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Stone Age Democracy

Britain is having its first war-crimes trial. More than three years after the invasion of Iraq a soldier is being prosecuted for brutalising an Iraqi businessman. The reason for the trial is that the deliberate destruction of the apparatus of state in Iraq has brought about a situation from which the British Government sees no clear way of extricating itself.

It collaborated with the USA in setting up a series of puppet Governments, whose lack of connection with the populace made them an aggravating influence. It now has a kind of elected Government which is representative to some degree, even though a lot of pre-election weeding was done by the Occupation authorities. Insofar as it is representative it is hostile to the conduct of the invasion force. Britain cannot afford to ditch it and look for another Government. There is no other Government there to be found. And so it is sticking a flimsy veneer of law over its conduct for propaganda purposes, by prosecuting a few low-level soldiers for committing war crimes by obeying orders.

But why, if democracy now exists in Iraq, is the trial being held in a military court in Britain instead of a civil court where the crimes were committed? Would it not give a great boost to the credibility of the hitherto ineffectual democratic Government of Iraq if it was allowed to conduct its own trials of the crimes of the invasion forces?

There is no doubt that the soldier who pleaded guilty to war crimes is a scapegoat. He was not part of a small, freely-acting, commando group, but part of a regular army in which there is a closely-linked chain of command from the bottom upwards. He did what he did under orders, in the way that orders are issued in such situations. Finding himself on trial for war crimes, abandoned by his superiors, and confronted with a detailed description of his actions in the cold light of day in a court in England, he apologises to one of the people he brutalised.

It is the business of Army authorities to cover over the things that are done by soldiers in action on the ground, and to ensure, by the controls of military discipline, which permeate the Army, that what is done is what it was intended should be done. And we do not doubt that such was the case in this instance—and that the trial is a Show Trial for a political purpose.

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The latest *Irish Times* Coup d'Etat

The recent attempt to undermine the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern with some spurious revelations about alleged handouts from businessmen is the latest in a long line of attempts by *The Irish Times* to undermine the State. The first was in the 1920s when William Redmond, the son of John Redmond, intended an alliance with Fianna Fail. R.M. Smyllie, who later became Editor of the newspaper, plied John Jinks TD, one of Redmond's supporters, with drink ensuring that he would be unable to vote for an alternative to the Cumman na nGaedhal government.

It was *The Irish Times*, which destroyed Redmond's party because it had the temerity to consider an alliance with Fianna Fail. The Redmonds were decent people who were dupes of British Imperialism. When they had served their purpose they were discarded.

And this is not the first time that *The Irish Times* has attempted to undermine Bertie Ahern. Nor is it the first time that Geraldine Kennedy, the current Editor of *The Irish Times* has had a hand in events.

In 1994 an *Irish Times* front-page story ensured that Bertie Ahern would not succeed Albert Reynolds.

The best account of this whole issue is

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Obituary

Cllr. Michael Ferguson MLA

Michael Ferguson (53), Sinn Fein MLA, and for 18 years a Councillor in Lisburn City Council died from illness arising from testicular cancer on Sunday 24 September. He was best known to readers of *Irish Political Review* for recently launching the publication, by the Aubane Historical Society, of L.G. Redmond-Howard's *Six Days Of The Irish Republic*.

Michael was active within the official

Republican movement in the early 1970s, then the IRSP, before joining Sinn Fein. He was jailed in the late 1970s for arms offences, joined the blanket protest and was active in prison struggle. His younger brother Hugh had been killed by the Official IRA in 1975 in Ballymurphy.

I first met Michael over twenty years ago, not long after he came out of jail to enrol at Queen University. I had hitched a lift on the Queens "Community Action" bus on my way to Magheraarty Pier (and an International Volunteer building camp on Tory Island). The bus was taking a community group from Lenadon to West

Donegal, and amongst them was Michael Ferguson.

At that time we discussed politics quite a bit—Michael's views were sure, shaped and forged in conflict—my own less well formed. He was eager to hear other views—particularly what thinking was going on in the Protestant community. He was interested in the Protestant working class, and their motivations. He was keen for information, absorbed it quickly, argued about it and started again. Later, as an Education spokesperson, he failed to understand the outlook of political unionism in promoting a selective system that worked against its most

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Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney**:
Towards 2016

The war crimes committed by this soldier are trivial by comparison with the things that have been done by British soldiers all over the world for generations. And not only in the distant past, but in the period since the Nuremberg Trials were held to have established a form of international law which was binding not only on Governments but on individuals. The barbaric treatment of the people of Malaya by the British authorities began the year after the Nuremberg Trials, and their barbarism in Kenya within the following decade. But there was not a single prosecution of a soldier or state functionary in either of these cases, because in both cases Britain succeeded in establishing neo-colonial regimes—and the Kenyan one still survives.

The reason the invasion of Iraq is creating such a disturbance in its aftermath is that it is unlike any other war fought by Britain. It was not a war of defence, even of the most far-fetched kind. It was not an assisted *coup d'etat* bringing to power a political stratum with which Britain had well-established relations, as was the invasion of Iraq in 1941. It was not a war of annexation, as with the Boer Republics in 1899.

The only definite purpose of the invasion was to destroy a functional state that was no threat to Britain or anybody else outside its own borders, and whose oppression of its own people was wildly exaggerated. Beyond that it was cloud-cuckoo land.

One does not need a long memory to

recall the comments of Cabinet Ministers during the early weeks of the invasion, applauding the general looting as a means of destroying the apparatus of the regime and as an expression of freedom. A situation of wild anarchy was deliberately brought about, and the Army was the means of bringing it about.

And then those politicians, accustomed to using the word 'democracy' as a kind of incantation, without thought of its preconditions, thought they could conjure up a functional democracy out of the anarchy, and one which would be obedient to their will.

Alan Johnson, British Secretary for Education, and a contender for the leadership of the Labour Party, was interviewed on BBC Radio Four's *Today* programme on September 27th. He still defended the invasion as the right thing to have done. Weapons of mass destruction were mentioned, but he brushed them aside. He said he had not been a member of the Government at the time—his rise has been meteoric as the established Blairites burnt out—but the decision to make war had been taken by Parliament and he had supported it, and he could say that weapons of mass destruction were hardly mentioned by the decision makers. The reason for the decision to make war was that Saddam was in breach of a series of Security Council Resolutions stretching over many years, and it was felt that the time had come to implement them.

He was not asked what all those Resolutions had been about, if they had

not been about weapons of mass destruction. The BBC is kind to important members of the Parliament which it serves.

As for the mayhem in Iraq that followed the destruction of the State—the British Government was in no way responsible for that. It was down to insurgents and extremists who are against democracy.

When professional politicians in a democracy talk garbage on the subject of Democracy, we would not waste our breath taking issue with them. They know no better. They live within the cocoon of democratic demagoguery and thought of any other kind is alien to them.

But Alan Johnson is an old friend of ours. He lived a life in the real world before taking up the profession of Parliamentary politics. When he was Secretary of the Union of Communication Workers he took up the Northern Ireland issue under the influence of members of his Union in Northern Ireland, and he joined the Campaign for Labour Representation, and he spoke at many CLR meetings at Labour Party Conferences, and he understood very well that democracy does not consist of sticking bits of paper into boxes.

Democracy is a comprehensive political structure in which periodic voting plays a part. Voting which is disconnected from the functional political structure of the state does not constitute democracy. Voting in Northern Ireland was a kind of fetishism because it had no connection with the formation of a Government for the state, and therefore it did not have the kind of effect on society which it had in Britain.

Johnson understood that and was well able to explain it.

In 1991 Kate Hoey, Boyd Black etc., debased the CLR into Unionist Union Jackery. We dissociated ourselves from it. But Johnson didn't. We thought at the time that was because Hoey was one of its Trade Union MPs, but it seems more likely in retrospect to have been because he already had the ambition of a career in Parliament and was therefore unwilling to break any political connections.

Anyhow, he understood then that functional democracy was an intricate political arrangement connected with the operations of a viable state—such as existed in Iraq then. Can he now have become as simpleminded on the issue as if he was a political hack born and bred?

As we go to print there is conflict within the 'War On Terror' between a dictator and a democratically-elected President—between General Musharraf and Mohammed Karzai. But the dictator, who came to power in a military coup, actually governs his state, and is

substantially representative of its society. And the elected President does not govern Afghanistan, but lives within a military enclave set up for him by the USA.

Karzai addressed the British Labour Party Conference two years ago and told it that a wedding party wiped out by an American bomb was happy to sacrifice itself in the cause of freedom. He now accuses Musharraf of stirring up his people against him and making it impossible for him to move outside Kabul. Musharraf responds with the contempt of a responsible politician, existing by his own wits and the effective use of power, for a puppet.

Bush had them both to dinner at the White House and tried to manoeuvre Musharraf into shaking hands with Karzai. He failed.

Shortly before this Musharraf was criticised by Bush over an internal treaty which he made with the tribes in Waziristan, under which he agreed not to interfere with them if they would not interfere with him. It is a very sensible arrangement. Eighty years ago the Royal Air Force set out to civilise Waziristan by bombing it. But Waziristan was stubbornly true to itself and survived. And what if Osama is living there? America has had five years of free-ranging action in which to find him, using a combination of terror and bribery, and failed.

The doyen of British political correspondents, John Simpson, led the 'liberation' of Kabul away back then, and in tones of certainty he made a statement which does not deserve to be forgotten. He said that Osama and Mullah Omar would soon be captured because a large reward had been offered for them, and "betrayal is the national culture of Afghanistan"

Well, it proved not to be the case. Another culture has taken root in Afghanistan. And the outcome of four years of Western activity there is the revival of the Taliban (and a huge increase in poppy growing, which the Taliban had curbed when they controlled the state).

Meanwhile, across the mountains, Musharraf is running a state which is Muslim, but without which the 'War On Terror' could not have been conducted.

Or could it? Musharraf, when criticised by Bush over his treaty with Waziristan, reminded us of the days when Bush declared that everyone who was not his ally was his enemy. He let it be known that in those days the White House put it to him that if he failed to be an active ally of the USA, Pakistan would be bombed back to the Stone Age.

This was a repetition of the threat made back around 1970 (by General Westmoreland, as we recall) that any country near Vietnam that helped the Vietcong would be bombed back to the

The Removal Of A Taoiseach

The following letter failed to be published in the Irish Times

Two down, one to go! How else to interpret the quite extraordinary opening sentence of your editorial on September 28th: "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". A pompous expression of one's own sense of editorial self-importance in publishing a sinister leak, or the declaration of a more threatening sense of mission in seeing a series of Taoisigh of a particular hue brought down, one after the other? I myself have been in opposition to Fianna Fail for almost 40 years. But that has been a matter of political differences openly expressed. The arrogant and irresponsible use of the powers of the press in unleashing its bloodhounds on a decent man for supposedly non-political, ethical purposes does, however, carry its own political consequences at a particularly critical juncture in the peace process. Surely there are some others who can also recall the cautionary tale that the last time a Fianna Fail Taoiseach was hounded from office, in order to be replaced by one from Fine Gael, the "collateral damage" was nothing short of once again unleashing the dogs of war.

Manus O'Riordan (29.9.06)

Stone Age. And, in the outcome of the bombing, Cambodia adopted Stone Age politics.

The same threat was made to Iraq shortly before the attack was launched in 1992. Secretary of State Baker told the Iraqi Government that, if it used the weapons it was suspected of having, the country would be nuclear bombed.

And of course the USA is the only state

that has ever used nuclear weapons.

Musharraf went further than revealing the barbaric threat made to him by the USA in its war on barbarism. He spokesmen have reminded the world that "Islamic fundamentalism" was cultivated and armed by the USA over many years as part of its campaign against the Communist Government of Afghanistan.

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continued

in Fergus Finlay's book *Snakes And Ladders*. A report from Geraldine Kennedy in *The Irish Times* was the catalyst that led to the collapse of negotiations between Fianna Fail and Labour.

The extraordinary circumstances of the collapse of the Fianna Fail/Labour Coalition need to be re-visited.

Finlay, who was Dick Spring's advisor, explains quite well why the then Taoiseach and leader of Fianna Fail, Albert Reynolds had to resign. It seems that Reynolds was a compulsive risk taker. This turned out to be a tremendous asset in the Anglo-Irish negotiations. He successfully faced down John Major when the latter tried to renegotiate the Joint Framework document.

The issue that brought down the Reynold's government concerned the Attorney General. Despite the mess in which Harry Whelehan had landed the Government in the "X case", Reynolds was determined to promote him to President of the High Court. Spring opposed this vigorously and relations were further soured when it was discovered that the Attorney General's office had sat on an extradition demand for seven months. The warrant from Northern Ireland was for the notorious paedophile, Father Brendan Smyth.

Reynolds agreed with Spring's suggestion that the Attorney General should write a report explaining himself. Whelehan's response was to arrange for Matt Russell, the civil servant who had been dealing with the case, to send a short note to the Taoiseach.

Although Spring was very unhappy with Whelehan's arrogance, he allowed Reynolds go ahead with the appointment rather than precipitate a General Election. It then emerged that the reasons given for the delay in the extradition were spurious when details of another case, the Duggan case, became known. Isn't it amazing how things 'emerge' when Fianna Fail is in power?

But by this stage Whelehan had already been appointed. Against Finlay's advice, Spring agreed to Reynolds making a speech criticising Whelehan as a means to preserve the Government.

However, there were a few more twists in this saga. It then emerged that Reynolds knew about the Duggan Case before he went ahead with the appointment of Whelehan. This forced the FF leader's resignation.

Since the dispute was not over a policy issue, the coalition looked as if it was going to continue with Ahern replacing Reynolds

as Taoiseach.

It was at this point that Geraldine Kennedy of *The Irish Times* revealed that other Fianna Fail members of the Government also knew about the Duggan Case before Reynolds went ahead with the Whelehan appointment.

Unfortunately, Spring, backed by his parliamentary party, mounted his high horse and decided that Ahern *et al* were unfit for office: a position that with the passing of the years seems even more ridiculous now than it was then.

The implication of the Labour position was that the previous two years in Government had been a mistake despite all its achievements. Labour returned to the arms of Fine Gael in the manner of a prodigal son who had realised the error of its ways. It had re-discovered its destiny of being the junior partner of Fine Gael. Needless to say the Irish people gave Labour a vote in the following General Election commensurate with the modest role it had consigned for itself.

Pat Rabbitte has continued that tradition and has succeeded in rescuing Fine Gael from oblivion.

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

So much for the Labour Party! But the replacement of Reynolds by Bruton at a key stage in the Anglo-Irish negotiations was not in the National interest. Indeed it could be said that having a Redmondite Taoiseach was in the British interest.

On his retirement from the editorship of *The Irish Times*, Conor Brady was asked if he had any regrets over the last sixteen years. This is what he said:

"I suppose there are a lot of things really. A newspaper is a very imperfect thing. I think maybe we were a bit hard on Albert Reynolds. We got into an adversarial position with Albert Reynolds for a number of reasons that I don't really want to get into. But he's a man who made a significant impact and probably at the time, the paper didn't give him enough credit for it" (Sunday Tribune, 4.8.02).

But Brady is not the only one with regrets. Vincent Browne, a former Fine Gael supporter, made a bid to save the Fianna Fail/Labour Coalition following the publication of Geraldine Kennedy's story. Here is what Finlay says about the incident in his book:

"Later after the suspension of talks hit the lunchtime news, I got a call from a very agitated Vincent Browne. He spent an hour on the phone, for reasons I've never understood, trying to convince me that there was nothing new in Geraldine Kennedy's story, that Maire Geoghegan Quinn had said it all in the Dail debate on the crisis a couple of weeks earlier....

"Afterwards, I went and got hold of

Maire Geoghegan Quinn's speech, and read it again. She had indeed dropped heavily coded hints of prior knowledge of the Duggan case, but in a way that couldn't possibly have made sense until you knew the true position" (Page 272, *Snakes And Ladders*, Fergus Finlay).

In recent times Vincent Browne has written some very good articles questioning the uncritical acceptance of IRA responsibility for the Northern Bank robbery. He is the exception. In general the media act like a herd and deliver the line that they are fed.

There must be many in Fianna Fail who resent the malignant influence of the Irish media which has become unrepresentative of Irish life. Following the retirement of Charlie McCreevy from the Finance Ministry he took the opportunity to reminisce about Irish politics on RTE and it was almost interesting. It would have been more than "almost interesting" if the interviewer Sean O'Rourke had asked some obvious questions.

In the course of the interview the former Fianna Fail Finance Minister regretted the collapse of the Fianna Fail/Labour Coalition in 1994. He said the reason was "outside influences". But the RTE interviewer didn't bother asking what those "outside influences" were.

Could it be that there are people in 'the know' in the Irish media and political establishment that have a bad conscience and do not wish to be manipulated again?

Editorial Commentary

Irish Times Editor, Geraldine Kennedy was accused by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern of attempting to drive him from office with misleading interpretations of information illegally leaked from the Mahon Tribunal. At a point when his career seemed at an end, he made a moving defence which turned the tables on his accusers. He wrote:

"...Politics, sport and serving my community are my only outside interests. I neither have nor crave personal wealth or the trapping of affluence. Never, in all the time I have served in public life, have I taken a bribe or in any way put my personal interest ahead of the public good. I have served this country and the people I have the honour to represent in Dáil Éireann honestly. I have for many years endured all sorts of false allegations and they have proven to be false.... I have provided more details about my personal finances than any person in this House who has ever held office.

Somebody who has access to confidential documents decided to leak them to a newspaper. With contempt for the courts and the tribunal process, this person made a sinister calculation. They thought if they could leak this information about me and my family, they could destroy me. They are wrong. ...

"It is important to bear in mind that the reason I volunteered all my bank statements and documents, going back many years, was to refute a set of outrageous allegations. People made secret allegations about me - like I had €15 million stashed away, or that I had bank accounts in exotic places such as the Dutch Antilles and Mauritius. These were lies. In disproving the lies, I provided my details to the tribunal - and now someone has leaked those details in an effort to throw up more material to damage me.

"The people who are pushing this story have one objective in mind. They want to drive me from office. They will not succeed " (1.10.06 *News Of The World*).

Though the *Irish Times* Editor was not named directly by the Taoiseach, it was she that published information disclosed to her in the most damaging way possible. And where the paper of British Ireland led, the rest followed. Conor Cruise O'Brien, wrote gleefully in Sir Anthony O'Reilly's *Irish Independent* of "devastating" criticism of Ahern's actions, and a "bombardment" by "The leading newspapers in the republic [which] are now arrayed against the Taoiseach" (30.9.06).

Bertie Ahern has been the most successful Taoiseach since Charles Haughey, and the most popular Taoiseach since Jack Lynch. That is why the *Irish Times* and friends are so eager to destroy him, as a means of further damaging Fianna Fail: the party which reflects (however imperfectly) Irish national aspirations.

What all the fuss is about are payments of £38,500 made collectively by 12 of Ahern's friends in 1993-4 when he was in financial difficulties, resulting from a Judicial Separation from his wife. (That he refused to divorce her is no doubt one of the things held against him by *Irish Times* liberal dogmatists.) A few Manchester Irish businessmen chipped in £8,000 as well. Ahern was under no obligation to disclose these sums in the Oireachtas: ethics legislation changing the rules of public life was introduced in 1995. Knowing this, the *Irish Times* has suggested that the Ethics legislation applied retrospectively, or that there may be unmet tax liabilities relating to the payments (which may be loans).

When Geraldine Kennedy was called to account by the Tribunal she destroyed the leaked documents on which the story was based, thus compounding her

offence. As we go to press, Justice Alan Mahon is expected to rule on the proceedings. It is open to him to fine the paper Euro 300,000—which seems nothing given its assets and the gravity of its political interference—or to imprison the Editor for up to two years. The *Irish Times* led the public howl for Ray Burke to be imprisoned for the misdemeanour of not giving sufficient financial records to a Tribunal. In view of the gravity of its offence in destroying evidence, after it being requested by a judicial body, can the Tribunal retain public respect if a lesser sentence is imposed?

Michael McDowell, the new Progressive Democrat leader, pursued an uncertain course on this issue. At first McDowell felt obliged to back his Coalition senior, but as the media onslaught grew, he "wobbled" (CC O'Brien's word) and seemed about to withdraw his support—only to come into line again when it became clear that Ahern had connected with the people in his lengthy television explanation of the affair. It is clear that he is seeking a good excuse to ditch the coalition.

McDowell was in the hot seat because, having forced the electorally popular Mary Harney to resign, he had supplanted her as Tanaiste and as PD leader. No election was held: rival Liz O'Donnell was given the Deputy Leadership, and rival Tom Parlon the Presidency of the PDs. Believing in competition as a "panacea for all other situations", the PDs thus avoided it themselves, as Brendan Butler pointed out in a letter to the IT, 12.9.06.

Assembly Shenanigans Sir Reg Empey's scheme to win an extra Unionist Ministerial position by forming an alliance between his Ulster Unionist Party and the sole Progressive Unionist Party Assembly member, David Irvine, has been overruled by Eileen Bell, Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly. This means that, in the unlikely event of the Assembly institutions coming into being after 24th November, there would be a 5:5 Nationalist/Unionist share-out of Ministerial positions. (In addition the DUP would have the position of First Minister, and Sinn Fein the position of Deputy First Minister.)

This is the third change in (theoretical) Ministerial proportions under the d'Hondt system since the 2003 Assembly Elections. Initially the 10 Ministerial positions should have been shared out as follows: 4 for the DUP, and 2 each for the other three parties: 6 Unionist and 4 Nationalist. However, one DUP member lost the Party whip, which then meant that the DUP was only entitled to 3 Ministers and Sinn Fein got an extra seat.

At this point Empey formed the *Ulster Unionist Assembly Group* with Ervine. The extra seat for the UUP-led group meant that Sinn Fein lost its windfall, giving a Unionist majority of Ministers: 3 + 3 vs 2 + 2.

Acting on advice, Eileen Bell of the Alliance Party ruled the Ulster Unionist Assembly Group was not a real political party and so could not act as such under the d'Hondt system. (Obviously there was nothing to be gained for Britain in provoking the DUP in advance of the 24th November vote on whether the political institutions of the Good Friday Agreement are to come into force.)

Stormont Revival? The Democratic Unionist Party has sent out increasingly rejectionist signals about sharing power with Sinn Fein under the GFA. On 6th September Alderdyce's IMC put out a positive report on IRA activity. The next day Jeffrey Donaldson suggested that "main blockage" to power-sharing was republican failure to accept NI policing arrangements: "That is the fundamental issue—do Sinn Féin support the police and accept the rule of law" (8.9.06 IT). A couple of weeks later Dr. Paisley added further preconditions: Those involved in a £300m ill-gotten financial Empire "must be handed over to the police"; "the police had to seize these funds; and the IRA must be disbanded" (IT 20.9.06). Rev. William McCrea added that republicans should "renounce and repent of what they have stood for" (IT 21.9.06).

NI parties will participate in talks about restoring devolution on 11-13 October in St. Andrew's, Scotland. These will be chaired by Premier Blair and Taiseach Ahern. The DUP will then embark on a consultation process with its members (IT 19.9.06).

Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan's term of office expires in 2007 after 7 years. Irwin Montgomery, Chairman of the NI Police Federation, told his annual conference that her tenure had been "disastrous" for the PSNI because she insisted on re-examining old cases, where there were complaints about the way the RUC had conducted the investigation. He suggested that, if she retired, she should be replaced by a senior judge (IT 14.9.06).

Danny Kennedy MLA, UUP, supported the PSNI complaints on the grounds that the Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan was married to an SDLP Councillor, and because of a widespread perception that she was "not only anti-police but particularly and most especially anti-RUC" (IT 20.9.06).

Reeling In The Years, the RTE TV programme reprising events of the

previous generation, got over a swathe of tricky facts to do with the North boiling over in 1969 simply by ignoring them. There was no Lynch speech of 13th August 1969 and no Arms Crisis of April-May 1970!

EU Liberal Dogmatism The Advocate-General of the EU Court has given a preliminary legal opinion saying that the Irish Government has breached competition rules by awarding the Euro 47.5 m contract to supply social welfare benefits to 1.1 m people to An Post without putting it out to Tender. Similarly, the State's Euro 9 m contract to Dublin City Council for emergency ambulance services breached competition rules (IT 15.9.06). This hardline neo-liberal economic stance follows other anti-social rulings from the Luxemburg-based Court.

In fact, the welfare payments contract helps to maintain rural communities by subsidising small Post Offices. Similarly with the Dublin ambulance contract: in Dublin it is customary for retired firemen to work in the ambulance service. Any competitive interference with that beneficial arrangement is likely to cost the taxpayer more in the end.

Northern Bank Raid After consistently asserting that money confiscated in Cork on 17 February 2005 formed part of the proceeds from the Northern Bank Raid of 20 December 2004, garda officers have been bringing samples of the money to Belfast over the Summer. *"Together with the PSNI, the gardaí met bank staff to try to establish if any distinctive marks on the notes recovered in Co Cork could be clearly identified as coming from the stolen cash consignment"* (Barry Roche, Southern correspondent, IT 12.9.06).

Michael Ferguson

continued

disadvantaged. He was particularly proud, recently, to have met and represented women from the Old Warren estate in Lisburn on a drugs issue. It is safe to say that Sinn Fein have lost one person who really could "connect" with the Protestant community.

He was elected as a Councillor on Lisburn Borough Council in 1989 at a time when simply attending the Council was a dangerous exercise. Moving from mere attendance to making a sustained Council contribution involved considerable risk. Times and places of meetings are public knowledge and, as such, made Michael and his colleagues vulnerable to assassination. His party colleague, Annie

Armstrong, was indeed shot on her way home from a Lisburn Council meeting, surviving with injuries.

I lost regular touch with Michael—although we would meet on occasion with some fellow feeling—the experience in common of operating in 'hardwired majoritarian' Unionist Boroughs: myself in Newtownabbey, Michael in Lisburn. Michael and his colleagues made serious attempts to reach out to DUP and UUP Councillors, notably over the successful bid for City Status. Unionists in Lisburn look to have rowed back, since, on their commitments to a "City for All".

In 1998, when I was Chair of *Playboard*, the childrens' play charity, we had discussions on the Dutch "Homezone" initiative that helped Michael plan some successful traffic calming campaigns. His years on Lisburn Council earned a grudging respect from Unionist council colleagues.

Michael was elected as an MLA in 2005 and took on the role of Education spokesman. He was the Vice Chair of the West Belfast Partnership Board. By his own admission he was most comfortable at community level, a tireless community campaigner, undertaking campaigns on traffic calming, tackling anti-social behaviour through positive youth engagement, forever seeking better facilities and programmes for people in Poleglass, Colin Glen and Twinbrook. Few community organisations or tenants associations in Greater West Belfast would not have received his help, wisdom and energy over the years.

In the past two years I had a lot of contact with Michael, in his role as Sinn Fein Education spokesperson. He had a detailed grasp of his brief, and earned respect from educational employers, administrators, civil servants, and teachers' unions. He surrounded himself with a well-versed education reference group and instinctively took the side of the disadvantaged.

Last November, he spoke at a conference I organised for the GMB (General, Municipal & Boilermakers' Union) on apprenticeships and had well-formed views of forcing the Strategic Investment Board to build quality training places into capital contracts. We shared a platform a few months ago at a NICVA conference on the Post Primary issue, in opposition to selection at 11,

In his personal life he was, like many Republicans of his generation, disciplined and abstemious. He exercised regularly, once ran in the Dublin Marathon, lived modestly and felt guilty to benefit from even modest comforts. Chocolates were his minor weakness!

When diagnosed as having testicular cancer, he overcame a reluctance to do

"personal stuff" by allowing his own case to publicize the need for men to overcome embarrassment to "get checked out" for cancer. When committed to hospital for Chemotherapy, and armed with his laptop, he turned his hospital bed into a makeshift constituency surgery, firing off electronic representations on behalf of his constituents.

Two days before he died, I received an e-mail from him—to arrange a get together. He was also undertaking a DLA (Disability Living Allowance) claim for a pensioner from Ballymena. That was "Massey"—always at his work!

His funeral was well attended, with a very broad range of people represented—a commentary on the way he lived his life.

Michael is survived by his wife Louise, whom he held in huge esteem, and children Aodh Tomas, Daibhead, Aoife and Naimh. He adored them all. Michael Ferguson will be a loss to Sinn Fein, to West Belfast and Lisburn - he was one of the good guys!

Mark Langhammer

Irish Labour History Society Conference 20-21 October 2006

www.ilhsonline.org

Full fee E10; individual sessions E5

Friday Oct 20 7.30 Liberty Hall

Professor John Horne, TCD
James Connolly and the Great Divide:
Ireland, Europe & the First World War

Sat 21 Oct 10.30 Liberty Hall

Prof Emmet O'Connor U. Ulster
Labour & republicanism: the un-
importance of James Connolly

Dr John Newsinger, Bath Spa Univ
Connolly & 1916

Dr Colin Whitson, Keele Univ
Connolly & Trade Unionism - the struggle
for an independent working class politics

Open Forum & Questions
Break 1.00 - 2.30

Sat Oct 21 2.30 Liberty Hall

Michael D Higgins TD
Connolly the Internationalist

Manus O'Riordan, SIPTU
WW1 - Why Connolly wanted a German
victory

Sinead McCoole
The women of 1916

Open Forum & Questions
Conclude 6.00 p.m.

Social Evening

Sat 21 Cle Club, Liberty Hall, 9.00 p.m.

The Greaves Summer School on 1916

At the conclusion of this year's Desmond Greaves Summer School at the Irish Labour History museum in Dublin, a spokesman for the organisers thanked the audience for making it the most successful Summer School in Ireland. Each of the five sessions on the theme *Evaluating the 1916 Rising and the struggle for Irish independence* had been packed to capacity (about sixty people) and the high quality of the lectures and discussion had been sustained throughout.

On this my second Greaves Summer School I would say that the secret of its success is that it picks topics likely to be of interest to a definite target audience, the Irish republican left (females and males) inside and outside the country, and while the lectures are usually given by academics with knowledge of specific topics the discussion often ends up focussed on present day practical politics. Being named after Desmond Greaves is obviously what gives it this orientation towards practical politics.

Speaking for the organising committee Ruan O'Donnell stated towards the close of the last session that the School was not intended to be a talking shop. He was answering a point made by a speaker from the floor, Percy Podger, that it was all very well to listen to academic speakers talking about 1916 but something practical needed to be done about revisionism. O'Donnell said that the papers from the school would be published and that in publishing them the committee would positively welcome controversy. Otherwise the committee would gladly consider written suggestions from anyone who had attended the School.

I attended this year's school with my own political agenda. Thankfully the Greaves School is a place where you can do that, provided you don't distract attention from the topics under discussion. I was determined to publicise the upcoming launch of a book from *Aubane Historical Society, Envoi*, a critical review of the arch-revisionist, Roy Foster. Those attending the school were exactly the sort of people who should know about the launch. I also wanted to make contact with anyone interested in helping to start up a broad grouping aimed at taking on the revisionists.

Of the three sessions I attended the first was by Professor Luke Gibbons of Roscommon and Notre Dame University in the US who spoke about Dorothy McArdle, author of *The Irish Republic*

(the official title was: *Children of the Nations: Dorothy McArdle, Internationalism and Republicanism*). Gibbons was less interested in pure history than in the cultural ramifications of historical events. His main focus was on the nature of Irish historical memory and he referred to an Irish TV documentary by Anne Roper about Irish veterans of the Vietnam War. Some of the vets had been inspired to choose a military career because of how much they had been told about 1916 and the War of Independence. Then their actual experience of fighting in Vietnam made them feel like members of the Black and Tans.

Gibbons went on to talk about the Irish diplomat, Sean Lester. The manner in which Lester had stood up to the Nazis while UN representative in Danzig won him international admiration. Lester, Gibbons stated, had learned about politics through his involvement in the national struggle—his memories of resisting British terror in Ireland informed his actions in refusing to be cowed by Nazi brow beating. Lester was a principled opponent of Nazism yet he supported Irish neutrality in the 1939-45 War. According to Gibbons this was down to his recollections of the Irish struggle.

By this stage, like many in the audience, I was beginning to wonder whether Dorothy McArdle was going to get any mention. But sure enough Luke Gibbons began to inform us of the many achievements of a very energetic woman. McArdle was a member of the family who produced McArdles' ale in Louth. She was therefore from a Protestant, unionist background. Imprisoned during the War of Independence/Civil War period she was a fervent republican. She wrote *The Irish Republic* and was quite brave in allowing the first edition to be kept in the National Library: subsequent editions contained many corrections. She was close to de Valera but unusual for the time she was not afraid to differ with him.

As well as writing one of the seminal histories of the national revolution she was a novelist and a playwright. Luke Gibbons held up a copy of one of her novels that was the only copy in existence. He was determined to re-publish it for no other reason than to prevent it from disappearing completely. Dorothy McArdle got a job with the *Irish Press* when it started in the thirties and this began a new chapter of her life as a campaigning journalist. Issues that exercised her as a journalist were: the

poor state of working class housing in the tenements of Dublin, the welfare of children and the 1937 Constitution on which she split with de Valera. She was one of a group of political women who objected to the role being envisaged for women in the Constitution.

Late in the thirties she got a job with the League of Nations. Like Lester she was an early opponent of Nazism. From what Luke Gibbons said she must have relished involvement in international affairs. Gibbons contended that her memories of the Irish struggle, as had been the case with Lester, informed her involvement in the struggle against fascism. *The Irish Republic* was published by the famous Left Book Club in Britain and this highlights her involvement with British socialism. She was also deeply influenced by the works of Sigmund Freud's daughter, Anna, and could write authoritatively about matters like trauma before such terms entered into the common vocabulary.

She moved to Britain during the war to assist the war effort. After the War she wrote a book on the effect of the war on children. In researching the book she travelled to virtually every European country affected by the War. All in all Dorothy McArdle was a political dynamo with a wide range of passionate involvements. She was a republican, a socialist, a feminist, an internationalist, a journalist, a novelist, a playwright and probably a lot more.

As I recall, the theme of Luke Gibbons' talk was that historical memory could be double edged. He warned of the danger of being blind to the different dimensions of historical phenomena. He quoted Primo Levi, historian of the Jewish concentration camps, as saying that oppression turns some people into champions of human rights and others into oppressors themselves. He was suggesting that the story of Dorothy McArdle illustrated how historical memory could have a positive effect on some people. He argued that it could also have the opposite effect. He was concerned about how Ireland was coping with its new status as a multi-cultural society. That the Irish had been in the recent past immigrants themselves was no guarantee that they would meet the challenge of large scale immigration to Ireland.

In this summary I cannot do justice to the subtlety of Gibbons thesis. Listening to his talk I thought at times that he was conceding too much to contemporary academic mores. At one point he referred in a somewhat reverential tone to 'holocaust studies'. I don't dispute for a moment the veracity of the generally

accepted history of the holocaust but I am alert to the way it is used in the worldview of the US and Britain. That the Nazis represented the epitome of evil compared to the Western powers oversimplifies and omits too much of the anti-semitic, racist and genocidal history of those same powers. Gibbons' talk was thought provoking and I look forward to reading the published paper.

In the discussion Rayner Lysaght picked up on a point that Luke Gibbons had made about John Mitchel. Mitchel had been an apologist for slavery and no amount of historical explanation could disguise the fact. Margaret Ward asked about McArdle's religion, whether like other feminists of the time she had been drawn to pagan ideas. Luke Gibbons was not sure whether she had converted to Catholicism but he was certain that she was a Christian. 'Christian socialist' might be a good summary of her beliefs.

Another speaker asked about her support for the British Communist Party. Speaking from the audience Manus O'Riordan said that if she was a friend of Victor Gollanz as Luke Gibbons had stated, she might have supported the CP until the Nazi-Soviet pact, would have opposed it for the duration of the pact, and supported it again when Hitler invaded Russia.

A speaker with a Liverpool accent took up a point made by Gibbons that the Irish could be progressive in some circumstances and reactionary in others. He said that Irish Americans of his acquaintance in the New York were openly racist.

When I got a chance to speak I said that, if the telling of Irish history as a morality tale was considered a bad influence from which school children needed to be protected, as was the claim of the revisionists, then Dorothy McArdle could not possibly have been a good person. She was the author of a history classic that glorified the struggle for national independence. If anyone had made Irish history into a morality tale it was she. Yet from what we had heard from Luke Gibbons, Dorothy McArdle had been an exemplary person. How could this be? It did not make sense. Dorothy McArdle was a republican who wrote a classic republican history and yet she made an impressive contribution not only to public life in Ireland but also on the international scene. Her life was a testimony to the falseness of revisionism. It is not surprising that her story was unknown in modern Ireland. Regarding the threat of racism in today's Ireland, the best defence against it was a sound education in the history of the struggle for

national independence.

I don't remember any of the later contributions beyond pressure being applied on Luke Gibbons to write a biography of McArdle; he declined as he was not trained in work of that sort.

The afternoon session was on *The 1916 Proclamation in Context* and was given by Ruan O'Donnell from the University of Limerick. O'Donnell started by saying that he would try to limit his talk to an hour but that he could easily talk for nine hours on this topic. He talked about the printing of the document, how it would have needed to be kept secret, how it was printed by the Citizen Army printers under Connolly's supervision. The story of how the various republican and socialist organisations managed to get their publications printed at a time when the authorities frequently smashed up printing equipment sounded most interesting.

Talking about the actual wording of the Proclamation, O'Donnell emphasised how much it had in common with Emmet's Proclamation of 1803 and other such documents. The authors of the Proclamation had a keen sense of historical continuity. He brought us through each section of the document drawing out how it derived from the republican/national tradition but at the same time broke new ground. Its reference to universal male and female suffrage was unusual and well in advance of what might have been expected. Its guarantee of civil and religious liberty meant a rising above the sectarian divisions fomented by Britain over the full stretch of modern history. Its call for equal rights and equal opportunities for all citizens represented the most advanced political thinking of its time.

The Proclamation was also interesting in the references to the '*exiled children in America*' and '*gallant allies in Europe*' (Germany). To succeed the insurrection would need help from both places. One of the early actions of the rebels was to send some form of communication to the US so that the first word about the rebellion would come from them rather than the British. The reference to '*relying on her own strength*' indicates that, even if substantial German support had got through, the intention was not to establish a colony subservient to Germany. The international references show how keenly aware the leaders were of the international situation. They knew that a peace conference would eventually be held and this would provide an opportunity for winning recognition. A phrase that O'Donnell singled out for particular attention was, '*among the nations*'. This harked back to Emmet's speech at the dock.

What was memorable in Ruan

O'Donnell's talk was his obvious knowledge of the history of all the Rebellions. He seemed to take personal offence at references to Emmet's Rebellion or 1848 or 1867 as being poorly organised. Each of these insurrections had involved a sophisticated degree of organisation. That they had not become full-scale revolts was down to chance and the difficulty of organising in circumstances of military oppression. O'Donnell also referred to the six occasions in the three hundred years before 1916 in which Irish national rights had been asserted in arms: the 1641 Ulster revolt, the Confederation of Kilkenny and Cromwellian War of the 1650s, the Jacobite conflict with William of Orange in 1688/89, the United Irish revolt in 1798, Emmet's Rising in 1803, the Young Irishmen of 1848 and the Fenian Rising of 1867. That makes seven so we must await the publication of the Summer School papers for an answer to that riddle. He did refer to two notable omissions from the list: the Defenders revolt and the campaign of the Whiteboys, both substantial movements. He also referred to a number of international reverberations of Irish revolts: the course of Canadian history was altered following an Irish Fenian incursion from the US in the 1860s; and at an Australian stockade rebellion the password was 'Vinegar Hill' for the simple reason that most of the insurgents were Irish.

After the talk the discussion initially focussed on the feminist angle. A number of feminist contributors defended the Rising on the grounds of its position on women. When I spoke I referred to the opposition to 1916 in contemporary debate. I said that I had fixed my parents' copy of the Proclamation to a wall in my house and it had been a great conversation piece. I recommended everyone to put it on their walls. There was now widespread opposition to the legacy of 1916 but the opposition that should be taken most seriously was opposition from the State.

They should never have stopped commemorating the Rising but when they finally re-commenced the annual commemoration this year they had done so in conjunction with the Battle of the Somme. As a result, in celebrating 1916 we were now being sucked into the annual British glorification of war. This made a total nonsense of what 1916 was all about. Anyone who doubted the extent to which the Battle of the Somme is important to the Government should look up the Government's website. All the web pages on 1916 can be downloaded as a document. 90 per cent of it is about the Somme. That is a disgrace.

One way of counteracting the pro-British implications of our Government's

Somme celebrations would be to have a pro-German celebration of it. That would not go down well among our pro-British elements. In many ways Germany was the innocent party in the Great War. We have been brainwashed into associating Germany in 1914-18 as an aggressor much like the Nazis in the 1939 War. In reality British diplomacy fomented a war against Germany to destroy a trading rival, the worst possible ground for waging war.

It should also be remembered that Roger Casement and James Connolly were both pro-German in 1916. The slogan outside Liberty Hall was, '*We serve neither King nor Kaiser*', but as the war progressed Connolly did choose the side of the Kaiser. German social democracy had forced social reform on the Kaiser and as a result the German army had something to fight for. American observers of the war had noted that German state socialism underpinned the high morale of the German army. Connolly considered German socialism to be preferable to English socialism.

The next speaker said my point was revisionist rubbish. Connolly had never departed from the position that we serve neither King nor Kaiser. Rayner Lysaght said that Connolly's position was that German victory would be the lesser evil but he was loyal to the anti-war stance of the Second International. He also stated that German diplomacy had the worst reputation in Europe.

Manus O'Riordan said he would refer to the points made about Connolly and Germany in his talk the following day.

Ulick O'Connor attacked a speaker from Kerry on the grounds that the Kerry IRB had made a mess of getting the arms ashore from a German ship. Collins he said had been critical of Kerry and made this clear to Austin Stack during the Treaty negotiations. This point was ably refuted by another speaker. Word had come from Dublin to hold off bringing the arms ashore for three days. Kerry's mistake had been to follow the Dublin orders too meticulously!

After the meeting the discussion continued outside the entrance of the Labour History museum. I spoke to so many people I can't remember who said what but some comments should be mentioned. One person asked me how could Germany be considered an innocent party in the Great War after the German atrocities in Belgium. Another point that came up in conversation concerned the actions of Pope Benedict in trying to initiate peace negotiations. I was surprised to hear the argument being put that the Pope had been in receipt of funds from the German State.

The next session I attended was the afternoon session on the Sunday. The title was **The Social and Political Ideology of 1916** and it was presented by Brian Murphy, who was introduced in the brochure as author of *Patrick Pearse and the Lost Republican Ideal, Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920* and other books, and Manus O'Riordan, Head of Research, SIPTU, author of numerous articles on labour history and 1916.

I will not describe the main talks. Both contributions will presumably be reproduced in the published papers. During his talk, Brian Murphy referred to a letter of his published in the *Limerick Leader* defending the character of Patrick Pearse. This letter was reproduced in last month's *Irish Political Review*. Manus O'Riordan based a lot of the content of his talk on the pamphlet entitled, *James Connolly Re-assessed*, recently published by Athol Books. He amended part of it to attack the Government's commemoration of the Battle of the Somme and he issued this part as a press statement.

The contrast in style between the two speakers was very noticeable. Brian Murphy is clearly a meticulous scholar whose *forte* is the careful reading of documentary sources. An interesting source he had come across was one of the official reports on the Rising but the particular copy he had seen was by Joseph Brennan who later became a Governor of the Irish Central Bank and who worked as a senior official Dublin Castle in 1916. Murphy was able to show how much light was thrown by the comments that Brennan had written in the margins of his copy. He concluded his talk by underlining the world historical significance of the Rising.

Manus O'Riordan's research was also clearly very thorough but he was unashamedly political in the thrust of his argument. He was scathing in describing the anti-German and anti-Jewish character of Redmondite activity during the war years. Connolly had actually produced propaganda in Yiddish in canvassing for the Jewish vote in Dublin. Manus also highlighted the hypocrisy of Britain in particular in placing great emphasis on their opposition to anti-Semitism in the Second World War, while in the Great War they were in alliance with pogromist Russia.

I felt the format was a bit unfair to the two speakers. Brian Murphy certainly did not have enough time to present his full paper. It was hard to see why both of the talks had been lumped together. In the discussion that followed neither of the speakers got the attention they deserved firstly because the discussion focussed on

practical politics and secondly because essentially there had been two quite different lectures.

As I said at the beginning of this article, the first speaker from the floor, Percy Podger, set the tone of the discussion by asking what could be done on a practical level to oppose revisionism. I spoke immediately after him. I said that I had a practical proposal to make about combating revisionism but before that I wanted to comment on some of the ideas raised by the speakers.

Brian Murphy had drawn attention to the global historical significance of 1916. I agreed with that. It was why the Irish were held in high regard around the world and particularly in developing countries. A phrase from the Proclamation underlined by Ruan in his talk the previous day, Ireland's place '*among the nations*', had stuck in my mind. Having our place '*among the nations*' means making a contribution to international affairs *in line with our national tradition*. At present we are not making such a contribution. We are not taking our place '*among the nations*' because we have sold our soul to the US and Britain as evidenced by the Shannon stop-over.

De Valera once said that Ireland could not stop the Great Powers from engaging in military adventures and wars but we could refuse to be their tool. That showed what could be done in modern international affairs by remaining true to our national tradition. At the present time things were changing on the international scene. China was on the way to becoming a super-power. Russia was resurgent and India was emerging as an economic power. At the recent G8 summit, Putin had organised a mini summit of Russia, China and India in which they demanded reform of the UN and the G8. The call coming up from diplomats in developing countries across the world was the necessity of creating a 'multi-polar world' (ie not a world dominated by the US). This will be a cause worth fighting over the next decades and Ireland should be to the fore in it. Instead we are licking the boots of Britain and America.

On a practical note I would like to see an anti-revisionist organisation of some sort established. I would be prepared to work with anyone across the political spectrum in getting it set up. Following this meeting I will be distributing a leaflet with my name and phone number on it advertising a book launch by Athol Books. The book is a set of reviews critical of Roy Foster, the '*daddy of Irish revisionism*'. Let this book launch be an opening salvo in a campaign against the revisionists. I would like to see the book launch widely

publicised. Every academic and student in the universities should know that it is happening. They may not attend it but they should know that it is happening.

Roy Johnson spoke about a book mentioned by Brian Murphy. Was it by his father? He was not sure. He also spoke about his own book which was available from Connolly Books. Another speaker said in taking on revisionism and all the rest we should work to revive the Irish language. She also said that socialists should learn from the past and adhere to democracy.

Another speaker took up the point about the Irish language. She spoke in Irish to start with. She said that not having our own language left us defenceless and vulnerable against American and British influence.

Rayner Lysaght said the book mentioned by Brian Murphy was not by Roy Johnson's father, that there was confusion between the names Johnson and Johnston. He had done his bit in countering revisionism in the past and wished my initiative well. He reiterated his view that Connolly was not pro-German but considered a German victory to be the lesser evil. Mary Cullen asked some questions of the speakers which I can't remember.

The school was officially closed by the director, Frank Keohan. The two sessions that I missed were *Representations of 1916*, by Dr Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, Curator of Irish Paintings, National Gallery of Ireland and *The effects of 1916 on empire*, by Dr. Angus Mitchell, an authority on the human rights work of Roger Casement and co-editor of the book, *Enemies of Empire: New Perspectives on Imperialism, Literature and History*.

David Alvey

Letter To Editor

Casement's Way

Regarding Jeff Dudgeon's letter (Sept 2006), *Casement: Another View*, I accept what he says regarding the two inaccuracies and one omission he finds in my summation of Casement's career.

What he says on the matter of Casement potentially jeopardising his mission in pursuit of sexual adventure I do find hard to envisage. I agree with Jeff that men will undergo great personal risk in pursuit of sex. But the key point is that Casement's situation in the Putumayo went beyond the personal. As far as I am aware, all biographers claim his interest in and commitment to alleviating the intense abuse and torture suffered by the Indians

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was sincere and deeply felt. So he must have realised any risks he took were not just risks to himself but risks placed upon those he deeply wished to help. Such a consciousness of responsibility to thousands of other human beings must necessarily have constricted the scope of his potential behaviour. He would not have wanted to risk letting the Indians down. So his behaviour would have been cautious. Illegal and frowned upon hanky panky would thus be very unlikely.

As for Casement not being questioned about the "diaries" at his interrogation it is most strange to imagine it took the police until Easter 1916 to come upon them as Jeff claims. It was no secret he had lodgings in Ebury Street. They knew about his "treachery" from late 1914. To search his

lodgings would have been the natural and sensible thing to do, from their point of view.

Why should we assume all archival evidence is fully authentic? Are not those who create archives subject to the full range of human temptations and behaviours? Before taking archival evidence at face value context needs to be looked at. If there were deceptions afoot regarding Casement is it not possible these deceptions might reach as far as files which would eventually end up in an archive?

I do not believe the diaries were found in April 1916. This sounds far-fetched. I believe they were found in 1914 after Casement's treason had become known.

Tim O'Sullivan

Shorts

from

the Long Fellow

"RIGHT" ON, BONO

The Venezuela Solidarity Network has recently taken umbrage at U2's Bono. Apparently, Ireland's world saviour has invested in a company called *Pandemic/Bioware Studios*. This company is a subcontractor for the US army and CIA funded *Institute for Creative Technologies*, which uses Hollywood techniques to mount war simulations for military training.

Bono's investment in *Pandemic/Bioware* is through a company called *Elevation Partners*, which he helped set up to exploit marketing opportunities between U2 and its fans. *Pandemic* boasts that, as a partner in *Elevation Partners*, Bono "has visibility into all projects at *Pandemic and Bioware*".

One of *Pandemic's* products is a video game, which promotes the invasion and destruction of Venezuela in order to check "a power hungry tyrant" who has "seized control of Venezuela and her oil supply". The game simulates in minute detail a mercenary invasion of Venezuela in the year 2007 in which the centre of Caracas is destroyed; the state owned Oil Company *Petroleos de Venezuela* is blown up; and no part of Venezuela is untouched.

Bono has failed to respond to concerns expressed by the Venezuela Solidarity Network, but *Pandemic* insists that its product is "just a game".

A supporter of the Venezuela Solidarity Network, Chuck Kaufman responded:

"If it's just a game and it's all about selecting fascinating and colourful locales, why didn't *Pandemic* select Dublin or Washington DC? Because people would be outraged, that's why. *Pandemic* is simply capitalising on negative and inaccurate US press stories about Venezuela and its leader, Hugo Chavez, in order to make a quick buck. It's another piece of propaganda that serves only the U.S. military, pure and simple".

PALESTINIAN UNITY

I suppose one should welcome the possibility that the EU will lift its embargo on aid to the Palestinian Government now that a National Unity Government is about to be formed between Hamas, the victors in the recent election, and the group led by Mahmoud Abbas, which lost.

The EU and US embargo has resulted in a humanitarian crisis and further

instability in the region. The US remains opposed to lifting the embargo, but the EU will resume its aid programme if the new government of National Unity renounces violence and recognises the state of Israel. No doubt some form of words will be found, but what state of Israel are the Palestinians supposed to recognise: the 1948 state, the 1967 state or some putative Israeli state extending to the Jordan River. It is not easy.

CHINESE REVISIONISM

It seems that Ireland is not the only country in the world where there is a revisionist project. A report in the *New York Times* (1.9.06) indicates that there has been an attempt to change the way history is taught in China. The role of the great Mao Tse Tung has been downgraded as well as communism and world historic events such as the French and Bolshevik revolutions. These changes have been tentative and seem to be confined to Shanghai.

Earlier this year Yuan Weishi, who seems to be the Chinese equivalent of Kevin Myers, wrote an essay criticising Chinese textbooks for "whitewashing" the so called "savagery" of the Boxer Rebellion which was designed to restore some self-respect to the Chinese people, much like our own 1916 Rising. Incredibly, the *New York Times* article says that this historian went on to call for a "more balanced" analysis of what "provoked" the imperialist plunder and pillage (and in the case of Britain the flooding of the country with opium) of China.

Fortunately, it appears that common sense has prevailed and the Chinese authorities have reacted in the way that any self-respecting state would: the newspaper which carried this nonsense was temporarily closed down; the editors were fired; and when it re-opened it carried an essay rebuking Mr. Yuan.

FITZGERALD INTERVIEWS

As expected there has been a fair amount of revisionism in the recent series of interviews with Garret FitzGerald on RTE. In particular, he was evasive in his description of the sequence of events that led to the anti-abortion amendment in 1983. The facts are that it was FitzGerald who put this issue on the agenda by giving a commitment as Taoiseach to "Pro-Life" activists on their demand for a constitutional amendment. Once the issue was on the agenda, Haughey had no alternative but to protect his conservative flank by going along with it. FitzGerald's "Constitutional Crusade" was the first casualty of his submission to the Pro-Life campaign.

Of the first three interviews that I have seen, by far the most interesting one was with Vincent Browne. Browne asked him about Haughey's criticism of the British during the Falklands/Malvinas War and in particular the sinking of the *Belgrano*. In FitzGerald's opinion this was an example of the Fianna Fail leader playing to the gallery and was counter-productive in terms of Anglo-Irish relations and the situation in Northern Ireland.

Browne suggested that there was a moral issue involved: the *Belgrano* was going in the opposite direction to the exclusion zone when it was bombed by the British causing the loss of thousands of lives and an escalation of the conflict.

FitzGerald said that the first duty of government was to act in the national interest rather than indulge itself on the world stage. He claimed that quiet diplomacy was much more effective. He said that the current Government was right to express its concern over the US's torture of al-Qaeda suspects, but would have been wrong to stop military flights going through Shannon. Such an action would have been pointless, as the business would have gone to Scotland or somewhere else.

Browne, referring to FitzGerald's "flawed pedigree" speech, pointed out that the former Taoiseach had taken a high moral tone in relation to Haughey, whose failings had no social impact (there is no evidence that political favours were exchanged for money), and yet he had taken a cynical approach to political events, which had very serious consequences. FitzGerald ended the discussion by indicating that Browne was entitled to his opinion, but that he disagreed with him.

I think it was Evelyn Waugh who said rather cynically that it was important to have principles when you were young, otherwise you would have nothing to sell out on when you were older. In the sphere of foreign relations I tend to think that, if a country can always be relied on not to rock the boat, it diminishes its influence even in matters which affect its own national interest.

In the late seventies it was thought that we were heading for exciting times when two dynamic leaders (FitzGerald and Haughey) succeeded the rather nondescript Liam Cosgrave and Jack Lynch. But with the perspective of the passing of the years it seems that Haughey's political legacy has been far more substantial than FitzGerald's.

In the interview with Marian Finucane, FitzGerald admitted that his happiest time in politics was when he was Minister for Foreign Affairs. He claimed that he could not achieve much as Taoiseach because of the economic situation.

The Mansergh Correspondence

Introductory Note

Martin Mansergh, in the course of his long dispute with Liam O Comain in the *Irish News* (some of which has been reported in the *Irish Political Review*), threw a barb in my direction for no good reason. I replied with a letter which, to my surprise, was published. (It was reproduced in this magazine last month.) I thought that perhaps the *Irish News* was no longer the paper described by James Connolly in *Press Poisoners In Ireland*.

Mansergh responded with a letter published as I was going on holiday. I managed nevertheless to put in a reply. When this had not been published a week later, I circulated it by other means. Somebody then made representations to the Editor and it was published. Mansergh responded with a further batch of ill-informed and incoherent allegations, one of them having to do with President McAleese's libel action against me. I answered that point but the answer was cut out of my letter as published, leaving Mansergh's accusation unanswered. By this action the Editor of the *Irish News* made Mansergh's garbled and groundless allegation his own. And the major responsibility lies, of course, with the publisher rather than the writer.

(Mansergh relishes discussions in which the other side is silenced, but it is the publisher who arranges it.)

The *Irish News* is no longer the power that it was when Connolly wrote *Press Poisoners*. It was then one of the organs of the Redmondite movement and expected to be central to the anticipated Home Rule arrangements in Ireland. When the approach, of which it was a vehement advocate, led to Partition and exclusion from the political life of both the British and Irish states, it adopted a humbler role as the general paper of the Northern Catholic community. What it says in its editorials counts for little. What has kept it going is that it gives expression to the views of every substantial tendency in the Catholic community. It would not last long if it ceased to do so. But that is its limit.

Below are the further letters published in the correspondence. It will be seen that the final letter has had extensive changes made to it, only some of which are normal editorial ones.

Brendan Clifford

**MARTIN MANSERGH: THANKFULLY
IRELAND VALUES CITIZENS OF MINORITY
TRADITIONS**

Irish News, 7.9.2006

Liam O'Comain now disclaims

making any personalized attacks on my father.

In any case, the person who I consider inspired his letter, Brendan Clifford, has now reinforced the attack—a necessary move not because Nicholas Mansergh's reputation among Irish historians is low but because it is high.

I am proud of my father and of his contribution to Irish historical scholarship and International studies well recognised by his contemporaries and peers. Nobody but Clifford has ever described him as "thoroughly British"—national papers throughout the 1930s acknowledged him as Irish. He was highly respected by many Irish political leaders. Sean MacBride told me, when I first met him, that my father was "a marvellous man and Taoiseach Charles Haughey—no anglophile either—read a lesson at my father's funeral in Tipperary.

John Hume and Bertie Ahern attended the posthumous launch of his essays *Nationalism and Independence*, edited by my mother in 1997.

In Cambridge, he lectured on Ireland in the 1960s when no-one else was doing so.

In 1948 he told the British they had been wrong to insist on dominion status in 1921 and again post-1937: and he denounced the Suez adventure publicly at an early stage. Nicholas Mansergh's exposition of de Valera's foreign policy including neutrality was positive and sympathetic.

While he corresponded with a small liberal wing of unionism, his book on the government of Northern Ireland was critical of it, pessimistic about its future and did not provide the lifeline that some two-nations ideologists supplied to unionism at its most intellectually belligerent as articulated by David Trimble before he became unionist leader. Trimble's biography records his debt to them.

Nationality has nothing to do with a person's politics or writings.

There is no sectarian ideological test for people of a particular background, otherwise unionists would never have the option of being Irish.

Some two-nations theorists exhibit extraordinary hostility to non-unionist persons or institutions with an Anglo-Irish and/or Protestant background and identified with Ireland, looking out for opportunities to denounce them as irredeemably English/British.

It has even been suggested that to call writers like Swift, Berkeley, Goldsmith, Wilde and Shaw anything but English is to 'contaminate' the notion of an Irish national literature.

The Irish Times of the past 35 years has equally ridiculously been accused of being "a British newspaper in Ireland", a gross aspersion on the integrity of editors and journalists. It is in that paranoid mental world that the only current Fianna Fail Oireachtas member from a Protestant background is accused of being "a permanent servant of Britain" and his father's life work dismissed as "British propaganda".

I acknowledge that Brendan Clifford and his colleagues have done some good historical work but he is out of his depth on the two world wars, the cause of many of his attacks on my father. The prospect of German assistance was vital to the credibility of the Rising but historians of many nationalities, especially German, have not validated Casement's and Connolly's analysis that the First World War was a war on the German nation. Equally it is too simple, as my father acknowledged, to blame it all on Germany. Nonetheless, the right-wing militarist ethos which survived the war saw the suppression of German social democracy in the early 1930s—hardly something Connolly would have approved of.

The balance of responsibility for the Second World War is different.

Hitler wanted war—Chamberlain didn't. Clifford's belief—revisionism applied to the Nazi period—that Britain was again responsible because it refused reasonable German demands regarding the Danzig corridor is naive. "Danzig is not the issue," Hitler said in May 1939. "The question for us is one of expanding Lebensraum in the east". This statement is highlighted in a current Berlin exhibition. De Valera denounced the Nazi invasion of neutral Holland and Belgium in May 1940 as "a most cruel wrong" and adopted a policy of neutrality which included valuable covert assistance to the allies. Logically, was not the German invasion of Belgium in 1914 also "a most cruel wrong"? But surely, the Germany that modern republicans should learn from is the united Federal Republic of Germany—Ireland's European Union partner. The Berlin exhibition referred to blames mass population displacement in the 20th century on "the bringing into being of an ethnically homogeneous nation state" particularly when combined with maximum territorial demands. The modern nation, like the modern Republic, has to be open and inclusive, not exclusive though it still needs a cluster of core elements to provide a centre of gravity.

Treating minority traditions as a contaminating fifth column thankfully has no part in the thinking or development of either the modern Irish state or nation.

Seánad Éireann, Dublin

**BRENDAN CLIFFORD: HISTORY TELLS
NO LIES**

Irish News, 20.9.06

It is a pity that Martin Mansergh (September 7) invents facts instead of meeting reasoned arguments with a modicum of reason.

I did not 'inspire' Liam O'Connell to do anything.

I don't know him. I have never met him, or communicated with him.

His general position is certainly much closer to Senator Mansergh's than to mine.

I noticed his dispute with the Senator, and found that he raised awkward issues that needed raising.

In that way he influenced me rather than I him.

I did not intervene in their argument until the Senator took a gratuitous side swipe at me.

With regard to the senator's father, the senator has made it clear that he is a missionary on behalf of his father and that you can't have one without the other. And that's a pity too.

I did not say that his father was British because of nationality or religion or education.

Nationality in that region is a will o' the wisp.

I said he should be treated as British because he worked for the British state in sensitive areas, and helped it to handle the Irish state after it broke free of the Treaty impositions.

With regard to Connolly, Casement and the Great War, the senator says that "historians of many nationalities... have not validated Casement's and Connolly's analysis". A curious formulation.

'Historians of many nationalities' have not been presented with the Casement/Connolly view by Irish publicists, so naturally they have not dealt with it.

No doubt Connolly would not have approved of the suppression of German socialism in the 1930s by "the right wing militarist ethos that survived the war".

How does that make him wrong in 1914-16?

What continuity is there between Nazism and the constitutional government, with a strong social reform ethos, that Connolly supported in 1914?

It gives the senator some satisfaction to travesty what I have written about British responsibility for the Second World War.

Britain joined with France to plunder and humiliate Germany in 1919, but prevented France from disabling Germany.

Britain then played the balance-of-power against France by supporting humiliated and resentful Germany against the French.

The British refused—in the era of Weimar democracy—to support a removal of the Versailles conditions that fed the nationalist resentment on which Nazism flourished, but from 1933 to 1939 either collaborated with the Nazi regime to break those conditions, or connived at the breaking of them.

The militarisation of the Rhineland, the formation of a navy and an army, and the merger with Austria were all breaches of Versailles.

And then Britain went way beyond Versailles in 1938, by browbeating the Czech Government into handing over the Sudetenland to Germany, making it a gift not only of territory with strong defences against Germany but of a massive increase in armaments.

Then, having prevented France from acting in accordance with its treaty obligations to the Czechs in 1938, it decided to go to war against a greatly strengthened Germany over the comparatively trivial issue of Danzig.

Britain encouraged the Poles to refuse a negotiated settlement over Danzig by including them in an apparently powerful, but actually illusory, military alliance against Germany—encircling Germany.

But Britain did not fire a shot when Germany broke the encirclement by destroying Poland.

That might be described as a series of mistakes—it is nevertheless a series of major historical facts.

It is what the British state did with its victory in the Great War of 1914 in defence of civilisation.

I don't know what grounds the senator thinks he has for associating me with David Trimble.

Over 30 years ago I saw Trimble as part of a fascist development within unionism and I never changed that view.

I thought he would be a disaster as Unionist leader, and said so when he was elected.

And I was certain that he would subvert the Good Friday Agreement, which he signed under duress.

Senator Mansergh thought otherwise.

MARTIN MANSERGH: BRITISH AND IRISH ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE IDENTITIES TODAY
Irish News, 25.9.06

I wish with this letter to close on my side a distasteful correspondence. What Brendan Clifford (September 20) has obvious difficulty in accepting is that in modern Ireland neither he nor any other ideological vigilante has any role in determining other people's nationality for them. To describe a historian from Tipperary, who—among other activities—made a substantial and widely recognised contribution to the advancement of Irish historical studies, as 'thoroughly British' (ie not Irish at all) is not just to repeat an untruth by any objective criteria but is gratuitously offensive as well. A son who defends his father's reputation and his right to his Irish identity, as most sons would, is not a "missionary" for him. My father had his life. I have mine.

They are in many ways different. Undoubtedly, the respect he was held in in

Ireland has helped me to contribute something in a different way as well.

Few people today would maintain that either the Irish or the British—living in such close geographical proximity—can be confined to exclusive watertight compartments. Countless Irish people, north and south, have been—for a few years only in my father's case—either soldiers, civil servants or government appointees to public boards in Britain or Northern Ireland without forfeiting their nationality of origin. Casement was one, Sam Maguire was another. It is not held against anyone's memory or identity today, as the Messines Tower and this year's official Somme commemoration at Islandbridge have shown that they have fought in British uniform in the First World War.

Volunteers who fought fascism in Spain are properly honoured.

None of the Irishmen and women who engaged in whatever capacity in the struggle against the far worse evil of Hitler have any right to be regarded—because of that and because of their background, as Clifford would have it—as aliens in their own country.

It is a fundamental error to demand that history conform to political ideology.

It is bizarre to suggest that Casement's and Connolly's views on the First World War constitute new 'evidence' or contain original lines of argument that all historians have ignored.

In an Austrian-owned house recently, I picked up former Chancellor Prinz von Bulow's memoirs, in which he speaks of the fecklessness of the Kaiser and the incompetence of his ministerial advisers.

Volker Berghahn in his recent book *Imperial Germany* concludes that "World War I had been unleashed by a small circle of decision-makers, based primarily in Berlin and Vienna", who were motivated also by a reactionary response to internal democratic and nationalist pressures.

As for the suggestion that Britain bore the major responsibility for World War II by 'encircling' in 1939 a Germany that was in the process of annexing its neighbours, it is simply not worthy of serious discussion.

A person of similar background and related to my father—the well-known writer Elizabeth Bowen whose roots were in north Cork—has been subjected in the past to comparable attacks by Clifford.

A new book by Brian Girvin reveals that she was encouraged to visit and report on Ireland by John Dulanty, the Irish high commissioner, to help provide a more nuanced view in London, making a nonsense of that invective.

Brendan Clifford owes readers of *The Irish News* a fuller account of his own dialectical journeys.

In what way, for instance, was the British and Irish Communist Organisation

(B&ICO)—in which he was a leading light—or its agenda 'thoroughly Irish'?

In his latest letter, Clifford implies that he was always strongly anti-Trimble, notwithstanding the inspiration provided to him by the two-nations theory. If so, it is difficult to explain why in a Belfast magazine in 1987 he strongly criticised the integrity of Mary McAleese's appointment to the post of director of the Institute of Legal Studies at Queen's, where the only other candidate was David Trimble; and why he joined and supported the Unionist hullabaloo over it.

How did he respond to the threat of legal action by Mary McAleese fully backed by Queen's? Clifford definitely has form.

My father may not have been the ultra-nationalist pro-German anglophobe that Clifford now seems to require of Irish historians of a certain background but at least Nicholas Mansergh did not toady to Unionism.

Seanad Eireann, Dublin

BRENDAN CLIFFORD: NICHOLAUS [SIC] MANSERGH'S HISTORY EASED BRITAIN'S GUILTY CONSCIENCE

Irish News, 28.9.06

(The text in square brackets was omitted by the *Irish News*. Where wording has been changed, the original appears in square brackets and italicised.)

Why did Senator Mansergh [*I wonder why Senator Mansergh (25.9.06) went out of his way to*] bring me into his argument with Liam O Comain if he finds correspondence with me distasteful.

I [*have*] never sought correspondence with him but I am entitled to defend myself. [*I suppose the reason I am distasteful to him is that, when attacked by him I defend myself—which is all I am doing now.*]

With regard to his father I said no more than that he was a British historian.

His history of Ireland has the blind spots appropriate to somebody who saw the upset of British affairs in Ireland from the vantage point of the British state: e.g., the decision of the British Parliament to carry on governing Ireland in complete disregard of the 1918 Election result was not a basic problem of democratic morality for him.

He handled that [*very awkward*] phase of history [*the British government of Ireland*] in a way that was designed to minimise the bad conscience of the British state [*about it. The revisionists of recent years would have been well advised to stay within the parameters set by him.*].

With regard to Connolly and Casement, I never said they provided "new 'evidence'" about the causes of the Great

War. [*In the nature of things they could not have done so.*] Both of them had been killed by Britain before the War was history [*became a subject of historical investigation*]. They made their judgment and acted on it as the war was raging [*on the War as it was happening, and acted on that judgment*]. I have re-published the views of both and said why I think they were sound. Nobody who thinks they were wrong—and that the 10 million war dead [*dead of the Great War*] was necessary for the achievement of some great moral cause [*purpose*—has published a criticism of their writings.

I summarised my views on World War 2 in my last reply to Senator Mansergh: that Britain helped to build up Germany into a great power, [*despite France's objections.*] before deciding to make the comparatively minor issue of Danzig a war issue against Germany. As for Germany being "in the process of annexing its neighbours", has Senator Mansergh [really] not noticed that the first Nazi annexation was a gift from Britain to Hitler—the Czech Sudetenland?

With regard to the "two nations": I suggested in 1969 that the Ulster Protestant community should [*be treated as a stubborn*] nationality, and should] be approached as a nationality rather than a feudal remnant which would crumble under pressure.

Thirty years later Senator Mansergh proposes that they [*the Ulster Protestants*] should have a right of veto on unification.

That is to accord them a right of national decision.

He questions my opposition to David Trimble but the [*The Senator suggests that I "imply" that I was politically opposed to David Trimble but was not actually so.*] evidence is [*there for all to read in thousands of words*] in the *Irish Political Review* from the moment Trimble [*he*] became leader.

[*He gives the wrong title to the Institute of which Mary McAleese was appointed Director, and it makes all the difference. She had no "professional" experience of legal practice. The appointment was made in breach of Fair Employment rules. Though she had not made the appointment, she started a libel action against me over it and did not merely issue a "threat" of it. I had to conduct my own defence against her solicitors and barristers for lack of funds. A week before trial she settled without a penny in costs or damages. My criticism of her appointment was not on the grounds that Trimble should have got the job. I did not know his application had been solicited. The appointment of either would have been in breach of Fair Employment rules.*]

[*Re Elizabeth Bowen: She was suddenly hailed about 15 years ago as the greatest North Cork writer. She was born in Dublin, wrote that when her family went to England she felt she was coming home, was published in England, but inherited a Big House remnant of a Cromwellian estate in North Cork. Despite all the hype, I have still to meet anybody in Slieve Luacra who has read her novels - and it is a place where people read a lot.*]

[*It was through the insistence that she was an Irish writer that I came to see that the meaning of "Irish" was being changed. In influential circles it is now used as a regional variant of British: the default position of Irish is British. That appears to be Senator Mansergh's view. In the light of it Irish is only a way of being British. Stated with less cantankerous evasion, it would perhaps be an arguable position, and the sequence of events from 1912 to 1922 would appear as a blip, a deviation, which has been curbed. But it was not the position of Casement and Connolly, or of De Valera, founder of the party for which the Senator speaks, or of Charles Haughey. And, even if it should be the case that the Irish national development is over, leaving behind it a state without a distinct national purpose, it would still be bad history to misrepresent the views of the people who created the state, or to set them aside without refuting them.*]

[*Re the Irish Times: Aubane has published documentary evidence from the British state archives, that its effective owner, Major MacDowell, conducted it in consultation with Whitehall during the crisis of 1969.*]

[*The Senator attributes the words "thoroughly Irish" to me in an obscure connection; seems to describe me as an "ultra-nationalist, pro-German, anglophobe... toady to Unionism"; and says the Irish News readers deserve a fuller account of my "dialectical journeys".*]

The Senator says the readers of *The Irish News* deserve a fuller account of my "dialectical journeys"

My "journey" has been very simple and straight, compared with the tortuous journey of leading Dublin politicians since they denounced me in 1969, and it is all on the public record. But the fuller account is something I would be happy to supply if *The Irish News* agrees with the Senator that it is required of me.

Editorial Note: We will return to this subject in the next issue of *Irish Political Review*.

Florrie O'Donoghue On MacCurtain, O'Hegarty, And "Dual Control"

To Major Florrie O'Donoghue must go to the credit for nipping in the bud the earliest operations in Ireland of the CIA, or as it was known during its Second World War pioneering days—the OSS (Office of Strategic Services). Eunan O'Halpin has written:

"American covert activities were mounted without consultation with their allies... Bill Donovan, Roosevelt's 'Coordinator of Intelligence' and the founder of OSS in July 1942, initially planned to dispatch Errol Flynn 'to act as a public relations and intelligence agent'; instead he had to make do with an undistinguished stand-in, who on a trip in 1942 recruited a Kerry cattle dealer to develop a network of people around the south-west to collect information for transmission to the American legation. These arrangements were quickly uncovered by Florence O'Donoghue of G2 (army intelligence), and with the aid of informants were kept under observation. In February 1944 O'Donoghue also confronted Smale, the American consul in Cork, considered a particular 'busybody' responsible for various scare stories about German activities" (*Defending Ireland: The Irish State And Its Enemies Since 1922*, p239).

O'Donoghue had been no less resolute and astute in ferreting out and eliminating those actual Nazi German subversive activities—as opposed to the fictitious ones invented by US 'dirty tricks' operations—that had in fact posed a real threat:

"Jim Crofton, the ex-Broy Harrier {Dev's Special Branch—MO'R} who was the IRA's most important Garda agent, was detained in Kerry while attempting to arrange the escape of the German agent Herman Goertz (in 1941). This was a result of intelligence gathered by Florence O'Donoghue through his SIS. Even then O'Donoghue initially had difficulty in persuading the local police not to release Crofton, who purported to be on undercover duty" (p205).

It is rather ironic, but surely even more enlightening, to learn that such thoroughly effective actions taken in defence of the wartime security of this very State had been accomplished through the creation by O'Donoghue of an organisation whose members adamantly refused to swear allegiance to that self-same State. As far as such incorruptible Republicans were concerned, what had been 'good enough for Dev' had been no more 'good enough' for them than what had been 'good enough for Mick Collins'. O'Donoghue had,

however, already taken the initiative to tap into their unequivocal patriotism in a manner parallel to some strategic thinking on the part of Frank Ryan—but with one key difference: Ryan went as far as to suggest that they should have been prepared to put on a "Free State" uniform! In a letter written to Dev's Minister in Madrid, Leopold Kerney, on 14th January 1942 (in which Ryan also remarked that "*the Goertz affair ends happily for all concerned... his arrest*"). He observed from his Berlin exile:

"I am following home affairs as closely as I can with the help of papers that arrive about a month late. While I have my own theories I cannot, at this distance, dogmatize—rather I will not. The reason for the apparent apathy of a large number of good Republicans puzzles me... In time of national crisis like this, there must be a unified command. The country comes before party. So, in his neutrality policy—which is the only sane policy under the circumstances—Dev should get 100% support... Because I know hundreds of good Republicans who are standing aloof today, I am fearful of what may happen if war reaches us... Why aren't they leaders in the Defence Forces?... Can the Govt. itself be partly responsible for the failure to get 100% support?... I want to get back—so that I can play a part (and I really believe I could do a little) in unifying my friends to support Dev in his foreign policy, while reserving our rights to differ on other matters" (quoted in Seán Cronin, *Frank Ryan—The Search For The Republic*, p242-3).

O'Halpin recounts how O'Donoghue had imaginatively come up with a far more radical solution:

"In the Munster area, hardened republicans who would not dream of taking a Free State oath or of wearing a Free State uniform were secretly recruited to a clandestine intelligence-gathering, security, and 'stay-behind' organisation, the Supplementary Intelligence Service (SIS). Established by Major Florence O'Donoghue of G2, one of the few War of Independence veterans who could bridge the political and personal treaty divide, it was organised on the same battalion areas as the pre-1922 IRA in anticipation of an invasion of the south coast by either set of belligerents. In the event, its main function turned out to be that of gathering intelligence on clandestine activities. Its greatest service was the detection of the escape plans of the German agent Herman Goertz and the Special Branch renegade Jim Crofton in Kerry in 1941. The SIS was notionally a secret unit of

the LDF (Local Defence Force), but its members were 'never formally attested' and their names did not appear on any army roll. They were, consequently, legally not eligible for the 1940-1945 Emergency Service medal later awarded to members of the defence forces. Special cabinet sanction had to be obtained in 1951 for the secret issue {by a Fine Gael-led government—MO'R} of medals to SIS members, who as committed republicans were still shy of admitting their Emergency activities {under a Fianna Fáil government—MO'R}" (p166).

If in some respects the structures of the SIS paralleled those of the old IRA, it would also be true to say that in other respects the very concept of the SIS suggests that it was inspired by the old IRB—but with this fundamental difference: while within its ranks were those with only a conditional loyalty to the *de facto* Republic whose sovereignty de Valera's wartime policies had conclusively established, at its apex was O'Donoghue himself with no other loyalty at this stage of his life but to that *de facto* Republic itself. It had, however, been a somewhat different matter with his War of Independence dual loyalties to both "*the Irish Republic virtually established*" by the IRB constitution and the actual Republic proclaimed and administered by the democratically elected first Dáil Éireann of January 1919.

As the Editor of *Florence And Josephine O'Donoghue's War Of Independence*, John Borgonovo has drawn on O'Halpin's research on the SIS and he pays handsome tribute to O'Donoghue's vitally important intelligence role during the Second World War (page 206). And these wonderful O'Donoghue memoirs, penned during the early 1960s, also explain where that expertise had first been fine-tuned—the even more outstanding intelligence record of both husband and wife during the War of Independence. As Joe Lee rightly points out in his Foreword to Borgonovo's book:

"The poorly equipped IRA had no hope unless they could compensate for their gross inferiority in gun power, not only through greater willpower but through superior Intelligence. The role of IRA Intelligence Officers was crucial in levelling up the odds. It is the judgement of John Borgonovo, the editor, that O'Donoghue, the farmer's son from Kerry, was as crucial to the struggle in Cork as Michael Collins, a farmer's son from Cork, was to the struggle in Dublin... Nor can this verdict be dismissed as merely a case of excessive editorial pietas. Borgonovo, an American, has already acquired authority on the subject in researching his thesis, *Informers, Intelligence and the 'Anti-Sinn Féin Society': The Anglo-Irish War in Cork City, 1920-1921*" (p ix).

Indeed he has: for John Borgonovo's thesis represents a thorough refutation of the revisionist thesis of Peter Hart—in his *The IRA & Its Enemies*—that what had been waged in Cork was a sectarian war. By focusing on the quality of the intelligence work produced by the O'Donoghue team, Borgonovo was able to illustrate just how accurate had been the information gathered in respect of informers of whatever background before they were then executed by the IRA—an argument also well made by Borgonovo in the *Irish Times* this July 14, in answer to a letter from Hart on June 28, leaving the latter struck suitably dumb.

But there is one issue where he pursues an argument against Hart that in my view is misplaced, in respect of events preceding the RIC murder of Cork's Lord Mayor and IRA O/C Tomás MacCurtain. This topic is introduced by Borgonovo as follows:

"On the night of 19 March 1920, City Volunteers shot and killed RIC Constable Joseph Murtagh on Pope's Quay in Cork. Two hours later, a party of police with blackened faces invaded Tomás MacCurtain's home and shot down the young Lord Mayor as he opened his bedroom door" (p90).

It is in a footnote that Borgonovo proceeds to argue:

"Peter Hart writes that the killing of Constable Murtagh was the work of the 'wild men of the IRB' and not authorised by Tomás MacCurtain (p. 79). I disagree. There is some evidence to support Hart's conclusion, including the fact that when MacCurtain phoned the Cork Infirmary to check on Murtagh's condition, he offered his condolences. O'Donoghue's papers include a letter from Volunteer Cornelius Kelleher who heard second-hand that MacCurtain said he would make the killers 'pay the piper' for 'shooting police on their own'. However, as O'Donoghue states, the Brigade had already targeted Constable Murtagh (and Sgt Ferris) weeks earlier for being 'particularly aggressive and obnoxious towards us'. This would indicate that MacCurtain previously approved the shooting of Constable Murtagh" (p105).

In an earlier footnote he had already argued:

"Peter Hart's book (pp. 79, 240-1, 246-7) emphasises the tension between the Volunteers and the IRB in Cork City. Hart argues that Seán O'Hegarty led an 'irregular' squad of IRB men that acted as an 'underground' body, outside the command of the Cork No.1 Brigade. I believe Hart overstates the case. Rather than an IRB 'gang' operating unilaterally, I believe the situation in Cork was one of individual Volunteer companies acting on their own to secure weapons and control their own areas. While IRB men frequently organised and led non-sanctioned sorties in Cork, they seem to have acted on behalf of individual

Volunteer companies rather than the IRB" (p73).

I disagree with John Borgonovo on this one point and believe that he himself has understated the IRB issue. He accepts at face value O'Donoghue's statement that any problems of conflicting lines of IRB/IRA authority had been overcome. O'Donoghue had joined the IRA in the Winter of 1916-1917 and subsequently joined the IRB in April 1917. He had no personal experience of the turmoil in the ranks during the Easter Rising and the particular IRB recriminations that followed. O'Donoghue's experience was that of what he himself described as a post-Rising "*illumination*", not least inspired by his IRB cousin, Pat O'Connor, who had been killed in action in Dublin as a member of the GPO garrison. But for those IRB activists who had personally experienced the 1916 Rising debacle in Cork it continued to fester as an issue in contention, as the North Cork IRA leader Seán Moylan, who had nothing to do with the IRB himself, was to observe in respect of the dual IRB/IRA West Cork leader, Tom Hales:

"There was only one Brigade in Cork City and County and when it was reorganised in 1917 I was at the first meeting. There was less than a score of men present, among them Tomás MacCurtain, Terence MacSwiney, Seán O'Hegarty and Tom Hales. The meeting opened in stormy fashion, Tom Hales charging the Brigade staff with neglect of duty during Easter Week, 1916, with a lack of initiative and a desire to avoid fighting. Those against whom his recriminations were directed were Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney. Their reputations need now no defence, nor are there any doubts of their courage or selflessness. This, however, is not to condemn Tom Hales. His attitude was rooted in the sincerity of a man disappointed in a great purpose" (*Seán Moylan: In His Own Words*, p25).

Moylan himself, who had also mobilised on Easter Sunday and then disbanded in response to MacNeill's countermanding order, held to a much more realistic perspective regarding 1916:

"People talk nowadays of the conflicting orders of 1916 and the might have beens. Had the orders agreed, been clear and explicit, there would have been here and there throughout the country an attempt at fighting, but little more, for there was not a countrywide organisation, very little arms and no general will to fight" (p16).

Returning to the Hales onslaught on MacCurtain and MacSwiney, Moylan commented:

"The storm blew itself quickly out and then we got down to a discussion on organisation" (p25).

O'Donoghue's memoirs suggest that

subsequent problems in Cork had also been overcome:

"Many of the more responsible leaders had come out of jails and internment camps in 1917 with the firm conviction that there was no further need for a secret movement, that the IRB should be allowed to lapse, and the whole future struggle be based on the open political and military organisations. They included de Valera, Cathal Brugha, Austin Stack, MacCurtain and MacSwiney. But they had reckoned without the astuteness, tenacity, and organising ability of Collins, who had virtually taken control of the IRB after the Rising, re-organised, expanded, and infused new life into it, and who now refused very determinedly to wind it up or even curtail its activities... Neither Tomás nor Terry had taken any active part in the IRB since their release from internment. On the other hand, Tomás had taken no steps to suppress or discourage it in his area. Seán O'Hegarty was County Centre (IRB) and Brigade Vice-Commandant (IRA)" (p58).

A crisis did, however, develop when an IRB man, conceded by O'Donoghue to be one of "*the tough men*" who probably also made use of his gun to benefit from "*pickings*" (a term not understood by John Borgonovo—see pp59 and 73), was arrested by an RIC constable for being "*under the influence of drink*".

"Harry (Varien) promptly pulled the gun and fired... The policeman was wounded seriously but did not die... The issue was forced by the arrest of Fred Murray and his positive identification by the wounded policemen (wrongly of course) as the man who shot him. I then told Tomás who had done the shooting and the lid blew off everything. When Varien was questioned, he declared truculently that he had Seán O'Hegarty's authority to carry a gun and use it if need be..."

"The event raised for Tomás in the most positive way the question of his authority as officer commanding the Brigade. He could not ignore it... Seán would not and could not be expected to abate anything of his IRB authority... Knowing the compositions of the Volunteer mentality at the time... and believing that whatever was attempted would emanate from the driving forces of the hard core of the IRB men within the ranks, I had become convinced of the necessity for maintaining the organisation (the IRB), notwithstanding all the difficulties and damages of dual control. Now the difficulty came home to me very forcibly. Fortunately in Cork it was not complicated by any bitterness or personal ambition. Both Tomás and Seán were acting out of a strong sense of duty. Seán resigned his position as Vice Commandant of the Brigade and returned to the ranks as an ordinary Volunteer. It was not a complete solution, but it was a gesture to the authority of Tomás, and it left Seán's IRB position intact. Terry (MacSwiney) replaced him as Vice Commandant of the Brigade".

"I was considerably agitated over my own position, now more complicated by reason of the fact that Seán held no rank. I knew that any day something could arise which would confront me with the dilemma of dual allegiance. I had so much of Seán's confidence in the IRB matters, that I feared a situation in which it would conflict with the loyalty I owed to Tomás and to the Brigade.

"Without consulting anybody, not even Joe O'Connor (IRA Brigade Quartermaster) who was in a similar (IRB) position but without the added complication of close association with Seán, I decided to offer my resignation from the position of Brigade Adjutant to Tomás".

MacCurtain, however, refused to accept it:

"He assured me again that the IRB position would not make the smallest difference as far as he was concerned to our mutual trust and cooperation. It never did down to the day of his death" (pp59-60),

O'Donoghue suggested that the issue had now been completely resolved and John Borgonovo agrees. Yet, in one of his footnotes taking issue with Hart's interpretation of the IRB issue, he becomes somewhat more equivocal when he restates that organisation's ongoing mistrust of the actual IRA leadership in place:

"The city IRB arranged the election of IRB men to quartermaster posts in the city's Volunteer companies, placing them in charge of local arms. That policy is understandable in light of the 1916 Rising, when MacCurtain and MacSwiney surrendered Volunteer weapons to the British" (p74).

John Borgonovo ends up validating a pattern of organisational behaviour based on such distrust of both the Commandant and Vice Commandant of the IRA's Cork No. 1 Brigade on the part of those of their Volunteer subordinates who also held dual membership of the IRB. Whereas North Cork IRA leader Sean Moylan fully accepted the need for people to get the issue off their chests in 1917, for the specific purpose of ensuring that it would then be dropped and no longer muddy the waters for the War of Independence that had yet to be fought, it continued to be an issue that exercised Seán O'Hegarty to the very end, never for a moment leaving his chest.

But what of Florrie O'Donoghue? One could not find a fairer and more balanced presentation of that whole 1916 issue than in O'Donoghue's 1955 biography, simply entitled *Tomás MacCurtain—Soldier And Patriot*. Pages 103 to 108 draw in detail on O'Hegarty's account of his encounters with MacCurtain and MacSwiney over Easter 1916 (from what we now know to be his Bureau of Military History Witness

Statement), before proceeding to also detail all of the arguments advanced by MacCurtain and MacSwiney as to why they had rejected any idea of radically changing tack from the countermanded orders for action by Cork City Volunteers on the Cork/Kerry border in order to belatedly embark on a Cork City Rising that had never been envisaged in anybody's scheme of things. O'Donoghue himself also observed:

"Neither they nor Seán O'Hegarty were aware that the Rising had started in Dublin three hours earlier. It was between 8 and 9 o'clock on Monday night when they reached the City and saw for the first time the message from Pearse".

O'Donoghue further related:

"Two independent inquiries were held in 1917 into events in Cork at Easter 1916. Three officers appointed by the Volunteer Executive carried out one inquiry and two members of the Supreme Council of the IRB carried out the other. Having investigated all the facts and heard a number of witnesses, each of the inquiry boards arrived at the same findings—that no blame attached to Tomás MacCurtain or Terence MacSwiney for the miscarriage of the plans for the Cork Brigade in the Rising" (p120).

This had been expressed in far softer tones by O'Donoghue himself than in John Borgonovo's summary:

"MacCurtain and MacSwiney were court-martialled for their conduct during the Rising by both the Volunteer Executive and the IRB. Both bodies eventually cleared the two leaders of wrongdoing, since they had indeed followed orders issued by the Volunteer chain of command. However, Cork's failure during the Rising had a profound impact on Cork's Volunteer movement" (p20).

And indeed it was the language of the court-martial, rather than any milder "inquiries", that Seán O'Hegarty continued to employ forever more. Three decades down the road, on 24th October 1947, O'Hegarty provided a Witness Statement to the BMH, personally taken down by Florrie O'Donoghue and simply entitled "*Conversations with Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney during Easter Week 1916*". O'Hegarty had remained totally lacking in the motivation to provide the BMH with a witness statement on any aspect whatsoever of the War of Independence. 1916 was the only bee in his bonnet and it was a queen bee. We can now see that it was from this statement that O'Donoghue quoted so extensively in his MacCurtain biography in order to provide us with O'Hegarty's recall of that Easter weekend, but its hard-hitting impact was immediately softened by him when he straight away followed with MacCurtain's own assessment and judgement of the

realities of the situation. To read O'Hegarty's statement directly in all its unsoftened starkness has, however, quite a different impact on the reader. That statement concludes:

"On Easter Monday about 1 o'clock Tomás MacCurtain and Terry came walking to where I lived. {O'Hegarty had been forced by the British authorities to reside outside Cork City in the West Cork Gaeltacht of Ballingearry—MOR}. We talked on the roadside and walked East to Túirindubh. I gathered from their talk that they had been frequently in Dublin of late and that they had all along foreseen what actually happened viz., a conflict of orders from the two sides there—the IRB and the Irish Volunteers. They told me how they had conflicting orders during the week and a final note on Friday from Seán McDermott that all were now agreed to go ahead on Sunday; and then MacNeill's Sunday morning cancellation. They told me the arms ship was sunk and Casement captured; but it was mainly of the evil of 'dual control' that they spoke, and that seemed to exclude everything else from their minds".

"I gathered from the tone of their remarks generally that they took it for granted that MacNeill's cancellation meant that whatever action might have been contemplated was now abandoned. They did not say this in so many words; they did not even suggest to me that they were aware of any specific action or activity contemplated. They were very general and indefinite in their conversations. They left Túirindubh about 3 going East, Driver D. O'Callaghan, Substitute Driver Bob Hales".

There we have it. Not for a moment did O'Hegarty cast any aspersions on either the integrity or personal courage of MacCurtain or MacSwiney. But he did question their leadership capacity, showing that the passage of thirty years had not modified this verdict of his by one iota. How then might O'Hegarty have been expected to act as IRB Centre for Cork? At MacCurtain's funeral in March 1920 his coffin was carried by three Brigade Officers—Vice Commandant Terence MacSwiney, Quartermaster Joe O'Connor and Adjutant Florrie O'Donoghue—and by one 'rank-and-file' Volunteer, Seán O'Hegarty. It is true that, when MacSwiney stepped into MacCurtain's shoes as Commandant on the following day, the move was accompanied by O'Hegarty's return to his old position as Vice Commandant, and that after MacSwiney's arrest in August he went on to succeed him as Commandant. From that point onwards the leadership of both the IRA and IRB in Cork City was concentrated in the single person of Seán O'Hegarty and a very effective war was waged. But are we really expected to believe that he had remained quite content to adhere to the IRA discipline of behaving

as just any 'Joe Soap' rank-and-filer between April 1919 and March 1920?

In this regard John Borgonovo overlooks the evidence inadvertently supplied by O'Donoghue himself that he had in fact reported to an independent IRB command structure that on occasions quite deliberately bypassed his own IRA superiors MacCurtain and MacSwiney. It was in September 1919, during O'Hegarty's IRA limbo period, that O'Donoghue had first met his future wife Jo:

"A little later ... we discussed the matter of getting (her son) Reggie back into her custody {by the IRA 'kidnapping' him from his deceased father's family in Britain—MOR}. For the Volunteer organisation as such no action within the law was possible; if we acted at all it would have to be on other lines. The proposal was of course something outside our immediate local control, and was moreover something quite outside our proper functions. So that when I put it to some of the Brigade Officers (I do not think it ever went beyond Seán O'Hegarty and Joe O'Connor) it appeared to them to be a matter requiring careful consideration as well as needing the sanction and active help of GHQ... It was to Collins I put the proposal and I doubt if it ever went beyond him. In both his capacities as Director of Intelligence and head of the IRB he was in a position to do all that was needed and he did it" (pp125-6).

In this narrative O'Donoghue forgot himself. Such a deployment of IRA personnel and resources should have undoubtedly required the appropriate approval of his Brigade superiors—yet Commandant MacCurtain and Vice Commandant MacSwiney were clearly bypassed. In this account O'Donoghue wrote of consulting O'Hegarty as if he were a Brigade Officer, forgetting that the latter was a mere 'rank-and-file' Volunteer during this period. But, within the command structure of the IRB, O'Hegarty was indeed O'Donoghue's superior as Centre for Cork. O'Donoghue's referral of the matter through both O'Hegarty and fellow-IRB man O'Connor, and then upwards to IRB President Collins himself, served to underline the ongoing operation of the IRB's own chain of command as something quite independent of the IRA's command structure. And, on the issue of that particular proposed IRA action, both MacCurtain and MacSwiney were treated as if they were just another pair of Eoin MacNéills to be kept in the dark.

John Borgonovo accepts at face value Florrie O'Donoghue's statement in *Florence And Josephine...* that, since "certain policemen in the city made themselves particularly obnoxious by their aggressiveness towards us, it was decided to shoot two of them—Sergeant Ferris and Constable Murtagh" (p85).

But decided by whom and when; and to be carried out under what set of circumstances? Subsequent paragraphs would date that decision to January 1920, or early February at the very latest. But whereas Sergeant Ferris had been armed on the occasion of both unsuccessful attempts on his life—early February and March 10 (with O'Donoghue himself being slightly wounded during the exchange of gunfire on the latter occasion)—the killing on March 19 had been of an unarmed Constable Murtagh while he was out on leave. I am not myself taking up any partisan position regarding MacCurtain's obvious belief that public opinion did matter and that there was a limit to what it would support at that stage of the War. Nor am I arguing against the O'Hegarty/O'Donoghue perspective that, given the nature of warfare, this was too precious a distinction to make any meaningful difference. What I am arguing, however, is that it most certainly did make a difference to IRA Brigade Commandant MacCurtain himself and that this difference pointed yet again to what O'Hegarty described as MacCurtain's concern with what he regarded as "*the evil of dual control*".

John Borgonovo correctly notes (p105) that "*when MacCurtain phoned the Cork Infirmary to check on Murtagh's condition, he offered his condolences*". This fact had already been recounted by O'Donoghue himself in his 1955 biography of MacCurtain (pp70-171). Why then did O'Donoghue drop that same fact from all the accounts he subsequently wrote of the circumstances surrounding MacCurtain's death—whether in his *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story* (1961) or these 1960s memoirs? The answer must surely lie in the fact that the reference to such condolences in that same biography had prompted Volunteer Con Kelleher to write to O'Donoghue on 2nd July 1958 with a more damning quotation from MacCurtain: "*Whoever did this will pay the piper. We can't have men roaming around armed shooting police on their own*" (quoted and dated on page 241 of Hart; partly quoted, undated, on page 105 of Borgonovo).

And so it was that in 1961 O'Donoghue decided to mask that controversial issue by completely dropping his previous reference to MacCurtain's condolences to the Murtagh family when he came once again to write of MacCurtain's murder in *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story*. The key argument that O'Donoghue decided to concentrate on in this book nonetheless remains a powerfully convincing one:

"The theory that the murder of the Lord Mayor was a reprisal for the shooting of Constable Murtagh at Pope's Quay about 11 pm on the night of the 19th presupposes that the crime was

planned and carried out in less than two hours—between 11.15 pm on the 19th and 1.10 am on the 20th. If the whole party engaged had come from one barrack, that may have been possible, but the evidence, as will be shown, indicated that a much larger number participated than the admitted available strength of the King Street force... The shooting of Constable Murtagh was not a factor in the event which followed it" (pp57-59).

O'Donoghue's meticulous examination of the evidence for this argument was indeed a *tour de force*. And it was here that Peter Hart, having been such a 'bright spark' in discerning a distinctly independent IRB role in Cork, reverted to his normal role of 'cute hoor'. For Hart had only absolved MacCurtain from responsibility for the shooting of Murtagh in order to argue for an ultimate IRB responsibility for MacCurtain's own murder, through a presentation of Murtagh's death as the cause of it. How else to explain why Hart, acclaimed in academia as the 'wonder boy' who brought statistical analysis to bear on the War of Independence, endeavoured to subvert O'Donoghue's very precise quantitative evidence in respect of "*less than two hours*", by a very deliberate resort to obscurantism as to the interval of time involved? Here is how Hart set about muddying the evidence: "*On the evening (of 19 March) Constable Murtagh... was shot... Several {!!!!} hours later, in the early morning of 20 March, a group of anonymous men appeared at the Blackpool home of Tomás MacCurtain*" (p78). And again—affecting ignorance of the distinction in meaning between "*a couple*" and "*a few*"—this quantitative analyst wrote: "*A few hours later he was dead*" (p241).

Hart's attempt to establish a cause/effect relationship is totally refuted by the sharpness and precision of O'Donoghue's forensic analysis. In contrast, John Borgonovo does indeed appreciate that O'Donoghue proved his point as regards timings, but then unfortunately also proceeds to minimise its relevance:

"O'Donoghue argues that MacCurtain's death was not a direct reprisal for the shooting of Constable Murtagh, but rather an RIC assassination that happened to occur on the same evening as Murtagh's killing. He cites the large number of police that had to be organized, disguised, and posted at various positions to seal off MacCurtain's home from the neighbourhood. This complex deployment would have been almost impossible to co-ordinate in the 90 minutes between the killing of Murtagh and the start of the operation to shoot MacCurtain... That would indicate a police counter-assassination policy already in place. While O'Donoghue raises good points, it seems too much of a coincidence that MacCurtain's killing

occurred only two hours after the shooting of a Cork policeman. The most likely explanation is that the local RIC had plotted to assassinate MacCurtain if another policeman was shot in the city (probably in response to the {attempted—MO'R} shooting of {the armed—MO'R} District Inspector MacDonagh by O'Donoghue and Tom Crofts). The police then put their plan into action upon hearing of Constable Murtagh's killing" (pp105-6).

In my view, O'Donoghue's analysis went much further than "*good points*". But that analysis, painstakingly conscientious as it undoubtedly was, also appears to have been conscience-driven, in the light of O'Donoghue's knowledge of the full details of MacCurtain's response to the Murtagh shooting.

Does any of this matter? Yes it does. While in no way being the cause of MacCurtain's murder, O'Donoghue had to wrestle with the knowledge that the assassination of the unarmed Murtagh had provided a pretext for propagandists—not only then, but also down through the years to today's RIC-Black-and-Tan apologists Eoghan Harris and Kevin Myers—to argue that the murdered, unarmed, innocent, and democratically-elected Lord Mayor of Cork had been a 'legitimate target' who was quite rightly on the receiving end of his 'tit for tat' just desserts.

And what of the problem of "*dual control*"? It is indeed true that it would cease to exist as a War of Independence problem in Cork City once Seán O'Hegarty became IRA Brigade Commandant in addition to his role as IRB Centre. But the existence of two parallel command structures was to matter very much nationally when it came to the struggle for an against the Anglo-Irish Treaty. And it was the real centre of authority in the IRB, its President Michael Collins, who roundly outmanoeuvred that Treaty's opponents. Cork anti-Treatyites O'Hegarty and O'Donoghue nonetheless went on to play an honourable role in refusing to fight in a fratricidal Civil War, by establishing their 'Neutral IRA' organisation and by acting as a conduit in attempts to bring that conflict to an end.

As for Peter Hart, when it comes to assessing the role of the IRB in establishing the Free State and pursuing a policy of assassination as part and parcel of its *modus operandi*, it is here that he takes leave of any previously expressed critical faculties in order to knuckle under the line established by his guru and thesis supervisor, David Fitzpatrick.

Manus O'Riordan

To Be Continued

The Casement 'Black Diaries' —An Overlong Controversy in Outline

Part 3

In 1993 under the Open Government Initiative of the new Labour administration in Britain it was decided to make the Diaries and previously closed files connected with Casement freely available to researchers.

HANDWRITING A new phase in the controversy was ushered in with what was represented to the public as a serious examination to test authenticity. A handwriting expert Dr. Baxendale made an inspection. The result was broadcast on a BBC Radio 4 programme, *Document*, in September 1993. The press duly reported the Diaries were real. But all that really happened is that a handwriting examiner made an inspection which had no meaningful scientific or legal value. It was not a fully fledged forensic examination. Handwriting experts, even when carrying out their work to full professional standards, err. There are the examples of the Dreyfus and Parnell forgeries and more recently the forged Hitler Diaries in the 1980s. Yet again, no written report emerged.

LINGUISTICS In 1994 independent researchers Eoin Ó Máille, Michael Payne, and M Úi Callanan privately published an eighteen page study which compared the linguistic patterns of attested Casement writings and the contested matter. *The Vindication Of Roger Casement—Computer Analysis And Comparisons* made a striking case that something was amiss with the notion that Casement could have written the contested diary entries. The case was made that the material lacked Casement's habitual verbal patterns.

Also included was a detailed analysis by Maura Scanlan of spelling inconsistencies between the 1910 Black Diary and Casement's 'White' Putumayo Journal.

Ó Máille had over a number of decades taken a deep interest in the Diaries question. His letters to newspapers, when against likelihood and the prevailing climate of the 70s, 80s and early 90s, they were published, provoked readers to question what was then becoming conventional wisdom.

ANGUS MITCHELL Angus Mitchell signed a publishing contract in 1995 to co-edit "Casement Diaries", along with Dr. Roger Sawyer, author of the biography *The Flawed Hero*. Mitchell, like Sawyer is of British heritage and he is an Oxford graduate. It had been planned to publish diary material never before published,

including the explicit 1911 Black Diary. Mitchell spent a number of busy weeks in the National Library of Ireland, in Dublin, going through an extensive body of Casement personal papers relating to his time in Brazil and his part in investigating the horrors the rubber industry inflicted on the native people of the Putumayo. This was a resource that had not been thoroughly investigated or utilized by previous researchers. The experience was to have a profound effect on Mitchell. Previously he had believed the Black Diaries genuine. Now he began to change his mind. Things just did not appear to him to add up. Details of events in the long overlooked papers did not correspond with the narrative in the Black Diaries.

He severed his connection with Dr. Sawyer and began to pursue a research and publishing project of his own. This would result in 1997 in the appearance of *The Amazon Journal Of Roger Casement*. It contained a 40 page section specifically devoted to the controversy, in which the author explained why he came to the conclusion that forgery had occurred. The research and ideas of Eoin Ó Máille regarding linguistic discrepancies are mentioned favourably. Among many aspects discussed is the simple question as to why a man might keep an incriminating document on his person when he realised he was being watched and he moved through "*an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and death*".

The book reconstructs Casement's 1910 investigative journey up the Amazon to the Putumayo from material collected from a number of disparate archives, but especially from the National Library of Ireland and the Public Record Office in Kew, near London. Events in the diaries did not tally with Casement diary fragments and letters Mitchell had discovered. His book deepened appreciation of the scope of Casement's work in the Amazon and promoted renewed interest in his place in history.

What is most interesting is that in his footnotes he details *forty two* inconsistencies between the 1910 Black Diary text and what appears in the archives. For example, according to the Black Diary on his arrival at Iquitos on 31st August 1910 Casement booked into the hotel *Le Cosmopolite*. But a letter from him to the Foreign Office of 3rd September shows that, instead of using a hotel on that date, he became the house guest of a David

Cazes. [1] The Black Diary entry for November 29th has him walk to the Iquitos town square with a character called Harrison. Casement's *Putomayo Journal* of his investigations for November 29th narrates he walked to the square with a man named Brown. [2]

The Amazon Journal reignited a debate about the authenticity of the Diaries. It was beginning to become fashionable again to contend they were forged.

ROGER SAWYER Covering similar territory *Roger Casement's Diaries—1910: The Black And The White* by Roger Sawyer appeared the same year. Sawyer still remained firmly with the school of thought that the contested Diaries were genuine.

THE FORGER? A hint of excitement arose when it was suggested that the actual forger of the Diaries could be named. The cause was a purported transcript of an interrogation of former Chief of the Gestapo, Heinrich Mueller, by the CIA in Switzerland in 1948. However, Mueller was last with certainty seen alive during the battle of Berlin in 1945. An author based in California who used the name Gregory Douglas among other aliases, wrote a number of books claiming Mueller escaped to Switzerland and then fled to the USA where he became a senior CIA officer. The alleged transcript named a Swiss called Zwinglieman as both a forger in the employ of the Gestapo and the forger of the Black Diaries on the instructions of Captain Hall. The allegation was carried in an edition of the American radical right journal *The Barnes Review* in 1998. It was referred to and accorded some respect in a book on Irish history *Birth Of A Republic* (1998) by Eoin Neeson. The reality is that Douglas, also known as Stahl, among other aliases, is a clever and inventive fraudster.

LINGUISTIC FINGERPRINTING The Roger Casement Foundation, which had come into being on the initiative of Jack Moylett, held its first symposium in Dublin in 1997, and the relevance of 'linguistic fingerprinting' to the controversy was discussed. The Foundation came to afford a point of contact for people around the world interested in Casement's humanitarian and political legacy. Its annual symposium has become a forum where ongoing developments in Casement scholarship and themes related to his wide ranging activities and writings are featured.

REINHARD DOERRIES German historian Reinhard Doerries published *Prelude To The Easter Rising—Sir Roger Casement in Imperial Germany* in 2000. The archives in Germany recorded that the Irishman had been shadowed by the Kaiser's secret service, for they suspected he might be a

spy sent by the British. There is no reference in the archival material to any involvement on his part in a clandestine homosexual lifestyle.

MAIREAD WILSON When the Dublin-published *Sunday Press* newspaper, in the mid 1980s, carried a serialisation of the then recently published *Casement, The Flawed Hero* by Roger Sawyer, Mairead Wilson, then a civil servant in Dublin, felt prompted to undertake her own investigations. In the coming years she used the facilities of the National Library of Ireland and collected information from whatever source she could. A pamphlet was published in 2000 by the Roger Casement Foundation titled *Roger Casement: A Reassessment of the Diaries Controversies*. It contains an exposé of a number of misconceptions that have been allowed to thrive over the years which had been promoted by a series of Casement biographies dating as far back as the 1950s. Also it contains the most insightful highlights from Professor McHugh's groundbreaking article from 1960. She wrote that she believed there were very strong reasons for believing the documents in the Public Record Office "*have been tampered with*". This thought-provoking pamphlet was re-published by Athol Books on behalf of the Foundation in 2005.

COLM TOIBIN Ireland's literary set still tended for the most part to regard the Diaries as genuine. The fashionable literary figure Colm Tóibín published a book *Love In A Dark Time* (2001), a collection of essays on gay historical personalities such as Oscar Wilde and Thomas Mann. The chapter on Casement he called *Sex, Lies And the Black Diaries*. He interviewed both Roger Sawyer and Angus Mitchell. Some textual inconsistencies Mitchell pointed out to him he described as "*interesting*". Yet he wrote there was no "*howler*" which demonstrated absolutely a forger had given himself away by totally misunderstanding something. While he obviously favoured the point of view of Sawyer, the essay ends on a subtly ambiguous note when he quotes from the word-frequency analysis found in *The Vindication Of Roger Casement* which he found "*detailed and interesting*".

Adrian Weale In Britain was published *Traitor Patriots* (2001) by Adrian Weale, a former Army Intelligence Officer turned writer, about the two British citizens executed for High Treason in the 20th century: Casement and one John Amery who was hanged after WWII and was a son of leading Conservative politician Leo Amery. As the Amery that appears in the book was an opportunist, misfit, and petty criminal, reviewers found comparisons with Casement strained and tasteless.

RIA A growing interest in Casement as a significant historical figure as well as the Diaries question prompted The Royal Irish Academy in May 2000, with the backing of the Irish Government, to conduct a symposium: *Roger Casement in Irish and World History*. Advocates of both forgery and authenticity were represented. Various aspects of Casement's activities on three continents were discussed, including the question of the Diaries, by a variety of scholars. The possibility of a forensic examination was discussed. James J Horan an American forensic scientist gave his views on what such an examination should entail. He emphasised the value of up-to-date technologies, such as X-ray Fluorescence and Ramon Spectroscopy, for the detection of erasure and interpolation. The examination of handwriting could be enhanced by the use of a computer program called *Write On*.

GILES REPORT Professor W.J. McCormack had shown an interest in the forgery question from the time it was brought back into public view through the writings of Angus Mitchell. He was a literary historian based at Goldsmith's College, London, who had also published poetry under the name of Hugh Maxton. He organised an examination in 2002 with the help of a committee of academics, most of whom had no qualifications in the forensic science field. It was financed partly by the BBC, partly by RTE, and an amount was contributed by the Irish State. A handwriting analysis was carried out by Dr. Audrey Giles of London, a document examiner. The results of the examination were rather dramatically made public as part of two television documentaries in March 2002. The BBC showed *Roger Casement: Secrets Of The Black Diaries*. RTE provided Alan Gilsenan's *The Ghost Of Roger Casement*. The Diaries were declared genuinely and solely the work of Casement.

The result was reported far and wide. The appearance of Taoiseach Bertie Ahern on one of the documentaries gave the appearance of official acceptance of the test results. Practically speaking, however, Ahern merely politely acknowledged the outcome. All this had a significant influence, both on general public opinion and on the views of scholarly specialists. However, the Report received no mention in specialist forensic science periodicals, as one would expect of a study of some weight. It has been criticised for being limited to the long used and fallible art of handwriting analysis. Recently developed technologies have a greater chance of answering questions related to erasure and interpolation; questions very relevant in this particular case. It was also criticised for a mix-up which resulted in some very

interesting material never reaching the desk of the examiner. Steps were not taken to ensure that the comparison handwriting, against which the Diary entries were checked, was authentic. So the possible danger of comparing forged material with forged was not obviated.

Since its original limited publication, two eminent American document examiners have, independently of each other, asked serious questions about the value of the report. Both of their opinions have for some time been available to read on the internet.

JAMES HORAN James J. Horan, of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, who had delivered a paper on how forensic science would approach the question of the Diaries at the 2000 RIA symposium, wrote in the newsletter of the *British Association of Irish Studies* in July 2002: "To the question, 'Is the writing Roger Casement's?' on the basis of the Giles Report as it stands; my answer would have to be I cannot tell." [3]

MARCEL MATLEY Relentless Diaries investigator Kevin Mannerings prompted document examiner Marcel Matley to assess the report. His reaction formed part of the 3rd *Virtual Graphology Conference* in 2002 and was published in *Graphodigest 2002* edited by Nigel Bradley of the University of Westminster. Matley concluded: "Even if every document examined were the authentic writing of Casement, this report does nothing to establish the fact." [4]

DR. MCCORMACK *Roger Casement In Death* (2002) by Dr. W.J. McCormack, the organiser of the examination which gave us the Giles Report, claims to be a deconstruction of the 1930s investigation by a number of individuals which resulted in *The Forged Casement Diaries* by Maloney. It does not seriously engage with Maloney's arguments. What passes for analysis in the book is bolstered occasionally by blunt assertions that the Diaries are genuine, based on McCormack's 'forensic test'. The text is enlivened by occasional humour and bravado.

JEFF DUDGEON The 1911 Diary finally appeared publicly in print in *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries, With A Study Of His Background, Sexuality And Irish Political Life* by Jeff Dudgeon. The author is an Ulster Unionist and homosexual rights activist. There is much biographical information on Casement. There is a serious effort to deal with Mitchell's critique of the 1910 Black Diary and he argues the case that the Diaries are genuine. In this detailed book material from all the Black Diaries are printed with an attached commentary. Many

transcription errors from the Singleton-Gates edition were corrected. The texts, however, are abridged. This book from 2002 briefly acknowledges James Horan's criticism of the Giles Report but claims science can not answer the question of authenticity to everyone's satisfaction. Instead, the author says, there should be reliance on "historically based evidence" and common sense.

One really has to question this lack of confidence in the efficacy of science, especially since we are dealing with physical objects which, as such, lend themselves to technological examination.

O SIOCHÁIN & O'SULLIVAN The text of the 1903 Diary and the text of Casement's Congo Report which was presented to Parliament in Feb. 1904 were published in 2003 in Dublin under the title *The Eyes Of Another Race*. The editors were Séamas O Siocháin and Michael O'Sullivan. O Siocháin is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. On page 182 it is claimed the editors have "no doubts" the Diaries were fully Casement's work. In addition the Giles report is cited as "an important milestone" in the debate about authenticity. The conclusions of the Report are quoted uncritically.

The 1903 Diary does indeed tally very well with the known movements and activities of Casement, as the authors claim. Indeed it was the assertion of the investigator, the late Prof. Roger McHugh, that it is more than 90% authentic and the rest interpolation.

ANGUS MITCHELL In *Sir Roger Casement's Heart Of Darkness* (2003) Angus Mitchell recreated Casement's 1911 Putomayo journey from surviving archival material, just as he had done for the 1910 investigative venture with *The Amazon Journal*. It is a beautifully-produced 800-page hardback volume which was published by the Irish State *Manuscripts Commission*. Unlike *The Amazon Journal* there is no effort made to relate the text to the Black Diaries. Thus lacking are footnotes comparing the two as in the earlier volume. The intention appears to be to encourage the reader to perceive Casement's activities and ideas in their own right without the distraction of the Diaries getting in the way. However he says, intriguingly, in his Introduction that the book has been arranged and compiled to allow historians to "make a more informed contextual scrutiny of the two contested diaries for 1911".

BRENDAN CLIFFORD A series of essays mostly by Brendan Clifford entitled *The Casement Diary Dogmatists* appeared in 2004. Among other matters is discussed;

what is a 'forensic test'? Essentially, it is a test the results of which are valid as court evidence. No forensic expert has claimed this for the Giles Report. The recent works of McCormack and Dudgeon and their authors' uncompromising 'diary dogmatism' are well commented upon.

VINCENT BROWNE In the Summer of 2004 Vincent Browne, in his regular column in *The Irish Times* discussed paedophilia and mentioned that Casement, from the evidence of the Diaries, must have been an active paedophile himself. This unleashed one of those skirmishes in newspaper letters pages which has been characteristic of the controversy for over half a century. Dr. McCormack wrote to *The Irish Times* extolling the virtues of his "forensic examination". The Roger Casement Foundation took the opportunity to outline its grave shortcomings. Interestingly, McCormack never replied to the points raised.

KEVIN MANNERINGS delivered a talk on his investigations at the 2004 Casement Foundation symposium. He displayed high resolution close up photographs of pages from the Diaries which exhibited evidence of erasure and interpolation. Well known Dublin media figures who had pronounced on the Diaries in the preceding year had been invited to attend. None showed up.

LUCY MCDIARMID *The Irish Art Of Controversy* appeared in 2005, by an American based academic; Lucy McDiarmid. Among a number of early 20th century Irish controversies is included the question of the Diaries, though it being so enduring, it does not quite fit in with the others which are long over and done with. The piece is called *The Afterlife Of Roger Casement*. It gives a history of the controversy with an acknowledged bias towards the position the documents are fully genuine. Strikingly, the extensive research of Angus Mitchell and the grounds upon which he argues the Diaries are forged are ignored.

PAPERS ON CASEMENT After a half decade long gestation the Royal Irish Academy published the volume of papers *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* in late 2005. Most of the contributions originate from the RAI symposium of the same name of five years before. It contains reflections on Casement as humanitarian and as political activist, as well as papers on his trial for treason and on his legacy both political and cultural.

The editor, University College Dublin historian Mary E. Daly, takes a neutral position on the question of forgery/ authenticity. There are also a number of interesting papers on the Diaries question, covering the full range of opinion on the

matter. At the end is the Giles Report followed by a commentary on it by James J. Horan. An appendix contains a technical discussion of the paper used in the documents by a Peter Bower, a paper historian. Regrettably, Horan's paper on what a full scale forensic examination might entail was not included.

WHY THE FUSS? The question is often posed, now with the oppressive laws gone and attitudes regarding homosexuality changed, why should the question of the possible forgery of the Diaries matter? Why the fuss? The Diaries do not merely portray a gay man. They portray someone at times deranged, at times a paedophile. Furthermore, as stated at the start, if he were to have behaved as the Diaries suggest in the Amazon in 1910 and 1911 he was in great danger of compromising himself and putting the mission he had to tackle the brutalisation of the native people in great jeopardy. As such the 'Black Diaries' do not portray a gay icon, or an Irish nationalist icon but an irresponsible and hypocritical figure. Casement, always idealistic and brave, deserves a better memorial.

The forgery thesis goes beyond the Diaries to a number of questionable documents in various archives around the world. Aside from this questionable material and the output of the propaganda campaign mounted against him in 1916, there is nothing that states compellingly Casement was homosexual.

From this mere outline of the controversy one learns that, in the standard story of the Black Diaries, in the text and on the written page there are anomalies and discordances. But the questions raised leave enough space into which an argument for authenticity, however uncomfortably, can still be squeezed in.

This controversy looks like continuing until a comprehensive forensic examination using the best and most up to date technologies is carried out. This must include examinations of handwriting, language, narratives, inks and paper. The sooner this happens the better it will be. After ninety years we are all becoming a little tired.

Tim O'Sullivan
September 2006

Notes:

- [1] Page 91, Note 95, *The Amazon Journal Of Roger Casement*, Angus Mitchell The Lilliput Press, Dublin 1997
- [2] Page 473, Note 325. Ibid.
- [3] <http://www.atholbooks.org/review/gilestest.php> <<http://www.atholbooks.org/review/gilestest.html>>
- [4] <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/marketingresearch/2179casement.htm>

Notes on Corruption

Isn't it interesting that some of the most effective European politicians in the last few decades such as Charles Haughey, Francois Mitterand and Helmut Kohl have been tainted by corruption? It seems that politicians who want to achieve things in the world are vulnerable to such a charge.

The question also arises as to who benefits from the exposure of wrong doing. Albert Reynolds proved to be an extremely effective negotiator in the Irish interest, leading a strong Fianna Fail/Labour cabinet during the Anglo Irish negotiations. It was extremely convenient for the British that he was replaced following a story from *The Irish Times*. This is not to say that British interests had a hand in his downfall. This writer doesn't know. It was just extremely convenient that he was replaced by John Bruton. That's all.

The question of who benefits from the exposure of corruption arose recently in France regarding the resignation of Herve Gaymard from Chirac's Government. The Government party is split between the neo-liberal Nicholas Sarkozy and the more traditional Gaullism of Chirac.

The satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* revealed that the pro-Chirac Finance Minister had the use of a 600 square metre apartment at a cost of 14,000 euros a month to the State. He might have survived if it were not for the fact that he had other apartments of his own in Paris which he was renting out. The French can tolerate a Napoleonic ego, but that last detail was just a little too petty bourgeois.

As Gaymard was considering his position, Sarkozy declared that:

"The minister has drawn the consequences. I continue to think that it serves no purpose to denounce him or carry out a man hunt".

All very reasonable, except he then added pompously:

"The French, confronted by daily difficulties can question and judge with a certain severity what has happened".

What a little squirt!

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CORRUPTION

"Corruption" tends to be more common in countries in the process of economic development. This is not because people in developing countries are inherently more corrupt than others, but rather that "corruption" is a necessary part of economic development.

There are two types of capitalist economic development. The first type involves rugged individuals competing against each other in a free market. In the second type the state does the job either on its own or in alliance with native emerging

capitalists. The first type of economic development only exists in the fantasy world of university economics departments. The second type is how things are done in the real world.

The Beef Tribunal found that there were good economic reasons for supporting Larry Goodman. State encouragement of more than one supplier to Iraq would have led to competition and reduced prices. This would not have been in the national interest. Whatever about tax fiddling, screwing the European tax payer etc, there was no evidence of political corruption. That was the substance of the report and the *Irish Political Review* agreed with that finding.

The Beef Tribunal also found evidence of tax evasion. But there was no evidence of political collusion so the "corruption" was not political corruption. Of course it is right that the Goodman organisation should bear the consequence of its wrongdoing. But does this mean that the Goodman organisation is corrupt or that because tax evasion was widespread that the National bourgeoisie was corrupt? It appears that tax evasion was one of the means by which native capitalists accumulated capital: a necessary condition for the development of capitalism. British capitalists accumulated capital from the profits of the slave trade. In the general scheme of things it is difficult to get too excited about our native "corruption".

How long ago was the Beef Tribunal Report, ten years or more? But Fintan O' Toole in his incessant drive to end corruption wants us to examine the Beef Tribunal again (*The Irish Times*, 8.2.05). If moral indignation was an Olympic sport this magazine would insist that O' Toole take a dope test!

In the absence of direct state involvement, "corruption" or the favouring of one group of individuals as distinct from another group by the state is a necessary element of economic development.

The only sensible criterion for making an overall political judgement on whether the country is genuinely corrupt or not is: have the economic policies of Irish Governments in the last twenty years been a success or a failure?

In most mature capitalist countries the investigation of corruption is encouraged. It is the means by which the existing bourgeoisie prevents its position from being usurped. The snobbishness regarding "new money" by "old money" is another element of this. But in Ireland the "old money" failed to develop the country and was largely represented by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. The current relentless preoccupation with exposing corruption among the native bourgeoisie does not make any sense in terms of anything within nationalist culture.

NON PRODUCTIVE CORRUPTION

Of course it could be said that not all corruption is productive. The rezoning of land resulting in enormous profits for land speculators was not productive or did not contribute to economic development. However, does anyone believe that there is a surplus of housing stock in this country? A significant element of this society, including many middle class socialists, did not wish to have any land rezoned. Corruption was the means by which the social demand for housing was satisfied.

The January 2003 issue of the *Irish Political Review* identified the real economic scandal in Irish life. It is the subsidisation of the rich by the poor through our property laws. As an example in 1996 and early 1997 300 acres of land in Lucan was bought for 35 million euros. The land was rezoned and as a result the speculators could sell it for 225 million euros in 1998. It was calculated that the price per **unserviced** housing unit was 50,000. The cost per **unserviced** housing unit was 8,000. Therefore before any building was done 42,000 euros per house was the cost of the land speculation element at 1998 prices. It is a matter of indifference to this writer what proportion of the 42,000 euros per house is distributed between corrupt politicians, land speculators or bagmen/consultants such as Frank Dunlop.

All land rezoned for residential housing should be compulsorily purchased by the state at its agricultural value. This would eliminate a vast swathe of non productive corruption as well as enabling the provision of affordable housing.

CENTRE FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

"Corruption" can be of the form of the state favouring one set of individuals over another set within the state. However, there is another form of corruption. This type of corruption involves one state favouring cultural or economic tendencies in another state, so as to undermine the latter state's development.

A few years ago the "Centre for Public Inquiry" was set up. This was a body funded by the Irish American Chuck Feeney to root out corruption in this state. Such "Globalist" institutions are usually designed to undermine national state structures in the interests of an Anglo American world view.

Normally, this writer would agree with the criticism of this institution by Senator John Minihan (PD) who has been supported by Brian Hayes of Fine Gael and Mary O'Rourke. However, among the people involved in this new organisation was Frank Connolly (brother of Niall Connolly of the Columbia Three) and Damien Kiberd of the *Sunday Business Post*. Feeney himself is no ordinary Irish American billionaire (not that this writer can claim familiarity with "ordinary"

members of the species). He appears to have financed the setting up of Sinn Fein Offices in the USA to help the peace process.

It was a pity that this organisation collapsed after it was undermined by Justice Minister McDowell.

In our view some politicians are scrutinised more closely than others. It can also be said that some institutions are investigated, but others are above suspicion. The level of investigation of the Catholic Church has been exhaustive, but the media, understandably, never comes under the spotlight.

The investigation of corruption in this state tends to be one sided and serves a West British interest. This is why this magazine takes a jaundiced view of the occupiers of the high moral ground. Above all, the first question that must be asked is: in whose interest is the exposure of corruption serving.

John Martin

British Newspapers On Ireland

Part One

2006 is the seventy fifth anniversary of the [British] Newspaper Publishers' Association, the NPA and the British Library put on an exhibition and a series of talks, lectures and discussions at the main Euston location rather than the newspaper library in Colindale. The exhibition consisted of newspaper front pages ranging from *Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster to Hitler Dead*, by way of *Gotcha*, the spectacularly crude *Sun* headline about several hundred Argentine service personnel being killed. And the *Daily Sketch* headline *Dublin In Flames* complete with large pictures of British soldiers behind barricades and (presumably the GPO) in flames, which can't have pleased the censors, it was published on May, 3 1916.

This is the only mention of Ireland except for an article in *Front Page*, the tabloid (sorry, *compact*) publication which was produced for the exhibition—and which was more readily available at Colindale than Euston—*Playing chess with human pieces in the name of Ireland*. This was by "David Beresford of The Guardian" who followed "the Irish troubles from the Easter Uprising of 1916 to the hunger strikers of the 1980s". If this is the best the British Library and the united journals of Great Britain can come up with on 'Ireland' is it any wonder they politicians are totally in the dark about the island?

There is a front page (from the

Independent) with a big headline, *Peace at last for Ulster*. There is a sub-heading *Blair, Ahern and Mitchell seal historic agreement 17 hours after passing of talks deadline*, which is all too typical of the British media 'spin' on Northern Ireland or even Ireland. Blair and Ahern had nothing whatever to do with the Agreement, though Senator Mitchell's patience and diplomacy was probably of use in the 'talks'. The ceasefires and then the Agreement were examples of 'people power'—and of Sinn Féin's ability to respond to the wishes of its constituency.

This had been made clear to the IRA and Sinn Féin long before the 1994 ceasefire, Danny Morrison has spoken of a "moral onus" being on the Republican movement in the late 1980s and early '90s. The 'moral onus' being whether or not they carried on the war, even on a very low level—or looked for peace for the war-weary population. This population included the Protestant people as well as the Catholic, and clearly the Republican movement was responding largely to working class pressure. Though Sinn Féin, of course, will take its votes where it finds them—this is one of its main strengths, and not a weakness. It is doubtful of some of the leadership of the Loyalist paramilitaries could pronounce the phrase 'moral onus' much less act on such a concept.

The other aspect of the Sinn Féin (and the 'Provisional Army Council') of 1970 vintage is that it was never hung-up on shibboleths. This is not to claim that the 'Provisionals' were opportunists. If the people who had brought about 'August 1969' had been the traditionalists, the 'Provis' may have been perceived as the 'left wing' of the movement. Some of their slightly overheated rhetoric of the early phase of the war in Northern Ireland had to do with the fact that State-pogrom of mid-August was a result of would-be Machiavellian 'Marxists' losing touch with Northern reality.

Roy Johnston in the late 1960s denounced Belfast Republicans as 'sectarian', rather than realistic. Part of the realism was that they knew the Unionists could see through aspects of the 'civil rights' strategy. The Prods may not be interested in politics but they could spot the Fenian in that particular woodpile. And they could separate-out the genuine civil libertarians from the sub-Bolsheviks or Fenian fakers. Working class Protestants were quite strongly in favour of 'British Rights for British Citizens'. The NILP (NI Labour Party) and the Unions held back mainly because of the involvement of the Communist Party and the IRA (under the influence of CPGB operatives).

To Be Continued

2016 continued

INFLATION STALKS

THE soaring cost of housing and energy brought the annual rate of inflation to 4.5% in August, the highest figure for almost three and a half years.

Despite less aggressive rises in the cost of petrol and mortgages in the second half of the summer, consumers are still being hit hard for everyday goods and services, new figures show.

According to the Central Statistics Office, inflation increased by 0.7% last month alone.

Consumer prices were 4.5% higher than in August last year—the fastest rate of annual inflation since March 2003.

CSO figures showed higher oil and interest rates drove the cost of housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels almost 17% higher over the year, while transport costs rose 5.2%.

Dearer energy and mortgages account for almost half the 4.5% increase in the national shopping basket. But the other half appears to be rising in price faster than elsewhere in the Euro area. Health costs were 4.1% higher, education charges were up 4.7%, and restaurant and hotel prices rose 4.3%.

Several economists predict inflation could reach 5% by the end of the year, with Davy Stockbrokers forecasting a grim 5.5%. *"The last increase in mortgages will show up in September inflation, with more to come"*, they said.

"If this trend continues, inflation at general election time could be the highest since the election of this Government in 1997," said Green Party Finance spokesman Dan Boyle, T.D.

LABOUR STANDARDS

SIPTU General Secretary, Joe O'Flynn said:

"Union members have clearly decided in favour of the proposals on the basis of the substantial progress achieved on measures to combat exploitation, the threat of displacement and the proper enforcement of labour standards as well as the wider social agenda.

"Our concerns in this area were highlighted by the events surrounding Gama and Irish Ferries and we held firmly to the view that only when sufficient progress was made on these issues could we proceed to consider the rest of the talks agenda," he said.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

* A new high-level Office of Director of Employment Rights Compliance (ODERC) to be established. The number of Labour Inspectors will be increased from 31 to 90 by end of 2007 and will have much greater administrative support.

Penalties on employers for non-compliance are to be greatly increased.

* Joint Investigation Units: New legislation to allow Revenue, Social Welfare and ODERC to work together, share data and target areas on non-compliance in JIU's.

* Sub-Contractors in Construction: The RCT1 (Tax-Form) regime will be overhauled to minimise bogus self-employment. The employment status of workers will be a particular focus of the JIU's.

* Employment Records: Legislation will be introduced to require the keeping of statutory employment records in a prescribed format. Failure to do so will be a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to Euro 250,000.

* Amendments to the Protection of Employment Act, 1977 and the Unfair Dismissals Acts, 1977-2001, will be put in place to prevent replacement of workers via collective redundancy and awards of up to five years salary for dismissals in this context.

ECONOMIC MIGRATION POLICY

* Workers will own their own work permits. Non EEA students will have to be covered by work permits; permit holders may transfer between employers and language schools will be regulated.

THE LORDS OF THE LAND

The Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) and the other farming bodies have still not signed up to *Towards 2016*.

The IFA newsletter for the World Ploughing Championship being held in September in Tullow states: *"I.F.A. could have signed up to a deal in June, at the same time as the Employers and Unions, but the money on offer fell far short of what farmers require."*

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

"The Partnership agreement coincides with Ireland's next National Development Plan 2007-2013, which covers all the key farm schemes: REPS, Disadvantaged Areas, Early Retirement, Installation, On-farm Investment and Forestry.

"In 2000-06, these schemes were funded roughly 50:50 by the national exchequer and the E.U. In future, because of Ireland's prosperity, the E.U. share will decline.

"As a result, the national share of funding will have to increase to about 70% for 2007-13. The total value of these schemes to farmers will be close to Euro 1,000m per year for the next seven years." (IFA September newsletter).

What the farmers are seeking is for the workers to make up the shortfall they will now experience with the reduction in EU subsidies.

Where is the voice of Labour?

"A group of up to 130 Irish farmers in an investment syndicate are pooling their resources to build a \$200 million (Euro 157.5 million) apartment development and golf course in Florida, one of the biggest holiday destinations in the U.S." (*Irish Times*, 21.9.2006).

TRADE UNION NOTES

LECH WALESKA, the legendary founder of Poland's Solidarity movement which helped bring down communism, said yesterday he had formally left the Trade Union.

"I have given up my membership because Solidarity and I have gone separate ways," he said.

He also said he planned to stay away from events marking the 26th anniversary of Solidarity's founding on 31st August, 2006.

* COACH DRIVERS working for private bus operator Aircoach have won Trade Union recognition after a 20-month organising campaign.

SIPTU organiser Paul Hardy said the Union began recruiting Aircoach drivers in January, 2005. Management had initially resisted unionisation despite the fact that its parent company, First Group, recognises Trade Unions throughout Britain.

"We're delighted to have finally concluded this recognition agreement," said Mr Hardy.

"Our members now hope to build on the recognition agreement and the improved industrial relations atmosphere at the company to make real improvements in terms and conditions."

Daily Ireland has closed down, after 20 months' production, with the loss of 15 jobs (10 of them journalists'). Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Managing Director, blamed the closure on the refusal of the British Government to aggregate the circulation figures of the Andersonstown News Group when placing official advertisements: *Daily Ireland* sales of c10,000 were not high enough on their own to qualify. In the first half of 2006 *Belfast Telegraph* dropped by 5.7% to 90,827; *Irish News* sales are 1.8% up to 29,272; while the *News Letter* is down 6.5% to 24,562.

2016 continued

Unions—an increase of in membership of 10,277 over 2004." (ICTU—Report of Executive Council, 2003-2005).

Trade Union membership in Republic as percentage of all employees

1960.....	44.0%
1975.....	55.0%
2000.....	36.7%
2001.....	37.6%
2002.....	35.6%

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

EMPLOYERS and Trade Union representatives failed to agree on increasing the minimum hourly wage rate in advance of the ICTU Special Conference on 5th September 2006.

Earlier this year the main 'social partners' agreed that they would "make a joint recommendation as to the amount of the increase by September 1, 2006".

This is set out under clause 2.1 of the new pay terms. The wage rate affects an estimated 220,000 workers.

Neither the Ibec employers' nor the Irish Congress of Trades Unions' representatives have even met to consider a revision of the minimum wage.

They are now expected to meet later this month and if agreement is not reached the matter is likely to be referred to the Labour Court.

Under the *Sustaining Progress* pay deal, both sides decided to outsource the determination of the minimum wage increases to the Labour Court which, most recently, recommended a 65 cents rise to Euro 7.65. The minimum wage adjustment is due to come into operation at the beginning of 2007.

The Irish hourly minimum wage is the second highest within the EU.

NURSES AND SHOP WORKERS GO IT ALONE

As reported above, the pay terms were also side-stepped by two leading ICTU Unions, the Irish Nurses' Organisation, which has made demands including a 35-hour working week, and MANDATE, which is asking for a Euro 1-an-hour wage rise for most of its members in stores and supermarkets.

Delegates at a special Irish Nurses' Organisation (INO) meeting on 1st September 2006 voted unanimously for a 'go-it-alone' policy separate from the Irish

Congress of Trades Unions.

The Union, representing 32,000 members, put a claim to the Labour Court in June and a recommendation is expected this month.

They are seeking: a standard 35-hour working week; a wage rise of 10.5% for nurses; a special Dublin living allowance; a review of premium and overtime pay; payments for monitoring trainees; and extra senior nursing promotion jobs.

INO General Secretary Liam Doran explained that his Union is not indicating acceptance, rejection or abstention. It would indicate its position on the *Towards 2016* terms after its members consider the anticipated Labour Court recommendation.

The INO. has already decided to boycott the second Public Service benchmarking review because it feels that its concerns were ignored by the first review in 2002.

Mr. Doran explained that his Union is engaged "in a difficult balancing act", which involves "assessing the benefits of 'Towards 2016' and the nurses' ongoing pay campaign".

"We cannot remain an independent trade union and also be constrained by the concept of social partnership, which has achieved many good things but also hindered our ability to address our members' claims."

Seven years ago, nurses held a nine-day strike which secured special increases and spurred the Government and other Public Service Unions into promoting the concept of benchmarking.

The delegates heard that since 1999 about 7,500 nurses left the country, while many older nurses decided to opt out of the health service.

BUREAUCRACY

Mr. Doran criticised the growing "layer upon layer of management bureaucracy in the Health Service Executive, which paid 11% pay rises to the growing number of managers".

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS 1987-2008

FIRST PROGRAMME: (1987) Programme for National Recovery (3 years=36 months)

Increase in basic pay at the beginning of each of three subsequent years (1988, 1989 and 1990) of 3% on the first £120 (Euro 152.37) of basic weekly pay and 2% on the balance (yielding an estimated average increase of 2.5%). A minimum increase of £4 (Euro 5.08) per week in basic pay for full time adult employees would apply.

SECOND PROGRAMME: (1991) Programme for Economic & Social Progress (3 years=36 months)

First Year: 4%; Second Year 3%; Third Year 3.75%. Total: 10.75%.

THIRD PROGRAMME: (Jan. 1994, December 1996) Programme for Competitiveness and Work (3 Years=36 months)

First Year: 2%; Second Year: 2.5%; Third Year (first six months): 2.5%; Third Year (second six months) 1%. Total: 8%.

FOURTH PROGRAMME: (Jan. 1997-March 2000) Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness (3 Years and 3 Months-39 months)

First Year: 2.5%; Second Year: 2.5%; Third Year (first nine months): 1.5%; Third Year (final six months): 1%. Total: 7.5%.

FIFTH PROGRAMME: (April, 2000-Dec. 2002) A Programme for Prosperity & Fairness (2 Years and Nine Months-33 months)

First Year: 5.5%; Second Year: 5.5%; Third Year (nine months): 4%. Total: 15%

SIXTH PROGRAMME: (January, 2003-Dec. 2005) Sustaining Progress; (3 Years=36 months)

3% over 9 months; 2% over 6 months; 2% over 6 months; 1.5% over 6 months; 1.5% over 6 months; 2.5% over 6 months. Total: 12.5%.

SEVENTH PROGRAMME: (January, 2006-March, 2008) Towards 2016; (2 Years and 3 months=27 months)

3% over 6 months; 2% over 9 months; 2.5% over 6 months; 2.5% over 6 months. Total: 10%.

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by increases on June 1st, 2007, March 1st, 2008, and September 1st, 2008.

A TENDENCY TO 'WHINGE'?

"Ultimately, most opponents of social partnership deals within the trade union movement, are made up of activists or officials. But even the proponents of the system can undermine their own cause" (*Industrial Relations News*, 13.9.2006).

This point was effectively made by Public Service Executive Union (PSEU) General Secretary, Dan Murphy. A staunch supporter of the Agreements, Murphy said the achievements in respect of the employment standards "are in sharp contrast to the position in other countries where the trend is in the opposite direction".

Another issue the Unions need to take into account is the relationship between their approach to the programme and Trade Union organisation.

"We have a tendency—not just in respect of the Programmes but in almost everything we discuss—to concentrate on what we might not have achieved and to appear almost as 'whingers'. Yet, at the same time, we recognise that our overriding concern has to be to strengthen the Movement by a massively enhanced recruitment and organisation programme."

Murphy said it was difficult to imagine "a less effective means of seeking to attract workers to our cause than to spend our time highlighting what we may not have achieved". On the contrary,

"we need to make the most of the gains the Trade Union movement has secured in this Programme and trumpet them abroad as real and significant gains in this, our core activity. We should not be sheepish about the gains we have made and which are for the benefit of workers generally."

Murphy is correct about the 'whingers' who see all the faults, failures and 'might-have-beens'—but cannot acknowledge any gains, unless begrudgingly.

The Left have still the hang-up about 'revolution'—it blinkers everything else. They cannot be seen to be helping the 'system' to work. Rather than engage in social partnership, they just sit and whinge, waiting for the recession.

The fundamental contradiction in all these agreements since 1987, surely, is the absence of price control. All we have is wage control. If the Left took up this issue and took it up seriously, Dan Murphy's

persona as the 'rational, reasonable' voice of Trade Unionism would be quickly exposed. But again, he need never worry as the 'whingers' just do not believe in social partnership or even a prices and incomes policy.

To them, it would be total betrayal, if the Left did anything to make these social programmes work more effectively, even if that effectiveness is to the greater benefit of their members and the working-class generally.

You see it in the writings of the Social Workers' Party activist, Kieran Allen—in the book: *The Celtic Tiger: the myth of social partnership in Ireland*. Allen completely avoids the issue of price control in tandem with wage control.

As we go to press, our argument about price control is borne out, further:

"Trade union leaders last night called for E.S.B.'s planned 19.7% hike in electricity bills to be scrapped, say the rise endangered wage agreements.

"ICTU fears the rise—along with the 33.8% hike in gas bills from next month—will eat into wage increases and squeeze hard-pressed families" (*Irish Examiner*, 22.9.2006).

SADNESS AS WORKERS LEAVE IRISH FERRIES

"JUST to let you know," said the e-mail to **Seascapes**, "that the last Irish Ferries ratings, directly employed by the company, have left.

"There are still a small number of officers left but they will be going soon also. We put up a good fight but the time had come to bow out gracefully. Thanks to everyone who supported us along the way. It was a good job—The best... But now it is only a part of Irish maritime history. Irish Shipping went, B&I followed it and also closed, then came Irish Ferries but it has few Irish seafarers left."

An e-mail with a tinge of sadness and regret. As I understand it, there were, after the Irish Ferries dispute earlier this year, 48 Irish seafarers left in the company. There are now about 12. I asked Irish Ferries for comment, but they preferred "not to go back into that debate" (Tom MacSweeney, *Seascapes*, *Evening Echo*, Cork, 13.9.2006).

BENCHMARKING

No wonder Dan Murphy and the Public Service Unions can go ahead and put all their endeavour into the second programme of Benchmarking—the Private sector workers are out of the way now, they have their 10% for 27 months.

The cost of implementing the first phase of Public Service Benchmarking in July, 2002, was over Euro 1.1 billion for

two years. These special pay increases averaged out at 8.9%, but varied from 3% to 25% across the Public sector. It meant that the public sector workers, on average received pay increases of over 16% under *Sustaining Progress 2003-2005*.

Murphy and McLoone may be regarded as 'reformist' Trade Union leaders but they have kept their eye on the political ball on behalf of their members.

The public service is the country's largest employer, 235,000, nearly 20% of the working population—immune from the waves of East European immigration.

No wonder Bertie Ahern and Fianna Fail view them as the bulwark of Fianna Fail's vote!

TWO MILLION WORKERS

Herein lies the greatest challenge to the future of the Trade Union movement:

* Employment stands at 2,017,000, the first time the workforce has exceeded two million.

* More than 84,000 from the new EU member states form part of the workforce.

* Just less than a third of those employed have a third-level qualification.

Employment and the labour force grew by 4.7% and 4.8% respectively, outstripping the EU averages of 1.7% and 1.25%. Since 1998, the number of people in employment has grown by more than half a million.

The construction and services industries continue to fuel employment growth in Ireland, according to the latest figures released by the Central Statistics Office (C.S.O).

The survey shows Ireland's workforce has exceeded two million for the first time in the state's history.

The construction industry, alone, accounted for almost a quarter, or 20,300, of the country's new workforce.

More than half of the country's new workers are foreign nationals, who make up 55% of the 87,800 increase in the workforce.

The total workforce of Ireland now stands at 2,017,000 people.

The biggest employment increases were in the 25-34 year age category, which seen an overall increase of 36,000 jobs in the 12 months since April 2005.

Congress is the largest civil society organisation on the island, representing and campaigning on behalf of some 770,000 working people. There are currently 56 Unions affiliated to Congress, north and south of the border.

"Total affiliated membership in the Republic of Ireland was 557,097, in 43

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believes that when the pay agreement expires there will be 'headroom' between it and the overall inflation picture.

Begg also believes that the employment standards measures constitute—

"perhaps the single most important piece of social legislation ever seen in this country. Across the globe, good working conditions and standards are under threat... Here in Ireland we have reversed that trend".

Several delegates expressed concern that the pay increases might not keep pace with inflation.

There were also calls for Unions to engage in concerted action to prevent employers from downgrading Pension Schemes.

The agreement includes a commitment by the Government to engage with Unions and employers in drawing up a comprehensive policy on pensions. It is also to publish a Green Paper on the issue.

Irish Bank Officials' Association President Colman Moore said Pensions had been a key issue in the latter stages of the Partnership talks, but what had emerged in the Agreement had been a "major disappointment".

"Even the proponents of the deal have publicly stated the section on pensions is extremely weak," he said, after informing the conference that IBOA members had voted by nine-to-one to reject the Agreement.

However, Public Service Executive Union General Secretary Dan Murphy reflected the majority view when he said opponents of the Agreement had failed to put forward a better course of action.

Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union leader Owen Wills said the employment standards provisions of the Agreement addressed issues of concern to workers in the construction and electrical sectors.

THE TEACHERS

The Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) said there had been an 82% vote to reject the Agreement.

Only 15% of its members entitled to take part in the ballot actually voted on the Agreement, which the Union claims failed to address key issues such as the underfunding of second-level education, overcrowding in classrooms, under-resourcing of science education, and a lack of emphasis on special education needs.

The Teachers' Union of Ireland has also rejected the Agreement in a members' ballot. TUI General Secretary, Jim Dorney, suggested that pay should be indexed linked with further local

bargaining allowed on top of this.

Taking the opposite view, John Carr, Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) General Secretary, said the "*priorities of this Agreement are the creation of a fair economy and society which distributes its resources in an equitable manner. It is a timely and badly needed vision for modern Ireland.*"

MANDATE'S PAY CHALLENGE

Most of the criticism came from traditional opponents, or from those who—like the IBOA and ATGWU—believe they could secure better pay deals in free collective bargaining.

Mandate, by its very absence from the process this time, believes the same. Its General Secretary, John Douglas, has attacked "*the restrictive agenda placed on wage increases*" which, he claims, governed the conduct of the talks from the outset. Douglas also believes that the "*cosy consensus of social partnership*" has done little to improve the lot of lower—and many middle-income earners. (*Mandate* has lodged pay claims with all major retailers in a bid to secure an extra Euro 1 per hour on all existing hourly rates for 25,000 workers across the country.)

JOHN DOUGLAS INTERVIEW

"Last October, we decided not to participate in a process to thrash out a successor agreement to Sustaining Progress. Why then did we choose to remain outside of the talks, while the vast majority of our colleagues in ICTU decided to proceed?" The answer for us is very simple. For our members, most of whom are employed in the booming retail and hospitality sectors, the restrictive agenda placed on wage increases which governed the conduct of the talks from the outset did not inspire any hope that this agreement would do any more than its predecessor deal did to address the ever-widening gap between those on higher incomes and those at the lower end of the scale.

"The sop of an extra 0.5% pay increase negotiated at the 11th hour at the national agreement talks for those earning less than Euro 10 an hour is, in MANDATE's opinion, nothing more than a sick joke at the expense of the lower paid.

"Research carried out last year on behalf of the union by Farrell Grant Sparks Consulting shows that since 1998, the wages of full-time equivalent workers in the wholesale and retail sectors grew by 34.7%, a full 10% behind the average in the economy of 44.8%.

"Profits in retail have increased dramatically. In the decade between 1995 and 2004, the incomes of retail workers increased by 126%, while profits increased by 338%." (John Douglas, General Secretary of MANDATE, *Irish Times*, 5.9.2006).

THE LAST WORD?

The final words at the Congress gathering were left to SIPTU General President, Jack O'Connor, the pivotal figure in the talks, and leader of the largest Trade Union. He said they should have no illusions that by ratifying the Agreement that the agreed measures would actually be realised.

"The same forces that resisted them will continue to resist them... the same forces that see Trade Unions and labour regulations and agreements as impediments on the free market."

The Unions must protect the gains made in employment regulations, gains that he said were the "*most significant in almost half a century*".

While it could be argued that some of the gains made would be achievable in the context of a General Election, O'Connor said that no one who had been through disputes such as Pat the Baker, right up to the present day, would really believe that.

And he signed off with a warning on inflation and its impact on the pay deal: if the inflation forecasts are not realised, he hoped that this would be confronted by "*a united trade union movement*".

IBEC Director General, Turlough O'Sullivan, for the employers, said the pay terms were at the higher end of what was appropriate for the Irish economy.

"However, business and employers have agreed to the programme on the grounds that it will deliver stable economic development, industrial peace, real reform in the public sector, increased productivity and practical measures to assist the manufacturing industry."

Towards 2016: the pay provisions

Workers covered by the new 27-month pay deal will receive the following increases:

- An initial increase of 3% (the start date for this first phase varies from one employer to another but generally, January 1st, 2006);
- 2% after six months of the deal (additional 0.5% for those earning Euro 10.25 or less per hour);
- 2.5% after a further nine months;
- 2.5% after a further six months to cover the final six months of the Agreement.

Public sector staff will receive the first increase of 3% on December 1st, followed

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Towards 2016

The big news on the Labour front for September was the massive acceptance by Trade Unionists of the seventh Social Partnership programme "Towards 2016".

More dramatically, Ireland's workforce has exceeded two million for the first time in the state's history and has presented organised labour with a huge challenge.

More than half of the increased workforce of 87,800 are immigrants: 55% of the total.

More ominously, the construction industry alone accounted for almost a quarter or 20,300, of the State's new workforce. There are 250,000 people currently employed in construction—a serious imbalance in the economy, some say.

Finally, the soaring cost of housing and energy brought the annual rate of inflation to 4.5pc in August, the highest figure for almost three and a half years.

And, yes, the farmers have still not signed 'up to a deal' on "Towards 2016".

AFTER VOTING to accept "Towards 2016", the new National Pay Agreement, the many Cork delegates who attended the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Special Conference at the Jury Doyle Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin, on Tuesday, 5th September 2006, got a big shock on arriving at Mallow railway station to be informed that they would have to find a way home other, than by rail.

A strike by rail maintenance workers crippled Iarnrod Eireann's InterCity and commuter rail services. Workers walked off the job in protest at being asked to undertake work which, they argued, should be carried out by others.

The men were supported by other Iarnrod Eireann workers in Cork.

"Industrial peace may be the order of the day in general, but incendiary disputes in both the private and public sectors, although not of a traditional type, seem inevitable in the current climate" (*Industrial Relations News*, 13.9.2006).

Delegates to the Special Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) voted by a big majority—242 in favour and 84 against—to accept the 10-year agreement *Towards 2016* : a 74% majority.

The main employers' body, IBEC, announced that its members had also accepted the deal, which was negotiated by the social partners and the Government earlier this year.

As well as a 10-year social and economic strategy, the agreement includes new measures to uphold labour standards and a 10% pay increase for workers in phases over 27 months, which provides for average pay rises of 4.6%.

Public servants will receive the first-phase increase of 3% on 1st December 2006 but a large proportion of private-sector employees will have their pay rises backdated to January 1st, 2006.

They will receive a 3% rise from that date, as well as a further 2% increase due to them since 1st July 2006, giving them a cumulative increase of slightly over 5%.

Many Union leaders were swayed by

promised improvements in monitoring and enforcement of employment standards and labour legislation.

The 32,000-member Irish Nurses' Organisation opted out of the 'social partnership' decision after its delegates voted on 1 September 2006 to pursue their 10.2% pay claim and demands for a 35-hour basic working week.

And the 40,000-strong MANDATE retail Trade Union also withdrew from the process six months ago and is pursuing individual demands for a flat Euro 1 an hour increase in basic pay rates.

.....
"...there was little by way of excitement. Most of the speakers had been around the same track a few times already in the past year and were glad to move on. The opponents of the deal, while critical of the pay arrangements, were—without exception—pleased with the employment standards measures"

(*Industrial Relations News*, 13.9.2006).
.....

That traditional Union opponent of centralized bargaining on principle, the ATGWU, epitomized the above. John Bolger made a point of praising the Executive of Congress for a job well done in this regard. He was one of many speakers who took their cue from IMPACT Deputy General Secretary, Shay Cody, who thanked the management of Irish Ferries and Ryanair for giving a major boost to the Union movement in the form of the new employment standards and for the 2001-2004 Industrial Relations Acts.

The size of the vote in favour was striking across most of the Unions that accepted the deal. SIPTU members in both sectors backed it by a similar margin (72%), while in Unions that used to oppose the deals, like the TEEU, there were big votes in favour.

The chief negotiator, Congress General Secretary, David Begg, said that Congress

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