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## News From Limbo

What is at issue now between the SDLP and Sinn Fein? Why is Dennis Bradley advising the SDLP about doing down Sinn Fein? If the SDLP recovered the ground which it lost through being gulled by David Trimble, what would it do different from what Sinn Fein is doing? And if the SDLP remains an anti-Partition party, why is it so vehemently opposed to increasing the presence of all-Ireland politics in the North through the expansion of Fianna Fail?

A case has been made that Fianna Fail organisation in the North would upset the class-based politics that now exists there. In this argument, the SDLP is the party of the Catholic middle class. It is not an argument that has been made by the SDLP. And in any case it is hard to see its relevance. Fianna Fail is hardly the class party of the proletariat.

A difference between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael in the Republic in this regard is that the pretentious stratum of the middle class feels more at ease with Fine Gael, while the vigorous, competent and thrusting element of the middle class, which takes a substantial element of the working class under its wing, is at the heart of Fianna Fail.

Sinn Fein is becoming, socially, in the Catholic community in the North what Fianna Fail became in the South in the early 1930s. Is the SDLP intent on becoming what Fine Gael became?

It does seem that the SDLP has become the pretentious party, though it is not clear what it is pretending to. When SDLP founder, Austin Currie, went South he joined Fine Gael. But we cannot see that there is the same ground for pretentiousness as a party ideology in the North as there was in the South. The North is not a state, and not even the best efforts of the SDLP and Sinn Fein combined could make it one. And the electorate, within which the SDLP and SF compete, is less than half of the whole electorate.

It has been suggested that the SDLP should join forces with the UUP on the basis of middle classness, and thus constitute an Opposition within Stormont through which normal politics might develop. But this would involve the disruption of the 'Constitution' which was in great part the work of the SDLP, and which was carefully designed to

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## Evidence Excluded From Pearsons Programme

*The Pearson brothers sided with the British and forfeited their civilian status, argues Pat Muldowney.*

The principal problem with RTÉ's controversial Hidden History documentary broadcast on October 23rd was its failure to mention the British Military Court of Enquiry in Lieu of Inquest into the deaths of the Pearson brothers, Richard and Abraham.

This inquiry is the best single source of hard evidence about what actually happened and why it happened. But nobody who watched the programme was given the slightest inkling of such an inquiry.

The British inquiry was held in Crinkle Military Barracks, Birr, Co Offaly, on July 2nd, 1921, the second day after the men's deaths.

It took sworn evidence from doctors and eye-witnesses and the papers include a high-level police report stating the result of the RIC investigation of the episode: "It is said by the CI [county inspector] Queen's County that the two Pearson boys a few

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## Carnival Of Reaction?

Wearing a poppy today is not a sign that *"we have grown up and finally opted to let bygones be bygones"*. Quite the contrary in fact. The poppy is worn in member countries of the British Commonwealth only, in remembrance of all who fought in all of Britain's wars since 1914. In recent statements by Mr Paisley and others, these wars have been characterised variously as fighting for freedom, the rights of small nations, democracy etc. The First World War was not about any of these things, a

war incidentally that led to a growth of 40% in the area of Britain's empire. In addition, many wars in which British soldiers fought and died since 1914 have been far from glamorous wars for freedom. The poppy celebrates the Black and Tan war in Ireland (1921), the murderous colonial campaigns in Iraq, Malaya and Kenya in the 1920s, 1950s and 1960s every bit as much as the poor Tommies of the Western Front of 1914-18. No other country in Europe celebrates its military history in this way let alone glorifying their militarist colonial past.

To paraphrase Ms Byrne, can you imagine the public outcry which would legitimately follow were the French to start celebrating their Algerian war or the Belgians their Congo massacres? A sign sign of maturity and of letting bygones be bygones would be rather the abandonment by Britain of this—yes—annual triumphalist carnival.

**Philip O'Connor**

This reply to Andrea Byrne ("Louis's poppy love points to our blooming maturity", Sunday Independent 18th November) was submitted on 18th November, but did not find publication:

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

Labour Hijacked back page

Unity On The Left by *John Ryan* page 30

prevent the emergence of that kind of politics by providing that every party of any consequence should have a place in Government.

There was within the Unionist community a social basis for the rise of a popular party against the hegemony within the Unionist community of "*the fur coat brigade*". It kept trying to happen right from the start, and eventually it did happen. There was not the same social basis in the Nationalist community for the rise of a working class party against the SDLP. When one thinks of Paddy Devlin and Gerry Fitt, founders of the SDLP, the category 'middle-class' does not spring to mind.

The SDLP/SF division, as it emerged in the early 1970s, had a considerable element of role-playing in it. The two parties sought the same object by different means, and the different means ('constitutional' agitation and war) were in substance complementary rather than antagonistic. The Catholic community was no longer willing, after August 1969, to vegetate under oppression in the old way. It had been pressed into defensive military action by the Unionist assault and would not revert to mere 'constitutional' action until some definite and irreversible constitutional change had been achieved. The SDLP was the constitutional alternative to the "*men of violence*", to which concessions might be made under pressure from the

"men of violence".

In 1971 Brian Faulkner's Unionist Government offered the SDLP a position of some influence in the old constitutional system. Agreeing to it would have set the SDLP on an independent course. Taken by surprise in the remoteness of Stormont, Gerry Fitt agreed to take up the offer, and spoke of "*Faulkner's finest hour*". Then he made the long journey back from the Parliament building to the busy civilisation of West Belfast, and realised that it was No Go for an independent course of action by the SDLP in real antagonism with Sinn Fein.

Rather than go back to Stormont and withdraw its agreement to Faulkner's proposal, the SDLP found an excuse to withdraw from Stormont altogether. It set up an Alternative Assembly in Dunganon. This inspired an intensification of the Republican war effort. The Government (the real one in Whitehall) decided to see whether a small administrative massacre would deflate the situation, but SDLP leaders responded to Bloody Sunday by declaring that it was "*United Ireland or nothing*". A few months later the old Stormont system was abolished.

The SDLP held out against constitutional approaches for about two years, until the Prime Minister (Ted Heath) indicated that, unless the SDLP agreed to negotiate for an internal settlement, he would arrange for Northern Ireland to be governed as an integral part of the British state.

At Sunningdale a power-sharing system was worked out between the SDLP and the Unionist Party under the pressure of the London and Dublin Governments. The power-sharing Government was set up in January 1974 and ran until May. It fell because of the rigid Anti-Partition stance of the SDLP and the Dublin Government (C.C. O'Brien and G. FitzGerald in particular). The Unionists had agreed to a Council of Ireland on the understanding that the Dublin assertion of sovereignty over the North would be withdrawn. When the duplicity of the Dublin Coalition on the matter was made clear in the Dublin Courts, a strong grass-roots Unionist opposition emerged. It demanded that, either the setting up of the Council of Ireland should be deferred, or a Northern election should be held. The SDLP, supported by the Dublin Coalition, would not agree to either, and the Sunningdale system as a whole was abolished in the face of a Unionist General Strike in May 1974. And that is essentially how matters stood for 24 years, until the Republicans and John Hume (rather than the SDLP) negotiated the 1998 Agreement.

The SDLP might have taken credit for Hume's achievement and flourished under the GFA system, if it had not lost its bearings and fallen into illusion during those 24 years. But, without Hume to make it do things in accordance with its real mandate, it no longer knew what to do. It was given the run-around by Trimble for two years, and then, when he allowed government to begin, it acted as if it was taking part in an authentic democracy.

Now that it has been pushed to the margins by Sinn Fein—with its better understanding of constitutional affairs—it is trying to subvert the system negotiated in 1998 by undertaking the role of an Opposition jointly with the marginalised Unionist Party.

Jim Gibney of Sinn Fein, in his *Irish News* column of October 25th, gave it a lesson the GFA for slow learners:

"Another false argument which emerged out of the ministerial row is the idea that the assembly needs a formal opposition. The assembly cannot have a formal opposition; a formal opposition is based on a parliamentary system which rests on democratic institutions and democratic culture. The current parliamentary arrangements have been carefully structured."

"These are novel arrangements and are needed because the six county state is not a democratic entity".

In fact it is not even a state. Its actual status has been deliberately obscured and the language for discussing it meaningfully has been retarded.

The "*ministerial row*" was sparked off

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days previously had seen two men felling a tree on their land adjoining the road. Had told the men concerned to go away and when they refused had fetched two guns and fired and wounded two Sinn Féiners, one of whom it is believed died."

Compare this with the Irish military report sent to GHQ by the responsible officer Thomas Burke:

"C Coy (Kinnity) 3rd Battalion reported to me on 26/6/21 that some of their men have been fired on a few nights previously, whilst engaged in a road blockade operation, by three men armed with shotguns. As a result one of their men was somewhat seriously wounded. The men who fired were recognised by the men present to be three brothers named Pearson.

"Having satisfied myself by inquiries from Coy Capt, Kinnity, and officers present at battalion council, that there was no doubt about the identity of the men who fired, I ordered that these men be executed and their houses destroyed."

This could hardly be clearer. Authoritative investigations on behalf of both the elected Irish government and the British military government reported that the Pearsons had, in effect, forfeited civilian status in becoming armed combatants on the side of the unelected imperial power.

This does not lessen the tragedy for the Pearson family who had no personal responsibility for starting this war, no more than any other person in Ireland, of whatever persuasion; a great many of whom suffered dreadfully. But it puts into perspective the statement in the Hidden History programme: "There was no official investigation into what actually happened that night."

And it puts into perspective the mass of flimsy, dubious and unsupported speculation in the documentary about motives of sectarianism, land-grabbing and possible punishment for the lesser offence of spying. Informing by non-combatants assists combatants to attack and attempt to kill combatants of the other side.

Combatants put their lives on the line. The Pearsons had become combatants.

Both the Irish and British authorities were agreed on this.

The British military court of inquiry evidence puts paid to inflammatory assertions made by Eoghan Harris in the programme that the brothers were shot deliberately in the genitals, in an act of sectarian hatred. There were no injuries to the genitals.

Dr FW Woods examined Richard Pearson and found a superficial wound in the left shoulder; a deep but not life-threatening wound in the right groin (which is farther from the genitals than an ear lobe is from the brain); another in the right buttock; superficial wounds in the left

## Hidden History And The Pearsons

**It will come as a surprise to many readers that the Pearsons were so trigger-happy that they shot and seriously wounded an ex-RIC man as well as two Republicans!  
In fact Bert Hogg lost a lung as a result.**

There has been a great deal of unfounded and ill-informed speculation resulting from the recent RTÉ Hidden History documentary on the Pearsons of Coolacrease.

The basic facts are as follows. About a week before the Pearsons were executed, an IRA roadblock at Cadamstown was attacked by the three elder Pearson brothers at about 11.30 p.m. They shot three people: my father's relative Mick Heaney; Tom Donnelly (both of these on guard duty while the roadblock was being constructed); and ex-RIC-man Bert Hogg who had been arrested by Mick Heaney after leaving the Pearsons' house about ten minutes earlier on his way home to Lackaroe via Cadamstown village.

Mick Heaney was seriously wounded in the stomach and, though his life was saved in the short term, he never recovered and died of his wounds about five years later. Tom Donnelly was lightly wounded in the head by further Pearson volleys when he came to Mick Heaney's assistance. Bert Hogg was shot in the leg and back as he ran towards Cadamstown from the Pearson attack. He made it home through Cadamstown village, but lost a lung as a result of the attack.

Apart from Mick Heaney who was spirited to hospital after getting first aid from Dr Brown in Kilcormac, all of the men on duty that night were arrested in their homes the following day by a party of RIC and British troops who took over the whole of Cadamstown. In the village, a British officer was heard ticking off one group of the RIC: "Did it take ten RIC to arrest two men?". This party was heavily ambushed at English, but succeeded in getting through to their base in Tullamore.

There is no mystery about any of this. I described it in detail in my book, *At the Foot of Slieve Bloom* (2002). Bill Glynn, the last surviving member of the roadblock party, died just a few years ago.

The resulting execution of two of the Pearson brothers had nothing to do with sectarianism or land-grabbing. In the Cadamstown area, most Protestants and most Catholics recognized the democratic mandate which had been won by the independence movement. The most prominent Protestants involved in the local IRA at the time were the Mitchells of Rahan.

The most prominent local opponents of the independence movement were Fr Holohan, parish priest of Kinnity, and the Pearsons. As to land-grabbing, when William Pearson sold Coolacrease back to the Land Commission, the first people to obtain land in Coolacrease, under the direction of Fr Holohan, were ex-British soldiers and other people with no IRA connections.

These are the main facts which I made available to the recent documentary. What was actually broadcast was entirely the responsibility of the programme makers.

**Paddy Heaney**

lower leg; and about six glancing wounds in the back.

Lt Col CR Woods RAMC (an army doctor) examined Abraham Pearson and found extensive wounds on left cheek, left shoulder, left thigh and lower third of left leg. In addition there was a wound through the abdomen.

As to the second atrocity allegation, that the men's mother and sisters were forced to watch the men being shot, here is what Ethel Pearson told the court:

"My mother who was in a fainting condition was carried by my two brothers into a little wood we call the grove and we all went with her by the order of the raiders.

"Six of the raiders, two or three of whom were masked, ordered my brothers down into the yard."

The grove has been grubbed out, but is clearly marked in the Ordnance Survey maps, which also prove that it is not

physically possible for anyone located inside the grove to see into the enclosed, walled courtyard where the two brothers were shot.

The Pearson execution was no war crime, no act of ethnic cleansing, and no land grab. It was an incident in the war forced on the Irish electorate by the imperial government's determination to suppress the democratic government formed on foot of the 1918 general election and confirmed in office by further elections in 1920 and 1921.

Dr Pat Muldowney is author of *The Pearson Executions in Co Offaly* (published by The Aubane Historical Society, 2007). He is researching a further work on the Coolacrease affair. Further reading on

<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/84547>

This article appeared in the *Irish Times* of 17th November

continued

by SDLP Minister Margaret Ritchie, who decided to withhold funding of the UDA through the Conflict Transformation Initiative (CTI) on the ground that it had not decommissioned. Her move has been understood as an electioneering tactic for the election Gordon Brown decided not to call when he saw how Cameron's Party Conference speech had influenced the opinion polls.

The SDLP has three Westminster seats. Alasdair MacDonald got South Belfast on a split Unionist vote and will probably lose it. Eddie McGrady, who has something like gentry status in South Down, is nearing retirement, and Sinn Fein's Catriona Ruane is in the running for it. With an eye to that contest Mark Durkan did not take a seat in the Executive himself, nominating Margaret Ritchie who was unknown to the wider public. It was thought Margaret Ritchie might just get it if she made a strong impression on the traditional electorate, so she set out to hammer the Prods.

It was a party-political move of the essentially meaningless conflict of the SDLP with Sinn Fein, and it went against the grain of Catholic-Protestant collaboration under the Agreement.

The UDA is not a Protestant counterpart of Sinn Fein in its political aspect or of the IRA in its military aspect. There seemed to be a slight possibility that it might become so when it made its first appearance 35 years ago. It didn't. It went off at tangents into dead ends, encouraged in later years by the Stickies. The possibility of a Protestant working class political development went awry with it, helped on its way by the erosion of Protestant industry. The CTI is an administrative measure for containing a working class community in decay. It involves a necessary combination of genuine do-gooders, crooks, and militarist poseurs who are no longer to be taken too seriously. Sinn Fein understands this and facilitates it. Margaret Ritchie affected not to understand it for the purpose of playing the Catholic card against Sinn Fein in the Election that was called off.

The loss of South Down to Sinn Fein would ease matters for Fianna Fail if it ever did organise in the North. It would leave SDLP leader, Mark Durkan, as the lone "constitutional nationalist" figure at Westminster, to keep company with the lone Ulster Unionist, Lady Hermon, and reduce the thing to its appropriate absurdity.

The SDLP was vehemently opposed during the 1970s and 1980s to the campaign to bring the North within the

sphere of operation of the British political parties, and thus establish a common political ground for Protestants and Catholics. That was consistent with its anti-Partitionism. It felt that, without the communal antagonism of Catholic and Protestant, Partition would die as an issue. But now it is doing its best to prevent Fianna Fail from organising. (And it will probably succeed. Bertie has always retreated in the face of difficulties in the North.) This can hardly be justified as anti-Partitionist. The SDLP seems to have become a mere Partition Party.

Garret FitzGerald (Irish Times 17 Nov) asserts that cross-Border parties would "put at grave risk the future evolution of political relationships within our island". He does not say why, and it is not self-evident.

He asserts that "the whole process of restoring peace" in the North "depended on the fact that none of the various government parties" of the Republic were "directly involved in the Northern Ireland political scene". Again he does not say why.

The suggestion seems to be that, because they were not involved in the situation, they were better able to impose peace on it. But the peace was not imposed. It was internally generated by Sinn Fein and John Hume, with Dublin usually being hustled along. The exception is Albert Reynolds, who himself hustled London.

FitzGerald sees "bipartisanship" in the South as having achieved great things. As we recall, what it involved was an agreement to do nothing, except take Sinn Fein off the air-waves.

He says bipartisanship was threatened three times: always by Haughey.

"The first of these arose in 1980 when Charles Haughey attempted to call off the campaign against the IRA in the United States which had been initiated by John Hume in 1972."

What we recall of John Hume in 1972 was inflammatory speeches which fuelled the Provo campaign and led to the abolition of Stormont.

We cannot extricate the second from the tangle of words in which it is presented.

"The third occasion... was when Charles Haughey opposed the 1985 Agreement". That Agreement was FitzGerald's crowning achievement. It was a goad planted in the neck of the Unionist community for the purpose of driving it crazy, and it nearly did. Or, as John Hume put it, it was a scalpel for lancing the boil of Unionism. We did our best to counter its disruptive influence. So did Mary Robinson, though on the occasion of FitzGerald's 80th birthday she said she had been wrong to do so.

FitzGerald set his police to stifle expres-

sion of dissent—by nod and wink rather than direct order we assume—but was kept within limits when Haughey brought out Fianna Fail in Opposition.

Pat Rabbit, in a slick operation, ensured the passing of the Labour Party leadership to another Stickie without a party election. Eamon Gilmore has put the development of the Labour Party in the North on hold. *Labour must wait*—again.

It was not De Valera who made Labour wait in 1918. It waited because it didn't know what else to do. And now Labour is waiting again to see how things work out, and it is acting as a drag on the Fianna Fail initiative to bring real politics to the North. In the meantime its Northern members must rest quiet in Limbo-land.

## Editorial Digest

EDUCATION MINISTER Mary Hanafin has distributed copies of Eamon De Valera's biography to 2,000 schools. De Valera was the founder of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are insisting that this is party political and are calling for balance. A biography of Michael Collins has been suggested. But Michael Collins was not a founder of Fine Gael. He was not even a member of Fine Gael's predecessor Cummann na nGaedheal, which was only founded after his death.

Does a sympathetic biography of Dev exist? And if one is to get party political about the matter surely balance would be better achieved with a biography of General Eoin O'Duffy. O'Duffy was a founder of Fine Gael. He was the party's first leader. Could Fine Gael object to that?

THE BRITISH LEGION in Ireland was very put out by their WW2 veterans not being invited to the Queen of England's anniversary bash at her embassy in Dublin. In the end its Chairman rang up and invited himself. President McAleese did the same. The matter was reported by Liam Collins in the *Sindo* on 25th November. Collins concluded in the following refreshing manner:

"This garden party was held at the British ambassador's residence in Glencairn, near Sandyford, and the "snub" was satirised in a poem written by Morgan Dockrell:

It matters not that Granpa Tom  
Was decorated at the Somme,  
That cousin Percy didn't shirk  
His Duty, fleeing to Dunkirk.  
Better for us to row by row  
Have gathered in the GPO.  
H E decides we've no more clout,  
Which means that socially we're OUT."

THE *IRISH NEWS* seems to be falling over backwards with stories and articles from the "other tradition". These are mostly WW1 stories, so I suppose they concern the *Irish News*' own tradition as well. On the Eve of Remembrance Day Gordon Lucy shared his thoughts with us. After declaring the 1916 celebrations last year were a bit of a setback he says:

"Mr [Dermot] Ahern claimed that without 'a shared past' we cannot have 'a shared future'. Whereas the legacy of the events of Easter Week is divisive, there is no greater shared experience than the Great War" ... "Sixty-four insurgents were killed during the fighting of Easter week. Significantly more men died that same week on April 27 1916 when the Germans launched a gas attack at Hulluch near Loos, on the men of the 16th (Irish) Division."

Lucy was particularly pleased about the unveiling of a WW1 memorial in Waterford which included the name of John Condon. John Condon was fourteen years of age when he was killed! Don't people get hauled off to The Hague for that sort of thing these days? Over the last year the *Irish News* has been returning to its roots with a vengeance.

MARTIN McGUINNESS had the following to say in an interview with the *Irish Times* on 8th November:

"I think I can say without fear of contradiction that in the last six months Ian Paisley and I have not exchanged an angry word between us. That is the truth of the matter and I think the public will be pleased to hear that. But there are individual members of the SDLP who walk past me in corridors in this building as if I didn't exist.

"I think I have a far better working relationship with Ian Paisley than Mark Durkan or Séamus Mallon ever had with David Trimble. I think that grates on them, it hurts them that the DUP and Sinn Féin have managed not just to get this government up but run it properly in a fashion that can deliver for the people."

MUSEUMS all over the world contain exhibits tracing the histories of their localities and are often marked with little signs of thanks to their proud donors. That seems to be no longer the way of things in Ireland. Some months ago mementos of Tom Clarke were sold off for a small fortune.

The latest cashing-in is the sale of a letter from Michael Collins to Thomas Ashe for 260,000 euros by descendants of Ashe. Other items on sale relate to historical figures like Countess Markiewicz and Richard Mulcahy. The total could reach 2 million euros.

In the course of 2008, Athol Books will be publishing an account of the 1916 Rising in North County Dublin which was led by Thomas Ashe and was

the most successful battle of the Rising. JIM ("Jim Who?") ALLISTER, former DUP and current Independent Unionist MEP has been setting up a new Unionist party on and off for some months now. His latest outing was at a dinner cum jumble sale in Templepatrick on 26th November. He said:

"I have one piece of good news for unionism. Shortly, I expect the launch of a political movement to provide a voice for those presently [sic] disenfranchised, which will hold the respectable traditional unionist ground once held by those who shamefully swung open the door of government to IRA/Sinn Féin."

THE *IRISH NEWS*. Following the collapse of the Sinn Féin-oriented and rather woeful paper, *Daily Ireland*, the *Irish News* went into a kind of flux. This resulted in a period of vibrancy as the paper tried to reposition itself. In particular its letters pages were full of lively debate. In the last couple of months the paper seems to have settled into a groove. By and large it is supportive of the SDLP and the OUP. It gets very sentimental about the good old Hibernian days of the Parliamentary Party and the British connection.

It has more news about the Catholic Church than it has had for many years. Its letters page (usually now only one page) is more and more parochial. By contrast, both the *Belfast Telegraph* and the *News Letter* have become quite readable.

STATE IMMUNITY? Former Minister for Justice Michael McDowell libelled Mairtin O Muilleoir, the publisher of the erstwhile *Daily Ireland*, and its Editor, Robin Livingstone: he called them fascist during an assault on the paper delivered just before publication started in February 2005. (The paper shut down in September 2006.) The object of McDowell's intervention was to prevent the paper getting a circulation and was delivered with all the authority of his office. However the Irish Government has accepted responsibility for McDowell's outrageous attack and pleaded State Immunity in response to libel proceedings brought in the Belfast High Court. It says that McDowell made his remarks in his capacity of Minister for Justice. O Muilleoir has been left with a £20,000 legal bill (IN 14.11.07). Lord Justice Higgins accepted the State Immunity plea without 'looking behind it', to see if McDowell's outburst was a valid exercise of his Ministerial powers. The ruling seems to suggest that parliamentary immunity from libel prosecution

has been arbitrarily extended by the Belfast High Court to cover all Ministerial statements, whether delivered in Parliament or not. O Muilleoir might have done better to bring his case in Dublin and should certainly consider taking it to Europe.

LOUISE ARBOUR, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has raised the question whether a Veto, exercised in the Security Council, to stymie an initiative "to reduce the risk of or ending genocide would not constitute a violation of the genocide convention" (IT 22.11.07). She is thus suggesting that the UN Convention on Genocide does not just over-rule national law, but also the UN Charter—which makes the Veto sacrosanct. We're tempted to ask how many divisions she has!

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# Imperialism In The Soul Of The Englishman

There is a strange kind of anti-Americanism that pervades much of British and Irish political society—especially in the context of the Iraq war and the War on Terror. Anything that goes wrong, i.e. disturbs people, is the fault of the Americans. Things need to be done in the world and Britain is best at doing these things. Unfortunately the stupid, crude and cruel Americans turn up and make a mess of everything.

There is another line also. This says that Britain has given up all that sort of thing but is being pulled into committing bad deeds with the American imperialists by traitorous leaders, from Thatcher, through Major and Blair, and now Brown. I have even come across that view from sources that I normally respect very much.

There was a period in the 1970s when one could say that the political leadership in Britain was determined to put imperial meddling and lesson teaching behind them and concentrate on remaking Britain in the image of the Christian/Social democratic societies of Continental Europe.

But Wilson and Heath were a very odd pair indeed and they failed utterly. They failed within their own parties and in the country as a whole. There were a few of us believers around who supported the social and economic policies on offer such as industrial democracy and European integration. Some, such as Jack Jones, were quite powerful. A lot of us were foreigners from another culture. We all

ended up as individuals with no constituency behind us—including Edward Heath and Harold Wilson.

Margaret Thatcher was no freak. She tapped into the very soul of England. Within a very short time she returned the country to its old ways of pleasurable but fruitless class struggle. And when that got a bit out of hand she de-industrialised and set about atomizing the society and turning it into a collection of obedient individuals. *"There is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families."* There soon wasn't.

I don't recall any resistance to this process. The coal miners, for example, were not thrown out of work. Such a thing would have been illegal. They accepted redundancy payments. So did the others. North Sea oil was squandered on this. People called it Reganomics. But Regan, the old right wing trade union leader, did not do this. American industry was preserved and the unions remain a vital part of the American social system.

It was not America that decided to go to war when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Iraq was its ally against revolutionary Iran. But Kuwait was Britain's oil client and Thatcher browbeat Bush Senior into going to war, and prepared over 40,000 British troops for the adventure before John Major took over. And it was the Americans who stopped the war once its goal had been achieved, something that the British have criticized them for ever since.

Again it was Britain, along with Germany, that stirred up the hornets' nest in the Balkans.

None of this is to suggest that there is no American Imperialism. But it is by and large a project of elites. Imperialism is not in the nature of Americans. Bullying may be, but not domination—for all that they may think that their system is second to none. Even their treatment of their own "back yard", Latin America, was more a case of keeping the Europeans out of the place.

It is no accident that in the current turmoil in Iraq and Afghanistan, America took its eye off the ball to its South; to the extent that it can count on no more than a couple of allies there any longer. No such thing happened in the case of Britain. It remained fully engaged in stirring things up in Africa and even started thinking it could interfere in former Republics of the Soviet Union. And it relentlessly pursues its Anglicisation of Ireland and as much of the rest of Europe as it possibly can.

The imperial impulse is ingrained in almost every English person. The impulse that says "we know best, and we're going to civilise, improve, help you whether you like it or not; whether with tea and biscuits or at the point of a bayonet—you choose". Even the "anti-imperialists" are imperialist. It's just that their targets don't always harmonise with those of the State.

I'm sure Peter Tatchell is a sound "anti-imperialist". But he has mobilised the gay community and many others to support any action against Zimbabwe should such action be taken. And there are many on the left who so hate Islam that they wouldn't

## Tony Blair's resignation speech

10th May 2007

...

### Great country

It is difficult to know how to make this speech today. There is a judgment to be made on my premiership. And in the end that is, for you, the people, to make.

I can only describe what I think has been done over these last 10 years and, perhaps more important, why.

I have never quite put it like this before.

I was born almost a decade after the Second World War. I was a young man in the social revolution of the 60s and 70s.

I reached political maturity as the Cold War was ending, and the world was going through a political, economic and technological revolution.

I looked at my own country, a great country—wonderful history, magnificent traditions, proud of its past, but strangely uncertain of its future, uncertain about the future, almost old-fashioned.

**I ask you to accept one thing. Hand on heart, I did what I thought was right. I may have been wrong. That's your call**

All of that was curiously symbolised in its politics.

You stood for individual aspiration and getting on in life or social compassion and helping others. You were liberal in your values or conservative.

You believed in the power of the state or the efforts of the individual. Spending more money on the public realm was the answer or it was the problem.

None of it made sense to me. It was 20th Century ideology in a world approaching a new millennium.

Of course people want the best for themselves and their families, but in an age where human capital is a nation's greatest asset, they also know it is just and sensible to extend opportunities, to develop the potential to succeed, for all—not an elite at the top.

People are, today, open-minded about race and sexuality, averse to prejudice and yet deeply and rightly conservative with a small 'c' when it comes to good manners, respect for others, treating people courteously.

They acknowledge the need for the state and the responsibility of the individual.

### Living standards

...

Look at our economy—at ease with

globalisation, London the world's financial centre. Visit our great cities and compare them with 10 years ago.

No country attracts overseas investment like we do.

Think about the culture of Britain in 2007. I don't just mean our arts that are thriving. I mean our values, the minimum wage, paid holidays as a right, amongst the best maternity pay and leave in Europe, equality for gay people.

Or look at the debates that reverberate round the world today—the global movement to support Africa in its struggle against poverty, climate change, the fight against terrorism.

Britain is not a follower. It is a leader. It gets the essential characteristic of today's world—its interdependence.

This is a country today that for all its faults, for all the myriad of unresolved problems and fresh challenges, is comfortable in the 21st Century, at home in its own skin, able not just to be proud of its past but confident of its future.

**I give my thanks to you, the British people, for the times I have succeeded, and my apologies to you for the times I have fallen short**

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be sorry to see the downfall of the Iranian Islamic Republic. The post-Protestant secularists are, if anything, more fanatical than the Protestants when it comes to spreading the sword—sorry, the word.

Though the Protestants are still quite wedded to the old project. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, launched an attack on America in the November issue of the Muslim journal, *Emel*, saying:

"It is one thing to take over a territory and then pour energy and resources into administering it and normalizing it. Rightly or wrongly, that's what the British Empire did—in India, for example. It is another thing to go in on the assumption that a quick burst of violent action will somehow clear the decks and that you can move on and other people will put it back together, Iraq, for example."

That's tellin' 'em!

The Americans have done terrible things in Iraq. But I don't think they've yet got around to strapping their enemies to the mouths of cannons and blasting them to bits as happened in India. Or ripping their bellies open and displaying their guts to dying prisoners as the British did in Ireland. All in the cause of good administration and normalization of course.

The British imperial structure has an interrelated group of bodies operating all over the world and with roots in every corner of the country. Probably at the top of the pile is the Inter Parliamentary Union, a meeting forum of MPs from all countries with MPs. It was formed over 100 years ago by Sir Randal Cremer, originally a trade union leader and member of the First International, and later a Liberal MP and

pacifist. The body was funded by the brutal philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie.

The British section is led by Anne Clwyd, left wing MP and warmonger. It has close links to most NGOs and reports back to the Foreign Office. It had a self-congratulatory debate in the Commons on 22nd November. Everyone agreed it did splendid work promoting the principles of the Mother of Parliaments, though Jeremy Corbyn did bring up the matter of the elected MPs in Palestine being arrested by the Israelis. Corbyn made it clear that he is not anti-Israel.

Then there is the British Council which promotes the British view of the world through education and propaganda, aimed especially at teachers and children. It is almost certainly her involvement with the British Council that cost Irish-born Margaret Hassan her life in Iraq. The Council also facilitates the sitting of British A-Levels, and the study of the courses, set by such Boards as Oxford and Cambridge.

These bodies and others came in for particular praise in the Commons debate as did the various scholarship systems. One of these, the Rhodes Scholarship, set up by the genocidal maniac and robber of the same name, was mainly geared to giving an English higher education to key Americans, but has now widened its scope. Clinton was a Rhodes scholar. He managed to kill as many Iraqis as Bush but without all the fuss. So you can see what Archbishop Williams was getting at.

Not mentioned in the debate was Chatham House whose capacity for secret plotting would shame the staunchest Free Mason. Chatham House is the latest of a

long line of secret cabals, also known in the past as the Round Table, where the British ruling class does its real business.

Last, but not least, there are the NGOs. These are powerful, ideologically-driven and well-funded bodies, run by well-paid executives. Non-Governmental Organisation is a misnomer. They get a lot of their money and supplies from governments and their distribution networks take them to places where intelligence agents proper can rarely go. But most of them are riddled with spies.

*Save The Children* may sound like a sweet group—and doubtless it contains many sweet people. But when its British section began to report on the plight of children in Iraq, it was told to shut up by the parent body, which got the bulk of its money from the US Government.

In Ireland one of the most prominent NGOs is GOAL. Under its leader and founder John O'Shea, it is most bellicose in its demands for military intervention (i.e. shooting locals) in Africa:

"The international community never wanted to get involved in sending troops to Darfur. Now that the African Union (AU) has stated it doesn't need any non-African troops, they have been given the perfect excuse to sit back on their laurels, while genocide occurs."

He also condemned the sending of a 300 strong Irish force to Chad on the grounds that they were merely monitors. He has even supported a boycott of China—whatever that might mean. Goal gets a lot of its money from the British Government.

So Brown and Blair did not sell out to the Americans. They are at the heart of

## Global terrorism

In Sierra Leone and to stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, I took the decision to make our country one that intervened, that did not pass by, or keep out of the thick of it.

Then came the utterly unanticipated and dramatic—September 11th 2001 and the death of 3,000 or more on the streets of New York.

I decided we should stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest ally. I did so out of belief.

So Afghanistan and then Iraq—the latter, bitterly controversial.

Removing Saddam and his sons from power, as with removing the Taleban, was over with relative ease.

But the blowback since, from global terrorism and those elements that support it, has been fierce and unrelenting and costly. For many, it simply isn't and can't be worth it.

For me, I think we must see it through. They, the terrorists, who threaten us here and round the world, will never give up if we give up.

**The British are special. The world knows it. In our innermost thoughts, we know it. This is the greatest nation on earth**

It is a test of will and of belief. And we can't fail it.

So, some things I knew I would be dealing with. Some I thought I might be. Some never occurred to me on that morning of 2 May 1997 when I came into Downing Street for the first time.

Great expectations not fulfilled in every part, for sure.

Occasionally people say, as I said earlier: 'They were too high, you should have lowered them.'

But, to be frank, I would not have wanted it any other way. I was, and remain, as a person and as a prime minister, an optimist. Politics may be the art of the possible—but at least in life, give the impossible a go.

So of course the vision is painted in the colours of the rainbow, and the reality is sketched in the duller tones of black, white and grey.

## High hopes

But I ask you to accept one thing. Hand on heart, I did what I thought was right.

I may have been wrong. That is your call. But believe one thing if nothing else. I did what I thought was right for our country.

I came into office with high hopes for Britain's future. I leave it with even higher hopes for Britain's future.

This is a country that can, today, be excited by the opportunities not constantly fretful of the dangers.

People often say to me: 'It's a tough job'—not really.

A tough life is the life the young severely disabled children have and their parents, who visited me in Parliament the other week.

Tough is the life my dad had, his whole career cut short at the age of 40 by a stroke. I have been very lucky and very blessed. This country is a blessed nation.

The British are special. The world knows it. In our innermost thoughts, we know it. This is the greatest nation on earth.

It has been an honour to serve it. I give my thanks to you, the British people, for the times I have succeeded, and my apologies to you for the times I have fallen short. Good luck.

Speech in full at BBC NEWS: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6642857.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/6642857.stm)  
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British tradition. They want to remake the world, and in particular their nearest neighbour, in Britain's image. (Heath and Wilson were the odd ones out.)

When one looks at the state of British 'society', it seems unimaginable that any people would want to copy that. But there are plenty of people in high places in Ireland who want exactly that. And high places is the key. They would like to join

the British ruling class, albeit a few rungs down the ladder, Never mind where that would leave the rest of us.

Some of the worst elements among the West Brits in Ireland are to be found on the 'left'. They take their politics and their prejudices directly from their counterparts in England. Such people are a poison in the Irish body politic.

**Conor Lynch**

Along with the conquest of the Ottoman territories there was another project close to the heart of Liberal England. This was the project of planting a Jewish colony in Palestine for British Imperial purposes. There was, of course, a Zionist movement that also had the same objective of establishing a national state. But the Jewish nationalists did not have the power to realise it themselves in the region.

During the nineteenth century a Christian Zionist impulse developed within the Nonconformist wing of Protestantism in England. Their Bible reading bred a familiarity with, and imbued a strong interest in, reviving the Holy Land and creating a new Jerusalem. There was a belief encouraged by reading the Old Testament that a Second Coming of Christ depended upon the return of the scattered Jews to the lands of their ancestors. So what happened to the Holy Land mattered to Christian fundamentalist England since great Messianic promises and millenarian predictions depended upon it.

There was nothing ridiculous in the belief and desire that Imperial power could be used to bring about an end to history and the Second Coming. And some Irish Catholics like Tom Kettle and Francis Ledwidge began to see things in a similar fashion as they sacrificed themselves to the cause.

There was another factor that exerted a gravitational pull on England from the Holy Land. Since the break with Rome the English Church had lacked a spiritual home. The Catholic Church had rebuilt the spiritual home of Christianity in Rome but when Henry VIII made himself pope of the English he had to be content with Canterbury.

The more English Protestants read their bibles the more they yearned for their own spiritual home—in the original holy places of Judea and Samaria. And what could be more of a riposte to Rome than to expose its spiritual inauthenticity by trumping it with the original article.

Christian Zionism worked its way into the political classes of the British State as the Nonconformists came to political power and it became part of the political culture of Liberal England despite the fact that Darwinism seemed to undermine the religious impulse toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Under the influence of Herbert Sidebotham, a prominent Liberal journalist, and C.P. Scott, the influential editor of *The Manchester Guardian*, there developed a Manchester school of Christian Zionism. The leaders of Jewish nationalism in England, Dr. Weizmann and Harry Sacher, were from Manchester themselves and the city became the hub for an Imperial Zionist project—particularly after Dr. Weizmann gave the Prime Minister the secret to a new high

## Ireland and the Last Crusade

Ninety years ago this month, on 9th December 1917, Jerusalem was recaptured by Britain for Christendom. This event was treated in England as the major event of the war. Lloyd George imposed a news embargo on reporters until he could announce the news to the House of Commons (in those days parliament was still important). To celebrate the liberation of the Holy City from the Moslem after 730 years the bells of Westminster Abbey rang for the first time in three years and they were followed by thousands of others across England.

General Allenby, the liberator of Jerusalem, and a descendent of Cromwell, declared in Jerusalem that the crusades were over. On hearing him, the Arabs, who had been encouraged into fighting for the British and who had been fooled into seeing them as liberators, walked away. And they have found themselves walking ever since.

The great outpouring of Christian triumphalism produced by the capture of Jerusalem was not confined to England. This is how *The Irish News* in Belfast saw the culmination of the last Crusade in its editorial of 11th December 1917:

"Fallen is thy throne, O Israel! The power of the Moslem in 'the Land of Promise' has fallen at last: we may assume that with the entrance of General Allenby's troops to Jerusalem an end has practically been made of Turkish rule over Palestine... When the Holy Land has been fully rescued from Turkish domination, who will possess and administer it? Official statements regarding the re-colonisation of the country by the scattered Jewish race have been made. Observers can discover no traces of enthusiasm for the project amongst Hebrews themselves. As an idea, nothing could be more sentimentally attractive; as a practical proposition, we believe each child of Abraham would bestow a benison on his brother who migrated from the lands of the Gentiles to the shores of Lake Galilee and the slopes of Mount Olivet. Thus might the storied little territory become once more 'a land flowing with milk and honey'—greatly to the content of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac

and Jacob who remained where they were. But an independent Jewish State cannot be established all at once, even did all the Rothschilds lead all their compatriots back to Jerusalem. The country must be 'protected'—in plain terms, annexed: a useful synonym in dealing with Oriental transactions might be 'Egyptised'. And the conquerors are, of course, the natural 'protectors' of the territory won by force of arms. Such has been the rule and practice from before the era of Moses and Joshua. We know all about it in Ireland. When the objects of the campaign in Palestine and Mesopotamia have been completely achieved, a solid 'block' of Asian territory will lie between the Germans and the Indian Ocean. The Turks gave the Kaiser's people a free passage from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf. The new occupants of Palestine and Mesopotamia will not be quite so accommodating. No one has hinted as yet at the ultimate fate of Constantinople itself: it was to have been the Czar's property, but poor Nicholas would rest satisfied with less nowadays. England, at all events, is carefully building up a wall against German 'aggression' along a line on which German eyes were cast covetously many years ago... There are really some arguments against a precipitate disclosure of the Allies 'war aims': one excellent reason for silence being that the Allies do not know how much they can aim at with a prospect of getting it."

It seems that by this time Ireland was completely in tune with British Imperialist ambitions in the world and quite in unison with the Christian fundamentalism of the Manse that accompanied it.

One of the major reasons why Britain entered the European war in August 1914 was to avail of the opportunity it presented to capture Mesopotamia and Palestine from the Turks. Of course, there was a problem—Turkey was not a combatant in the war at that time. It took a couple of months for Britain to find a *cassus bellum*. But it did on November 5th, over an obscure incident in the Black Sea, and the conquest of the Ottoman territories was on.



explosive that would kill Huns by the dozen.

The proposed Jewish colony in Palestine was a British construction designed as a foundation for Imperial hegemony and as another buffer state between India and potential enemies. It would end forever the scheme of a Berlin to Baghdad railway and frustrate any designs the new potential rival, France, might have in the region.

The *Balfour Declaration* was issued in 1917 as Jerusalem was about to be captured for the Empire. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister who authorised it, was raised by an uncle, a lay preacher in a millenarian Baptist Church, and "was brought up in a school where there was taught far more about the history of the Jews than the history of my own land".

In 1903, when an ordinary Member of Parliament, he had drawn up a *Jewish Colonisation Scheme* for Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement. The colony was meant for British East Africa but by 1917 the real thing was possible.

The Prime Minister was not alone. Of the ten men who had formed his War Cabinet at one time or another seven had come from Nonconformist families. Three were the sons or grandsons of Evangelical preachers. They all had a close acquaintance with the Old Testament and the people of the book.

The memoirs of Major Vivian Gilbert were published in 1923 under the title of *The Romance Of The Last Crusade—With Allenby To Jerusalem*. They open with a piece about King Richard the Lionheart and Sir Brian de Gurnay riding away from Jerusalem after their failure to capture the city: "In the heart of Sir Brian de Gurnay was the thought of another and a Last Crusade that for all time should wrest the Holy Places from the Infidel" (p1).

Chapter XII of Major Gilbert's book is called *When Prophecies Come True* and is about the capture of the Holy City:

"At last Jerusalem was in our hands! In all ten crusades organised and equipped to free the Holy City, only two were really successful,—the first led by Godfrey de Bouillon, and the last under Edmund Allenby... then at last we found ourselves inside the walls themselves—the first British troops to march through the Holy City!... I recalled a quaint hymn I read many years ago. It was written by Saint Augustine, or founded on words of his, and was passed from mouth to mouth in the middle ages to encourage recruiting for the Crusades... As I rode through Jerusalem the words were on my lips... We were proud that Jerusalem after languishing for over four hundred years under the Turkish yoke should be free at last... But above all, we had a great and abiding faith in God, Whose mercy had granted us this victory... to free the

Holy Land forever, to bring peace and happiness to a people who had been oppressed too long!" (pp171-77).

As the British advanced towards Jerusalem many of them began to see themselves as taking part in the last Crusade. All the Christian fundamentalism imbued in English gentlemen by their Biblical education in the Public Schools came flooding out in a great surge. They had reconquered the Holy Land for Christendom after 700 years of Moslem occupation. And what would the Holy City and the New Jerusalem be without the Jews?

Irish nationalism came into political alliance with the English Nonconformists in the Liberal/Home Rule movement and they came into military alliance with them in 1914. By 1917 the Redmondites had become a mere mouthpiece for British Imperial interests and they uttered no criticism of what was going on about them. And, of course, John Dillon was a personal friend and confidant of the leading Liberal Zionist C.P. Scott. So the Devlinite *Irish News* saw nothing wrong in the plantation, ethnic cleansing and partition that was planned for Palestine despite "knowing all about it in Ireland."

Pat Walsh

## Rudyard Kipling And The English, Ah The English

### Part One

### My Boy Jack

Regarding memory and the remembrance of Remembrance Sunday there is one thing that has to be remembered. It hasn't gone away you know. The British Empire. It hasn't gone away.

Though it no longer exists as a corporate entity, the empire is with us yet. As a series of ideological constructs, a body of carefully sanitised historical writing, a pattern of domination and subordination, as a military presence in regions where once it ruled and the template of an aspiration to rule again, the empire is with us yet.

It is most noticeably doing business in Afghanistan and Iraq. But really everywhere it once was something of the empire, something that is forever England, still remains.

Sandy Grant is a journalist on the Botswanan Mmegi (*The Reporter*). He was born in the United Kingdom but in 1983 became a citizen of Botswana. So this is Sandy Grant writing in his column on Monday November 12th of this year:

"Last week, I rang the British High Commission to ask if in future it could arrange for poppies to be made available here and was astonished to be told that they were there, as in other years, and could be collected by anyone.

"I have no recollection of ever having previously seen a Remembrance poppy being worn in Gaborone and in this past week, when I have at long last been able to wear my own, I have come across nobody else wearing theirs. To me, this is a real sadness.

"Remembrance Sunday used to be celebrated in Gaborone with a service at the war memorial attended by the President. Now that this domestic Service has been dropped, the country should be made aware that it is still very much involved in the great Service of

Remembrance which takes place annually in London on the nearest Sunday to the 11th November when the killing guns of the First World War were finally silenced. The ceremony at the Cenotaph may be a particularly British event but it is also a great Commonwealth occasion, with the Queen, as head of the Commonwealth placing her wreath at the Cenotaph, and all the Commonwealth High Commissioners including ours, placing theirs, in honour of all those, especially those from their own countries, who lost their lives in war. Can it be right that our High Commissioner should do this remembering on our behalf in this moving multi-faith service in London whilst we, here at home, are busy with other, more important matters?

"Remembrance Sunday really needs the involvement of the people of all Commonwealth countries (and not just their representatives in London), which means that the poppy should be made available by all the High Commissions in Gaborone to everyone wanting to be involved. The necessarily plastic poppy, a flower, is both a symbol (but what a symbol!) and a mechanism for raising funds for the care of people suffering from the effects of war, originally WWs 1 and 2 but now extended to cover those in need after other subsequent wars. At the moment, it may be that it is only British citizen residents in Gaborone who identify with Poppy Day believing that it is specifically their day, and their history. But is there any reason why this cannot be changed not least because ten thousand Batswana served in various military theatres in WW2 and many died? Since the end of that war, in 1945, there have always been other wars somewhere in the world, and now there must be currently dozens raging and thousands being killed and injured.

"Instead of every country trying to remember those who died in all of its localised wars, the United Nations could adopt Remembrance Sunday and Poppy Day as the one day in the year when the entire world would remember, honour, regret and learn. It could be done. There would be problems of adjustment, of course, and changes of thought and practice would be needed. In the last century, Europe, and Japan (in WW2) did its best to destroy both itself and much of the rest of the world but out of that madness of killing a model of remembering has emerged in London which needs now to be adopted world wide. The poppy is its symbol of terrible sacrifice, youthful death, forgiveness and hope.

"It could be worn on this one occasion each year in recognition of the world's terrible willingness to sacrifice everything including itself in its pursuit of wealth and power.

"Nothing has changed since 1945. But that little flower, the poppy, could give the world that one day to be set aside for reflection and thought."

#### BRITISH LEGION

The model of remembering that Mr. Grant, currently of Gaborone, Republic of Botswana, recommends to the world is organised by the Royal British Legion which describes itself on its website as :

"The Royal British Legion provides financial, social and emotional support to millions who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, and their dependants. Currently, nearly 10.5 million people are eligible for our support and we receive thousands of calls for help every year.

"The Legion was founded in 1921 as a voice for the ex-Service community and over 450,000 members continue to ensure that this voice does not go unheard. Although the needs of ex-Service people have changed over the years, we are still there to safeguard their welfare, interests and memory. British service people are in action around the world every day of the year. They know that if they need our support—now or in the future—the Legion is always on active duty for them."

"The Legion will be needed for as long as people continue to be affected by conflict. It doesn't advocate war but is simply there to support those who have been prepared to make a personal sacrifice through serving in the British Armed Forces."

The website makes a great point that *"There has only been one year (1968) since the Second World War when a British Service person hasn't been killed on active service"*. So many wars and such an awful lot of killing. And what Brit wouldn't be proud and anxious to remember all those wars and the members of the British Armed

Forces who killed so many anonymous Irish, Indians, Kenyans, Iraqis, Germans, Japanese, Afghans, Singaporeans, Burmese, Italians, Serbs and so many others in pursuit of whatever the imperial war aims of the day may have been. (And isn't it interesting that, for Mr. Grant, the Japanese of the last century did appalling things in World War Two, but not apparently in World War One. Perhaps there should be some way that they, and the Italians, can be Remembered with all due solemnity for their part in England's First War, and forgotten with ignominy in respect of the Second?)

There would certainly be a great deal to be said for the world setting aside at least one day a year to remember the killing ways of the British and perhaps give some thought as to how to keep the English War Machine at bay. In a way it's a pity that England's victims would rather forget their bloody encounters with the empire and let those still living get on with what little might remain of their lives. But that's just people for you; human beings who exist outside ideology, for whom remembrance is not an exercise in wiping your memory clear of all true trace of your actual activity in the real world.

And so, for the English (and for their dupes and hirelings) the remembrance of Remembrance Sunday has nothing to do with commonplace human memory. It is an ideological construct designed to commemorate England's wars in the world by wiping the truth of those wars from the face of the world. The ideological construct of Remembrance Sunday begins in the past as apologetics, dwells in the present as propaganda and moves into the future as an aspiration to dominance. So buy a poppy, any of you peoples of the world, buy a poppy. And pay for it with your children's blood.

Or Remembrance can be disremembered, put to one side for the most part and celebrated in a more perfunctory fashion. As was beginning to happen in England from the sixties on.

In the seventies Remembrance Sunday was becoming irrelevant as its originals faded away and substantial elements of British political society tried to realign the past with an emerging post-imperial future. Briefly then the future was Europe and industrial democracy. But Heath was succeeded by Thatcher, and Callaghan abandoned the Labour Party to its left foot; the Unions sabotaged industrial democracy, then sabotaged themselves rather than face up to the appalling consequence that was Arthur Scargill; the Soviet Union imploded and England became the hand in glove henchman of a global power. Remembrance Sunday by then had become relevant again.

Which is to say, the empty sentimentality that had always been the public face

of the British Legion, its Sunday at the Cenotaph and its poppies, that had become all there was to all that, became once again a façade. After a period of some twenty or so years during which the empty sentimentality was just that and nothing more it became again a mask.

#### MY BOY JACK

Following upon the break-up of the Soviet Union, England's army was number three in the premier league of world armies with room on the wings to be inventive in and with a license to kill. The empty sentimentality of Remembrance Sunday was a mask again because all of a sudden there was once again something to be masked.

The mask that was worn this 11th. November 2007, when Poppy Day and Remembrance Sunday coincided, had something to hide. Just what it had to hide was alluded to on Independent Television. Only an allusion, but there it was in a production of the stage play *My Boy Jack* (written by David Haig and starring him as Kipling) in which Rudyard Kipling campaigned for lambs to the slaughter in the trenches, secured a commission for his short-sighted son in the Irish Guards and mourned the boy's death in the poem of the title which he recited at the play's end for King George.

Grand Occasions of State and Statecraft are the business of the BBC and the BBC knows exactly how to arrange its coverage of those occasions just so as to give a focus to the crocodile tears of empty sentimentality. They know it is not a question of trying to fill out the emptiness but rather of how to build that vacuum into the development of rising generations. As Conor Lynch pointed out in a letter to the Irish Independent that the Indo was somehow able to restrain itself from printing:

"At last year's event, as the BBC cameras focused on the children present, David Dimbleby declared that this was important for them as they too would one day be asked to risk their lives. The monument recently unveiled in Britain to the 16,000 who have been killed since 1945 allows for a further 10,000 names."

The BBC knows better than to allude to anything behind the mask. It just wears the mask with pride and uses it to monumental effect. Independent Television doesn't have that reflex, or hasn't refined that reflex to the same sharp point of skill. Really ITV simply shouldn't be allowed anywhere near the Great Occasion of State and Statecraft that is Remembrance Sunday. It is as well for the glorious fallen in the trenches of future wars to end war that so far it has got no nearer the Cenotaph than David Haig's clumsy drama.

And so to the nitty gritty of that ham fisted piece of work, but briefly so.

Kipling had long been warning of the dangers to Human Civilisation and the Empire that embodies it posed by the barbarous Hun. To no avail. Now war has been forced upon lazy, smug, unprepared politicians and Britain's "*Tiny professional army*", "*Our army of 160,000*", must face "*their one and a half million*". At the precise moment when England's war against frightfulness is declared Kipling is shown stirring the masses to patriotic fervour. He calls for volunteers and demands that young men who have no taste for killing and being killed should be ostracised.

But Kipling's son Jack, like Kipling himself, is shortsighted to the point of near blindness. Jack is keen to get into action but keeps failing the medical. As a last resort Kipling goes to see the hero of his youth, old 'Bobs', now Lord Roberts, now figurehead of the Irish Guards into which Jack is drafted forthwith, no awkward questions asked, as a Second Lieutenant in charge of a platoon of "*twenty raw recruits from Dublin*". And off they all go to France.

Kipling himself is shown in this period as the civilian member of an otherwise military committee, learning the appalling statistics of death at the front and advising how they might best be presented, short of outright lying, for public consumption. We are left in no doubt that Kipling knew exactly what *My Boy Jack* was in for.

In France, in the trenches, Private Bowe is forever complaining about the state of his feet. So, on the stage, in preparation for going over the top, Second Lieutenant Kipling gets on his knees before these sweepings of the slums of Dublin and washes the poor man's feet. Says Private Bowe as he does so, "*Oh Jesus Christ, that feels good*". (I really can't imagine what David Haig thought he was doing in that scene. It raised in me the suspicion that Jack's death may have had more to do with an Honour Court of the Second Battalion of the Irish Guards than any beastly Germans. Or perhaps the Lord of England's Far Flung Battle Line was offended by the blasphemy and responded as he tends to do in respect of such matters. But maybe that's just me.)

And over the top they go, into the Battle of Loos, where Jack and Private Bowe reach the German trenches and Jack is shot to bits.

Jack's body isn't found and he is posted as missing in action, maybe wounded, probably not dead. The Kipling family goes into action to find Their Boy Jack, or learn what has happened to him.

David Haig scripted Kipling's private grief in the only way open to him, in

private scenes for which, given the nature of them, there can be no evidence. A child asks him: "*Is Jack Dead?*" He replies: "*Not certain, old man, not certain at all. Not certain he should have gone at all*". A little later, in bed with his wife, he sort of breaks down and kind of confesses: "*Do you want me to get down on my knees and admit that I've murdered my son*".

Then Private Bowe turns up and tells them how their son died. Followed by scenes of quite restrained, really very dignified, grief. The television play, but not apparently the stage version, moves then to Kipling reciting *My Boy Jack* for King George. Roll credits. Cut.

The problem with ITV's celebration of Remembrance Sunday as against the BBC's March Past the Cenotaph with music and *Missa Solemnis* is bound up with the nature of sentimentality. Sentimentality is a completely superficial, entirely trivial and generally useless thing. There is only one area of social life in which it is of any use at all, and in that one area it is of very great use indeed. Sentimentality moves unthinking masses. It can do so because being empty it is as close as humanly possible to a raw emotion that can be shaped to ideology. The BBC's almost content-free blend of movement, sound and colour is just perfect for grand state occasions of thoughtless mass mobilisation. Independent Television and David Haig tried too hard to be clever about it and provided content. They should have known that content can sometimes provoke thought (as movement, sound and colour never can) and thought is decidedly not what Occasions of State and Statecraft are about. Not at all.

The author, David Haig, did his best of course. The content of his play is a bland mishmash of lies, half-truths, strategic omissions and misleading allusions which on any other day of the year would be fine and dandy and par for the course. But not on Remembrance Sunday. Not on a Grand Occasion of State and Statecraft. Not amidst all the solemn sentimentality of a mass mobilisation. No, No, Not Then.

David Haig was interviewed by many newspapers on many websites to a script (at least he gives exactly the same answers to broadly similar questions). Extracts from one would seem to cover them all:

"The journey of *My Boy Jack* began in February 1985, when I was doing a production of *Tom and Viv* on Broadway. The American actor playing Eliot, Ed Herrmann, was a great Anglophile who particularly loved Rudyard Kipling. One day he handed me a biography of Rudyard called *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling* by Angus Wilson and in the front cover he had written 'here's hoping your Rudyard comes to pass'....

"On one side you had the magical, inventive father, creator of the *Just So Stories* and *The Jungle Books*, providing a wonderful environment for a child to grow up in. And on the other side you had the apologist for the British Empire who tyrannically pursued his son's joining of the army and his involvement in the fighting of the First World War. That clash, I thought, was a fascinating combination....

"...The poem *My Boy Jack*, written after Jack's death, revealed a father tortured—in hindsight—by the part he played in his son's fate....

...  
"The chain reaction of a single death in Iraq is huge and yet in this particular war we're talking about sometimes 20,000 men in one day. Rudyard never lost his faith in the rightness of the war but what he couldn't bear was the thought that the country let those boys who fought down. After the war, he wrote a two-line phrase, through the eyes of the sons who died, which is: 'If any question why we died, tell them our fathers lied.' And that, to me, sums up what happened inside Rudyard's head after Jack and all these other boys died" (from, <http://www.memorabletv.com/2007/david-haig-on-my-boy-jack.html>).

Now then, some remarks on all this. Not necessarily relevant to the play, or critical of it. Just some remarks.

#### PREPARING FOR WAR

England's first war against the world was not something that it blundered into all unbeknownst to itself and ill-prepared. It had been in the works since Campbell-Bannerman led a coalition of traditional liberals and liberal imperialists to victory in the 1906 election. A gang of three liberal imperialist Ministers of State, Asquith, Haldane and Grey, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of War and Foreign Minister respectively, began planning for war with Germany. When Campbell-Bannerman retired to spend more time with his mortality in 1908 Asquith became Prime Minister. Then Winston Churchill joined the gang. When he became First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911 the liberal imperialists controlled all the offices of state that were required for planning and executing a war policy. The war manoeuvres that this gang of four engaged in were described by Charles James O'Donnell:

"At the end of 1905 the secret 'conversations' of Sir Edward Grey with the French War Office began. Then also commenced the evil policy of concealed alliances with France, Russia, and Belgium, 'to which,' in Lord Morley's words 'Grey has step by step been drawing the Cabinet on.' The first steps were naturally elaborate and urgent

military preparations by the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Haldane, which went on ceaselessly for eight years. Mr. Winston Churchill in his *Four Great Chapters of the War*, wrote: 'The British Army went to France according to what may be called the Haldane plan. Everything in that Minister's eight-year tenure of the War Office had led up to this and had been sacrificed for this. To place an army of four or six infantry divisions, thoroughly equipped, and with their necessary cavalry, on the left of the French line within twelve or fourteen days of the order to mobilise, and to guard the home island meanwhile by the fourteen Territorial divisions he had organised, was the scheme upon which, aided by Field-Marshal Nicholson and French, he had concentrated all his efforts and stinted resources.' 'It was a modest plan; but it was a practical plan; it was consistently pursued and laboriously and minutely studied. It represented, approximately, the maximum war effort that the voluntary system would yield, applied in the most effective and daring manner to the decisive spot. It commanded the assent of almost all the leading generals. When the hour struck it worked with perfect precision and punctuality. There was nothing to argue about, nothing to haggle over. The French knew exactly what they were going to get if Great Britain decided to come in, and exactly when and where they were going to get it; and mobilisation schemes, railway graphics, timetables, bases, depots, supply arrangements, etc., filling many volumes, regulated and ensured a perfect and concerted execution. A commander whose whole life led up to this point had been chosen. All that remained to be done on the day was to take the decision and give the signal.' On the whole the British preparation seems to have been the most thorough in Europe..." (from *Ireland in the Great War*, Athol Books, pp 51-52)

None of this was known to Parliament. The first Lord Birkenhead, old Galloper Smith as was, who was not of that gang, that government or that party (he was a Tory Unionist) wrote approvingly of Grey's (and the others') secrecy, in *The Sunday Times* of 8th. June 1924:

"I have often amused myself by speculating what his reception would have been in the mad House of Commons of 1906 if he had informed the collection of hysterical sentimentalists who kept him in office of his conversations, at the time when they took place, diplomatic and military, with the French nation; and of the commitments deeply rooted in honour, if not in formal documents, in which he was gradually, dangerously, but rightly, involving this people. The

necessity, however, for such confidences, did not, happily for the interests of the world, appeal to him, and therefore for eight years everybody was satisfied. He and Lord Haldane, with the knowledge of Mr. Asquith, made preparations for the war that threatened; their followers made perorations on behalf of the peace which preceded it" (quoted, *ibid*, p.52).

Nor was the rest of the Cabinet aware of what Asquith, Haldane, Grey and (later) Churchill were up to. So Kipling's hysterical claim at the beginning of David Haig's play that an ill-prepared British Army of 160,000 was about to be overwhelmed by 1.5 million Germans was not entirely insane (he really knew better, but he didn't actually know the especial details of better that were only immediately available to the gang of four). But surely Haig could have found some way to point out that Britain was in alliance with France and Russia and that it was the Germans who on every point of men and resources were vastly outnumbered and overpowered. Well he could have but he didn't, and that's that.

#### KIPLING

Now then the Kiplings and the death of Their Boy Jack (who was played on the night by the boy wizard, Daniel Radcliffe; all the better to engage a couple of coming generations of cannon fodder down the line). David Haig has said that his journey into Kipling's world began with reading Angus Wilson's biography, *The Strange Ride Of Rudyard Kipling*. Wilson explains that the Kiplings' efforts to find out what had happened to Jack were mainly directed towards finding out where he was being held prisoner. The details of Jack's death were not discovered by the Kiplings but by H. Rider Haggard. Guardsman Bowes (called Bowe in the TV drama) was tracked down by Haggard and told his story of Jack's death to Haggard who then passed on a less horrific account to Rudyard and Carrie.

It is clear that Haig changed the details mainly for the greater drama of a fictionalised retelling. I would hardly comment on it at all except that the dramatic effect Haig was striving for is essentially false. He was looking for a dramatic example of the private grief of any father given definitive proof of his son's death, with the additional burden of guilt that he feels Kipling must have borne in Jack's case. And the problem for a dramatist (or propagandist) of the case of Rudyard Kipling is that on the one hand Kipling was too private an individual to leave evidence of such a clichéd response and on the other hand was too public a character not to have responded vigorously and openly to his son's death. *The Strange*

*Ride Of Rudyard Kipling* was no canter in the park. Simply by having read Wilson's biography Haig must know that. It's just knowledge that is better not shared with a television audience.

The kind of knowledge a television audience is ready to know in its bones about a matter like this is that the great writer expresses his grief in his work. So that is the evidence Haig has provided, with the whole of one poem at the end of the play and two lines which he suggests in the interview(s) are a short poem .

As evidence of deep, tortured, grief that is sparse, to say the least of it. But really it is difficult to appreciate how either piece of verse is evidence of anything at all to do with the father's response to his son's death.

Kipling's son Jack was killed fighting as a Second Lieutenant in the Irish Guards during the Battle of Loos in the War to end War. *My Boy Jack* is some mother's son lost at sea with no more said about it. It is pretty well inconceivable that the use of his son's name in a poem about loss written within three years of Jack's death doesn't mean something but equally it impossible to say from the poem just what the something is that it undoubtedly means.

The two lines which Haig quotes in the interview(s) are from Kipling's *Epitaphs Of The War*, which is the generic title of a group of thirty-odd very short poems. The one Haig gives is called *Common Form*. It is not just there without context, so here it is in its immediate context:

#### BATTERIES OUT OF AMMUNITION

If any mourn us in the workshop, say  
We died because the shift kept holiday.

#### COMMON FORM

If any question why we died,  
Tell them, because our fathers lied.

#### A DEAD STATESMAN

I could not dig: I dared not rob:  
Therefore I lied to please the mob.  
Now all my lies are proved untrue  
And I must face the men I slew.  
What tale shall serve me here among  
Mine angry and defrauded young?

That context is a very public one of soldiers at the front betrayed by laziness and deceit at home. Kipling did not count himself as one of the home front betrayers: to the contrary, he very much felt himself to be one of the betrayed. So where is his tortured grief for Jack in those lines?

I can only think of one poem by Kipling which seems to me to have been very definitely written in response to his son's death. It is easy to see why Haig preferred not to mention it:

### The Children

These were our children who died for our lands: they were dear in our sight.

We have only the memory left of their home-treasured sayings and laughter.

The price of our loss shall be paid to our hands, not another's hereafter.

Neither the Alien nor Priest shall decide on it. That is our right.

But who shall return us the children ?

At the hour the Barbarian chose to disclose his pretences,

And raged against Man, they engaged, on the breasts that they bared for us,

The first felon-stroke of the sword he had long-time prepared for us—  
Their bodies were all our defense while we wrought our defenses.

They bought us anew with their blood, forbearing to blame us,  
Those hours which we had not made good when the judgment o'ercame us.  
They believed us and perished for it. Our statecraft, our learning  
Delivered them bound to the Pit and alive to the burning  
Whither they mirthfully hastened as jostling for honour—  
Not since her birth has our Earth seen such worth loosed upon her.

Nor was their agony brief, or once only imposed on them.

The wounded, the war-spent, the sick received no exemption

Being cured they returned and endured and achieved our redemption,  
Hopeless themselves of relief, till Death, marvelling, closed on them.

That flesh we had nursed from the first in all cleanness was given  
To corruption unveiled and assailed by the malice of Heaven—  
By the heart-shaking jests of Decay where it lolled on the wires—  
To be blanched or gay-painted by fumes—to be cindered by fires—  
To be senselessly tossed and retossed in stale mutilation  
From crater to crater. For this we shall take expiation.

But who shall return us our children ?

I simply can't speak to Kipling's private grief, nobody can. The public expression of that private grief I can speak to and it is no cringing, milk and water thing of post-Christian piety. It is rage, and a passionate call for vengeance. Not at all the stuff of prime time, ecumenical, Remembrance Sunday viewing.

And Kipling's rage and passion for vengeance was, all of a piece, a very considered thing. He had been considering it from the beginning of the war.

Long before the Great War came to fruition Kipling hated the Germans (and loathed their welfare state, "*The weak and the lame be blown!*"). Achieving the Great War did not give him pause. Less than six months into the "*game*" as he called it, he felt that the game was running England's way and was looking forward to the vengeance to come. So he wrote to his chum, former American President, Teddy Roosevelt, on 4th. December 1914 (while the US was still neutral):

"...the game reduces itself to plain killing. Our losses are not light, but by the circumstances and training of the German armies the German losses are not less than three times ours—which is a reasonable proportion. But don't believe the Germans will slack off. They are good for at least a million more losses on our front alone—besides what they can stand from the Russians. They ought not to weaken till they have lost a flat million of dead—not counting sick and wounded. We have got our bigger artillery into shape on the Western front, and I believe are reaching them farther back than before...

"But has it ever struck you that if the game goes our way, the largest block of

existing Germans may perhaps be the eight million within your Borders? And precisely because, to please this Contingent and to justify his hereditary temperament, Wilson did not protest against the invasion and absorption of Belgium, Wilson will not be able to save for them the sentimental satisfaction of having a Fatherland to look back upon from behind the safety of the United States frontier. It seems a high price to pay for 'domestic politics'.

"Thank you for what you say about my boy. He was not seventeen till the 17th August, but he managed to get in by Sept. 6. He is in the Irish Guards. Suppose my only son dies, I for one, should not 'view with equanimity' Mr Wilson (however unswayed by martial prejudice) advising or recommending my country how to behave at the end of this War..." (from, Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling*, London 1978, pp281-82; Note: This is the Galloper's grandson, the third Earl of Birkenhead, finishing off his father's biography of Kipling, the first draft of which was seen by Kipling's surviving child and banned by her from publication).

In 1914 Kipling looked forward to the complete destruction of the German state and people. The "*lie*" that he spoke of in *Common Form* and elsewhere was the politician's failure to deliver on that promise. It has nothing to do with the "old lie" of Wilfred Owen's poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori*. That old lie, that it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country, was Kipling's bedrock truth. The response to Jack's death which he rehearsed in December 1914 was the one he felt cheated of from the Armistice to his death. *Germania Delenda Est* was not delivered on by the lying politicians.

After Jack's death it is hard to find any mention of him at all in Kipling's published work. He is not mentioned in the Autobiography, *Something Of Myself* (published 1937). Nor in *Souvenirs Of France* (1933) which recalls trips to battlefields of the Great War; there is nothing of Jack in that but there is this complaint about the failure to make good on the recruiting posters of 1914:

"There followed, presently, a passionate propaganda that "Civilisation" should 'put Germany on her feet' because she was in economic ruin and her heart had changed. After 'Civilisation' had sufficiently studied that ruin and satisfied herself, at some cost, of the worthlessness of German currency, the mark returned to parity as a machine-gun re-hoists itself over the apparently abandoned trench. The manoeuvre to abolish her internal debt cost Germany no more than a few thousand old and unusable persons wiped out, perhaps by starvation. It was magnificent, and it was the first step of the real war which began at a quarter-past eleven on the 11th November 1918."

His two volume history of the *Irish Guards in the Great War* really is Kipling's literary memorial to My Boy Jack. On this occasion Jack is mentioned; briefly, and in passing.

This is Jack's Company Commander, John Bird, describing in a letter to the Kiplings the circumstances in which their son, who was commanding No. 5 Platoon of the 2nd. Battalion, went missing:

"No. 2 and 3 coys. were ordered to attack, No. 1 and 4 being in support with picks and shovels. We advanced with one platoon from each of No. 2 and 3 in extended order, and the other 3 platoons of each Coy. behind in artillery formation. Your son led the Platoon in extended order from No. 2 Coy. We were shelled most of the way but remained in this formation till we reached the Wood, which was about 500 yds. long and 70 yards deep. The 2 leading platoons charged through the Wood, and when I got through with the platoons of my Coy. they were already digging themselves in about 30 yards the other side, and parallel with the Wood; at this time we were under machine-guns and casualties were getting numerous.

"The Grenadiers and the Scots then came up on the right, and the Irish Guards on the right flank advanced with them right up to the Puits and Red Brick House, which were about 300 yards from where we were digging ourselves in. There were machine-guns in these buildings, and although they had been heavily shelled they opened from them a considerable fire and also from another Wood just beyond. Two of my men say they saw your son limping, just by the Red House, and one said he saw him fall, and somebody run to his assistance, probably his orderly who is also missing. The Platoon Sergeant of No. 5, however, tells me your son did not go to the Red House, but remained with the remainder of the 2nd Btn. digging themselves in just outside the Wood, but I

think the former story the more correct one, and I am very hopeful that he is a prisoner.

"Your son behaved with great gallantry and coolness and handled his men splendidly. I trust that your great anxiety may be allayed by definite news of his safety soon. Please accept my most heartfelt sympathy. I had a great affection for him." (from Lord Birkenhead, op. cit. pp 267 - 68)

In Kipling's history this substantial account is substantially compressed:

"In the meantime, the 1st Scots Guards, following orders, had come partly round and partly through the right flank of the Irish, and attacked Puits 14 bis, which was reasonably stocked with machine-guns, but which they captured for the moment. Their rush took with them 'some few Irish Guardsmen,' with 2nd Lieutenants W.F.J. Clifford and J. Kipling of No. 2 Company who went forward not less willingly because Captain Cuthbert commanding the Scots Guards party had been adjutant to the Reserve Battalion at Warley ere the 2nd Battalion was formed, and they all knew him. Together, this rush reached a line beyond the Puits, well under machinegun fire (out of the Bois Hugo across the Lens-La Basse road). Here 2nd Lieutenant Clifford was shot and wounded or killed—the body was found later—and 2nd Lieutenant Kipling was wounded and missing."

Jack's death is later noted and his name is included in a list of the dead.

Kipling's grief for his dead son was a private matter which remained within the family circle. It does not provide the materials for a moving tribute to the families of the fallen of the War To End War. Those materials had to be worked up almost from scratch by the author, the actor David Haig. Kipling's public reaction to Jack's death was simply an intensification of his already blistering anti-Germanism. All that had to be glossed over and dumbed down to a TV supper for couch commandos. What remained for public consumption was a washed out caricature of a central character and a tepid drama that relied on fans of Harry Potter for its audience.

It is very striking how Kipling is only shown as a poet at the very end of the play, and only then with the mawkish *My Boy Jack*. Up to the last moment he is the creator of Kim and Mowgli, the author of *Jungle Book* and the *Just So Stories*. At no point in the drama are we given the least clue as to the character of the overwhelming literary achievement which powered his unique public presence, of which we are also left unaware.

Kipling was a public figure of unparalleled influence. Really the spirit of his age walked in him. His poems moved on the face of the waters. He wasn't a politician,

and the political positions he made a firm stand upon were trivial things, here today and gone tomorrow, disturbing no-one as they passed. But he was, bone of their bone, strong pulse in their own heart's blood, the firm rock of imperial principle around which *realpolitik* revolved. His poetry was the medium of existence of Rhodes' War and Asquith's War, of Campbell-Bannerman's Peace and Lloyd-George's Peace. Kipling really understood very little of it, but he enabled it all.

It was altogether a coincidence that the Great War that Kipling set all his heart and power upon was the Great War of Liberal Imperialism's *Realpolitik*. But the business of his poetry, as of his nation, was war. If Kipling hadn't found the right war, we can rest assured that the right war would have found him.

He was no intellectual but he made the imperial thinkers intelligible to mobilising masses of the once and future democracy. He put Seeley and Dilke and the rest to a spirited rhythm that was its own music and marched them off to Flanders and Gallipoli.

Just as there could have been no Great War without the secret preparations of the gang of four just so there could have been no war at all at that time without Kipling's poetry. Just so is he the most dangerous figure of all to bring to mind and memory on of all days a Remembrance Sunday. He raises too many questions and provides too many answers. Just so.

**Joe Keenan**

## Palestine Solidarity

At the ICTU Biennial Conference (BDC), held 3-6 July 2007 at Bundoran, the following motion was passed:

### Motion no 70,

#### Belfast & District Trades Council:

This ICTU BDC is outraged at the continue human rights abuses being suffered by the Palestinian people. In response to the destructive impact of the Israeli Government's actions on the daily life of Palestinians, and in pursuance of the existing ICTU policy to campaign in solidarity with the Palestinian people, this BDC calls on the ICTU to:

a) Make direct representations to the European Council of Ministers to:

\* Challenge the withholding of EU funding for the Palestinian Authority.

\* Raise the EU's failure to meet its obligations under International Law to oppose the illegal actions of the Israeli Government.

\* Call for the ending of the preferential trading status afforded to Israel under the Euro-Mediterranean

Agreement.

b) Seek meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Irish EU Commissioner to raise our concerns around the issues raised in point a) above and to ask for their support.

c) Make representations to the European TUC to organise a campaign around the issues raised in point a).

d) To support and promote a boycott campaign of Israeli goods and services similar to the boycott of South African goods during the Apartheid regime. ICTU should work with affiliates, human rights and humanitarian relief organisations to promote such a campaign through a programme of educational activities and media campaigns.

e) To support and promote a policy of divestment from Israeli companies as a means of encouraging the Israeli government to comply with International Law and to end the human rights violations of the Palestinian people. As part of this ICTU should encourage affiliates to apply and campaign for a policy of ethical investment against Israeli companies and other companies who directly support the Israeli government's occupation of Palestinian land and infrastructure.

f) To strengthen solidarity links between the Irish, Palestinian and Israeli labour movements through exchange visits. ICTU should initially facilitate a trade union delegation to the Palestinian territories to encourage greater awareness of the situation.

The BDC welcomes the establishment of the Trade Union friends of Palestine in Northern Ireland and calls on ICTU to encourage the formation of a similar group in the republic of Ireland. To facilitate this, the BDC also calls on ICTU to host a seminar to further develop trade union solidarity action.

**Motion 71, proposed by Derry Trades Council, was also passed. It will be found on the Athol Website, along with a speech made by Michael Robinson in proposing Motion 70.**

## Irish Labour And Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Labour Forum put a motion before the Irish Labour Conference in Wexford, proposing that it should be allowed to contest Local Government elections in Northern Ireland. The National Executive Committee proposed to Conference that the suggestion be referred to a Commission on re-organisation that it was about to establish. A full report of the debate at the Conference, along with the arguments of a fringe meeting held on the issue will be placed on the Athol Books web-site early in December and will also appear in the next issue of this magazine.

**www.atholbooks.org**

# Shorts

## from the *Long Fellow*

### ALL BALLS

The documentary the *Killings at Coolacrease* has been a fiasco from the revisionist point of view. The allegations that the killings of the Pearson brothers in 1921 were motivated by a Land Grab or Sectarianism and by implication ethnic cleansing have not stood up. No evidence to support these allegations was given. All we had was the assertions of three academics: Terence Dooley, Richard English and William Murphy.

It was not mentioned that after the Pearsons sold their land that some of the people who obtained part of the land were ex British Army soldiers. None of the other purchasers had any connection with the IRA.

There was no evidence of sectarianism but this did not prevent the allegation from being made. None of the other Protestant farmers in the locality were molested. Indeed many participated in the War of Independence. In this part of Offaly the wealthy and respected local Protestant Biddulph and Drought families armed the Cadamstown IRA unit, and the local Protestant Mitchell family provided military training and a safe house to them. A member of another branch of this Protestant Mitchell family was a prominent and well-known Offaly IRA man.

But the most egregious allegation was made by Senator Harris who claimed that the Pearsons were shot:

*"...very deliberately in the genitals, in their sexual parts, in their sexual organs, what it really says is you are the other, you are an outsider, we hate you, go away and die."*

The facts are that in the case of Richard Pearson the medical evidence says that he had:

*"a superficial wound in the left shoulder; a deep but not life-threatening wound in the right groin (which is farther from the genitals than an ear lobe from the brain—Long fellow -); another in the right buttock; superficial wounds in the lower leg; and about six glancing wounds in the back."*

In the case of Abraham Pearson he had:

*"extensive wounds on left cheek, left shoulder, left thigh and lower third of left leg. In addition there was a wound through the abdomen."*

No contemporary report in 1921—not even the propaganda department of Dublin Castle—deduced from this that the IRA deliberately shot the Pearsons in the genitals. It is a complete fabrication.

### MORE BALLS

But for two weeks running Eoghan

Harris devoted the whole of his weekly diary in the *Sunday Independent* to defending the Coolacrease documentary. For someone not used to reading Harris it was embarrassing. Apparently, the Senator doesn't know the difference between the right groin and the genitals (in the case of Richard Pearson); and the abdomen and the genitals (in the case of Abraham Pearson).

But Harris is not one to let facts get in the way of an ideological position. Since the facts as presented by the Coolacrease documentary do not stand up the last line of defence is to attack those pointing out this.

He claimed on Joe Duffy's *Live Line* that the critics of the Coolacrease documentary were "liars" and "holocaust deniers"! Joe Duffy had to apologise on his behalf, but no apology was forthcoming from the Senator. *Au Contraire!*

In his *Sunday Independent* columns he continued his denunciations of the malignant influence of Pat Muldowney, the *Aubane Historical Society* and the *Irish Political Review* and all their pomps and works.

Could it be their testicles extend everywhere?!

### AND EVEN MORE...

But probably the most insidious aspect of the documentary was not Harris's false statement but the programme makers' overall attempt to explain away reality. They arrived in this locality in Offaly and attempted to tell the locals that their recollection of the past was different from reality. And this programme makers' reality was something the locals should be ashamed of. The original title of the documentary had the word "atonement" in it. In short the documentary was Orwellian in its scope.

The big problem for the programme makers was an incident about a week before the Pearsons were executed.

The Pearsons had shot two IRA men who were cutting down a tree to make a road block. This was a problem because it suggests that the Pearsons were armed combatants in support of the imperial government, which makes other assumed motives for their execution pale into insignificance. It also undermines the programme makers' attempt to portray the Pearsons as Amish like, pacifists.

There is no doubt that this shooting by the Pearsons took place. An internal IRA report said it was the principal reason for their subsequent execution. A British Military Enquiry into the killings also referred to the shootings by the Pearsons of two IRA men and indicated that the source for this was an RIC County Inspectors' report.

Local historian Paddy Heaney further confirmed this. One of the IRA men—Michael Heaney—was a cousin of his

father. This IRA man died about 5 years later from the wounds incurred from the Pearsons shooting.

But all of this was dismissed. The British Military Enquiry report was not mentioned and the motives of the author of the *internal IRA report* and Paddy Heaney were impugned.

When the producer/director Niamh Salmon was asked to explain why the documentary didn't refer to the British Military Enquiry report she claimed that this report was only collating local rumours gathered by the RIC.

But it turns out that not only did the Pearsons shoot two IRA men, they also shot Bertie Hogg an ex RIC man who was arrested by the IRA leaving the Pearsons house ten minutes before the shooting incident. So the RIC was not just recounting rumours, it was reporting on an incident that it was directly involved with.

And it looks like Coolacrease will get another outing on the big screen. The Irish Film board has even awarded a grant for the film. The film will be directed by Perry Ogden, who is also listed as a scriptwriter. This time there will be no constraints re: broadcasting standards, so one can only imagine the end product.

### THE OVAL BALL

The critics of the documentary, most notably Pat Muldowney, have unearthed some details on the war of independence and the land struggle. There was no land agitation in Coolacrease in 1921 but about 30 or forty miles away in the town land of Luggacurran in Co. Laois there most certainly was.

Lord Lansdowne evicted 100 Luggacurran tenants in 1887, replacing them with 30 Protestant tenants. Some of these tenants came from Scotland and Ulster. This dispute had not been resolved by 1921.

Lansdowne was appointed Viceroy of India and Governor-General of Canada. And, of course is a well known name today because of the rugby stadium. This brings us to the naming of the said stadium which is in the process of being rebuilt.

The new stadium should be named after someone who has brought glory to Irish rugby such as Michael Gibson or Tom Kiernan.

But if it is a choice between receiving no money for calling it after an imperialist land grabber on the one hand and receiving some money for naming it after some capitalist brand on the other, the capitalist brand would be the Long Fellow's choice.

### HIGH SOCIETY

The Long Fellow saw a bit of the High Society documentary which was commissioned by Kevin Dawson who also commissioned the Coolacrease documentary. None of it looked credible.

Justine Delaney-Wilson, the

investigative journalist at the centre of the documentary, claimed in an interview to have a tape of a Minister discussing his cocaine use. But this was not told to RTE or Gill & Macmillan her publishers. They were under the impression that she had only contemporaneous notes.

RTE were quite happy to leave the impression that such a tape existed until

the *Sunday Tribune* dragged the truth out of them. Delaney-Wilson had never told them about the tape: a very curious omission on the part of a relatively unknown journalist trying to get her book published.

It seems the Coolcrease documentary is not the only suspect documentary that has been broadcast by RTE.

more Stalinist than the Stalinist himself. But my Communist father never placed Soviet interests above those of his own native land, and it was a decade later before I came to the firm conclusion that—even in respect of Dev's Second World War neutrality—it was he who had, in fact, been right.

But which country's interests came first for Irish-born Nicholas Mansergh during the period when he worked for Britain's wartime Ministry of Information? With the British spy John Betjeman as his close collaborator and reporting directly to him, can we at least say of Mansergh that he did his best to serve Irish interests as well as British, but with the latter remaining the defining primary loyalty in any clash of interests? Or, can that order be reversed, linked to my own conclusion that Betjeman had in time been successfully 'turned around' by Dev's right-hand men Frank Gallagher and M.J. MacManus {being under a particular personal obligation to the latter}, and became in effect a double agent who now pushed Irish interests to the fore? If it was the case that Nicholas Mansergh became aware that Betjeman had been so 'turned', and not only acquiesced in it but also acted as an accomplice in that project, perhaps his own priorities subsequently shifted to doing his best to serve British interests as well as Irish, but with the latter now becoming his primary loyalty. I am indeed stretching the argument to allow for such a slim possibility, for that would have left Nicholas Mansergh, if ever 'caught out', open to the charge of operating as a wartime 'foreign agent' deep inside British Government ranks. But I remain to be convinced by the production of any solid evidence to prove that Mansergh himself ever made that decisive shift and thereby offset the compromised position he found himself in with regard to this country's interests, whenever UK Ministry of Information decisions hostile to Ireland were being processed. This is not at all to doubt the fact that Nicholas Mansergh had twin affections for both Britain and Ireland. German *Abwehr* intelligence officer Helmut Clissmann also had twin affections for both Germany and Ireland and was—in the literal sense—even more deeply wedded to the latter. But at least the Clissmann family website is completely up front in acknowledging where his primary loyalty lay, when writing: "*For two years he (HC) was seconded to the Foreign Office in Berlin to deal with Irish affairs. During his war service he did his best to serve Irish interests as well as German—but this is history.*"

Indeed it is. And just as the Clissmann family was extremely fortunate that Helmut Clissmann's intelligence reports provided convincing arguments as to why

## JOHN DULANTY—HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR WHOM?

### *Some Realities of Betjeman, Bowen and Anglo-Irish Relations*

#### PART ONE

The instinct to defend near or distant relatives from perceived wrongs, insults or slights is indeed an understandable one. But it should not be accompanied by bad history. It is therefore to be deplored that—this past November 6—the *Irish Examiner* closed down a correspondence where, in the course of polemicising on behalf of Elizabeth Bowen against Jack Lane's account of her wartime British intelligence role, Dr. Martin Mansergh TD was facilitated in introducing yet more statements that will not stand up to historical scrutiny. Martin Mansergh was born and raised in England but, at the age of 28, he opted to join the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974. He resides in his family's ancestral home in Tipperary, and was in last May's General Election elected a Fianna Fáil TD for Tipperary South. I have never had the slightest doubt about Martin Mansergh's own self-identification as an unequivocally patriotic Irishman committed to the service of this Republic. That, after all, is why Charlie Haughey promoted him. When discussing the role of his Tipperary-born Anglo-Irish father Nicholas Mansergh, however, he sometimes goes a step too far in suggesting a conflation of his father's loyalties with those of his own.

Any similar conflation is a mistake that I myself have made a point of avoiding whenever called upon to defend the integrity of my own father's reputation. Even where there might be considerable overlap, fathers and sons exist as distinct political entities. Our own family political differences have, in fact, been publicly highlighted by me. True, although I was only 7 years of age at the time of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, I was in fact so bloody-minded enough a loner as to stubbornly and defiantly shout "Up the Russians" whenever taunted about that issue by other kids during the course of our childhood street quarrels! In my "more mature" years, however, I have for over a 30 year period

written in condemnation of that Soviet invasion of Hungary, and I have also written in retrospective support of my own mother's opposition to it during the 1956-58 period itself, as well as her arguments at that time with both my father and Seán O'Casey who had each championed the Soviet action. By 1968 I was old enough to take a considered public stand in my own right by writing an article in opposition to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia, which action my father had also supported. In 1982 it was my father's turn to be outraged by my own support for Israel's invasion and occupation of South Lebanon, to such an extent that we proceeded to engage in public dispute with each other in the letters column of the *Irish Times*. {Displaying an almost stereotypical cultural preoccupation with the family angle of this controversy, this was subsequently reported in the New York Yiddish Socialist newspaper *Morgn Freiheit* under the heading of "*On the Irish Left: Father and Son Debate Israel!*"}.

I have little doubt that most supporters of *Irish Political Review* would now conclude: "father wrong in 1956 and 1968; son wrong in 1982". So be it. But in the context of this article it is important for me to acknowledge one particular issue where I myself consider that my father had been quite right, whereas I had been dead wrong. Notwithstanding the Soviet Union's condemnation of Ireland's wartime neutrality—and its vetoing on that account of Irish membership of the UN for a full decade thereafter—my father's anti-fascist history, *Connolly Column* (1979), contained a sturdy polemic in support of that same neutrality policy. In a book review for the *Irish Communist* in the following year I, in turn, publicly criticised my father on that score, arguing that—as the State primarily responsible for the defeat of Nazi Germany—the USSR had every right to make Ireland pay for such wartime neutrality. In other words, I was



it was in Germany's best interests to accept Irish neutrality, so equally was the Mansergh family particularly fortunate that the intelligence reports from Elizabeth Bowen—a relative by marriage of Nicholas—were similarly convincing as to why it was in Britain's own best interests to also accept that same Irish neutrality. But what if choices had to be made in the event of conflict? In the *Irish Examiner* on September 26th last, Martin Mansergh throws reason out the window by arguing: "Why not acknowledge in this era of excellent Anglo-Irish relations that she was helpful to both countries and that, in a sense, she was an agent of both?" This is a total *non sequitur*. A double agent is one who begins by spying on country A on behalf of country B, but is then 'turned around', thereby changing sides in order to spy on country B on behalf of country A. Whatever about Betjeman, there is nothing to suggest that Bowen was ever compromised as a British spy.

In the *Irish Examiner* on November 6th Martin Mansergh writes: "Given Ireland was neutral in World War 2, by definition Britain and Ireland could not have been enemy nations, in that context". But that is pure tautology. By the same definition, it is equally true that neither could Ireland and Nazi Germany have been enemy nations. Yet Ireland remained under threat of invasion from both, and from one more than the other. The prospect of a German invasion had been a serious fear in 1940, in which context I have frequently argued the following:

"De Valera was left with no option but to act ruthlessly and with resolve against [Seán] Russell and his IRA followers ... for his actions in defiance of de Valera, specifically his 1939 bombing campaign in England, followed by his request for German aid to mount an IRA invasion of the North. If Russell's plan had materialised it would have had the knock-on effect of either a German or British invasion and occupation of Southern Ireland, bringing to nought de Valera's skilful safeguarding of this State from both war and fascism" (*Sunday Independent*, January 9, 2005).

In his family reminiscences, simply entitled *A Memoir* (2004), Dev's son Terry de Valera recalled:

"The summer months of 1940 were indeed anxious. We never knew from day to day, indeed from hour to hour, when the invasion might take place. Things became more intense with the approach of August when the Germans dropped bombs on Campile in Co. Wexford, causing casualties [incl. 3 killed—MO'R], nor did the tensions ease or subside for the remainder of that year ... Things came to a head again with the approach of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, invasion seemed inevitable. The defence forces were on full alert. Germany was then putting

pressure on the Irish government to increase its diplomatic representation, a pressure which Father strongly resisted. It was feared that the move was a prelude to invasion, with Shannon being attacked first. Such happenings would have provoked the British. The question was: would the British try a pre-emptive strike? ... By the early days of 1941, the immediate crisis of Christmas 1940 had passed."

There had indeed been real fears of a German invasion in 1940, but a British invasion threat also co-existed during the course of that same year. Thereafter, right up to 1944, further threats of invasion were either British or Anglo-American. On November 6th Martin Mansergh rhetorically asked: "Which country bombed the North Strand in Dublin?" Terry de Valera's own account was as follows:

"I will not easily forget the night of 31 May 1941 ... I was awakened by the sound of aircraft. I knew they were German ... It was only early next morning that I heard that a bomb had fallen on the North Strand, causing many casualties [incl. 34 killed—MO'R] and considerable damage ... Next day Éamon [Dev's doctor son] visited the Mater Hospital and said he was shocked by the wounds and injuries received by so many of the unfortunate victims of this bombing ... Appalling as this bombing was, my father explained that this action by the German air force was not a deliberate attack on Dublin. Dr. Hempel, the German Minister, and the German Government apologised and, in due course, substantial compensation was paid. Even Churchill indicated that this attack could be attributed to other reasons, as the British had been successful in 'bending' radio-beams which put the German planes off-course. This had been confirmed by one of the crew of the German planes engaged, who established the cause of the bombing beyond doubt."

From the outset of war in September 1939 Terry de Valera himself had also taken an important personal initiative:

"Two boys who had been in the national school in Booterstown with me joined the British navy and appeared in uniform at Mass in Booterstown. I reported this at once to my father and almost immediately the wearing of uniforms by belligerents was forbidden, as such displays clearly violated neutrality. One of these young men, Tony Toft, was a stoker on the aircraft carrier *Courageous*. He was lost when the ship was sunk by a U-boat that October. He was only seventeen years of age".

In an otherwise warm-hearted review in the *Irish Times* (July 17, 2004) Garret FitzGerald was, however, to make the following charge against the younger de

Valera: "In the context of the war, he sees Churchill as having been concerned 'simply to satisfy his own selfish imperial aims and personal lust for power'—which seems an odd verdict on the man who saved Europe, including Ireland, from Nazism." Since it was actually Stalin who had saved Europe from Nazism, one might justifiably enquire what odd verdict Garret himself might have on Stalin. But that would be a detour from the principal problem with his pronouncement, namely, that he had torn Terry de Valera's quote completely out of context. It had, in fact, nothing to do with Churchill confronting Nazism in Europe. Terry de Valera's own antipathy towards Nazism and Hitler's war—from the very outset of the latter's invasion of Poland—had been made patently manifest throughout his memoir. The quote that FitzGerald completely tore out of context, however, specifically referred to the war crimes that Churchill was quite prepared to contemplate committing in Ireland itself. As Terry de Valera related:

"The popular view today, and for sometime past, is to create the impression that the only threat of invasion of Ireland during World War Two came from Germany. This is far from the truth. Invasion by the British was just as likely, if not more so, and it is now known that the British had drawn up detailed plans for this. What is so terrifying to realise is that, had Germany invaded, Churchill, on the advice of his air chiefs, was fully prepared to order and sanction the saturation of large portions of the Irish population using mustard and phosgene gases, calculated to cause maximum pain, suffering and lingering death to countless Irish people, both in the south and in the north. The consequences of such diabolical action would have been horrific. It appears that there were no such plans by the Germans to use gas against the Irish. It should not be forgotten that the British, and Churchill in particular, were quite prepared to wipe out large portions of the Irish population by using the most ghastly methods imaginable. This Churchill would do simply to satisfy his own selfish imperial aims and personal lust for power."

Perhaps Garret FitzGerald did not wish to believe Terry de Valera's home truths about Churchill. But de Valera's source was impeccably accurate—Lt. Col. John P. Duggan's book *Ireland and the Third Reich* (2004), in which this Irish military historian brought to light a secret British War Cabinet memo of 8th October 1940. This revealed Churchill's concurrence with an RAF plan to drench Ireland with poison-gas in the event of any German troops landing here. As Duggan elaborated:

"A requirement was outlined, in the event of the Germans setting up a bridgehead in Ireland, of spraying their landing sites and axes of advance with

poison gases, including mustard gas, which would have caused incapacitating blistering of the lungs and respiratory tract. There was also a phosgene gas which would kill by choking. It would not separate Irish from German, and no thought seems to have been given as to the possible effects on the Irish civilian population, north or south. This could hardly have been termed assistance to repel the German invasion. A bomber squadron at Feltwell in Suffolk was equipped with gas spray containers for the contingency."

In the *Irish Times* on 22nd January 2005 Martin Mansergh devoted his whole column to Terry de Valera's memoir. He alluded in passing to the fact that it had been reviewed by Garret FitzGerald six months previously, but he expressed no concurrence with that review. On the contrary, Dr. Mansergh enthusiastically embraced Terry de Valera's personal take on historical events, without entering any critical caveat whatsoever. He actually wrote as follows:

"As President of the League of Nations, Dev took an instant dislike to Mussolini, telling his son he was '*an arrogant bumptious little man*'. He also told him that the intended Blueshirt march on Government Buildings was to be followed by a *coup d'état*. The author complains: '*Some modern revisionists have tried to deny or at least soften down these events*'. The memoir underlines the personal pressure that de Valera was under during the Second World War. An old opponent, Winston Churchill, smarting at British diplomatic defeats in Anglo-Irish relations in the 1930s, was in power in London. The US Minister in Dublin, David Gray, was deeply hostile, trying to destabilise de Valera. This elicits the comment: '*He was no match for Éamon de Valera. A lesser man might well have yielded to the might and strength of the US and Britain, both then and in the earlier part of the War*'."

It is a pity, then, that Martin Mansergh abandons that de Valera perspective when seeking to present Elizabeth Bowen's spying activities as other than what they were. It is, however, an even greater and more reckless mistake for Dr. Mansergh to argue that Bowen's activities had some Irish Government endorsement by invoking the name of the Irish High Commissioner in London, John Dulanty. He writes: "*Having had the chance to consult a personal communication from Brian Girvin clarifying the part of the text of his book on Irish neutrality, I find I was understating the position in saying that .... John Dulanty, had foreknowledge and approval of Bowen's visits to Ireland ... There is simply no answer to the point that a mission that had the prior approval and support of the Irish High Commissioner in London in June 1940 could not have been a betrayal of the interests of this country*" (*Irish Examiner*, September 6 and 26, and November 6). Unless, of

course, one remains oblivious of the facts contained in British State Papers which, if de Valera had been aware of their contents, would have given him every reason in previous years to have had Dulanty arrested, charged with high treason and firmly placed behind bars in the interests of national security.

In a review of *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, Volume V, 1937-1939, Emeritus Professor John A. Murphy engaged in character assassination of the Irish Minister to Madrid, referring to him as "Leopold Kerney, recently described by one historian as a '*monumental fool*'." (*Sunday Independent*, December 3, 2006). But see <http://www.geocities.com/irelandscw/docs-KerneyReview.htm> for "Leopold H. Kerney—Irish Minister to Spain 1935-1946", a vindication of Kerney's good name and patriotic wartime role in my review of the website <http://www.leopoldhkerney.com> for the March-April 2007 issue of *History Ireland*. In contrast, Murphy became unashamedly obsequious with the following reference: "John W. Dulanty, the High Commissioner in London, reflected all that was best in the diplomatic corps, successfully occupying the most important and sensitive posting in the whole service". The tone for Murphy's review and adulation of Dulanty had been set by its very title: "*Inside the diplomatic pouch: tales of the King and I*".

It is true that this Volume V of Irish State Papers does indeed record Dulanty as faithfully transmitting the marching orders given to him by Dev. One example is the following communication, on 23rd April 1937, to Sir Edward Harding, Permanent Under-Secretary at the UK Dominions Office, as dictated by Dev himself:

"Our position had been made crystal clear when the President talked to Mr. MacDonald on the 15th of January last. The position then clearly defined by the President was that the ports were Irish and not British ports. The British had no right there. They ought to leave and not seek to return except on our invitation and with our goodwill. We were not imperially minded nor had we any imperial interests. The nearer we could get to a position of neutrality the better. The President had made it clear that in our own interests we would not allow our territory to be used as a base of attack on Britain, but obviously we could only be at war when our interests were jeopardised and the Dáil had so decided. Our first aim must always be to make our country safe for our own people but we would see to it that a free Ireland was not a source of danger to Britain".

What can be found in the Irish State Papers regarding Dulanty is one thing, but what can also be found on him in the British State Papers is quite a different matter. And it is solely from a source in

the latter that Brian Girvin bases his references to Dulanty and Bowen, for we can be damn certain that Dulanty never drew the Irish Government's attention to Bowen. The Girvin references are, however, not at all phrased in the manner suggested by Martin Mansergh. In his book *The Emergency- Neutral Ireland 1939-45* (2006) Brian Girvin actually writes as follows:

"A more objective and reliable account of Irish opinion was provided by Elizabeth Cameron—better known as the novelist Elizabeth Bowen—who visited Ireland in July 1940. Bowen was originally refused permission to travel by the Dominions Office as her trip involved spending some time working on a novel; the Dominions Office was only prepared to sanction trips to Éire at this time if it could be shown that the visit was of importance for the national interest. However, the Ministry of information insisted that Bowen could do some good while in Ireland. Betjeman supported her trip, pointing out that Dulanty and the writer Stephen Gwynn, 'two people to whose voices we should certainly listen', supported her visit to Éire to collect information ... Dulanty believed that Bowen would provide independent and objective reports on the state of opinion in Éire, presumably ones that would allow for a more nuanced approach by the British. Whether Dulanty was acting on his own initiative is difficult to judge, but de Valera was minister for external affairs and Joseph Walshe maintained close contact with Dulanty throughout the war".

While John Betjeman had indeed invoked the name of Dulanty as a supportive collaborator in this project, it is also quite clear from the Girvin account that he is writing of Betjeman's own initiative. Less than a year before the outbreak of war, on 29th October 1938, Betjeman had already rather fawningly, and in an unashamedly *herrenvolk* frame of mind, written to Bowen: "*Your book goes to prove my contention that the Anglo-Irish are the greatest race of western civilisation*" (*John Betjeman—Letters* (1994), edited by his Dublin-born daughter, Candida Lycett Green).

The important question in this context is, of course: What of Betjeman's own wartime activities in Ireland? On 23rd April 2000 a TV documentary on Channel 4, entitled *The Real John Betjeman*, raised this issue in the following manner: "*But there was another side to Betjeman's work in Ireland, something about which he would only speak 40 years later*". This documentary reproduced an excerpt from a TV interview which Betjeman had given not long before his death in 1984. In response to a question as to what exactly had he been doing in Dublin, Betjeman quite candidly replied: "*I was the Press Attaché in Maffey's Office—one of what they call Maffey's spies*". Far more revealing than this Easter Sunday documentary, however, was the press

coverage it stimulated on the following day. On April 24 the *Guardian's* Fiachra Gibbons reported that Betjeman's biographer, Bevis Hillier, had got his first inkling that Betjeman was a spy when he interviewed Professor Nicholas Mansergh, of St. John's College, Cambridge. Hillier pointed out that—as Head of the Empire Division—Mansergh had been Betjeman's superior in the Ministry of Information during the War and had read many of the poet's reports from Dublin. "As soon as I arrived in his room to talk to him, he [Mansergh] prefaced it by saying that he would not discuss whether Betjeman was a spy. I hadn't even raised it", Hillier said.

And, as for Betjeman's reported conversation with Dulanty, one cannot avoid noting Brian Girvin's equivocal statement that it is "difficult to judge" if Dulanty was acting on his own initiative. For Brian Girvin knows full well that 'solo runs' were the very least of what Dulanty had already been guilty of. Indeed, two of Brian Girvin's own reference works—Joseph T. Carrolls' *Ireland in the War Years* (1975) and Robert Fisk's *In Time of War* (1983)—provide enough damning evidence from British State Papers of Dulanty's activities, over and above the formal communications and reports whose innocent character can be perused in the Irish State Papers.

For a number of years immediately prior to entering the Irish Free State's diplomatic service in 1926, Dulanty had been engaged in private business in Britain. A Manchester Irish Catholic by origin, he had been active in Irish political organisations in Britain before the First World War, topping the poll in the annual election for secretary of the United Irish League under the leadership of John Redmond. But Joe Carroll also took note of a British political career that had only formally ended in 1920: "*The Irish High Commissioner in London, Mr. John Dulanty, curiously enough had worked for Churchill in his election campaign in Manchester in 1906 and as a senior civil servant in Churchill's Ministry of Munitions in World War One*".

If we look up Dulanty's *Irish Times* obituary on February 12, 1955 we can further read: "The first recognition of his undoubted ability came when Lloyd George appointed him principal assistant secretary to the newly-created Ministry of Munitions in 1917. Later he became assistant secretary to the British Treasury, for his work in which he was awarded the CBE." Under the heading of "*Had Terrible Things Ready for Germans*", the *New York Times* for 23rd December 1918 provided the following report on what Dulanty's wartime work had entailed:

"London, December 22 ... Winston Spencer Churchill, Minister for Munitions, said: ... 'When the firing stopped on the

western front we had reached the culminating point in the output of war materials of all kinds. We had also a whole series of terrifying novelties, some of a most intricate character, and weapons and devices of a most deadly nature, which were in readiness to be used by our troops in the campaign of 1919, had it been necessary. Therefore this ministry was at full extension, straining like a runner in a race as he approaches the goal!'"

And how did Dulanty perform on the outbreak of the Second World War? Joe Carroll related: "But Irish neutrality did not appear quite so cut and dried in London where the previous Friday, the day Germany invaded Poland, the cabinet was told by Mr. Chamberlain that he had received a communication from Mr. De Valera about the latter's meeting with the German Minister in Dublin, Dr. Edouard Hempel. If war broke out, Hempel told de Valera, Germany was anxious to respect the neutrality of Éire. The Secretary of State for the Dominions, Sir Thomas Inskip (later to become Lord Caldecote), then said that it had been contemplated that at least Britain should ask Éire to break off diplomatic relations with Germany if Britain became involved in war. **The Irish High Commissioner in London, Mr. John Dulanty, had informed Inskip that he thought that 'in a week Éire would come in on our side** as a result of attacks on shipping'. **It is curious, if Inskip's report is accurate, that Dulanty should have expressed such a pessimistic view of Ireland's chances of remaining neutral while in Dublin all resources were being mobilised to maintain neutrality as long as was humanly possible.**" (My emphases—MO'R.)

Carroll shed further light on Dulanty's behaviour a year previously: "According to Sir John Maffey [the UK's wartime Representative in Dublin, later ennobled as Lord Rugby—MO'R], in an interview with the *Irish Times* in 1962, the Irish High Commissioner in London, John Dulanty, 'could hardly believe his own ears' when he heard the ports were being given back and Maffey went on to say that 'the blame for this incredible miscalculation is entirely attributable to the British General Staff.'" The *Irish Times* of 4th July 1962 did indeed have Lord Rugby reveal the following:

"This error of judgement was the cession of the Irish ports as a generous 'gesture' in 1938 ... At that critical moment Winston Churchill, as so often in his life, clearly saw the danger ahead, but his warning was not heeded. **Dulanty told me he could hardly believe his own ears when he was told that Mr. de Valera, in addition to a generous financial settlement, had also got the Irish ports!** [My emphases—MO'R]. The consequences of this fatuous gesture were grim indeed. You would be surprised if I gave you a list of truly

patriotic Irishmen who said to me, 'You ought never to have handed over the ports *at such a time!*' ... The ports were British by treaty rights internationally recognised".

In the immediate aftermath of the British agreement to hand back the ports to Ireland, de Valera himself did his level best to assure the British Government that he would never allow any enemy power of Britain to use those ports against her. This, however, provided another opportunity for Dulanty to go behind Dev's back and brief the British Government on supposed internal differences within the Irish Government. As Robert Fisk related:

"Scarcely more than a week after his latest meeting with Chamberlain, de Valera made it clear that—for the present at least—he had no intention of placing Éire's Army under British tutelage. Frank Aiken was ill and de Valera, who had temporarily taken charge of the Irish Defence Department in his absence, came up with an unorthodox solution to his military needs. On October 12 [1938], Dulanty and Walshe called at the Colonial Office to tell Malcolm MacDonald and Devonshire, his Under Secretary, that de Valera—'extremely anxious to get the Irish defences into a good state, as he did not want to be 'caught napping' if there was trouble in Europe'—planned to appoint a *French General* as principal military adviser to the Irish Army ... MacDonald could hardly have expected such a proposal. He and Devonshire, nonplussed by this sudden overture, thought it might be possible 'to get some experienced and really good officer in the British Army who was an Irishman, to resign from the Army in order to offer his services to Éire'. It was in keeping with the unconventional tenor of this conversation that Dulanty should have mentioned the name of General Sir Hubert Gough, the former Third Cavalry Brigade commander at the Curragh who had refused to order his troops into Ulster during the 1914 Home Rule crisis. [In other words, the leader of the Curragh Mutiny—MO'R]. Dulanty disclosed that Gough had privately told him on two or three occasions that 'his services were at the disposal of Mr. de Valera', although Dulanty agreed that Gough's 'connection with the Curragh incident' presented difficulties. De Valera did not regard Gough as 'the right man for the post' but—no doubt attracted by the mutinous reputation of the unrepentant old General—nonetheless wanted 'very much ... to discuss Éire's military problem with him'. [Or so Dulanty related—MO'R]. MacDonald pointed out that de Valera's original proposal would mean that a French officer would be given access to secret British defence papers in the hands of the Éire Government—a difficulty which de Valera had himself foreseen—but promised to consult Inskip ..."

"Somewhat inevitably, Inskip informed Dulanty eight days later [in a one-to-one get-together—MO'R] that the Chiefs of Staff had convinced him that there were 'insuperable objections' to de Valera's plan. The British possessed 'certain devices and

equipment', he said, 'a large part of the value of which would be lost if it came to the knowledge of a potential enemy' ... There was no question, he said, about his country's willingness to communicate confidential information to the Éire Government, but if a French officer was appointed then some of this information would be passed on to 'a foreigner'. To compound this unflattering reference to an officer in the armed forces of Britain's principal ally, Inskip added that 'the French are not in any case very good at keeping secrets' ... **Dulanty** expressed his disappointment and **then made a strange admission**. De Valera, he said, wanted to improve the port defences while Aiken was absent since he believed that the Minister for Defence would himself be unwilling to undertake the task; therefore 'it was important to get action taken while Mr. Aiken was away'. Inskip asked if the Irish would consider a military adviser from one of the Dominions and suggested an Australian officer who was a Catholic, but Dulanty again showed no enthusiasm. De Valera, he said, had already turned down a proposal to appoint a South African officer, General van Ryneveld, even though the South Africans had fought against Britain. Dulanty explained that one of the reasons for de Valera's reluctance 'was due to the fact that Mr. Aiken represents the IRA Organisation and Mr. De Valera relies upon him to keep the IRA lot quiet and behind the government'. Dulanty 'did not think that any Dominion soldier or sailor would be agreeable to Mr. Aiken'. **The Irish High Commissioner had revealed what the British must have suspected for some months; that the political divisions in Éire over which de Valera was so exercised were also mirrored inside his own Fianna Fáil Cabinet**. Aiken, who deeply distrusted the British, and who throughout the war was to regard Britain as a more serious military threat than Germany, would never have countenanced a British or Dominions defence adviser and would probably have objected to the appointment of a Frenchman". [My emphases—MOR].

I am not rejecting out of hand the possibility that, as the Second World War progressed, Dulanty became in time a great admirer of Dev and thereafter loyally served the Irish Government. The process by which one might eventually cease to function as a spy is often as grey an area as the process by which one might begin to behave as one in the first place. But Dulanty should not have been at large to exercise such options any further. I know of no set of circumstances where the furnishing to Government A by a representative of Government B of B's own confidential Cabinet secrets can be described as anything other than espionage—even when voluntarily carried out with such enthusiasm that no formal recruitment had been necessary. A clear concept of espionage exists, not only with respect to the relations between a Great Power and a former colony with which it had so recently

been at war and might yet again invade. It even exists just as clearly with respect to relations between states that are the closest of allies. That is why US naval intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard is now in his 23rd year of imprisonment in the USA for his 'solo run' in divulging to Israeli intelligence some US intelligence in respect of Syria. There has been no escape clause available for Pollard along the lines of Martin Mansergh's illogical formula: "*Why not acknowledge in this era of excellent US-Israeli relations that he was helpful to both countries and that, in a sense, he was an agent of both?*" US intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard is spending his life behind bars because his own government judged that his 'solo run' made him an Israeli spy pure and simple.

That 'solo runs' were the least of what Dulanty should have been charged with was something known beyond any shadow of doubt by Brian Girvin. And yet he opted for obfuscation when referring to John Betjeman's invocation of Dulanty's support for his proposal to send Elizabeth Bowen to gather intelligence in Ireland. Yet Candida Lycett Green's edition of her father's personal correspondence had long made it quite clear that John Betjeman did not wait for 40 years before alluding to his own role as a spy. To those he deemed discerning enough to rumble him he decided to strike first by coming out up front. In a letter to the writer Frank O'Connor on 7th March 1941 Betjeman declared:

"Delighted to hear from Sean O'Faolain that you are back. Look at me, a bloody British spy (open) Press Attaché here. Now can you both come in to Dublin for lunch? The O'Faolains are coming." To which Candida added the footnote: "Sean O'Faolain, editor of *The Bell*, was a man of letters and a lover of Elizabeth Bowen".

As well as becoming her lover, O'Faolain had also sought to nurture a common sense of Irish nationality between himself and the Anglo-Irish Bowen. It is not Catholic sectarianism to conclude that he might have failed in that mission. For an outstanding Irishman of impeccably Protestant character had already pronounced that judgement a good sixty years ago. In her biography *Elizabeth Bowen—Portrait of a Writer* (1977), Victoria Glendenning related one unhappy encounter that her own husband Terence de Vere White had been instrumental in bringing about in 1947. He had brought Bowen to meet the artist Jack Yeats in his Dublin studio. The latter firmly believed in Wolfe Tone's principle of substituting the common name of Irishman for Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter, for Jack Yeats was himself a committed Irish Protestant Republican patriot. But Yeats felt he had nothing in common with Bowen. He scathingly summed up his view of Bowen's own national identity

and allegiance as follows: "*The English who settled in Cork remained English. They liked it because it seemed like a part of England. She was afraid I'd expect her to buy a picture.*" Such an assessment did, of course, leave Glendenning somewhat perturbed: "*A strange thing to say of a member of a family who had owned land in Cork and lived continuously on it for three hundred years. But that is how it was.*"

Yes, that's how it was. It was as a British patriot that Bowen had engaged in intelligence work in wartime Ireland. In *The Mulberry Tree—Writings of Elizabeth Bowen* (1999), Hermione Lee reproduced a letter written to Virginia Woolf on 1st July 1940 wherein Bowen, before leaving London to embark upon her mission, informed her friend:

"I think I told you I had asked the Ministry of Information if I could do any work, which I felt was wanted in Ireland. On Saturday morning, I had a letter from them saying yes, they did want me to go. Now it has come to the point I have rather a feeling of dismay and of not wanting to leave this country. I am to see Harold Nicolson on Thursday and go to Ireland on Friday night next. I don't expect it will be for very long. I shall be at Bowen's Court first, but I expect they will also want me to move about the place. I don't know much till I've seen Harold Nicolson. I hope I shall be some good: I do feel it's important. As far as my own feeling goes I feel low at going away, so can only hope to be some good when I'm there. It will all mean endless talk, but sorting out talk into shape might be interesting. I suppose I shall also finish my book. But Ireland can be dementing, if one's Irish and may well be so now. If there's to be an invasion of Ireland, I hope it may be while I'm there—which I don't mean frivolously—but if anything happens to England while I'm in Ireland I shall wish I never left, even for this short time. I suppose the Ministry will give me a come-and-go travel permit".

Bowen was not at all hoping that she might be present in our midst for a German invasion of Ireland. Fears of such a German invasion centred on a flanking operation occurring simultaneously with a German invasion of Britain. But Bowen did not all want to be absent from Britain in any such event. The invasion of Ireland of which Bowen wrote in this letter would have been a British invasion to seize the ports. And Bowen would have presumed on continuing to have permission to travel back and forth between a free England and a British occupied Ireland. The reference to "if one's Irish" related to where she hailed from, not to any shared sense of national character or identity. On 5th January 1941 Bowen again wrote to Woolf, this time from Bowen's Court, of "*a trick of the Irish mind. They are very religious.*" Bowen had not said "*Irish*

*Catholic mind*", but "*Irish*" pure and simple. No sense of any shared nationality there! "The Irish" are "They", the others. Nonetheless, it is, of course, a tribute to the quality of her intelligence work that within months of her arrival here she had quickly appreciated the strength of popular support for Irish neutrality and, as a consequence, proceeded to forcefully argue against any British invasion—in Britain's own interests.

**Manus O'Riordan**

To be continued

## REPORT

### An Irish Examiner Debate On Elizabeth Bowen

Following the inaugural Bowen/Trevor Summer School in Mitchelstown as reported in the September *Irish Political Review*, the following exchange of letters is taking place in the *Irish Examiner*.

#### ELIZABETH BOWEN (11.8.07)

Your report on the inaugural 'Trevor/Bowen' Summer School in Mitchelstown says that "The audience was thrilled to hear the voice of Elizabeth Bowen" from a recording that was part of Donncha O'Dulaing's lecture on the writer. (Corkman, 9th August.)

I assume that the recording, or the lecture, did not explain or elaborate on aspects of Elizabeth such as "...the vehemence with which she said 'I hate Ireland'" as reported by Roy Foster in his 1993 book "Paddy and Mr. Punch", (page 122, emphasis not added).

Neither, I assume, did it deal with her paid espionage activities here during World War II which was her only real connection with Ireland and which produced her most valuable writing on Ireland though 99% of it appears to have been destroyed because it was classified as 'top secret.'

May I suggest that any future Mitchelstown Summer Schools deal with these aspects of Elizabeth Bowen's career as they tend to be ignored or explained away though they were the central focus of her relationship with Ireland. Exploring these would add some real value to Bowen studies.

Of course, there are several aspects of her Cromwellian family history that would also be useful to explore at such Schools to add to our knowledge of her and might also thrill audiences even more than they were at the inaugural one. **Jack Lane**, Millstreet.

#### A 'SPY' WRITER IN GOOD COMPANY (29.8.07)

The letter from Jack Lane on the Trevor/Bowen Summer School in Mitchelstown and Farihy, Kildorrery, Co Cork (August 20) gave an interesting side-view on a great Irish writer.

I have one, if not two, advantages over Mr Lane. I lived through the Second World War years in Ireland, and attended the Trevor/Bowen school last August bank holiday weekend. Those present enjoyed a stimulating series of lectures.

Elizabeth Bowen's wartime activities did not pass without comment from two of the principal speakers. Ms Bowen was loyal to England at war, but did not stop being Irish. She was not the only Irish person with shared or ambiguous loyalties.

Estimates vary for the number of Irishmen from the South who joined the British forces, but there is no dispute about the vast numbers who worked in Britain in wartime or the eight Victoria Crosses and one George Cross awarded to men from this part of the island.

There is also no dispute about the astute manner in which de Valera facilitated both this process and

the recruitment of Irishmen into the British forces, a fact confirmed by Churchill in 1941 when he acknowledged "the considerable help which we were receiving by the enlistment in our forces of volunteers from Southern Ireland". After all, Miss Bowen and de Valera, whatever their differences, were both aware that the common enemy was fascism.

I will let Mr Lane decide whether Elizabeth Bowen's wartime reports to the British Ministry of Information on Irish public opinion amounted to "espionage".

I doubt if she found too many secrets or did any harm. Her reports may have helped foster some degree of understanding at a very difficult time in relations between the two islands and for this, as for many aspects of her writing, we must be thankful.

In this happier time in relations between the two countries it is interesting to recall these wartime experiences of one of Ireland's most distinguished writers. It is a pity Mr Lane employs a redundant epithet—"Cromwellian"—to describe Miss Bowen's family history. We cannot be responsible for our ancestors or be required to atone for their sins.

Indeed a trawl through all family histories might also produce as many thrilling tales as Mr Lane thinks will be found among Ms Bowen's ancestors. History is rarely so simple. **Kathleen Fitzgibbon**, Mitchelstown

#### BRITISH DEEMED BOWEN REPORTS ESPIONAGE (5.9.07)

Kathleen Fitzgibbon says that she has "one, if not two, advantages over Mr Lane. I lived through the Second World War years in Ireland, and attended the Trevor/Bowen school last August bank holiday weekend." (Irish Examiner 29/8/07)

However, on the actual point at issue—Bowen's espionage reports to Churchill—Kathleen and I are exactly in the same position because neither she nor I could have read any of Bowen's 200 odd reports during the war or subsequently as they were secret reports and the vast majority were destroyed. The few that survived were never published by her admirers until I did so a few years ago.

Yet Kathleen speculates that Bowen's objective was to "foster some degree of understanding". Kathleen should really explain to us why a well known writer and a very competent and capable person such as Bowen chose this peculiar and very inefficient way to spread understanding!

People went to England for work during the Second World War, as they had been doing ever since the English Government had deliberately and systematically wrecked the Irish economy. The Irish people also joined the British Army in all of Britain's many wars over the centuries for much the same reason.

Bowen's reports to Churchill about the state of public feeling in Ireland about a possible British invasion possibly helped to ward off that invasion. Churchill in 1945 said he had the right to invade but chose not to. Bowen's reports indicated that resistance would be united and strong.

It is not me who classified her reports as espionage. They were treated by the British authorities as espionage reports. They were kept secret at the time and most were subsequently destroyed. A few survived through bureaucratic negligence.

I did not drag up the Bowen family history. Bowen flaunted it at us. It was Cromwellian in origin, and the Bowsens of the Big House lived as aliens remote from the people to the bitter end.

Kathleen says that "After all, Miss Bowen and de Valera, whatever their differences, were both aware that the common enemy was fascism."

I beg to differ. England went to war against Germany, not fascism. Churchill had warmly welcomed fascism in Europe as the saviour of western civilisation and had hoped that, if it proved necessary, a Hitler would have emerged in Britain. He went to war against Germany because as he graphically put it in the 30s, "the Hun is either at your throat or at your feet," just as he would have put it during WWI.

De Valera did not share such sentiments. He had never welcomed fascism and had countered it

successfully in Ireland (without war) with no help whatever from England or Churchill. He was neutral on England's second war on Germany just as the US and the USSR were until they were attacked and he would no doubt have acted as they did if Ireland was attacked from any quarter.

As it happens, Bowen's published reports confirm that for her, as for Churchill, fascism was not the issue. The single Irish politician she really cultivated (and deceived) was James Dillon because he was the only significant politician who wanted Ireland to join the war that England had declared on Germany. Bowen describes her close study of him in an extant report and concluded he was a fascist but that mattered not a whit as he too supported war on Germany. Fascism was neither here nor there for her or Churchill when England was at war. **Jack Lane**

#### BRITAIN DID NOT GO TO WAR TO DEFEAT FASCISM (5.9.07)

Kathleen Fitzgibbon (Letters, August 29) says, "Miss [Elizabeth] Bowen and de Valera, whatever their differences, were both aware that the common enemy [in WWII] was fascism".

It is true de Valera achieved political power democratically against the fascist movement in Ireland but Britain, on the other hand, did not go to war in 1939 against fascism as such.

Churchill had been, notoriously, an admirer and friend of Mussolini and he declared that a British Hitler might be necessary in certain circumstances. Britain went to war against its former ally in 1939 not to defeat fascism as such but to assert its position as the predominant world power. Other world powers, such as the US, remained neutral until their own interests were at stake.

From 1945 to the present, Britain has made effective propaganda use of Nazi crimes, in order to give itself licence for continual warfare around the world. While Elizabeth Bowen's favourite Irish person was the fascist-minded John Dillon, Churchill himself was in favour of world conquest and genocide of inferior races—provided it was done by or for Britain or its allies. Here is his testimony to the 1937 parliamentary commission of Lord Peel, to decide the fate of Palestine:

"I do not admit that the dog in the manger [the Palestinian Arabs] has the final right to the manger, even though he may have lain there for a very long time. I do not admit that right. I do not admit, for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to those people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race, has come in and taken their place. I do not admit it. I do not think the Red Indians had any right to say, 'The American continent belongs to us and we are not going to have any of these European settlers coming in here.' They had not the right, nor had they the power." **Pat Muldowney**, Derry

#### A LAUDABLE EMISSARY, YES; A TRAITOR, NO (6.9.07)

Jack Lane (Letters, August 20 and September 5) might desist from his continuing efforts to denigrate the memory of the writer Elizabeth Bowen, who is buried in Farahy Church, near Kildorrery in north Cork, of which I am a trustee (my family and hers are related by marriage). He has two grievances in particular against her: one, that she spied against Ireland, betraying Ireland's interests/secrets to the British in WWII, and, second, on the basis of a fleeting, frustrated remark, that she hated Ireland.

When Mr Lane claims these were "the central focus of her relationship with Ireland", he is either being disingenuous or displaying his animus against a meritorious representative of the Anglo-Irish tradition, which some two-nations theorists would like to see excommunicated altogether from the Irish nation and put down as English, quite out of kilter with today's pluralism and multiculturalism.

In 1948, Bowen said, "I regard myself as an Irish novelist. As long as I can remember I've been extremely conscious of being Irish; even when I was

writing about very un-Irish things ... All my life I've been going backwards and forwards between Ireland and England ... but that has never robbed me of the strong feeling of my nationality." There is no sign of hating Ireland.

It is generally accepted today that, within the limits of nationality defined by law, and she always qualified as Irish on that count, people should be free to decide their own identity, not to have it posthumously confiscated from them by political ideologues.

Brian Girvin's book *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45* contains many debatable conclusions but also useful new information. From this, it emerges that Bowen wanted an acceptable excuse to travel to Ireland at the height of the war, and that the Irish high commissioner in London, John Dulanty, supported her visit (unpaid) to Ireland to provide independent reports on the state of opinion. To give credit to Mr Lane, he and the Aubane Society have done a public service in publishing some of her reports, despite the lurid commentary accompanying them.

Girvin assesses these reports, which were critical of Churchill's more belligerent approach to Irish neutrality, echoing the views of de Valera, Walshe, and the army chief of staff at that time.

Bowen was sceptical of James Dillon, the one politician who wanted to involve Ireland in the war. Dulanty's foreknowledge and encouragement of her visit surely requires a reassessment of the theory she was some kind of traitor to her country and therefore not deserving to be considered Irish.

Britain and Ireland were not enemies. De Valera's policy during WWII was for Ireland to be vis-à-vis Britain a "friendly neutral".

Bowen will be commemorated in a service at 3.30pm on Sunday at St Colman's Church in Farahy. She will be honoured beside Bowen's Court, where her family lived for generations. If it had been left standing when sold in 1959, though circumstances at the time were not conducive to that, it would surely be a tourist attraction. It would also, like Strokestown House, provide a point of reference on the morals of landlords of Cromwellian descent, which Bowen herself wrote about. **Dr. Martin Mansergh**TD, Dáil Éireann

### NEITHER FASCISM NOR SAVING THE JEWS WAS BRITAIN'S AIM (10.9.07)

Pat Muldowney quite rightly points out that Britain did not go to war to defeat fascism (Letters, Sept 5).

Churchill himself admitted as much in a famous exchange with one of his generals, who bridled at returning the Cossacks to Stalin.

The general argued that Britain had gone to war because of the sort of atrocity which certainly faced the returned Cossacks.

Churchill did not argue (as he could have) that the Cossacks voluntarily sided with Hitler and deserved their fate. Instead, he called the general a fool for not understanding that Britain had gone to war to restore the balance of power in Europe, and for no other reason.

There is a subtle rewriting of history that suggests the Allies were trying to save the Jews.

In fact, the Allies made no attempt to disrupt the railways on which the camps depended.

There is evidence that news of the camps was deliberately downplayed by the British government because it feared anti-Semitic sentiment would weaken the war effort if the truth were more generally known.

We owe Britain a lot for its stance against Hitler, just as we owe a debt to the old Soviet Union. But no debt can obligate us to lie about the historical facts.

**Tim O'Halloran**, Dublin 11

### NOT THE ONLY ONE (12.9.07)

According to Jack Lane (Letters, Sept 5) and Dr Martin Mansergh TD (Letters, Sept 6), former Fine Gael leader and agriculture minister James Dillon was the only politician who wanted to involve Ireland in Word War II.

## Hidden history Or Hidden Agenda?

The following letter by Brian Murphy osb was submitted to the *Irish Times* on 9th November 2007, but failed to find publication

Dr Pat Muldowney's letter (October 29) on RTÉ's Hidden History programme (October 23) was valuable at the time and has become of even greater importance subsequently.

Dr Muldowney provided clear contemporary evidence that the two young members of the Pearson family, killed by the IRA at Coolacrease, Co Offaly, on June 30, 1921, had been killed for military, rather than, sectarian reasons. He then explained that his contribution to the RTE programme, on that matter, had been excised and that the producers had persisted in portraying the killing of the Pearsons as a sectarian act.

Since the publication of the letter, RTÉ, in the person of Niamh Sammon, director of the programme, and Eoghan Harris, an influential voice on the programme, defended the depiction of the Pearson killings as sectarian on the Joe Duffy Liveline show (November 5).

I would like to add to the evidence submitted by Dr Muldowney.

First, the testimony of Matilda Pearson, the victims' sister, is valuable. She asked the IRA raiders, who were burning the family home, why they were doing it and received the reply, as recorded by herself, "Don't think we are doing this because you are Protestants. It is not being done on that account." These words are taken from the King's County Chronicle of July 7, 1921, and are found in Alan Stanley's book on the Pearson family. This was the book that inspired Ms Sammon to direct the programme on the Pearsons and was used by Eoghan Harris to convey the idea the IRA were sectarian killers. Why, it seems reasonable to ask, was this relevant evidence, from their own chosen source, ignored?

Second, the positive interaction between Dáil Éireann and many Protestants during 1919-1921 provides conclusive evidence against the allegation of sectarianism. For example, the National Land Bank, created by the Dáil to tackle the issue of land, was established by Robert Barton. Its leading directors were Erskine Childers and Lionel Smith Gordon. All three were Protestants. Is it credible that the Dáil would have put these men in charge of land reform, if they had wished to drive Protestants from the land?

Another example is provided by the Co-operative Society where, under the direction of Sir Horace Plunkett and George Russell, both Protestants, Catholic farmers worked harmoniously. Another example is to be found with the Irish White Cross Society, founded in January 1921 with the explicit purpose of repairing the damages of war. That Michael Collins, a wanted man, was listed as a trustee did not prevent leading Church of Ireland clergymen, the Jewish rabbi in Dublin, Dr Herzog, the Quaker James Douglas, and many other Catholics and Protestants from working together.

One could go on but sufficient has been said to enforce the case made by Dr Muldowney and to raise grave questions about RTÉ's programme. Are we dealing with a hidden history or a hidden agenda?

## Pearsons: The Medical Evidence

The following letter from Malachi Lawless failed to find publication in the *Irish Times*

Niamh Sammon is correct in, her letter of Nov 24th, to highlight the importance of evidence in establishing the historical truth of the killings at Coolacrease. In her documentary film, broadcast by RTE., Sen Eoghan Harris says the following re the above: "That's not an execution. That's an atrocity..... shooting them very deliberately in the genitals, in their sexual parts, in their sexual organs; what it really says is... you are the other, you are an outsider, we hate you, go away and die"

Now the important fact in all of this is where they were shot. The medical evidence to the British Court of Enquiry at the time says the Pearson brothers were shot in the groin, not the genitals. This is not rumour or lurid invention but the kind of cold unavoidable fact that is crucial to the difference between an atrocity and an execution. Ms Sammon, for some reason, does not agree and included Sen Harris' statement in her film rather than sworn medical evidence. RTE broadcast this invention of Sen. Harris. I trust at least the Dail Committee on Broadcasting, meeting this week, can get to the bottom of why and how this was allowed to happen. It is important for public confidence in RTE. [Letter submitted 25th November]

More BITEBACK on page 28

Not so.

In fact, Dillon's view was shared by an earlier political associate, Frank MacDermot, a member of Dáil Éireann from 1932 to 1937 and Seanad Éireann from 1938 to 1942). **J.A. Barnwell**, Dublin 9

### SAVING THE JEWS: REWRITING HISTORY IS NOTHING NEW (12.9.07)

In his letter headlined 'Neither fascism nor saving the Jews was Britain's aim' (Sept 10), Tim O'Halloran says "there is a subtle rewriting of history that

suggests the Allies were trying to save the Jews".

This is not such a recent phenomenon as Mr O'Halloran would think: it was already part of the Nazi propaganda claim that the war between the two great Aryan nations, Britain and Germany, was a result of the international Jewish conspiracy to take over the world.

As Mr O'Halloran quite correctly observes, "the Allies made no attempt to disrupt the railways on which the camps depended".

In fact, it has been reported that when such a suggestion was made, the then British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, asked: "What should we do with all those Jews?"

Small wonder then that, as Mr O'Halloran puts it, "news of the camps was deliberately downplayed by the British government". **Martin D. Stern**, Salford M7 4FQ

### **WRITER DID AN EXCELLENT JOB IN HER 'SPY' REPORTS TO LONDON (17.9.07)**

I can assure Martin Mansergh (Letters, Sept 9) that I have neither the inclination nor the power to excommunicate Elizabeth Bowen or anybody else from anything they might wish to be.

What I seek to do is to make sense of Bowen's activities during WW II. That is why I published her extant reports and while Martin describes my comments on those as "lurid" I would describe them as calling a spade a spade—just as her reports did.

Was she a traitor to Ireland or a spy for England? I believe the evidence clearly supports the latter and as doing one's patriotic duty in time of war to the best of one's ability is normally a laudable thing I cannot see how I denigrate her as Martin claims. She did an excellent job. My admiration for her increases every time I read her reports. If Martin insists she was Irish then he is automatically making her a traitor which is not considered very laudable and I would not dream of accusing her of that and have never done so.

Martin invokes Brian Girvin's book "The Emergency" in his case: "...the Irish High commissioner in London, John Dulanty, supported her visit (unpaid) to Ireland to provide independent reports on the state of opinion." However, Brian Girvin provides no actual evidence by Dulanty to support Martin's claims and the reference to an "unpaid" trip is actually by John Betjeman of the British Embassy in Dublin. This latter reference indicates that the secret reports could not be the matter in question here as the secret reports were paid for by the British Government and the payments have been detailed by Heather Bryant Jordan in her biography, "Will the heart endure" (page 210). Martin should keep up with the literature on this

Of course, there is no doubt that Dulanty and everyone in the Irish Government would have welcomed all kinds of reports to London, open or secret, written and oral that helped ward off Churchill's desire to invade. But Bowen's reports were certainly not written for the benefit of the Irish government and they were not party to them. Martin is clutching at straws to try to prove otherwise. If the Irish government was in some way involved we would surely have come across some copies somewhere in Irish archives over the past 60 years.

Martin says "Britain and Ireland were not enemies." Was that why Ireland had to fight a war of independence against England, and then a civil war insisted on by England? In 1940 Churchill denied Ireland the right to neutrality. Irish independence was a standing affront to him and Bowen's job was to advise him on the probable strength of Irish resistance if he invaded.

He adds "De Valera's policy during WWII was for Ireland to be vis-à-vis Britain a "friendly neutral". Of course it was—friendly to everybody. That is what neutrality means. Eamon de Valera was pragmatic and sensible enough not to provoke any of the major powers at war around him—just like all other neutrals.

He concludes that "It is generally accepted today that, within the limits of nationality defined by law, and she always qualified as Irish on that count,

people should be free to decide their own identity". This is very true and Bowen was constitutionally an Irish citizen by birth if she chose to exercise that right—but she did not. By the same token, I and millions of others are legally British subjects being born here before 1948 but most do not exercise that right either. Nationality is not defined by law. Like home, it is where the heart is and Bowen's heart was in England (and certainly not in Anglo-Ireland) and she cannot and should not be robbed of that. She simply adopted an Irish persona when necessary.

It is regrettable and ironic that Martin actively helped to change the noble and generous aspect of the Irish Constitution which guaranteed the opportunity of citizenship to all people born here.

**Jack Lane**

### **ANGLO-IRISH WRITER WAS HELPFUL TO BOTH COUNTRIES (26.9.07)**

Notwithstanding the offensive campaign over many years by Jack Lane to blacken the memory of Elizabeth Bowen, the holding of a Trevor/Bowen weekend in Mitchelstown and the annual service at Farahy show that many people in north Cork appreciate the area's association with a famous writer.

Having had the chance to consult a personal communication from Brian Girvin clarifying the part of the text of his book on Irish neutrality, I find I was understating the position in saying that the Irish High Commissioner in London, John Dulanty, had foreknowledge and approval of Bowen's visits to Ireland (Letters, September 9).

According to Girvin, Dulanty pressed her case to travel and he was the person who suggested to Bowen that she offer her services to the Ministry of Information as an unofficial correspondent. The fact that she was sponsored by Ireland's chief diplomat in London—and her reports were helpful to the main cause of Irish neutrality as even Mr Lane acknowledges—blows all the hate-mongering charges of treason and espionage sky-high. "Unofficial correspondent" is a very accurate description of her work. Why not acknowledge in this era of excellent Anglo-Irish relations that she was helpful to both countries and that, in a sense, she was an agent of both?

Britain and Ireland were not enemies during World War II, which is the other false premise. Indeed, there was a considerable coincidence of interest, as evidenced by the close cooperation between the intelligence organisations in both countries and no obstacle was placed in the path of those who wanted to join the British or other forces.

Elizabeth Bowen declared herself as an Irish national, which she was entitled to do, and that was more than sufficient to make her so. Her choice of burial place in Farahy speaks for itself. **Dr Martin Mansergh TD**

### **WRITER'S WARTIME ROLE: A QUESTION OF SOURCES (9.10.07)**

Martin Mansergh refers to a private communication from Brian Girvin as proof that Elizabeth Bowen's secret reports to the British government about Ireland during the war were not spy reports (Letters, 26 September). But a private communication is evidence of nothing.

The suggestion seems to be that Bowen was jointly commissioned by the British and Irish governments to draw up these reports which the British Government marked 'secret' upon receipt of them, utilised them, paid for them and destroyed them after the War. And no copies have turned up in Irish archives.

If "Britain and Ireland were not enemies during WWII" as Mr. Mansergh says then when did they cease to be enemies? Leaving aside the Six Counties, parts of Ireland were under forcible British occupation until the appeasement of 1938. The following year Ireland made preparations to meet England once again as an enemy. A British invasion was expected daily in 1940 as my father and many others could testify as they trained in the LDF to counter it. They were not expecting the Germans in North Cork.

And in 1945 the British Prime Minister said it had been within his rights to occupy Ireland if he had found it expedient. Bowen's espionage reports helped him to decide it was not expedient.

Mr. Mansergh obviously thinks that present-day Britain would not be friendly with us if we tell the truth about the past. He may be right.

Mr. Mansergh says that "Her choice of burial place in Farahy speaks for itself." Her husband Alan Cameron, who was certainly not Irish, had died at Bownscourt and was buried at Farahy in 1952. The estate was lost a few years afterwards including the house, Bownscourt—which Virginia Woolf had once described as "a stone box". Over 20 years later she (Bowen) wished to be brought back to be buried with him and if that was not possible to be buried with her mother in England. Perfectly normal things to wish for, i.e.,—to be buried with one of those she loved no matter where they were buried. A purely personal matter and not a political proclamation.

Mr. Mansergh might stick to the facts of her life and leave her rest in peace in her afterlife.

Or is nothing sacred in his fixation to re-nationalise Elizabeth Bowen? **Jack Lane**

### **ILL-FOUNDED VENDETTA AGAINST WRITER WHO DID NOT BETRAY HER COUNTRY (6.11.07)**

I am not surprised that Jack Lane (Letters, October 8) is impervious to new evidence that his vendetta against the memory of Elizabeth Bowen is ill-founded. There is simply no answer to the point that a mission that had the prior approval and support of the Irish High Commissioner in London in June 1940 could not have been a betrayal of the interests of this country.

Conor Lynch (Letters, October 9) is quite right that I disagreed fundamentally on radio with the anti-neutrality thesis in Brian Girvin's book on the Emergency. That does not invalidate the information he has discovered in relation to Elizabeth Bowen.

Given Ireland was neutral in World War II, by definition Britain and Ireland could not have been enemy nations in that context. If only a British invasion was to be feared or guarded against, perhaps Jack Lane would like to explain why Eamon de Valera ordered the destruction of hundreds of files of the Department of External Affairs on May 25, 1940, for fear they might fall into German hands (Appendix 1 of Vol 5 of Documents of Irish Foreign Policy).

Which country bombed the North Strand in Dublin and whose submarines sank Irish merchant shipping, with considerable loss of life?

If, nevertheless, Britain was, as alleged, the enemy, logically, does Jack Lane regret that Germany lost the war (as is hinted at in his North Cork Anthology)? I do not have to re-nationalise Elizabeth Bowen, as Jack Lane never succeeded in denationalising her. As for the plea to leave her to rest in peace, who started this correspondence by objecting to a weekend in Mitchelstown being held in her memory? I share the view of many that it deserves to be cherished and vindicated.

Underlying all of this is a habit of old-fashioned ideological bullying, directed against a former ruling class that, post-independence, had become a vulnerable minority. It is exemplified in the belligerent comment in the North Cork Anthology that when Bownscourt was destroyed and the foundations dug up, "the difference that made to Irish life was the addition of a good agricultural field".

Jack Lane's dismissal of Bownscourt, the Bowen grave in Farahy and Anglo-Irish (ie, Protestant) Dublin as "a little piece of the English home counties" can only be described as vicious caricature, far removed from any spirit of pluralism or reconciliation. It is telling that the ideology behind so clear a demarcation was a positive inspiration to David Trimble and unionism at their most hard line.

**Dr Martin Mansergh TD**

**This correspondence is now closed — Editor**

## CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

(LETTER SUBMITTED 11TH NOVEMBER 2007, BUT NOT PUBLISHED)

You are of course entitled to close a correspondence at any point, but you are not entitled to introduce a fresh allegations of a personal nature by one correspondent directed against the other when doing so. This is what you did on 6th November, when you allowed Martin Mansergh to assert that I was a "positive inspiration to David Trimble" in his final sentence. That assertion is the reverse of the truth.

The Irish Political Review, in which my view of Trimble was expressed, opposed him at every stage of his political career, from his Vanguard days to the time when as Unionist leader he was subverting the Good Friday Agreement from within, while being courted by Martin Mansergh and his colleagues. This is on public record in scores of critical articles, especially during the years when Trimble was preventing the Agreement from functioning. Mansergh cannot produce a shred of evidence in support of the accusation which he throws out in his parting shot.

His other piece of lying character assassination is that I am a Nazi: "does Jack

Lane regret that Germany lost the war (as is hinted at in his *North Cork Anthology*". Nowhere in the *Anthology* do I say anything which even malevolent misrepresentation could present as support for the Nazis in the war. And I am amazed that any reputable newspaper should give a politician space to assert that I did, and then expect to get away with "closing the correspondence".

Most of the other matters in the correspondence are matters of opinion. These are not. They are indisputable matters of fact.

**Editorial Note:** Of great concern is the behaviour of the Editor of the *Irish Examiner* who assisted Mr. Mansergh by ending the correspondence after publishing his lies. There is no recollection in living memory of a correspondence being closed in the *Examiner*. The Editor should be ashamed of himself.

The paper is seeking to make a mark nationally and showed signs of being more open and fair than the other national papers in its letters and opinion pieces. That was short lived.

*The Way* p71). He does not say where his information about dumdums comes from.

I suppose if the firing squad was using captured ammunition it might have been dum-dum. Long ago in the State Paper Room of the British Museum I came across the original typed copy of *Memoranda And Notes By Sir George Clarke While Secretary Of The Committee Of Imperial Defence, 1904-7*. The following is from a Note of advice to the British delegates to the Hague Conference On The Reduction Of Armaments:

**"66B The Hague Conference**  
*Notes On Subjects which might be raised by Great Britain or by other Powers.*

...  
*II. Expanding Bullets*

An agreement to abstain from the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body... was signed by 15 out of 26 Representatives at the last Hague Conference, Great Britain, Germany, United States, etc., dissenting.

This Agreement, as drawn up, was evidently intended to forbid the use of the Dum-dum class bullet, while permitting the same effects to be obtained in other ways.

We desire not to abandon the right to use expanding bullets in our small wars.

There seems, however, to be no reason to oppose a complete abandonment of all forms of expanding bullets in the case of civilized warfare. The Powers might agree to prohibit their use when engaged in hostilities among themselves..."

The war against the Irish was a small war, and the Irish were not considered to be engaging in civilised warfare.

Stanley throws out another suggestion that I had never heard of before:

"A Roman Catholic man from Cadamstown (J. White), told us that the I.R.A. had adopted a quota for each district, to be eliminated by a certain date. This may have applied to us" (p46; From a letter by Dave Pearson, a younger brother of the men who were shot, written over 60 years after the event).

How negligent of Peter Hart not to have seen that Republican GHQ allocated extermination quotas of Protestants to Brigades!

Who allocated the quotas for the extermination of Protestants? Michael Collins, I suppose. Assisted perhaps by Ernie O'Malley.

## R-R-REVOLUTION

I notice a review by Brendan O Cathaoir of a recently published memoir of Ernie O'Malley's: (IT Nov 24): "*This memoir provides an anti-dote to Coolacree... An IRA atrocity on Offaly, however worth recording, was not representative... Anything written by Ernie O'Malley is of value.*"

## Land Grabbers?

With regard to the killing of the Pearson brothers in Coolacree, Co. Offaly in June 1921 there are a number of indisputable facts of a general nature, and a handful of contemporary documents about the event—whose accuracy may be disputed if conflicting evidence appears.

RTE gave its approval to a reconstruction of the event, by Niamh Sammon and Fianna Fail-appointed Senator Eoghan Harris, which simply ignored the both the documentary evidence about the event and the indisputable facts of the context in which the event took place. They assumed the role of the omniscient author of a novel who imagines the world which he describes, and whose knowledge of events within that imaginary world is independent of such evidence as he cares to present in order to make a story.

The indisputable general facts are that in June 1921 there was in the 26 Counties a war between an elected Government and an unelected Government, which had not even contested the election, and that the Pearson brothers were shot on the authority of the elected Government on a charge of having acted in support of the authority of the unelected Government.

All that is disputable with regard to this is whether the charge against the Pearsons was well-founded. It is not disputable that they were shot by the Army of the elected Government on a charge of having conspired with, and acted with, the unelected Government.

The contemporary evidence does not

suggest that the charge was false, but it is almost always arguable after an execution that it was a miscarriage of justice. But that is not what the RTE programme argued. What it did was set aside the indisputable facts of the situation and present a world in which legitimate authority (the unelected Government) was confronted with an outbreak of criminality motivated by land-grabbing and religious bigotry, in which the land owned by the Pearsons was grabbed by some of the people who shot them.

The Pearsons were shot so that their land might be grabbed, and they were shot in the genitals so that feelings of religious bigotry might be relieved.

## ALAN STANLEY

The RTE reconstruction was based on a book published 84 years after the event by the son of a cousin of the Pearsons, Alan Stanley. Stanley, too, treats activity in support of the elected Government as an outbreak of criminality inspired by religious bigotry and land-grabbing. At the same time he maintains that the Pearsons were innocent—but innocent of what? Of supporting legitimate authority against criminals! Of being good citizens!

He wants to have it every which way, but in the end that is not something that can be got.

However he does not say they were shot in the genitals. That is Sammon-Harris embroidery. What Stanley says is that there was a "*barrage of dum-dum rounds to the groin*" (*I Met Murder On*



While preparing a book about the Young Irishmen and Carlyle, I came across a biography of John Mitchel by O Cathaoir in which Mitchel, in mindless revolutionary phase, is admired, while the stubborn, realistic, calculating reformer, Gavan Duffy, who refused to be provoked into wild revolutionary demagoguery, is dismissed as a mere *bourgeois*. Mitchel was a more exciting writer, and a more elegant one. He carries you away. Duffy lodges you in the particularity of the situation and makes you understand what might be done and what is mere verbiage. The circles which determined over generations which historical figures should be kept alive and which should be discarded kept Mitchel alive and discarded Duffy both in verse and prose:

"You that Mitchel's prayer have heard,  
"Send war in our time, O Lord!"  
Know that when all words are said,  
And a man is fighting mad,  
Something drops from eyes long blind;  
He completes his partial mind,  
For a moment stands at ease,  
Laughs aloud, his heart at peace."

Or something like that.

Duffy is dull if literary excitement is what you need. But it was Duffy who did things. And De Valera, who did things in a later generation, followed on from Duffy rather than Mitchel, and has been dealt with accordingly. Our litterateurs, who back away 'moderately' from action when the need for it arises, find solace from Mitchel in their studies.

I suppose O'Malley is Mitchel today. He made literature out of 'the revolution'. And Richard English, who contributed to the Coolacrease programme, and contributes to the academic task of removing the 1918 Election from history, is "*fascinated*" by O'Malley, whom he has taken as the subject for his study of "*the revolutionary mind*". And there is no doubt about it: O'Malley, who came late to 'the revolution', unfortunately had a 'revolutionary mind'. He missed 1916 but helped to start what we call 'the Civil War'.

I grew up amongst people who a generation earlier had taken part in the War of Independence, and I do not recall that they spoke of it as the revolution. It was for them a matter-of-fact business. Britain kept on trying to govern the country when it had no right to, and it had to be made stop. And I was not aware of any residue of Utopian expectations which had been disappointed.

That is the history that has not been written—not since Dorothy Macardle I suppose—certainly not by revisionists, who must make it "*visionary*" in order to disparage it.

Insofar as there was a revolution, in the sense of a social turnabout, it had already happened by 1910. The colonial landlord

class had been disfranchised by the establishment of representative local government in 1898, and had given up the land after 1903. The Tory-Unionist ideal of a property-owning democracy came close to being realised in Ireland through an alliance between William O'Brien's vigorous but realistic land agitation and the Unionist Government of 'Bloody Balfour'—which is another piece of Irish history deleted by the revisionists.

This property-owning democracy wanted to govern itself, and voted to govern itself. And the only reason there was an Anglo-Irish War, and an IRA, was that the British Government didn't want to let it govern itself. But to write down that fact plainly as the history of 1919-21—well, it just wouldn't look good for Britain, would it?

#### TERENCE DOOLEY

The appearance of Richard English, a revisionist mystifier, in Eoghan Harris's Coolacrease programme was not surprising. Terence Dooley's appearance in it was. While he claims somewhere to have been influenced by David Fitzpatrick, Peter Hart etc, their influence is not evident in his books that I have read. He is a historian while they are ideologically-inspired falsifiers.

In *Inniskeen, 1912-1918: The Political Conversion Of Bernard O'Rourke* (2004), he shows the development of O'Rourke, a substantial Monaghan businessman, from being a pillar of the Home Rule establishment in 1912 to becoming a Sinn Feiner after 1914. The 'conversion' is not a sudden emotional response to the 1916 executions, but a gradual and reasoned response to events after Redmond committed the Home Rule Party to war on Germany.

O'Rourke, a County Councillor and a Justice of the Peace, was in 1914 willing to settle for Home Rule within Britain and the Empire. The trouble began when the Home Rule Bill, after three years of conflict, was simultaneously enacted and suspended as a British wartime measure:

"O'Rourke became increasingly uneasy by the fact that despite home rule have been enacted, there were no immediate signs that Ireland was being treated any differently by the British administration. Local and national events in 1915 compounded his suspicions.

"The first of these concerned a local agrarian conflict. In late 1914 Lawrence Keenan purchased a farm at Keenogue belonging to James Meegan that had been sold by the Land Commission because Meegan had defaulted on his payment of annuities... Keenan had taken over what was effectively an evicted farm and since the Land War days, anybody who did this was usually held in great odium by the local community. Local resentment was

palpable and Keenan was soon subjected to widespread intimidation. He was shunned, people refused to serve him in the local shops, and at night groups of young men gathered around his home, banging saucepans...

"In February 1915, 12 young men... were literally dragged from their beds at 4 a.m.... by a party of 30 policemen and taken to Carrickmacross barracks... The Inniskeen United Irish League passed a resolution condemning the high-handed and arbitrary action of the police. Newspaper reports highlighted the "Inniskeen Sensation"...

"The young men were released on bail and bound over to the peace but the arrests did not have the intended effect. Later in February, 44 new members were enrolled in the Inniskeen UIL. The local Ancient Order of Hibernians offered their support...; on St. Patrick's Day 1915, the Inniskeen AOH band planned to march down... to make a point to Keenan but a large force of police drafted in from Carrickmacross and other outlying areas prevented the march...

"James Meegan continued to harass Keenan. He was arrested and charged... A resident magistrate was taken from Monaghan town to try his case. This simply added fuel to the flames...

"Meegan was released on bail but the judicial system had been undermined. At this stage the UIL [United Ireland League] decided to take matters into its own hands by bringing the interested parties to a specially convened court of its own. Land courts were... nothing new in rural Ireland but it seems to have been some time since one was convened in south Monaghan and... this one was convened as a consequence of the perceived failure of the official judicial system to settle the matter. The court found in favour of Meegan and ordered Keenan to relinquish his claim on the farm on receipt of payment of its market value, which Keenan did" (p32-3).

Because of the way history has been written, not only by Fitzpatrick's counterfeit factory but by the preceding generation, the significance of this incident will probably not be apparent to the reader.

The UIL was a land reform movement developed by William O'Brien in the late 1890s when the factions into which the Parliamentary Party had been divided by the Parnell affair were feuding with each other. Under pressure from the UIL, the factions came back together under Redmond's nominal leadership. The UIL then became the mass membership organisation of the Party, while continuing to play an active part in agrarian reform when the situation required it. The Parliamentary leaders had little concern with agrarian affairs, and they even obstructed the great reform of 1903, because their minds were on the high politics of Home Rule. But it was the UIL

that gave the Party a continuous presence in the country at large.

The Party was called simply *The Party*, but it was either more or less than a party. In conjunction with the UIL it constituted both the politics and civil society of a burgeoning state, and it was accustomed to do things that in England were not within the competence of a political party. Then, in Monaghan in 1915, with Home Rule on the Statute Book, instead of being drawn into closer collaboration with the Dublin Castle administration in preparation for the implementation of the Statute, it found itself being set aside. So it reasserted itself in its UIL dimension, stymied the operation of Castle law, and settled matters with its own Court.

That was the beginning of O'Rourke's transition towards Sinn Fein—before the Sinn Fein Party that won the 1918 Election had been formed. Then one thing led to another.

It was announced in September 1917 that O'Rourke was to be the Sinn Fein candidate in the General election, but in March 1918 he announced that he would not stand. South Monaghan was one of the constituencies where the Home Rule Party was still a serious contender and it was possibly thought that it would be best for Sinn Fein to put up a candidate who had no involvement in local disputes. Sean McEntee stood and defeated T.J. Campbell (future leader of the 6 County Nationalist Party) by a substantial, but not crushing, majority.

Thereafter—

"O'Rourke involved himself in the administrative side of the revolution. By mid-1919 the emerging counter state had significant financial commitments. In September of that year, Michael Collins launched the Dail loan... From October 1919 to the end of January, O'Rourke collected £766 for the Dail loan from just about every businessman, small farmer and labourer in Inniskeen... By September 1920, he had successfully raised over £5,700 throughout Monaghan, the most successful contribution from Ulster."

His house was raided and documents relating to the loan discovered and he spent a few months in jail in Belfast. In 1922 he supported the Treaty. He was a Free State Senator from 1922 to 1938, and a Monaghan County Councillor until 1945.

"By 1920, O'Rourke's solicitor could claim that his client was "probably the wealthiest man in the county". In 1920, his Inniskeen and Dundalk mills were prospering; he was the largest shareholder in Beleek Pottery... of which he was also managing director; and he was a shopkeeper and extensive farmer. Some years later he expanded his businesses to Dublin and he became a founder of Arklow Pottery of which he was chairman and managing director

for many years. O'Rourke was in fact a leading industrialist whose contribution to Irish industry at a national level was as significant as his contribution to Irish politics at a local level" (p57).

This is a long way from the picture of Republican Ireland as a criminal movement of land grabbers and religious bigots presented by Niamh Sammon, Eoghan Harris and RTE.

**Brendan Clifford**

**To Be Continued**

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'Atonement: Ethnic Cleansing In The Midlands'. Pat Muldowney  
July 'Errata'.  
IRB Corrections & Questions From Joe McCullough. Manus O'Riordan  
Old Irish & The Market. John Minahane  
Back In The Box. Wilson John Haire  
Collusion & A 'Truth Commission' In N.I. Niall Meehan (Unpublished Letter)  
RTE Gives Madame A Dig-Out. David Alvey  
The *Irish Times* Must Be Held To Account. IPR Group Press Statement  
Biteback: Reports On Iraq And Palestine. David Morrison  
On Nationalist Ideology. John Martin  
The Two Tiers Of The Irish Nationalist Mind. Desmond Fennell  
Hornes On Display. Report  
fDoes It Stack Up. Michael Stack (Marianne Elliott; Christians Today; Tribunals)  
Unionism & ZionismóSame Struggle? Se-n McGouran  
The *Indo's* Guilt Complex. Se-n McGouran  
*Labour Comment*: The Duodecimo Demosthenes, an obituary of John Wilson

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Culture vs. Politics. Editorial  
Jihad. Crusade Colonisation. Editorial  
A Visit To Iran: Part Two, Ethnicity And Nationalism. Conor Lynch  
Letters To The Editor (Romantic View Of FFF? Reader (Co. Meath); China G.M. Williams; How Ireland Reached The End Of History I. Kenna)  
Harris In The Seanad. Jack Lane  
Shorts (Labour Debate; Celtic Tiger; Fianna Fail; The *Irish Times* Opposition; The *Irish Times* Refuge); Sacco & Vanzetti. Report of *l'Humanité* tribute (trans. J. Martin)  
Press Freedom: The Right To Misrepresent? Editorial  
Hidden History Of 'Ireland's Nazis'. Manus O'Riordan  
IRB Corrections & Questions From Joe McCullough. Manus O'Riordan  
Getting Sophistication (Report, Trevor/Bowen Summer School). Julianne Herlihy  
Hubert Butler Society Goes American. David Alvey  
What Is To Be Done! Joe Keenan  
Editorial Digest (Northern Victims; O'Loan Insulted; Empey On Democracy; G a y Derry; Shankill Welcome!; End Of Sctarianism?; Carson; Limerick)  
The *Indo's* Guilt Complex (Part Two). Se-n McGouran  
Does It Stack Up. Michael Stack (Education?;

Sculpture; Global Warming; Dollars & Guns; Pheasant-Shooting; Atonement)  
Old Irish And The Market (Part Two). John Minahane  
The Professor And The Prince. Pat Walsh  
*Labour Comment*: Two Views On When And Why Labour Lost Boat And Vote; Eamon Gilmore by Conor Lynch; Union Officials v. Elected Reps. by Tom Doherty; What Left For The Left In Northern Ireland by Mark Langhammer

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Forwards To ? Editorial  
Bertiegate, Media-Inspired 'Death by a Thousand Cuts'. Daithi O hAilbhe  
Social Customs (Iran, Part 3). Conor Lynch  
Letters To The Editor (W.J. Haire on What Is To Be Done; Dick Kenny on The Burning of Cork, with reply by Manus O'Riordan)  
Baghdad, 1917. General F. S. Maude (Report)  
Editorial Digest (Labour's Sister Party?; Giant's Causeway; Two-headed Corkmen; Wild Geese; Robert Nairac; John Kelly; Crumlin Rd. Jail; Fake Guns; A Gas Of A Peace; Who Made The World?)  
Tokyo, 1945. General Curtis LeMay (Report)  
What Is To Be Done, Part Two, The Responses. Joe Keenan  
Unpublished Letters On President McAleese. Conor Lynch & Joe Keenan  
Shorts (*Irish Times* Ideological Struggle; *Irish Times* Immigration Policy; A Christian Newspaper; Damage Limitation; O'Toole's Soap Opera)  
Old Irish And The Market (Pt Three). John Minahane  
All-Ireland Politics. Report  
Jumping The Black Pig's Dyke. Joe Keenan  
Roy Johnston's Memoirs. Seán McGouran (Book Review)  
Dev's Refugee Policy (Part 2 of "Ireland's Nazis"). Manus O'Riordan  
Bowen, Lane And Mansergh. Julianne Herlihy  
Jottings. Brendan Clifford  
*Labour Comment*: The Heart Of The Celtic Tiger?

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Coolacrease. Brendan Clifford  
Ireland Is In The Imperialist Camp. David Morrison  
Boycotting The Cenotaph. Conor Lynch  
Letters To The Editor (Headscarves In Iran, Desmond Fennell; Casement 'Black Diaries', Roger Sawyer; Instant Revolution? Ivor Kenna)  
Conquest Politik. Nicollo Machiavelli  
Seán O'Casey's Songs Against Sommetry. Manus O'Riordan  
Shorts (Irish Times: Self Parody; English Language; The Law; The State Broadcaster; New 'Creative Age'; New Allies? 'Nuff Said)  
End Of History. Hamid Dabashi (Report)  
The Killings At Coolacrease. Pat Muldowney (Report)  
Editorial Digest (Dana; Bus Tours; Martin Meehan; MI5; UDA; 1641; Seagate; RUC Resignations)  
Tokyo, 1945. General Curtis LeMay (Report) Seán O'Hegarty. Peter Beresford Ellis (Review, Report)  
Hands Off Venezuela.  
Coolacrease And The Pearsons. Daithi O hAilbhe (Report)  
Philosophy Of Nationalism. Brendan Clifford (Book Review)  
High Court Ruling Against *Irish Times* Deserves Support. (Irish Political Review Group Press Statement)

Kevin Myers' Niche. Seán McGouran  
Hezbollah Denied Entry To Ireland. David  
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*Labour Comment* is edited by Pat Maloney  
*Shorts* is by The Long Fellow

## Chipping away at Ireland's sovereignty

The following appeared in the *Irish  
Examiner* of 12th November 2007

The National Day of Commemoration  
—on the first Sunday of July each year to  
remember those Irish who fell during both  
world wars and on service with the United  
Nations—is most welcome.

The barbarism inflicted on our great-  
grandparents' generation during the Great  
War is at last being given official State  
recognition on this day.

It is important that the memory and  
sacrifice of these men is protected from  
those would make political mischief out  
of them. Honouring the Irish war dead  
should not be confused with honouring  
the British Army.

It is disappointing, therefore, that there  
is still a persistent campaign aimed at  
forcing the full participation of the Irish  
State in the annual Remembrance Sunday  
ceremonies of the Royal British Legion.

This was further highlighted by the  
unveiling of a plaque in Galway recently  
to commemorate Galway's Great War  
dead. An Irish Army colour party was in  
attendance, as was the British Ambassador,  
David Reddaway, and Gaeltacht Minister  
Éamon Ó Cuív.

What an unusual country we have  
become. Our army and Government  
participate in events to commemorate the  
armed forces of our former colonial  
overlords. Ireland is changing the way it  
projects itself politically and symbolically  
in order to accommodate aspects of  
political Britishness.

This process manifests itself in the  
acceptance of titles and awards by Irish  
citizens from the British monarch. In  
addition, monuments to Sir Francis Drake  
and Queen Victoria have recently been  
erected here. This is an infringement on  
Irish sovereignty and an attack on the  
republican and egalitarian ethos of  
Bunreacht na hÉireann. Is it not time that  
the Irish Government stood by the  
Republic?

**Tom Cooper**

· Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback

## Political Legitimacy?

The following letter has been submitted to the *Sunday Independent* by **Daithí O hAilbhe**

...Where did legitimacy lie? Everything about the Pearsons story depends on the answer to that question.

Since this state owes its existence to the first Dail and the IRA, conservatism should favour a perspective sympathetic to the IRA. That is not to say that the anti-IRA perspective is wrong, only that its advocates have all the work to do in making a case against the institutions that pioneered democratic self-government in this state.

While the documentary included contributions from people on both sides of the debate, it avoided the issue of political context and it failed to mention key evidence like the British Court of Inquiry. Its intent from beginning to end was to win sympathy for the Pearsons. As the producer of the documentary, Niamh Sammon could have presented the evidence in a way that allowed people to think for themselves, but that would not have achieved the moral effect she needed. That would not have landed the necessary political punch. [Letter submitted 25th November.]

## War Crime?

The following letter has been submitted to the *Sunday Independent* by **Jack Lane**

Brendan Cafferty goes to the heart of matter as regards the Coolacrease executions. He does not accept the legality of what was done and describes it as a war crime. (Letters, 25 November). He is quite logical in that he denies the legitimacy of the Irish State and therefore the right of its army to defend it (or indeed its right to exist) despite the overwhelming result for Sinn Fein in the 1918 election and the subsequent unanimous Declaration of Independence in 1919 by the those elected. Crimes are committed by criminals. Who exactly are the criminals in this situation? And how can they be brought to justice? Mr. Cafferty should tell us. [Letter submitted 27th November.]

## Aubane Historical Society And The *Irish Times*

After the AHS was denounced by the *Irish Times* (by columnist David Adams),  
Jack Lane wrote in to protest. His letter did not find publication

You have yet again denounced The Aubane Historical Society in your issue of 10th November ('Diehards reveal true colours') comparing us unfavourably with professional historians. The Society and its friends must confess to lacking the skill of popular professional historians such as Peter Hart in interviewing the dead as displayed in his work on the Kilmichael Ambush.

We live in a remote rural townland where the dead do not give interviews and we confine ourselves to republishing material of this world which the UDA and the professionals have neglected, such as Gavan Duffy's *Conversations with Carlyle*, the poems of Eoghan Rua O'Sullivan and Piers Ferriter, a study of Edmund Burke, a survey of the authorship of Shakespeare, an account from contemporary sources of the Parnell split and the collapse of the Home Rule Party in Cork in 1910, Redmond-Howard on the 1916 Rising, Elizabeth Bowen's wartime reports to Whitehall and about fifty more publications.

## Coolacrease And *Irish Political Review*

The following reply to misrepresentation of this magazine  
failed to find publication in the *Irish Times*

Re David Adams' column (9th November), the *Irish Political Review* published, from the British state archives, documentary evidence that the effective owner of the *Irish Times*, Major MacDowell, conducted the paper in secret consultation with Whitehall in the critical year of 1969.

I do not know what David Adams means by saying those documents "stand up to no examination". I am aware of no examination of them by Adams or anyone else in the *Irish Times*. **Eileen Courtney** (Editor)

## REPORT continued

The SWP must be mellowing from when I encountered them before. Refreshingly, they identified themselves during the meeting and declared they did not want to direct People Before Profits in Ireland and were not going to suggest introducing democratic centralism to this nascent movement. Well at least they won't strangle the new arrival at birth, I postulated.

The two main speakers were Maura Harrington, a teacher and Shell 2 Sea campaigner from North Mayo where locals who have faith in their own selfworth and basic rights have been conducting an eight-year struggle against the chosen site location for Shell to bring their major gas option ashore in our near Atlantic and the placing of a high pressure pipe of unfiltered gas through farms where proximity to domestic dwellings is seriously inappropriate. Alongside her was Richard Boyd-Barrett of the Socialist Workers' Party, who is also an official spokesman for the Irish Anti-War group.

Maura talked about the many overlapping facets of her campaign, introducing several titbits of information which were certainly new to me. One gem was the fact: resistance to Shells chosen preferred scheme was able to be easily bypassed by a mechanism called the *Strategic Management Bill* of July, 2003. Strange how such legislative development gets such little coverage or scrutiny through the aegis of the mainstream media. As Maura herself pointed out she and her neighbours have had to do a lot of learning themselves over the last number of years. Beyond the consistency of politicians; standards in journalism and public crisis fatigue, there has been gathering of knowledge about elected legislators but more important unelected agencies making daily critical decisions that affect all our lives.

Amongst other tactics observed have been public relations overdrive, manufacture of local pro-industry lobbies, the practice of multi-national corporations wheeling out so-called objective experts to quell the capacity for disquiet on a sometimes naive public.

Also, the pattern of delaying tactics whereby the Corporation can play a long war to undermine the morale of Bangor Erris residents including through the courts interspersed with sudden flashes of State aggression where Gardai on several occasions have, to say the least, been heavy-handed in confronting lines of peaceful protesters. I will leave it to the reader to be cognitive as to whether all this is a series of coincidences and unfortunate misunderstandings.

Boyd-Barrett identified the health service as an area in crisis. Extra A Grade managers, an Executive with no patient representative or union people, along with the bonus to the

Chief Executive Officer, add aggravation to the malady. He went on to outline the pitiable lack of stroke units in the country and the slowness in the rollout of breast cancer screening checks. Politicians increasingly let it be known that they cannot interfere with the work of the Health Service Executive (HSE) or other agencies. It may be about time an organised movement brought their criticism and demands to the door of the agencies themselves. As we were warned about our lack of impact if we are fragmented, many excellent contributions from the floor were raised. One nurse talked about how her skilled and able unit was basically undermined, reduced and ultimately halved in impact over the last three years. This was at a time when there was no discussion about cuts and the policy makers were formulating the extremely expensive capital structures of co-location and the public private partnerships.

There was plenty of time for questions and comments before the speakers' closing remarks. Boyd-Barrett touched on the housing situation facing young couples on ordinary means, the back-tracking by Government in modest attempts to alleviate the worst trends in the property market and negligence in provision by the local authorities. It was pointed out that many County Councillors who voted for inappropriate developments went on to make speeches about the tragedy of such decisions once they were safely secure in Dail Eireann. He also touched off the Shannon Airport issue, concerning military use; pointing to the irony of Aer Lingus pulling the economic carpet under the Mid-West region, where in the past such outcomes were forecast as the result of Anti-War Planes actions. Now that there are storm clouds gathering over Iran, the need to rekindle Anti-War work was agreed as being of critical importance.

Maura Harrington had a lot of optimism. She pointed out that in 2005, a Davitt League was mobilised in response to the increasingly irrelevant nature and the culture of back-slapping at the Humbert Summer School. Issues of the Ray Burke era when the natural resources of the nation were allowed to slip out of the country's control are coming into focus again in the light of recently revealed extensive oil and gas finds in our territorial waters on the continental shelf. She also explained how a responsible and empowering partnership had evolved between the local farmers and people from outside who had come to help. They were comfortable enough to discuss politics together as well as other topics while being wise enough to realise they did not need to agree on everything. Ironically, an ecology driven campsite accused by the Mayo County Council of damaging the environment had to move location. Afterwards, Shell were caught and stopped carrying out illegal

boring on the self-same spot. The Bangor Erris plight has now got international attention and offers of support from several countries.

Ideas that emerged were as follows: recording of more hard facts and suggestions from those at the coal face, e.g., in the Health Sector from employees, carers and parents of children with special needs, etc. Registration of people's housing needs. It was argued that many political actors had left the pitch where one might question the very basis of Government and those activating the transformation ought to be obliged to fill the space.

Networking was essential between people in different job sectors, activists, volunteers and users of County Council services. County Council power both in elected office and the unelected officials to be held to public account if necessary making our own media in the process. Also, it was felt certain that the activity of citizens between elections is what is most important. Some of the more experienced political attenders on the night admitted that they all had made mistakes in the past.

This writer was hopeful we may now be into a new chapter going beyond phases when some were obsessed with selling a particular paper and others spent all their time getting elected to various worthy organisations in order to promote their own personal profile. Perhaps this is a growing up for some of us of a certain generation. There was a time now long passed when students' unions in this country were dominated by Lefties.

At one time people put faith in journalism as a ray of hope for some future societal development. We now read between the media's lines, confront it, and at times make it so that we are impossible to ignore. The next couple of years have the capacity to be very interesting for this loose mature initial movement influenced by the traditions of the **Left** but not trapped by it. Various layers of interaction along with multiplicity of tactics would seem to be the sensible approach.

In time some of the smaller **Left** parties may choose to officially affiliate inc. Irish Socialist Network, Irish Republican Socialist Party, Eirigi as well as the already discussed Socialist Workers' Party and a number of Independents who are seen as of the **Left**. Electoralism may be one of the planks but must not be fetishised. Cork people have shown that they still have respect for themselves and can only be pushed so far. Possibly, we are learning to be discursive without being side-lined into absolutist debate which gives the excuse to micro groups to wallow in obscurity and bitterness.

**John Ryan**

## LABOUR continued

quite often, indeed, with shirking the hard work involved in thinking of any kind. These options are not open to a left-of-centre party. It has to stand for something. But what?

"Ever since the fall of communism, efforts at revision and rethinking by centre-left parties have been a spectacular failure. This has not prevented them from attaining government office in several countries. Significantly, however, by far the most successful, and also by far the most right-wing, has been New Labour in Britain under both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Merely to mention Tony Blair's name in Irish Labour circles is enough to provoke a contemptuous response.

"But not many party activists would like to turn the derision onto themselves by advocating public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

"This is the dictionary definition of socialism. It is not Bertie Ahern's definition.

"In point of fact, Bertie has never defined his own socialism. He has simply explained, in his unique way, that when he called himself a socialist he did not mean he was a socialist." (James Downey, *Irish Independent*, 19.11.2007).

The future of Labour, as an idea, as a community, is now in the hands of the Trade Union movement : it will receive little support from the Labour Party.

"The new party leader put in a very assured maiden performance. He decided not to deliver a speech attacking the Government, steering away instead from negative comment. Perhaps he could have been a bit more violent in his approach and less lavish with the earnest aspirations. The biggest cheer of the night came when he thundered: "Éamon de Valera would never had taken fistfuls of cash in a suitcase." (Miriam Lord, *Irish Times*, 19.11.2007).

"Cork South West Senator Michael McCarthy argued that the party needs to remain true to its core values.

"Ireland needs, now more than ever, a party which places at its core the values of equity and fairness. And inequality no longer affects just working class people; lest we believe inequality is ghettoised. Inequality is now clearly evidenced in the middle classes in society as well. One would do well to remember this," said Senator McCarthy. (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 17.11.2007).

LABOUR is suing outside advisers over the handling of its pensions fund.

During a briefing on the party's finances, delegates were told accounts were in the black but that more fund-raising was needed ahead of upcoming elections. They were also told court proceedings had been started following "*errors on behalf of professional entities*" (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 19.11.2007).

FORMER Cork Senator Brendan Ryan has failed in his bid to become the new Labour Party chairman.

Mr Ryan contested an election against Waterford TD Brian O'Shea to take over from former Kerry TD Breeda Moynihan Cronin.

Meanwhile, Cork North Central TD Kathleen Lynch and Máire Sherlock, the sister of Cork East TD Seán Sherlock, were both elected to the party's ruling National Executive Committee.

"The party booked the three-day conference before the outcome of the election was known. It should have been a triumphant review of six months in Government. Instead, there's an inevitable element of navel-gazing and pondering where it all went wrong." (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 19.11.2007).

PARTY delegates blocked an attempt to change its title from a democratic socialist party to that of a social democratic party.

The move was proposed by the Dublin south-east constituency (and backed by Ruairi Quinn) but was rejected by a large majority. Michael D Higgins made a passionate speech defending the party's socialist stance, arguing that "social democratic" was a label for which the party would be very vulnerable to attack.

"Henry Haughton, one of the longest-serving members of the Labour Party's National Executive Council (NEC), has lost his place on the body after a recount, following difficulties with the original count during last weekend's annual conference.

"The result of Sunday's election to the NEC in Wexford was challenged by one of the losers, Brendan Carr, who learnt that he had been defeated only hours after he had been told he was elected.

"However, Mr Carr was elected in yesterday's recount, along with another candidate who was deemed defeated last Sunday, Ted Howlin, brother of former minister, Brendan, in place of Mr Haughton and Adrian Kane.

"Last night, Labour Party figures said that Mr Haughton, who is unhappy with the way transfers were distributed, has "reserved his right" to launch a legal challenge to the outcome of the vote.

"The new NEC membership is: Paul Dillon (Dublin South); Brendan Carr (Dublin Central); Ted Howlin (Wexford); Ray Kavanagh (Dublin South East); Peter Keane (Longford Westmeath); Kathleen Lynch (Cork North Central); John McGinley (Kildare North); Marie Maloney (Kerry South); Jack O'Connor (Kildare South); Seán Ó Hargáin (Carlow/Kilkenny); Donna Pierce (Dún Laoghaire); Mary Quinn, (Meath East); Marie Sherlock (Dublin Central); Henry Upton (Dublin South Central) and Labour Youth member Neil Ward (Dublin North Central)." (*Irish Times*, 22.11.2007)

## Unity on the Left

### Report Of People Before Profits Meeting

Occasionally, the **Left** or rather the small **Lefts** gather to consider the state of the world. One such occasion happened in Cork on October 17, 2007. Before considering the attitude of the top table or the range of contributions from the floor it is worth noting what questions were posed on commencement of the gathering.

Some times beginnings in such meetings can put one off completely or lead to confusion or frustration. In fairness, the questions posed represented a more mature reflection than I had often experienced with the small **Left** in the past. Do we really live in a democracy? Are we really protected by the police? In terms of the broad number of regulatory state agencies what is the limit of their competencies?

More important, I suggest why we the general public might not alter or abolish some of these agencies and make them all the more accountable. Later in the discussion there would be an expansion of the consideration of moving from an impression of current predicaments to a point, where we may as citizens be moved to act in a manner that is structured to work for change but while retaining freedom, diversity and open communication.

The meeting was called by People Before Profits (PBP), a group until recently seen as a front for the Socialist Workers' Party but which may have the potential to evolve into something more than this. The PBP title seems to be borrowed from the post-Seattle protest movement worldwide which sought to counteract the Global Corporate message of no alternative to neo-liberalism—with the idea that our world is not for sale. The idea of self-education being combined with rallies and mass mobilisation whenever WTO or the International Monetary Fund met has been ongoing ever since and has progressed through Genoa and across the globe. Loosely arranged, it keeps a communications system based on the internet and other Twenty-First Century methods of moving messages to a generation which takes such technology for granted.

*continued on page 29*

Whatever excuse Willie Penrose had for echoing the continuous wail of the Dublin media to break the one remaining worthwhile vestige of the Labour Party—its links with the Trade Union movement, there is absolutely no excuse for Eamon Gilmore!

He is a former senior official with the ITGWU (SIPTU), he surely understands the reality that a life and death battle is going on between Labour and Capital (Globalisation) or does he?

Is he happy that only 35% of workers in the state are in Trade Unions? That half of that 35% (630,000 members) are in the Private Sector, which accounts for just 18% of the total workforce.

Gilmore states: "...that his party had to speak on behalf of an estimated three-quarters of the workers in the private sector who are not in trade unions" (*Irish Independent*, 20.11.2007).

If he was half a leader, he could have turned the Wexford conference into a powerful unifying force by appealing to those non-union workers to join a Trade Union—he "...intends to embark on a journey—physical and political to relearn Ireland"—he will learn that working people have never before faced such pressure or stress. Every weapon at their disposal is being harnessed by employers to undermine and circumvent Labour legislation, Employment laws and legally registered industrial agreements.

The use of Immigrant labour is a key weapon in this campaign by the employers.

The Trade Union movement is running to keep up! Yet, the new leader of the Labour Party refrains from attacking Globalisation, the Government, or the anti-Trade Union media, and basks in the glory of praise bestowed on him by the O'Reilly media in making the Trade Union movement his number one target at his first conference as leader of the Labour Party

### THE MASTER'S VOICE

We publish below two articles which go to the core of what the Wexford conference was all about, more so, what the prevailing establishment require of the Labour Party and where they see the role of Trade Unions.

James Downey, like his employer, Sir A.J.F. O'Reilly, are not opposed to Trade Unionism, provided the movement doesn't get above itself. And one thing is for sure, the *Irish Independent* believes that Trade Unionists have far exceeded their status by being tolerated by Taoiseach Ahern as an equal partner in the partnership process.

The ICTU, however, ignores at its peril the anomaly that Benchmarking has created and its consequences for other Trade Unionists.

### SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

"However, "Penrose's frustration is only the tip of the iceberg. The relative decline of trade unionism in the private sector has left it the creature of a public service culture that is perceived as old, outdated and inefficient by voters and workers in the private sector.

"Labour's association with the unions may well tar it with the same brush, despite Gilmore's legitimate claim that Labour made modern Ireland.

"Labour's problem is compounded by the growth in employee share ownership schemes in many privatised former public sector companies—which blurs the lines even further between public and sectional interest.

"If Labour is truly to be a party of the national interest, can it be tied to what, at the end of the day, is a minority interest group? Can you be critical about the cloying impact of social partnership on our democratic system when you are aligned to one of its players?"

"What Gilmore does on this issue will, again, be interesting to see—his room for manoeuvre is certainly greater than that afforded to many of his predecessors.

"Following the electoral funding reforms of the late 1990s and of the last few years, Labour is less dependent on trade union funding than ever before.

"However, Gilmore will have to weigh the balance of risk between a bold gesture, which would constitute a clear signal to the public that he knows Labour needs to change, and any move which would upset many of his own members.

"He will also recall that the last time a fundamental change in the party's relationship with the trade union movement was undertaken was in 1930; before then, the party and congress were a single entity.

"In 1930, they separated to allow the Labour Party to broaden its appeal, yet Labour's performance in the subsequent election was among its worst ever" (*Sunday Business Post*, 25.11.2007).

### DOWNY ADVISES GILMORE

"Much more significantly, Eamon Gilmore supported him. "What Willie was reflecting was a frustration of many people in the Labour Party that the trade unions have got too close to government." (*Irish Independent*, 19.11.2007).

"This could be read as meaning that they have become too much part of the establishment through the partnership process. But that was not exactly what either Mr Penrose or Mr Gilmore meant.

"They meant that the public sector unions have grown much too close to Fianna Fail.

"There is nothing new about either the phenomenon or the complaint. It has been a common grudge and worry for generations. What is new is that we should hear even a hint that Labour might revise its relationship with the

movement from which the party sprang a century ago.

"We should avoid reading too much into the fact that it has come into the open in this way. But several factors have combined to make it imperative that the party should engage in an exercise in revisionism; at the extreme, that it should consider breaking the link altogether.

"The party leadership is piqued by the cosy relationship that Bertie Ahern has enjoyed with the public sector union leaders throughout his leadership of the Fianna Fail Party.

"Specifically and recently, they have maintained a deafening silence on the issue that has infuriated more than half the country, the massive pay increase accepted by the Taoiseach and his ministers. They are not independent observers. Their members have been the beneficiaries of the benchmarking process which has created an enormous difference in average pay in the public service and the private sector. They are also certain of the pay increases under the "partnership" agreements. They enjoy far better pension arrangements. And they run no risk of having to change their status from privileged employees to self-employed.

"But the greatest anomaly is their unrepresentative character. As Mr Gilmore points out, three-quarters of private sector employees are not union members. Who represents whom, and what?

"The world of work has changed beyond recognition in the last decade, to say nothing of the last century or the last generation. So has the class system. Most people consider themselves middle-class. Indeed, most people ARE members of a vastly expanded middle class which in many ways, though not all, has more in common with the long-affluent parts of society than with the traditional working class.

"This new middle class naturally includes a majority of public service workers, who have shown themselves tough and skilful at adopting the old-time methods of the upper working class and who see their interests as well served by Fianna Fail's **corporatist** policies.

"But it also includes people with lifestyles, aspirations and educational levels more closely in tune with those of the traditional middle class and upper middle class. Labour's middle-class vote (higher than its working-class vote) comprises elements of both.

"It makes better sense for the party to appeal to these voters (for example on Green issues, where it will have an exceptional opportunity once Fianna Fail's relationship with their present partners ends in the normal way) than to try to present itself as a pale shadow of Fianna Fail. But it has also to ask itself, to what purpose?

"Both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael can get away with refusing to define themselves, with shunning revisionism;

*continued on page 30*



## Labour Hijacked

**THE LABOUR PARTY, in seeking to weaken the nexus with the Trade Union movement, is not cutting off its nose to spite its face—it's cutting off its bloody head to spite its body!**

**We know that Emmet Stagg made a vigorous case for the liberalisation of cannabis at the opening session of the 62nd National Conference in Wexford on the November 2007: "decriminalisation, regulation and taxation of supply of marijuana/cannabis" but we weren't aware that the party had distributed free samples of the stuff to the delegates or that the leadership must have hogged the samples all to themselves before getting stuck into the Trade Unions.**

"Union bosses have been accused of "cosying up" to the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, writes Fionnan Sheahan.

"Labour Party enterprise spokesman Willie Penrose, TD said that his party expected more support from top union officials who were busy "drinking from the best china" with Mr Ahern." (*Irish Independent*, 19.11.2007).

Party leader Eamon Gilmore endorsed this criticism of the Trade Union leaders by Mr Penrose at the conference.

The Labour leadership also signalled a shift in its relationship with the Trades Unions and a more critical stance of Union resistance to change.

"That mood clearly coloured the reaction to the fiery speech by the general president of Siptu, Jack O'Connor, who had advocated going into government with Fianna Fáil after the election. O'Connor spoke on Saturday of the danger to the future of social partnership posed by the increasing use of agency workers." (*Irish Times*, 19.11.2007).

With SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor sitting right in front of him, Mr. Penrose said Labour wanted something in return for its backing of Trade Unions.

"We in the Labour Party expect trade unionists to come out and support us and not be behind the door and forget about this palsy-walsy act with Bertie Ahern".

"With Bertie Ahern, drinking tea and everything else. Come out. Come out. Come out." (*Irish Independent*, 19.11.2007).

Mr. Penrose received rapturous applause from delegates at the conference when he made his remarks.

"Forget about the trips to Farnleigh and cosying up to Bertie. Forget about the trips to Merrion Square and drinking

from the best china. We're asking for the trade unions to come back to their natural home," he added later" (*ibid.*).

Adopting a tougher approach with the Unions, Mr. Gilmore said the party needed to redefine its relationship with the Trade Unions.

"Three-quarters of those workers in the private sector are not in trade unions at all. As a party we have to speak for them as well."

Mr. Gilmore said there was a disappointment in the party that the formal association between the Trade Unions wasn't matched by votes for Labour at election time.

"Afterwards, Mr O'Connor told the *Irish Independent* he wanted to remind Mr Penrose that social partnership was proposed by trade unions on the basis of co-operation with European social democratic parties" (*Irish Independent*, 19.11.2007).

Mr. Gilmore said that many in Labour were "*frustrated*" that Trade Union leaders "*have got too close to government*".

"There is a disappointment in the Labour Party that while there is a formal affiliation between Labour and the trades unions, that when it comes to election time the support the party might expect from members of trade unions does not come across" (*Irish Times*, 19.11.2007)

"Labour receives some 40,000 Euros a year from affiliated trade unions, mainly from SIPTU and Unite" (*Irish Examiner*, 19.11.2007).

### ATTACKING YOUR OWN!

The present writer had hoped to continue from the November issue, which focussed mainly on 'Vocationalism' or 'Corporatism' and the challenges facing the Trade Union movement.

Then along came the Labour Party conference and Party leader, Eamon Gilmore's need to "*redefine its relationship with the trade unions*".

The Conference that "*should never have taken place*" suddenly developed into one of Labour's most historical political gatherings when Willie Penrose commenced a virulent attack on the Trade Union movement and "*received rapturous applause from delegates*".

"A central theme of Mr. Gilmore's speech was that the future of Ireland and the world was determined by scientific and economic forces beyond political control. He said that the role of Labour politics was to be international and local without mentioning any national role or national polity" (*Irish Political Review*, Sept., 2007).

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