his mind, a curious oversight in the plans... there had been no provision against any attempt to start the train. Robinson hurried quickly to the spot where he could keep his eye and his gun on the engine driver. The next minute he saw Treacy, Breen and Hogan and knew that the rescue had indeed succeeded.'

"Robinson's indecision, timidity and commitment to the rules of war—as he interpreted them—would gradually isolate him from the fighters he commanded. However, on that Knocklong platform, after fifteen minutes of grim struggle, his cohorts were probably lucky to have at least one of their number fully operational; Treacy tottered on the edge of unconsciousness, Breen was delirious with pain and Hogan was still handcuffed" (p77, 2006).

And Ambrose is making Robinson out to be a coward!

### AMBUSHING LORD FRENCH:

#### 19 DECEMBER, 1921

On the Lord French Ambush, Breen has this to say about Robinson: "So I went on one of these occasions to warn him of a proposed attack, but he informed me that he was having nothing to do with it and that he was not taking part in any more of these Dublin exploits. I told Treacy about this and actually we did get him to come with us to Ashtown when the actual attack on French took place but from this on Robinson was no longer proving amenable and, on quite a number of occasion after this, he upset the applecart rather badly by giving countermanding orders when we had something arranged in Tipperary.'" (p94, 2006).

"Robinson had objected to [Sean] Hogan being put in charge of a column. He told Ryan that if they insisted on handing over their column to Hogan, they might live to regret it. He said that Hogan was too young for the job. By

early 1921, Hogan's subordinates were starting to share Robinson's doubts" (p120, 2006).

"Nevertheless, Hogan remained in charge of his column and, by the time the Truce came about in July, 1921, they had failed to pull off even one successful ambush.

"Organising now took up all of Robinson's time. Cut off from day-to-day Volunteer life at the Rosegreen HQ, he ceased to have any real influence. Augusteijn says: 'The fighting men gradually lost their respect for him as he now rarely did any fighting himself. The local men considered him a thorn in their side with his relentless requests and criticisms of their lack of action, while GHQ was rarely satisfied with his work. The column men as a rule had very little respect for those who were not involved in the fighting.'

"Thomas Ryan came to regret aspects of the manner in which Robinson was treated as the war approached its end: 'With the wisdom of later years, I realise that had he been possessed of a more forceful character and spent more of his time with the columns, where he might have influenced or directed their activities on the spot, we might have had less to lament in the way of lost opportunities" (p121, 2006).

And yet for a man who takes such a slugging in this book, he is central to every operation! He set out to organise the Volunteers in Tipperary; he was in Soloheadbeg; he and Treacy went to meet Michael Collins in Dublin; he was at Knocklong; and in the French attack in Ashtown.

In April, 1920, Hollyford barracks was besieged: "*Robinson took a notable part in this action*"; at Clerihan RIC barracks, Robinson called off the attack, plans would have to be vetted by HQ. Treacy simply remarked: "*All right, Seamus, you are the boss.*" On the following day the IRA had a 'bloodless victory', the barrack was evacuated and on that evening, the volunteers burned it down.

In the Treaty War, he was in charge of the defence of Clonmel. "*He played a gallant role in the Clonmel resistance—assisted by De Valera.*"

### TIPPERARY & THE TREATY

"The Third Tipperary Brigade was vocal during the Dail debates which took place between December 1921 and January 1922. Seamus Robinson had been a Sinn Fein TD since 1921 and, naturally, he had a great deal to say about the Treaty and its signatories. His bitter attack on Michael Collins caused disruptions in the chamber: 'Arthur Griffith has called Collins 'the man who won the war'. The press has called him the commander-in-chief of the I.R.A. He has been called 'a great exponent of

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## BREEN continued

"My father approved 'physical force' only as a means to resist conscription.

"It was for defence—not for offensive action—that the Volunteers had been formed in 1913. The vast majority had no clear idea of the determination, discipline and strength of the existing Ulster loyalist force backed-up by trained veterans and British politicians. My father knew how weak the nationalist military position was and he was convinced that Ulster loyalists could not be forced into an Irish Republic. The only way to pursue this objective, he firmly believed, would be by constitutional means: otherwise Partition would result.

"My father's reasoned conclusion was supported by a minority in the IRB and by a group of Sinn Féin members. He was opposed by those who, caught-up in the afterglow of the Rising, deemed further military action to be justified in pursuit of a thirty-two county Republic." (ibid., p17).

### SEAMUS ROBINSON

The most fascinating personality in the new Ambrose book is Seamus Robinson. Ambrose makes Seamus Robinson the *bete noir* of South Tipperary Republicans and especially of Dan Breen. Two chapters and 21 pages in all are devoted to Robinson.

Ambrose is greatly influenced in this by Joost Augusteijn who singles Robinson out:

"Organising now took up all of Robinson's time... he ceased to have any real influence... fighting men gradually lost their respect for him... while GHQ was rarely satisfied with his work" (p121, 2006).

Seamus Robinson was born in Belfast in 1890; educated Christian Brothers Schools, Belfast and Scotland. Joined the Irish Volunteers 1913; was in charge of outpost at Hopkins & Hopkins, Easter Week, 1916; was interned at Frongoch; was Brigade Commandant 3rd "South" Tipperary Brigade 1917-1922 and subsequently Commandant-General 2nd Southern Division IRA; was member of the second Dail (East Tipperary and Waterford) 1921-22; voted against the acceptance of the Treaty and during the debates demanded an Army Convention be called to decide whether or not to approve the Treaty. A founder member of Fianna Fail. Elected on Fianna Fail panel to Senate at triennial election, December, 1928, until the abolition of the Senate in 1936.

In 1947, he was appointed one of the five founder members of the Bureau of Military History which was set up that year to assemble and co-ordinate material on a compilation of the history of the

movement for Independence from 25th November 1913 to 11th July 1921.

### ARRIVAL IN TIPPERARY

"At the start of 1917 Eamon O'Duibhir had obtained a loan and bought Kilshenane House and farm, with a view to using it as a base for Gaelic League, Sinn Féin, and Volunteer activities. During his East Week-induced internment in England he had met a Belfast man called Seamus Robinson who had trouble finding work after his release from prison. Robinson had played a considerable part in the Rising, having been in charge of the farthest outpost from the GPO on Sackville Street, holding the Hopkins and Hopkins shop which looked out over O'Connell Bridge. From that vantage, he was face to face with the full might of the British response to the GPO insurgency. His building was one of the last to be evacuated despite heavy British gunfire. O'Duibhir, in prison, noted Robinson's obvious sincerity and capability. After their release he invited the firm catholic to come and live at Kilshenane as an alleged farm labourer. In fact, Robinson's job was to help manage the Volunteers" (p33, 2006).

"Robinson arrived some day in January, 1917, in the midst of a snow storm", said O'Duibhir. 'He had with him a small black travelling bag that we got to know very well and to associate with him. As a farm worker he made up for his lack of knowledge by his honesty, hustle and zeal. He certainly worked as hard as he could and left nothing undone that he could do in addition to all that, he was a very gentlemanly man... certainly no more proper man could be found than the same Robinson'" (p34, 2006).

"Seamus Robinson was appointed commandant in a manoeuvre masterminded by Sean Treacy in cahoots with Breen. Treacy was appointed vice-commandant.

"Treacy had arranged that Robinson should be appointed brigade commander to suit his own purpose" Breen later claimed. 'He wanted a sort of yes-man or a stooge as we would call it now, in the position and we thought that Robinson would serve this purpose'.

"Breen said that Treacy reckoned the two of them were 'too unknown and unproved to carry any weight in Tipperary and it must be remembered that a man who had the label of being one of the Volunteers who fought in 1916 was still a hero to us all in 1918'.

"Breen and Treacy—having discussed things between themselves—had, prior to the meeting, travelled to Kilshenane to check Robinson out. They liked what they saw and on a subsequent visit offered him the position. In *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, Breen wrote that they: 'asked Seamus if he would agree to become commandant of our brigade. I well remember the night on which we called. We found his milking a cow and our acquaintance with him

was so slight that we addressed him as Mr. Robinson. Treacy kept on talking to him while he continued with his milking. When he had finished milking the cow, we expected that he might stand up and talk to us, but he took his bucket of milk and walked away, saying over his shoulder as we followed him that he would do whatever we wanted him to do, but that he could not afford to idle as he might lose his job" (p40, 2006).

"Breen's contention that Robinson was not really in charge is borne out by events and by the opinion of Thomas Ryan: 'I have no direct personal knowledge of the circumstances of the appointment of Robinson... but from what I knew of Treacy, I imagine that it was he who supported if he did not propose Robinson for the appointment. When Treacy lived he was looked upon by all the officers and men of the brigade as the actual power, even though he did not choose to hold the appointment of brigade commander. At brigade council meetings which I attended, though Robinson might preside, it was Treacy who dominated and directed matters and it was therefore to Treacy that we looked for leadership in action" (p41, 2006).

"Whenever Treacy was present, he was in charge," said Breen.

"Ernie O'Malley, in *On Another Man's Wound*, said, 'Robinson was pudgy and took short steps, which were hard on my long stride. Brown eyes helped a grin when he played on words; he liked to pun even to the limit of our groans. He had a slight, clipping, speech which came from Belfast, a stout stubborn underlip, sparse hair on a high round forehead . . . Seamus had too much of the French kind of inquiring, critical logic" (p42/129, 2006).

"Robinson, a serious-minded methodical man, a fretter and a worrier, was an obvious outsider in south Tipperary. His Belfast family had been active in Fenianism and, as a result of enforced political exile, many members (including his father) were born in France. They were people who worried a great deal about being excommunicated because of their Fenian activities.

"Robinson felt that there was a 'zeal of the convert' aspect to the deeply religious catholic ethos in which he grew up. His great-grandfather—though a nationalist—had been a protestant, indeed a grand master of the Orange Order.

"Robinson's parents were Parnellites, convinced that the British empire was invincible. When he showed an enthusiasm for 1798 centennial commemorations happening in Belfast he was told: 'It would be lovely if it could be done but your grandfather failed and your great grandfathers failed, all better men than you ever can hope to be and besides England has become much stronger and is just as ruthless.

"Breen and Treacy were hard-nosed wild spirits and may, in Robinson's eyes, have seemed somewhat uncouth fellows.

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## BREEN continued

here: Ambrose relies heavily on August-eijn; Michael Kevin O'Doherty falls back on Foster and *Modern Ireland* for his background on Irish history. Both men do it quite innocently: they have been persuaded that anything from Oxford University Press or the Irish Academic Press is gospel in so far as the authentic writing of Irish history is concerned.

### THE BIG FOUR

"The myth of the Big Four doesn't bear close examination. Seamus Robinson—whose many polemics, rants and recollections have been seized upon by sloppy revisionists anxious to prove what a bad lot the Tipperary IRA were—was a decidedly hesitant combatant, disliked by Michael Collins and distrusted by many members of the Third Tipperary Brigade. His 1950s written attacks on Breen, informed by retrospective bitterness and jealousy which bordered on the irrational, are worth noting but are unreliable. Sean Hogan, younger than the others, led the Second South Tipperary Flying Column but was regarded by his comrades as being unfit for leadership. His capture by the RIC—which led to the Knocklong rescue—was just one of many incidents wherein his careless, brainless or irresponsible behaviour put himself and his companions in danger. Breen and Treacy were what they seemed to be—gutsy, spirited militants willing to risk everything for what they saw as a high ideal. Other Tipperary activists—such as Eamon O'Duibhir, Maurice Crowe or Dinny Lacey—were probably more deserving of the fame which was heaped upon Robinson and Hogan. Nevertheless, the legend of the Big Four acted as a stirring call to arms during 1919 when the outcome of the War of Independence was far from clear." (p12, 2006).

Yet, in his 1981 book, Ambrose describes Sean Treacy thus:

"Treacy was an arid, doctrinaire revolutionary without any great sense of fun or humour" (p12, 1981).

### SOLOHEADBEG:

TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 1919

"We had the full intention of not alone taking the gallignite they were escorting, but also of shooting down the escort, as an assertion of the national right to deny the passage of any armed enemy." (p53, 2006).

"In his 'Statement to the Bureau of Military History', a sealed account of events left behind for future generations, Breen went out of his way to repeatedly claim that he and Treacy set out to kill RIC men at Soloheadbeg: 'I would like to make this point clear and state here without any equivocation that we took this action deliberately having thought the matter over and talked it over between

us. Treacy had stated to me that the only way of starting a war was to kill someone and we wanted to start a war, so we intended to kill some of the police whom we looked upon as the foremost and most important branch of the enemy forces which were holding our country in subjection. The moral aspect of such a decision has been talked about since and we have been branded as murderers, both by the enemy and even by some of our own people, but I want it to be understood that the pros and cons were thoroughly weighed up in discussion between Treacy and myself and, to put it in a nutshell, we felt that we were merely continuing the active war for the establishment of the Irish Republic that had begun on Easter Monday, 1916. We felt there was a grave danger that the Volunteer organisation would disintegrate and was disintegrating into a purely political body... and we wished to get it back to its original purpose... We also decided that we would not leave the country as had been the usual practice, but that, having carried out this act of war, we would continue to live in the country in defiance of the British authorities... The only regret we had, following the ambush, was that there were only two policemen in it instead of the six we expected, because we felt that six dead policemen would have impressed the country more than a mere two" (p58, 2006).

### MICHAEL COLLINS

Seamus Robinson, Commandant, Third 'South' Tipperary Brigade and Sean Treacy, Vice Commandant headed to Dublin to meet Michael Collins. This is Robinson's account:

"Michael was waiting for us on the street with his notebook out', said Robinson. That this meeting was to be on the street instead of in an office was the first indication Robinson had that, 'if we were not exactly *persona non-grata*, at best we were decidedly not warmly welcome in any HQ office... they were rightly afraid of our blazing trail being followed by spies.'

"Collins seemed to be keeping his eyes peeled, watching everyone in the street without moving his head.

"Well', he said, 'everything is fixed up; be ready to go in a day or two.

"To go where?' Robinson asked.

"To the States', Collins replied.

"Why?'

"Well, isn't it the usual thing to do after . . . .' Collins allowed his sentence to trail off.

"We don't want to go to the States or anywhere else', Robinson insisted.

"Well', said Collins, 'a great many people think it is the only thing to do.

"Look here,' said Robinson, worried that Sinn Fein-style pacifism had taken hold of GHQ, 'to kill a couple of policemen for the country's sake and leave it at that by running away would be so wanton, as to approximate too closely to murder.'

"Then what do you propose to do?' asked Collins.

"Fight it out, of course.'

"Mick Collins', Robinson said, 'without having shown the slightest emotion during this short interview, now suddenly closed his notebook with a snap, saying as he strode off with the faintest of smiles on his lips but with a big laugh in his eyes: 'That's all right with me.'" (p67, 2006).

### THE IRB

"Soloheadbeg... widely regarded as the act that started the War of Independence." We can debate that for ever! But one thing is certain it could not have started without the calibre of men like Breen and Treacy, there's no doubt about that.

The Constitutional fighters were still well to the fore! Soloheadbeg took place on the same day the Sinn Fein MPs elected in the December 1918 British General Election—which saw Sinn Fein eclipse the Parliamentary Party amongst Irish nationalists—met in Dublin's Mansion House. They styled themselves Dail Eireann, issued a Declaration of Independence, adopted a provisional constitution and issued a rather progressive Democratic Programme.

"Professor Michael Hayes subsequently pointed out that this much celebrated First Dail took place, 'within the jurisdiction of an empire that then had millions of men under arms and had firmly entrenched and long established organs of government in Ireland'. But, as Charles Townsend says in *The British Campaign in Ireland*, in 1919 the Republic served by the Volunteers was, 'still a different thing from that represented by Dail Eireann'." (p52, 2006).

"Could progress towards Independence have been made without further armed revolution after 1916? Such a course was in fact proposed by my father and accepted in August 1916 by the Acting Supreme Council of the IRB in Dublin.

"Dr. McCartan... in the first chapter of his book *With de Valera in America*, states:

"The smoke had scarcely cleared from the ruins of the General Post Office which had been the headquarters of the revolutionary army, before steps were taken to reconstitute a temporary Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

"Seamus O'Doherty having agreed to undertake this work at the request of a representative of the Clan-na-Gael of America and having been later confirmed in this appointment by John Devoy, was the dominant member of that Council. He initiated the policy of capturing the electorate representation of Ireland for the Republic.'

"The first successes of that policy in 1917 were the elections of Count Plunkett in Roscommon and of Joe McGuinness in Longford" (*My Parents And Other Rebels*, Michael Kevin O'Doherty, 1999, p4)

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"Collins was a great, outstanding character. I cried at his death... Dev was a dictator. He could be very cruel... Irish politicians are the crookedest in the world... The only one making a stand against economic imperialism today is old de Gaulle... I've no hatred against anyone, English or Irish... I'm really a pacifist by nature." (Dan Breen, *Divine Word* magazine, November, 1968)

## Recalibrating and Deconstructing DAN BREEN

1981:

"Dan Breen was a guerrilla fighter and a revolutionary of the noblest tradition, dedicated to social as well as political change. He became a living legend in Ireland as one of the ablest and toughest soldiers in the fight for freedom."

(*The Dan Breen Story*—Joseph G. Ambrose, Mercier Press, 1981)

2006:

"Dan Breen was sometimes known as the 'Thug with Blood on His Hands' because of his involvement in the ambush and killing of two RIC policemen at Soloheadbeg—a political and historical controversy widely regarded as the act that started the War of Independence.

"Alongside his comrades in the Third Tipperary Brigade of the IRA, Dan Breen became one of the most infamous and controversial IRA leaders of his generation."

(*Dan Breen And The IRA*, Joe Ambrose, Mercier Press, 2006).

Dan Breen has leaped from hero to villain in 25 years—he could be from Bellaghy and not Donohill in so far as the new faked confidence of Cork and Dublin publishers and their media entourage is concerned. Time for Dan to be outed.

In the 1981 book, Dan Met Gandhi—by 2006, we are told that was impossible. We are told that G.B. Shaw, the writer, "...told Breen that he had always been surprised that the Volunteers had taken so long to eliminate the RIC; they should have been eliminated with more ruthlessness". There is no mention of this in 2006.

Joe Ambrose is not a writer of politics. He did grow up in South Tipperary "and knew—as a child—many of that county's War of Independence veterans". He has written seven books, including two novels.

Dan Breen is the subject of both his political books. However, the biggest shock the present writer received was when he entered the name 'Joe Ambrose' into Google: this is the same man who wrote the Dan Breen books, they are advertised on his site.

Joe Ambrose works as a DJ and member of experimental hip hop group Islamic Diggers, whom The Guardian called "the newest and grooviest of the new and groovy". Islamic Diggers produced the Dutch East India/Sub Rosa 2CD, **10%**, which features tracks by Marianne Faithfull, John Cale, and William Burroughs.

His books include two novels for Pulp Books, **Serious Time** (1998) and **Too Much Too Soon** (2000). His recent non-fiction books for Omnibus Press are **Moshpit Culture** (2001), an investigation of covert punk culture from inside the moshpit,

and **Gimme Danger** (2002), a biography of punk icon Iggy Pop. His short story **The Fatal Advantage** can be read in the [www.pulp.net](http://www.pulp.net) archive.

The new book on Dan Breen is a much larger publication, 220 pages to the 1981 publication of 120 pages. Ambrose also has the advantage in 2006, of access to the Bureau of Military History documents.

"This books seeks to recalibrate the story of Dan Breen, the Big Four (Breen, Treacy, Robinson and Sean Hogan) and the Third Tipperary Brigade so that the other players come into the spotlight." (p11, 2006).

Joost Augusteijn, a graduate of the University of Amsterdam, currently lecturing in Modern History at Queen's University, Belfast, is mentioned nine times in the index. His book, *From Public Defiance To Guerrilla Warfare*, is a constant source of reference throughout the publication.

"In more recent years Joost Augusteijn has deconstructed the story of south Tipperary IRA Volunteers with efficiency and academic rigour. Augusteijn sups from the same revisionist trough which feeds an undeniable intellectual blackguardism but he does know what he is talking about" (p11, 2006).

If Augusteijn knows what he is talking about, why associate him with 'intellectual blackguardism'? But does Augusteijn know what he is talking about?

Revisionism is primarily an academic phenomenon. It aspires to bring about a fundamental change in public opinion through the medium of the greatly expanded educational system of recent times. You can see the impact of revisionism in the two books mentioned

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