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Government Wins Opposition Undefeated?

The result of the election was that the Government won and goes on essentially as before with a Green tinge. This was almost inevitable for the very good reason that the real opposition to the Government was not standing in the election, i.e. the media led by the *Irish Times*. The official Opposition made no real impression and were merely tail-ending the real opposition and they were treated with contempt by it no less than it treated the Government.

All elections need a 'big idea'. Pat Rabbitte thought up '*But are you happy?*' Being charitable we will say no more about it. We assume he is not keeping any souvenir copies of it on his wall. Fine Gael wanted to create a '*Contract with the people*'. Again, the less said the better. Copies of that are also scarce.

The real big idea of the election was that established by the *Irish Times*—are you going to vote for another Fianna Fail crook as Taoiseach?

This was long-thought-out and well-planned for months—and indeed for years—ahead. All the paper's reporting was pure propaganda based on that theme before, during—and it is ongoing. There was not even a pretence at objectivity. Others followed suit. Vincent Browne now says he is very concerned that the issue of apparently 850,000 people who are officially near poverty level was not an issue. Vincent helped ensure this was not an issue. The latest leaked tit-bit from the Mahon Tribunal was much more important for him at the launch of the Fianna Fail manifesto. The poor will have to wait for Vincent's attention to refocus on them when he has a free moment from feeding, nay gorging himself, on these tit-bits.

The drawback this time with the Big Idea was that it made no sense to the electorate. The country officially was never better off and any sane electorate will not seek a change of government in that situation unless it is given some very compelling reason. The electorate very sensibly ignored the puff of smoke about the Taoiseach's house and his unorthodox financial arrangements during a trying time in his personal life. They took the decent, humane attitude of '*there but for the Grace of God go I*'. After all, it was not taxpayer's money that was involved and it was not even the Taoiseach's own money in any real sense. And what had it all to do with running the country? After that, there was nothing to do but return FF.

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Judge Mahon's Tribunal

"It represents a total travesty of my constitutional and legal rights to fair procedures to have allowed such malicious and ill-founded allegations to be made in circumstances which must have been calculated by the witness to do injury and damage to my reputation."

(Statement from Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Michael Martin. *Irish Examiner*, 9.6.2007.)

Minister Michael Martin's counsel, Dr. John O'Mahony, SC, reiterated to the Tribunal the "*gross injustice*" done to the Minister. But, as reported in the *Irish Times*, 13th June 2007, Tribunal Judge Alan Mahon "*defended the handling of last Friday's evidence*". The fact that Mr. Gilmartin retracted his own sensational evidence of giving a six-figure sum to Michael Martin to five figures didn't seem to move Mahon either way. (Martin himself acknowledges a four-figure political contribution.) But the counsel for the Tribunal, Pat Quinn SC, caught Mr. Gilmartin out in a number of inconsistencies subsequently—perhaps reflecting that while Chairman

Eyeless Towards Gaza

When Israel made a deal with Arafat's PLO/Fatah movement the idea was that the Fatah would come home from exile and make war on Hamas. Those were the unspoken terms of the Oslo Agreement. The PLO leadership came home—what remained of it after a long series of Israeli assassinations—but Arafat did not launch a Civil War with Hamas. He did not keep his side of the Agreement and his movement was therefore branded as corrupt by Israel, by the creator of the Israeli State, Britain, and by Israel's protector, the USA.

Then for a couple of years the story was that a peace settlement could not be made with the Palestinian Authority because it was corrupt. But attempts to sideline Arafat came to nothing because he had prestige with the Palestinian population, and rivals set up by the US and Israel had none.

Arafat died. An Israeli nominee, Abbas, became President. (Bush liked Abbas because he wore a suit.) It was then up to the Americans and Israelis to demonstrate their good faith by getting down to negotiation of a realistic settlement with him. But—Surprise! Surprise!—they didn't.

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Mahon protested that Dr. O'Mahony's "*comments*" constituted "*a personalized attack*" on his handling of the evidence on that day, he felt it advisable to fire-proof his performance on the day in question to some degree.

It was interesting that Minister Michael Martin choose for his Senior Council, the Cork-based Dr. O'Mahony—a long time Fianna Fail supporter. In fact, Dr. O'Mahony who qualified as a Medical Doctor but went on to qualify for the Bar, practices locally. I first came across him in the General Election of November 1982, when he was involved in a turf war

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Immigration: US Debates; Ireland Flounders
War Planes For Some; Fun For Others

The problem is that the real opposition does not have to take responsibility for failing to achieve their ambition this time and they can go on as before. Removing Taoiseachs is not easy—as they have said—and they have bigger fish to fry than winning a mere election. The electorate must be remade.

When the *Irish Times* organised its first round of the current Bertiegate saga last year, it also suffered a defeat when Aherne's popularity rose as a result of their 'exposure'. The *Irish Times* concluded: "So, we are to hold our noses" (4 October 2006) when Aherne survived in the Dail. Then, when opinion polls went in his favour, it asked: "What sort of people are we?" (13 Oct. 2006). The people are the problem for the *Irish Times*.

This is in spite of the fact that Irish society has been more positively reformed and transformed than any other society in Western Europe in recent decades. Insofar as any party or political body has overseen and orchestrated this transformation Fianna Fail has done so. It makes plenty mistakes and is atrocious on some issues but it can be safely said that, all things being relative, the alternatives to the party were, and are, even more atrocious at any stage. In overseeing this transformation Fianna Fail was simply following its history. In its first decade alone it prevented the effects of the Great Depression, prevented fascism

and war, and established constitutional independence. One would think that this could be easily gleaned from 'the journal of record', but it would take a lot of searching there to find these elemental facts stated. For the very good reason, of course, that the *Irish Times* was its deadly enemy at every stage. So there is nothing new under the sun.

The *Irish Times* was founded as part of the British body politic in Ireland. It did not deign to engage in, or with, the Irish body politic. It fought tooth and nail against every move towards Irish independence in thought, word, or deed. As it put it so well as late as last October, it held its nose when contemplating the Irish body politic. And it still does.

We must appreciate how clearly and blatantly the *Irish Times* does this nowadays. It is oath-bound, plans the removal of Taoiseachs, defies the law, and grants itself constitutional rights in opposition to existing constitutional rights. In short it has established the equivalent of *Crown Immunity* in the State. We have therefore a most unusual situation. Some people go on about it all being about the power of the media, and the framework of this idea is the situation that occurred in Britain with occasional near-monopoly ownership of the press and media. That is not the issue in Ireland. The monopoly problem is usually sorted out by the market itself

and/or the development of new media etc. Denis O'Brien may topple O'Reilly and someone else may replace him and that's all open and above board.

The problem in Ireland is that the leading newspaper operates outside and beyond the law and feels totally justified in doing so because its mission is not related to the Irish body politic. It serves another in current circumstances as faithfully as it ever did in other circumstances.

We need an Irish solution to this Irish problem.

PS

The greatest casualty of the Election is Pat Rabbitte and this is confirmed by the coalition with the Greens. What an absurd position for Labour to be in! To have been able to be in Government simply for the asking and to throw it away and to do so for purely ideological reasons. This is more than the end of Rabbitte—it is the end of the whole Stickey experiment in Irish politics. And good riddance. The Stickers ruined everything they touched. They helped set the North alight by misjudging both the nationalists and the Unionists. They encouraged the Northern nationalists in the 60s with anti-Partitionist rhetoric (while disarming them), thereby provoking the Unionists and leaving the nationalists as sitting ducks.

Their problem was that they were a product of the schemes of a part of the British body politic, specifically, the Communist Party of Great Britain's plans for Ireland. The CPGB lived by ideology and its role for Ireland was to flatter it as a non-member of NATO and thereby encourage it to be a possible support for Moscow in the Cold War. Ireland as such was of no interest whatever to them. It's great achievement would have been to have kept Ireland out of Europe—and only somebody lost completely to the real world could have seen that as being in Ireland's interest. Stickey ideology is blind to reality as Pat Rabbitte has proved conclusively.

Their view of Irish history was based on a lie created by Desmond Greaves to the effect that James Connolly was a Leninist. But Connolly did not know of Lenin and neither did Lenin know of him. Connolly was his own man through and through, as was Lenin, and their positions on WW I were totally different. Greaves concocted a story that they were the same. That is the source of the big lie that lies behind the Stickey view of Irish history. The Stickers allowed others to do their thinking for them and they were satisfied with a hand-me-down version of it. Pathetic.

Irish Labour Party

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Times* of 11th June 2007:

I first worked on a general election campaign in 1973. I have worked for the Labour Party on every one since then—nothing important, just knocking on doors, dropping leaflets, putting posters on lamp posts.

I took no interest in policy detail, believing it to be something that would be negotiated if and when the party was in a position to go into government, but I believed politics offered some possibility of doing something on issues I cared about: some measure of secularisation of Irish society; some redress in the balance of power between worker and employer; some measure of redistribution of wealth in a society where poverty was deep-rooted and endemic.

I did this every few years, thinking that if you expressed strong sentiments about what was happening in Ireland, then at election time you should do something about it, however minor. I even watched, open-mouthed, as Ruairi Quinn delivered a pre-election budget so tight-fisted that it said, in no uncertain terms, to his own electorate that if they thought they were going to get something from a Labour minister for finance they could think again. Then I went out and worked on the subsequent election.

I have now watched for 10 years as Ireland has transformed itself and Labour has sat on its hands refusing to take any part. It now looks as if that is set to continue for another five years. I don't quite know why this is; perhaps the party leadership think that anything so vulgar as the actual exercise of power is beneath their elevated sensibilities; perhaps, deep down, they actually believe the right is better at doing these things.

Either way, I have come to the conclusion that the Labour Party, as presently constituted, represents the single biggest block to progressive politics in Ireland, mopping up votes and then neutralising them. There are two options. Either the party must be destroyed, removing it from the way of social reform, or the party must be reformed. If the latter, then reform can only start with the removal of the present leadership; that is the only way a new beginning can be made.—Eoin Dillon, Dublin

Renditions Report

A reader informs us—

The *Council of Europe's* report on the gulags and torture centres in Eastern Europe is here—it's worth a read.

http://assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2007/EMarty_20070608_NoEmbargo.pdf

The Casement 'Black Diaries' - An Overlong Controversy In Outline (Part 3)

Please be kind enough to allow me to correct an error of fact reiterated in a letter (May 2007) about my part in the controversy: no extract from my book *Casement The Flawed Hero* ever appeared in the *Sunday Press*.

Your correspondent is, however, quite right when he says that my acceptance of the belief that the diaries were forged was not published. I did not find a publisher until 1984, by which time I had had plenty of opportunity to examine the original MSS and had had to change my views.

In the early days I was—like many others—hoping to expose a forger. But the evidence led me elsewhere. One thing did not change: the crime against Casement was the use to which his diaries were put. In that, at least, believers in the authenticity of the diaries and the forgery theorists are united.

Being quite sure of the genuineness or otherwise of the diaries was important to historians generally—to determine whether they were reliable primary sources. It was particularly important to me as I undertook research for my doctoral thesis: 'Origins and career of Roger Casement with particular reference to the development of his interest in the rights of dependent ethnic groups'—presented in 1979.

As your correspondent noted, by the time that Routledge and Kegan Paul had adopted me, the only correspondence that I had had published was the odd letter about Casement's anti-slavery career. One of these was to change my life, as it prompted the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society to say to me: "If you feel like that, why don't you join us?" So I did and before long was trying to emulate Roger Casement's African anti-slavery activities, not in the Congo but in Mauritania. Unfortunately I cannot claim to have had the same degree of success. **Roger Sawyer** (31st May 2007).

Justice Mahon's Tribunal

continued

between his friend, Sean French TD—the long time Jack Lynch devotee, and former Lord Mayor—and the hungrier Danny Wallace who took French's seat in Cork North Central. (French, who came from a Cork political family, always secured his seat by coasting in on the high transfers from the Cork Taoiseach, Jack Lynch.)

Many of us have always been very suspicious over the setting up of the Tribunals and I would go so far as to say that they are totally *without constitutionality or legality*. In a very good article in the *Daily Irish Mail*, 11th June 2007, Mary Ellen Synon contended that reasons for establishing the first Tribunal—The Beef Tribunal on Larry Goodman's multi-million beef industry (especially his exports which were to Arab countries like Libya)—needed investigation. It was pushed by—she contends—the Left, at a time when the Irish economy was in ruins and young people were fleeing in their hundreds of thousands to get jobs abroad. But why was a successful enterprise like Goodman's really targeted and by whom? Charlie Haughey was *stampeded* into setting up a Tribunal of Inquiry in 1991 over something as innocuous as Export

Credits. Who remembers that now? But Synon is wrong to attribute to the Left this appalling legacy. It was the media and certain figures in Dublin 4 who made the running and applied the heat day and night. It was **not** in Irish interests then nor now but it is legitimate to enquire whose hand was/is on the media tiller?

Unlike Ireland, Britain *suppressed* stories of corrupt payments by the giant arms conglomerate BAE Systems, and Premier Blair even made the Serious Fraud Office *drop* their investigation of large bribes paid to Saudi officials, citing Britain's national security being at risk! Now of course that the Americans have sniffed out the story—

"talk is rife that BAE's progress in the world's biggest defence market, the US could be blocked. It is in the process of buying Armor Holdings for £2bn. There are fears the US Department of Justice is planning to launch its own criminal investigation into the corruption claims against BAE and that politicians will oppose any further deals in America" (*Daily Mail*, 9th June 2007).

And, unlike the piddling payments *alleged* to have taken place in Ireland, the *Guardian*, 9th June 2007, reveals (now that the US has uncovered the story) the payments being revealed are *£1 billion* to Prince Bander of Saudi Arabia (that old friend of President Bush as shown in

Michael Moore's documentary). So, in the interests of their country's trade, the British shut down on their in-house financial shenanigans, while we—are *made* to set up useless Tribunals of Inquiry which have made many people very rich—all those parasitic media people, barristers and solicitors etc. And these bodies have thrown question marks over the names of good politicians and businessmen who brought the tiger into the Irish economy and for their pains have been subjected to abuse of hitherto unmentionable proportions.

Imagine a country where the makers of wealth have to answer to a quasi-judicial (?) procedure where, as Mary Ellen Synon attested, once they come calling, ignore: "the rules of evidence that a court would guarantee, leaving accusations against them untested, leaving charges against them vague and directing investigations that never end". Oh—and then being presented with an extortionate bill for their pains. Who could make it up?

As the Tribunal era chugs to an end and we survey the devastations left behind, I thought it would be an interesting exercise to look at the figures behind the Tribunals—those judges who have stood over such judicial incompetence and farce and try to work out how they came to be these people with such never-ending powers.

JUDGE ALAN MAHON

Any biographical profile of Mahon has the standard stuff but the *Sunday Business Post*, 27th May 2007, has the best by far. Judge Mahon, age 56, was born in Dublin on 3rd March 1951 into a proud legal family. He has three brothers and they were all raised in Tullamore, Co. Offaly and were educated by the Christian Brothers. He comes from solid Fine Gael stock and his father, a solicitor, was appointed a District Court judge by Liam Cosgrave's administration in 1974.

According to *Phoenix*, 10th October 2003, his "three brothers are the principals in the Tullamore-based legal firm of Hoey & Denning. His wife, Anne Marie Reidy, a solicitor whose family are solicitors and her two brothers, John and Pat Reidy—partners in the Newbridge law firm, Reidy Stafford—are well known in Fianna Fail circles. Both are close friends and allies of Charlie McCreavy and stood by the Fianna Fail dissident when he squared up to Charles J. Haughey in the dark days of the early 1980s". (This was the Fianna Fail Minister closest to the *ideology* of the PDs.)

The *Sunday Business Post* goes on to say that Alan studied in Clongowes Wood College and then trained as a barrister at the King's Inns in Dublin and was called to the Bar in 1976, practised in the Midlands Circuit and took silk in 1988. *In the same year, he was called to the English Bar.*

Phoenix adds that Mahon also had an extremely profitable relationship with solicitors Patrick V. Boland, which company has made over €14 Million from the army deafness claims. Judge Mahon was the principal senior counsel used by Bolands in these claims and is reckoned to have made at least €2 Million from such litigation. He also worked for a number of other solicitors in relation to this litigation, but then so did many legal colleagues who now also have risen to elevated positions.

DEFRAUDING THE REVENUE

When Mahon heard that *Phoenix* was going to run with a story about his Tax affairs, he made a statement that he had disclosed his settlement with the Revenue Commissioners when he applied to become a judge. He claimed that his default was as a "*result of miscalculation*". But as the *Phoenix* states—

"every year the Revenue Commissioners publish a list of tax defaulters who have coughed up settlements (including penalties) having come to the attention of the Taxman as the result of an investigation. The Revenue does not publish the names where the taxpayer has, in advance of any investigation, voluntarily furnished complete information relating to undisclosed tax liabilities. In 1992, one Alan Mahon of Roslevin, Mullacash, Naas, Co. Kildare—then a humble senior counsel—came to the attention of the Revenue investigators and as a result Mahon had to pay £20,000 in settlement, made up of £16,000 in underpaid tax and a further £4,000 in penalties."

Phoenix says that the "Revenue's own annual report for that year points out, "it must be recognized that there will always be a small minority who will try to evade their tax liabilities... It should always be remembered that tax evasion is not a victimless crime. The tax evader not alone deprives the Exchequer of revenue and places a greater burden on other taxpayers but also undermines legitimate business by obtaining an unfair commercial advantage".

Tax evasion is a crime.

The Mahon Tribunal was formerly known as the Flood Tribunal. Mahon was appointed as an ordinary member of the Flood Tribunal in 2002. This was because Justice Fergus Flood asked for extra members to be appointed. *Phoenix* continues—

"The Government found it difficult to attract suitable candidates and the net was widened. The appointment of Mahon and two other barristers was eventually announced in February last year [2001] although complications associated with promoting the trio to the level of Circuit Court judges further delayed matters and it wasn't until October 2002 that Mahon took his place on the Tribunal."

As the *Phoenix* asked: "*in appointing a tax defaulter as chairman*", has "*the Government shot itself in the foot?*"

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

The Constitution of Ireland does not mention Tribunals of Enquiry. However, Article 37.1 says

"Nothing in this Constitution shall operate to invalidate the exercise of limited function and powers of a judicial nature, in matters other than criminal matters, by any person or body of persons duly authorized by law to exercise such functions and powers, notwithstanding such person or body of persons is not a judge or a court appointed or established as such under this Constitution."

Thus Article 37.1 does not refer to Tribunals of Inquiry.

The Moriarty and Mahon Tribunals are investigating *possible* bribery and corruption which are in the area of "*criminal matters*".

Then again under the heading of "*Trial of Offences*", Article 38.3 of the Constitution says:

"Special courts may be established by law for the trial of offences in cases where it may be determined in accordance with such law that the ordinary courts are inadequate to secure the effective administration of justice, and the preservation of public peace and order."

The Tribunals are not "*courts*" and there are no plaintiffs or defendants before the Tribunals nor are the tribunals charged with the "*administration of justice*", so it would seem that Article 38 does not apply to Tribunals.

The Dail and Seanad are quite entitled to establish committees from among their members. Any body of persons is entitled to appoint a committee. But if the Dail and Seanad are not given powers by the Constitution to compel witnesses to attend and to answer questions, then how can the Dail and Seanad delegate these non-existent powers to Committees and to Tribunals?

The tribunals, as operated, seem to be intrinsically unlawful.

Michael Stack

Editorial Note

Mahon And The Leaks

If the Mahon Tribunal had been serious about its brief, it would have suspended its work when the *Irish Times* breached the confidentiality of its proceedings last year, on the grounds that its work was being compromised, until the Courts gave it adequate judicial protection.

That it did not do so, and instead continued to send out confidential documentation to up to 20 outside people, shows that it is functioning as part of a continuum with forces which have the aim of undermining good government within the Irish State.

Eyeless Towards Gaza

continued

Then elections were held for the Government, and Hamas won. If corruption was the problem, it was dealt with. There was no whiff of corruption around Hamas. If democracy was the issue, because it was fit that Fatah had bent the electoral process by means of corruption, that too was dealt with by the Hamas victory against the corrupt Fatah system.

It was obvious that the US/UK/EU, while berating Fatah as corrupt, would only deal with Fatah. Fatah was their agency in Palestine. It was corrupt, secular, and susceptible to Western pressure. Clean, democratic Hamas was not.

The response of US/UK/EU to the Hamas victory was to try to starve the population of Palestine by means of sanctions. Naturally Israel took part too—as well as withholding the taxation revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority. But chief responsibility for the attempt to over-ride Palestinian democracy by means of sanctions lies elsewhere—and Ireland is one of the responsible bodies, if only as a hanger-on of the others.

Ever since the elections the West has been preparing Fatah for an assault on Hamas. Britain, the creator of the whole problem, has been helping to train Fatah for the assault. Fatah had everything needed for success except popular support.

Hamas, cheated of the fruits of its democratic victory by the democracies, resorted to direct action. The British Foreign Secretary (Christian Socialist Margaret Beckett) condemns it for making a *coup d'état* because it took by force what it had won in a democratic election but had been denied.

The pretend issue, now that corruption and democracy no longer play, is recognition of Israel.

In the last Israeli election the party that won had the very daring policy of defining the borders of the state. Of course Olmert hasn't actually done it. Zionism lives by Parnell's famous saying that no man has the right to impose limits on the march of the nation. Of course the meaning is different. Parnell only meant the degree of self-government to be asserted. For Zionism it means the amount of territory to be conquered, settled and annexed.

Arafat did not abide by the implicit terms of the Oslo Agreement: he did not start a civil war. For Israel there were no terms to the Agreement. The territory

conquered from the Palestinians in 1948 was treated as part of Israel proper, the existing colonies in the territory conquered in 1967 were not questioned, and further colonisation was continued. And Oslo allowed Israel to build special roads to these new colonies. But, just in case Rabin had it in mind to restrict colonisation and recognise a viable Palestinian state, he was dealt with by a popular assassination.

Israel is an unknowable quantity.

Recognition of a Jewish State within the territory set out by the 1947 UN General Assembly Resolution would be treated as Anti-Semitism. That Resolution is sacred to the Zionists insofar as it established the principle of a Jewish State in Palestine, but its territorial provisions were broken on the instant, and on principle, by the Zionist leaders the moment the Resolution took effect in 1948.

Even within the territory allocated by the UN—essentially the Soviet Union, the US and its client states, and the states of the British Empire—for a Jewish State the proportion of non-Jews was so high (a little under half) that extensive ethnic cleansing was a practical precondition of the establishment of a Jewish State. And now the demand that those who were ethnically cleansed should have the right to return, even without restoration of their confiscated property, is held to be Anti-Semitism.

Donald Rumsfeld brought a refreshingly frank way of dealing with the situation into the international scene for a few years. He saw the Jews as doing what the Anglo-Saxons did in America—dominating a weaker people and phasing them out. And he could not see what was wrong with it. It was a welcome change from the European humbug in the matter.

There is of course a practical difference. The native Palestinians are not going under as easily as the native Americans did.

Richard Crossman was an influential British left-wing Socialist of the era in which the Jewish State was being imposed on the Middle East. And he was critical of Britain because, when it issued the Balfour Declaration and set about implementing it, it did not use its Imperial Power to ethnically cleanse Palestine of Arabs, but left it to the Jews to do it piecemeal in the way that is still going on. And it is proving to be a labour of Sisyphus, because the Arabs on their reservations have not stopped breeding and Jewish immigration is drying up.

The EU recently issued guidelines on what Anti-Semitism is. Seeing any similarity between what Zionism has been doing in Palestine for sixty years and

what Germany did in some East European areas for five years is declared to be Anti-Semitic. What is the significance of this? That Europe doesn't want to know itself—doesn't want to know what it was then and what it is now. It has become what Jane Austen was to slavery.

Palestine Update

The Daily Mail editorial of 15th June said that Hamas in Gaza had overthrown the elected Fatah Government. The rest of the media may not be such crude liars but the impression one gets is the same—especially from the *Irish Independent*.

It was Hamas and not Fatah which won the election. The group overthrown in Gaza was not Fatah. It was an independent faction called the "*Preventive Security Force*", led by Mohammad Dahlan. This force was armed and trained by American soldiers and, according to people in Gaza, British soldiers also.

Fatah soldiers and police were not involved. This can be demonstrated by watching TV pictures, most of which show them mingling with Hamas soldiers. Fatah are the ones with the green or the red berets.

There was some fighting in Nablus. I cannot say what this was about. But while I was there, there was a contingent of American-armed and -trained Palestinians from Jordan occupying one of the barracks. It is reasonable to assume that these were attacked.

The Security Minister, Hani Kawasmeh, resigned giving President Abbas the excuse for trying to dismiss the Government but the Government has decided to continue anyway. Kawasmeh was always pro-American and never pretended to be otherwise. He gave Dahlan's group the nod and tried to organize a Presidential Guard independent of the Government.

There have been several Fatahs for some time. Now, at least, it is all out in the open. Abbas may try to crush Hamas in the West Bank. He is unlikely to succeed without direct Israeli support, or even then.

The present unfortunate conflict should at least clear the air and permit Palestinians to speak with one voice. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of Hamas, seems to have grown into the job and been able to empathise with a Palestinian public well beyond his own organization.

Conor Lynch (16th June)

Allah Akhbar

"*Godbothering*" is a common pejorative term in secular Britain, and in parts of Ireland since the decline of the Catholic Church. What is really meant is "*people bothering*", though the botherers give the impression of bothering God as well. It normally applies to missionary Protestants who seem to feel their, usually new-found, religion as strange and wondrous as do the rest of us. They don't so much live in a world in which God is all-present, as in a world where he is ever-present. They are odd-balls.

A few years ago I began to get to know a man who was "normal" in every way. He was interesting at the levels of politics, sport, music, or books, as well as common or garden chit chat. Being away from my roots for a generation, I was astonished to discover that he was an active member of a sincere and quite strict Protestant congregation. He was in Northern Ireland where one can still develop and thrive in a religious environment without bothering God or anyone else.

That is the kind of environment that exists in Palestine and in the Middle East generally. It is to some extent like the environment in which I grew up. Though Catholic Ireland was far more pious than Palestine. Cork was less pious than Dublin or Limerick but God came into normal conversation regularly. When speaking of someone who was dead you said "*the Lord have mercy on him*". Words like "*please God*" or "*thank God*" or "*with the help of God*" peppered normal conversation. They do so also in the Middle East.

Religion provides a framework through customs and sets of rules within which people not only co-exist and relate to each other, but which puts few obstacles in the way of their personal, social and political development. This would be disputed by most people in a place like secular Britain. But such dispute is only valid if one expects everyone in the world to develop towards the values cherished or tolerated in secular Britain.

One can cherish these values only if, as Tony Blair recently said, you believe that: "*The British are special. The world knows it. In our innermost thoughts we know it. This is the greatest nation on earth*". On the other hand visits to Nottingham or Nablus on Saturday nights might provoke a more rational comparison of value systems.

Last year, at the end of the war, I was taken around the border villages of South Lebanon by a Druze man who had been involved in the evacuation of the families of Hezbollah soldiers. He said he could

not understand why the Israelis were so greedy since they worshipped the same God that he worshipped. Their mutual God surely would wish for everyone to have his fair share.

I said I doubted that most Israelis worshipped any God at all, and that the religious Jews were the least of his problems. Indeed many religious Jews were very anti-Zionist. I also felt that secular Jews were by instinct internationalist, and that Jewish nationalism was a dead end and would increasingly be seen as such.

The majority of Palestinian Arabs are Sunni Muslim. In normal conversation this is seldom obvious (apart from the dress of the women). A large minority are Christian—mostly Catholic or Greek Orthodox. (I found no internal dynamic in Palestinian Christianity which would produce Protestantism—any more than I've found it in Germany or Spain. But that is an issue for another place and time.)

On the other side, so to speak, the majority were secular Jews with a large minority of religious Jews and a smaller minority of Russian Orthodox Christians, economic migrants pretending at the port of entry to be Jewish. Most of the religious Jews that I met were in West Jerusalem—a vibrant and interesting place compared to the rest of the State of Israel.

Much is made in the West about the way that people, especially women, dress. It is a common sight in Jerusalem to meet women with scarves covering their heads, skirts down to their ankles and, even in warm weather, chunky jumpers several sizes too big. That is how religious Jewish women dress.

Nothing can be made of this for fear of seeming anti-Semitic, which it probably would be. And anti-Semitism is, at least for the time being, while it suits, said to be taboo by the powers-that-be in Britain and America.

No such inhibitions exist when it comes to criticizing the way that Muslim women dress. They wear headscarves, trousers, and tunics that look for all the world like mini-skirts. These forms are said by the clever secularists to be designed to make women less attractive to men. They don't! Indeed it is a reflection on Western men that they can't find women attractive unless they are half naked. As for the men, are they not also covered from collar to toe?

In Lebanon I was told many times that the impetus for wearing the Muslim headscarf came from the girls. It was a

kind of revolutionary statement. It often bothered the parents in the "*you can't go out dressed like that*" sort of way.

I found the sexual morality of the Christians and the religious Jews to be pretty well the same as that of the Muslims. Nonetheless an awful lot of sex happens. The difference is that in Palestine they prefer to bring children into the world within a safe and organized structure—the extended family and the clan.

I am what I am and not much can be done about that. But I could happily live in God-loving Palestine or Syria or Lebanon. I would be more than happy never to set foot in the secular freedom of England again.

Conor Lynch

President's Comments On Religious Freedom In Iraq

The following letter by Manus O'Riordan was submitted to the *Irish Examiner* on 6th June 2007

I refer to the murder on Sunday June 3 of the Irish-trained Iraqi priest Fr. Ganni and three of his deacons, after he had celebrated Mass in his native city of Mosul. Your report (*Irish Examiner*, June 5) records: "President McAleese, who met Fr. Ganni at Lough Derg, recalled a long conversation with the priest, in which he told her of the growing religious freedom for Christians in Iraq."

For fear that readers might conclude that this had been a recent conversation, it is important to quote the President's exact words, as recorded on RTE News on June 4:

"I remember the long conversation we had with him—it was before the Americans and the British invaded Iraq—and he telling me of the time that Christians were enjoying at that particular era. Actually, ironically, it was one of the best in their history because, ironically, under Saddam Hussein they were enjoying considerable religious freedom."

Much has since changed for what RTE reporter Joe Little now describes as the "war-weary and dwindling" ancient Christian community of the Chaldean Church.

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Why A United Ireland Has Lost Its Significance

In the years after the Civil War, while the restoration of the Republic of the Second Dáil was the overriding aim of the Republican Movement, two objectives summarised nationalism for Irish people generally. Those objectives were the replacement of English by Irish as the language of Ireland and the political reunification of the island under the Dublin government. Irish nationalism meant pursuing those, 'the Two National Aims'.

Although one might have expected the ending of emigration to be likewise a 'national aim', this was not the case, though it was something that nationalists hoped would happen. Its omission from the nationalist canon was due to nationalism being, in Ireland as elsewhere, an essentialist doctrine; a set of beliefs about the essence or 'being' of the nation. There was a guiding European image of a proper or normal nation as one that spoke its own language and that ruled its historically determined—occasionally also geographically determined—'national territory'.

So Irish nationalism was not concerned about the number of people who would live in the national territory. The Irish would be fully 'a nation once again' if, as at an earlier period of our history, a couple of hundred thousand Irish, speaking Irish, controlled the entire island. Nor indeed was our nationalism expressly about the material wellbeing of the Irish. Among Irish nationalists there would have been considerable agreement with Liam Mellows when, speaking for the men and women of the Revolution, he said: "We would rather have this country poor and indigent, we would rather have the people of Ireland eking out a poor existence on the soil, as long as they possessed their souls, their minds, and their honour. This fight has been for something more than the fleshpots of empires." The implication, subscribed to by all Irish nationalists, was that the Irish could have those essential attributes of free men and women in an Irish-speaking, all-Ireland republic, and by that means alone.

In the first decades of the new state the replacement of English by Irish as the spoken language made no headway. In fact, as the Gaeltacht continued to shrink, the reverse occurred. In the mid-1960s, under Lemass, the State declared as its future policy an undefined 'bilingualism'. In other words, the State withdrew support for language revival, in its original sense of language change. And, since the State had been the principal sponsor of language change, in theory and in fact, that 'national aim' ceased effectively to be a goal of

Irish nationalism. For the past forty years it has not been pursued or worked for by nationally-minded people.

The same fate seems now to be befalling the other 'national aim'. The Irish state has ceased to have a United Ireland as an objective. More precisely, it has accepted that a United Ireland will come about, if it ever does, only by the express will of a majority in the North, and it is not working actively to bring about such a majority. The only political party in Ireland which has a United Ireland actively on its agenda is Sinn Féin. In the May elections in the Republic, it was the only party even to mention a United Ireland in its electioneering; and in terms of deputies elected it lost, rather than gained, support. The days are gone when rhetoric about a United Ireland at a public meeting would receive a great deal more than a scattered clap. At most public meetings today it would receive not even that.

A United Ireland has lost the significance it once had as a national goal. It had that significance mainly because Partition was seen as a grievous national wrong calling imperatively for remedy, and a United Ireland as the only commensurate remedy. But Partition is no longer seen as a grievous national wrong. There are several reasons for this.

Our view of what constitutes the Irish nation has changed, and therefore our view of what Partition divides. Underlying classical Irish nationalism, as all European nationalisms, was the theory that all the inhabitants of the 'national territory', however defined, belonged to the nation; were members of it whether they wanted to be or not. But we have come to recognise that a nation consists not of those who inhabit a certain territory, but of those who by choice adhere to that nation in what Renan called a daily plebiscite.

So, in the North and in the Republic, we no longer believe that the Northern unionists are part of the Irish nation. We recognise, what their flags and national anthem have long proclaimed, that they are a British ethnic minority in Ireland. Consequently, it is no longer a simple case of Partition wronging our nation by dividing it politically. It wrongs our nation, but it is also a device which (crudely and excessively) recognises the self-determination of part of another nation. And that complicates the matter, because it has a whiff of just dealing, even if crude.

The political division of our nation is

only a superficial aspect of its existence. It does not amount to a division of the nation's life. Both parts of the nation are in constant touch with each other: through daily intercourse of many kinds in the Border counties, as well as through the Catholic Church, the main Protestant churches, the GAA, Sinn Féin and the IRA, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann, contacts between universities, Irish-language broadcasts and activities, and so on.

The Irish in Northern Ireland have ceased to be an oppressed people, discriminated against and ground down by a dominant majority, their nationality not formally recognised, and, as all of that, calling for rescue by incorporation in the Republic. In many respects, the Irish in Northern Ireland feel that they are doing very well for themselves, that they have, so to speak, 'won the war'. And in the Republic we see this and no longer regard them as a part of our nation which is oppressed and needing rescue.

Those three factors have contributed to Partition no longer being regarded by Irish people, generally, as a grievous national wrong. And accordingly, a United Ireland—as the proposed righting of such a wrong—has lost the significance it once had. But there is also a fourth reason for this change in our valuation of it; a reason which goes back to the concept which was at the core of modern Irish nationalism when it took shape.

That core concept was national sovereignty. Many European nations possessed it, Irish nationalists wanted it for their own nation. It consisted of an internationally recognised legal status of the nation and its recognised right to shape its life, and its external relations, autonomously. Increasingly, from the 1920s, 26-County Ireland won that sovereignty in both senses, and it realised it decisively by maintaining Ireland's neutrality in World War II. So a United Ireland signified extending this acquired full sovereignty to the part of the nation which was still deprived of it. But then, beginning in the 1950s, many European nations surrendered much of the nation-shaping or legislative part of their sovereignty to the European Commission in Brussels. And the Republic of Ireland did so in the 1970s.

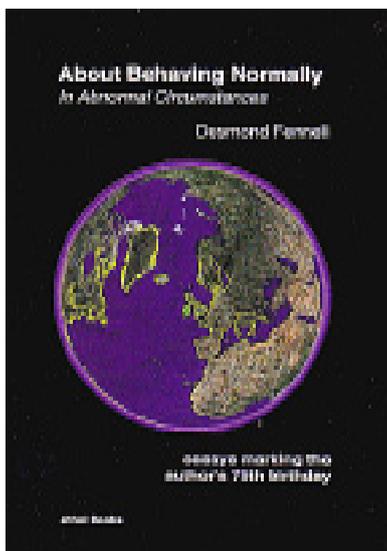
This entailed a decisive devaluation of the meaning of a United Ireland. No longer did that signify the extension of an effective national sovereignty from the Republic to the Six-County Irish. The Republic and Northern Ireland were now two West European territorial units which received most of their laws, not from Dublin or London, but from Brussels. The Republic, as indeed the United Kingdom, had ceased, in any real sense, to be even a parliamentary democracy: a state in which

the laws are determined directly by the elected representatives of the people. Add that the Republic, as one of the smaller and least armed members of the European Union, had effectively lost the ability to conduct an independent foreign policy; and that its growing economic dependence on American investment obliged it to provide Shannon Airport for America's wars. Add, finally and in summary, that if next week the Six Counties were to be added to the Twenty-Six, all these limitations on the free action of the Irish nation would continue to obtain.

Throughout Ireland, over the last thirty, twenty or ten years, people have noted, consciously or subconsciously, all these changes in the situation. Small wonder, then, that a United Ireland has ceased to figure for the Irish, generally, as a significant national goal. Inasmuch as it remains a significant goal for members of Sinn Féin and the IRA, that is not because they see it as any real advantage to the nation. It is because their allegiance to the long armed struggle, and to those who suffered and died in it, makes it seem imperative to them to work for, and some day to achieve, what that struggle was for, and what those comrades suffered and died for. But this particular significance that a United Ireland has for the Republican Movement takes nothing from the fact that it has lost any mobilising force for the Irish nation generally.

With this fading from significance of this second 'national aim' after the other one, language change, was abandoned forty years ago, Irish nationalism, as a living force, can be fairly said to have evaporated. That leaves us with an emptiness and a question. What is Irish nationalism to be henceforth? Every nation worth its salt has a nationalism: *a set of principles and goals guiding national action towards national advantage*. The Irish nationalism of history having brought us this far and evaporated, what are those 'guiding principles and goals' to be from now on?

Desmond Fennell



Book Review: About Behaving Normally In Abnormal Circumstances

Athol Books

A Curate's Egg

This book is another interesting collection of items by Desmond Fennell. He is clearly right in seeking to break down the rigid concepts that are taken for granted by historians about Europe and the West, and by the wider public, and are now a tool to keep minds firmly closed and operating along set, predictable lines.

He is refreshing in being clearly at home in Europe and has the attributes of a European intellectual, a rare species in Ireland. He also deals with basic unfashionable issues like procreation and gives food for thought on the consequences of the West's increasing inability to reproduce itself. The varied contents and format makes for easy reading.

INTELLECTUALS

I think there are some questionable aspects of Desmond Fennell's discussion of Ireland at the beginning of the book, when he deals with what he regards as a great lack of Irish writing about the world outside Ireland until his writing on various countries from the 50s onwards. The book does not dwell on this issue, but Desmond Fennell clearly considers it important. He says:

"Generally speaking, during the Revolution and the decades that followed it, the Irish saw themselves collectively through the prism of an inherited nationalism which in that period took its definitive republican shape. That nationalism depicted them as members of the essentially Gaelic and Catholic Irish nation that since ancient times had owned and inhabited all of Ireland, and was therefore entitled to exercise dominion over it as an independent republic. 'Essentially Gaelic and Catholic' paralleled British nationalism's view of its multi-ethnic monarchical nation as essentially Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. The Irish nation, thus immutably characterised and with 'anti-imperialist'

added, was in its nationalist vision further distinguished by something like a superior racial quality from humanity generally, as represented by the Anglo-Irish, the English and other foreigners. Its nature, thus effectively non-human, was superior to human nature because, while in worldly—intellectual and practical respects—its endowments might be less than the norm, in what really mattered—the spiritual and moral spheres—they were greater.

"It was a colonised nationalist vision, dwelling in unreality. Colonisation dispossesses a people of reality by taking from them the perception of themselves as human. More precisely, it induces them to regard themselves as constituting a version of humanity which differs radically from the norm, inasmuch as it is seriously deficient in those intellectual and practical faculties, and related autonomies, by means of which human beings tackle and control the world. Colonised by the English, the 'native' Irish shaped a nationalist self-image which took as given this effective dispossession of humanity. But in order to motivate them towards regaining their lost political dominion, that nationalist image transformed their non-humanity into a positive value by affirming the higher nature of spiritual and moral endowments and Ireland's more-than-human possession of these. Thus, Irish non-humanity became a two-tiered thing: an affirmed superhumanity resting on an assumed subhuman base. By not perceiving normal humanity as present in themselves, and thus appropriating it, the nationalists appeared to confirm the absence of man in Ireland which the English had alleged.

"The point to note there is the unreality of this Irish self-image and the logical consequences of that. People who are guided by an unreal idea of their nature use judgement, thought and language abnormally. The Irish, guided by their colonised nationalism, judged that, because humanity and its various cultural worlds—the Catholic parts excepted—were radically alien to the Irish nature, they lay beyond the competence and jurisdiction of Irish mind and word. (It was much as in the matter of government, where the asserted rightful dominion of the Irish was confined to Ireland and its offshore islands; so, too, in the matter of thoughtful language, where the 'related parts of the world' corresponded to our offshore islands.) And even those related, Catholic parts, though not entirely alien, were seen as connected only inasmuch as the Pope recognised them as Catholic; that is to say, in a formal manner, not intrinsically. That these were abnormal judgements for human beings to make is obvious, and that they led to abnormally restricted use of investigation, thought

About Behaving Normally In Abnormal Circumstances

Essays Marking
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and writing, not surprising." (p11-13.)

This is a pretty damning indictment of a people essentially living in a dream world of their own about themselves. The question that it begs is how could a people like this have achieved such things as winning a war of liberation, defeating its fascism and establishing an independent state during the 20th century which he acknowledges was the most reckless and bloodiest in the history of the world. They needed to have some confidence in themselves to achieve this but it seems over the top to paint a picture of the nation considering themselves superhuman to the point of total unreality. I think Desmond does the nation as a whole a disservice here. Surely, if "*Colonisation dispossesses a people of reality*", the actual overthrowing of that colonisation must redress the balance to some extent? In fact is it not the case that a vital prerequisite for overthrowing a coloniser is a sense of reality? The way Desmond puts it, *the question arises as to how any colony could ever free itself?*

Winning wars and establishing viable states is the ultimate test of collective human endeavour in the modern age. The increasing number of "*failed states*", i.e. destroyed states, twice over in some cases, all around us these days testifies to the fact that it is no easy task and certainly not one that can be done by peoples with illusions about themselves or the world. Confidence is certainly necessary, yes, but certainly not illusion. As for a feeling of moral superiority it seem to me that any nation that had objected to, and sought to limit, WW I was quite entitled to feeling morally good about themselves.

Probably part of the problem for Desmond Fennell, in not seeming to appreciate the achievements of independence and successful statehood, is the fact that the people who did it did not write sufficiently about it and explain themselves. I assume writing naturally tends to be the reality of things for writers. For example, Michael Collins played a large part in this project. How he did it was based on the answer he gave to a question he asked himself as a teenager in west Cork: "*...how such as island as Great Britain came to be the greatest power on the face of the world*" (*Michael Collins: Some Original Documents In His Own Hand*, Aubane Historical Society). He never wrote down the answer but he certainly must have found an answer as he helped bring that Empire to negotiate with him after a war with it, not much more than a decade later. When Collins lost the run of himself in 1922, his task was taken on by people like de Valera. Anyone who reads Dev's speeches, for example at the League of Nations, would see that he had a most realistic view of the world and of Ireland's place in it. National survival then, as now, was something akin to surviving in a crocodile swamp.

Sean Moylan. was one of de Valera's closest colleagues. Moylan found little time for writing, though a voracious reader. He had more important things to do. But by current literary fads Moylan passed the ultimate test of erudition and knowledge of all things worthwhile in the world—he was quoting Samuel Becket in the Dail over 50 years ago when dealing with—as far as I recall—butter or milk quotas. Becket was never put to better use. And, when Moylan put pen to paper, there was a most realistic strain to it. De Valera summed up the essence of the productive relationship and balance that should exist between reading, writing and doing things. Speaking of Moylan at his graveside in Kiskeam he said:

"Always thoughtful and meditative, in his later years he devoted his leisure to a wide reading of history and its philosophy, and brought to that reading the critical discernment of one who had himself, in his experience, encountered the problems, and understood the considerations, which determine decisions and action in all fields, military, political, economic and social" (18 November 1957, *A Millstreet Miscellany* (2), AHS).

If two representative politicians such as Moylan and de Valera had this "*critical discernment*" regarding theory and practice—the ultimate safeguard against unrealistic notions—then we can assume it was appreciated throughout the society. This is far from the picture of the society Desmond Fennell paints. And it begs the question—who or what is he describing above? I would suggest it is those who wrote profusely but who were essentially untrammelled by experience or responsibility.

THE MASSACRE MENTALITY

Speaking of modern massacres Fennell says of the mentality that produced them in the 20th century:

"This cast of mind derived, variously, from the Old Testament by way of a partly secularised Puritanism, from the French Revolution by way of Marxism-Leninism, or directly from the northern European racial theories of the late nineteenth century regarding Nordic and Aryan superiority over all other races—including Jews conceived of as a race. Moreover, in central and eastern Europe, once the Nazi-inspired massacre of Jews had got under way, it was underpinned by the traditional popular hostility to Jews of European Christians." (p105-6.)

This gives the impression that all modern massacres had separate sources equally responsible in some random way for the different massacres. The massacre that is always forgotten in the usual litany is that of WW1 the estimates for which can now range up to 20 million dead. That

War, as Desmond rightly says in another context, was engineered by Britain to put down Germany. Its spread by Britain to 36 countries in total, the way Britain conducted and concluded the war and the 'Peace of Versailles' ("*the peace to end all peace*") succeeded in reducing the world to its elemental forces of race, class and nationality and these are the forces that caused the massacres of the 20th century. Civilisation returned to the proverbial jungle.

WWI and its conduct was the flowering of the English non-conformist, Puritan concept of Good versus Evil and is the source therefore of the resultant horrors. And none of the other modern ideologies came close to it, in terms of responsibility for those horrors and they are derivative from it. It is worth noting that reducing man's behaviour to Good versus Evil is a heresy in Christian/Catholic terms and some of its consequences are plain for all to see in Iraq today.

BRITAIN

But Britain's responsibility for such things is always very obscure in Desmond's writings. For example, its colonial empire is described in the most benign terms. I think Desmond thinks it is a remnant of the "*colonised mind*" in Ireland to apportion blame to Britain for those things that nationalists traditionally did. But the fact remains that the latter were more right than wrong in this. Desmond says that :

"England had a period of political and cultural impact in Africa and Asia, and, logically, English historians record this. Beginning much later, from 1916 to 1965, Ireland made a similar if lesser impact. In fact, during that period, apart from Britain and the US, the main international setting of Irish history was colonised and semi-colonised Africa and Asia. But Irish historians, with a narrow insular perspective, which they do not exhibit in dealing with our history in the sixth to ninth centuries, have failed to record and narrate this."

It is mind-boggling to compare Ireland's role in the world after 1916 as in some way similar to that of the history of the British Empire in the world.

I did not know that we had a similar impact after 1916 as the English had had on India, Kenya, Malaya, Yemen, Egypt, etc. etc. As the Irish Army was not involved, were the missionaries armed to the teeth and massacring freedom fighters, for example? If not them, who else could have had a similar impact on behalf of Ireland?

Dare I suggest that in this regard it is Desmond's view that is somewhat unreal, if not indeed an expression of another version of the "*colonised mind*" he castigates earlier in his book?

Jack Lane

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

'DESTRUCTION' OF THE BOOK OF KELLS!

The Longfellow is grateful to Tim O'Sullivan of the Roger Casement Society for drawing his attention to an act of 'vandalism' being perpetrated by Trinity College Dublin.

A *Sunday Tribune* report of 3rd June 2007 describes the "dastardly" deed:

"Experts at Trinity College Dublin are confident of discovering new secrets about the Book of Kells when a two-year laser analysis of the manuscript reaches completion in the coming months.

"Little is currently known about the book, which was written 1,200 years ago and has resided at TCD for the past 246 years. But for the past 18 months, scientists have been using 'Raman spectroscopy' to analyse some of the minerals used to make the colours in the tome. It is hoped the technology will prove that substances used in the manuscript have come from all over the world... suggesting extraordinary trade routes for the ninth century."

But as everyone 'knows' who has taken an interest in the 'black diaries' of Roger Casement 'Raman spectroscopy' is a 'destructive' test. That was the view of Dr. Audrey Giles in her report on the 'black diaries' which were used to undermine the campaign for clemency of the great Irish patriot in 1916. It was for this reason that Giles had to content herself with a handwriting analysis. And even this was considered inadequate. James J. Horan concluded:

"As editor of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* and the *Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners*, I would NOT recommend publication of the *Giles Report* because the report does not show HOW its conclusion was reached" (see *Irish Political Review*, February, 2005).

And yet now we hear that Trinity College experts are blithely going ahead with the 'destructive' technique of Raman spectroscopy on the Book of Kells, a technique which could not be used on the 'black diaries'. Could it be that the secrets of the British state are more sacred than the 1,200 year old holy book?!

THE GREEN PARTY

Would Roger Casement have been in the Green Party if he were alive today?!

It was noticeable that the party announced the overwhelming vote in favour of government participation 'as *Gaeilge*'. And its initial justification for entering into talks with Fianna Fail was that participation in government was something that its "gallant allies" in continental Europe had done. Respect for traditional culture combined with a continental perspective is a potent combination.

The participation of the Green Party in Government is a very significant development in Irish politics. The party is no longer on the fringes and it is likely that it will be an element in the formation of Governments for many years to come.

Vincent Browne on his radio show (12.6.07) suggested that the party had sold out on its

principles. His idea was that it should first build a constituency for its policies and then enter Government (presumably after a majority of the electorate had seen the light). But as Goethe said: "first there was the deed" (in contrast to the Biblical view: "in the beginning there was the word"). And there is no doubt that in modern politics obtaining state power is a deed which impresses the electorate much more than any amount of fine words.

THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS

The Progressive Democrats are in still in the game. Their future may be uncertain but they are not finished just yet. Pat Cox correctly pointed out that participation in Government was essential for the survival of that party. And it has retained the Health portfolio.

THE LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party ruled itself out of the game. It could have gone into coalition with Fianna Fail and therefore ensured the demise of the Progressive Democrats by depriving them of the oxygen of state power. But Pat Rabbitte has decided that Labour's destiny is to be the junior partner of Fine Gael and there has been no serious opposition to that view within the party.

For the first time in its history the Labour Party obtained more middle class votes than working class votes. This fact masked its long-term decline. The middle class vote is notoriously volatile. Many such voters might have been put off by the 'flaky' reputation of the Greens. But the latter's participation in Government will most likely assuage such fears in the next election. The prognosis for the Labour Party is not good.

FINE GAEL

Despite the pronouncements of the Fine Gael leader after the election that party was never really in the game. But Enda Kenny insisted that he could be Taoiseach. He even refused to accept that Ahern was the most likely to be Taoiseach after the election result. But the numbers indicated that he would need to pull more than a Rabbitte out of the hat. Could he have been contemplating coalition with Sinn Fein? In 1948, after all, Fine Gael was in coalition with Clann na Poblachta whose leader was the Chief of Staff of the IRA.

But no, it was all sound and fury signifying nothing. On the day Ahern was elected Taoiseach, Kenny was reduced to carping on the sidelines. And Trevor Sargent responded effectively to the carping:

"If you wanted to be in government you would have talked to Sinn Fein. You do not want to be in government."

When the opposition raised the issue of the Taoiseach's finances in the Dail Sargent responded that it was "strange and difficult" to listen to Pat Rabbitte and Enda Kenny raise such questions in the Dail when they had avoided doing so in the General Election.

Sargent did raise the issue during the election and when it failed to make an impact he moved on. That's what leaders of professional political parties do.

FIANNA FAIL

On the evidence of the first few days the present government will be successful and last its full term. At present the Greens don't look like a party that is going to wobble. But if they

do threaten to walk out, Ahern can rely on the PDs and independents. And he can rely on the Greens if Harney doesn't deliver on health. Ahern is not one to close off his options and in the very unlikely event that both junior partners pull out, the Labour Party will come in to play again.

Fianna Fail is a remarkable political party. Throughout its history it has managed to attract the most dynamic elements of the society and harness them in its political development. The alliance with the Green Party might be its most interesting and fruitful relationship.

Ahern has been the longest serving Taoiseach since de Valera. He has been both lucky and skilful. He was lucky to have inherited policies which gave birth to the Celtic Tiger and peace in Northern Ireland. The groundwork was done by the Haughey Governments, in which Ahern was an important player. And it was Haughey that broke the Fianna Fail taboo against coalition government in response to the setting up of an independent electoral commission, which made it almost impossible for a single party to achieve an overall majority. But Ahern has been the consummate practitioner of Fianna Fail led coalition governments and has brought the last two such governments to full term.

THE IRISH TIMES

On the occasion of his election as Taoiseach for a third term Bertie Ahern honoured *The Irish Times* with an article outlining his thoughts on the challenges of the new Government. The newspaper responded by publishing a Martyn Turner cartoon immediately below the article portraying the new Government as a "tired old cabinet" with "woodworm" and a "lightweight front", which could become "unhinged by the Tribunals".

What a nasty small-minded little newspaper!

THE LONG FELLOW WAS WRONG!

There was one aspect of the Long Fellow's election commentary which was wrong. He criticised *The Irish Times* commissioned TNS MRBI polls for docking five percentage points off the Fianna Fail vote. But it turns out that this was a valid method of predicting the outcome of the election! The problem is that Fianna Fail supporters do not vote as assiduously as other voters. (Bertie Ahern admitted this in a comment reported in *The Irish Times* on 12.5.07). This might reflect the fact that its support comes from the working class, which has lower voter participation rates than other classes.

5 percentage points is a massive slippage. For every 9 votes that Fianna Fail should win it is giving 1 vote back to all other parties. In political terms it represents the difference between leading a coalition and being able to form a single party government.

Fianna Fail should seriously consider applying resources to encourage greater working class voter participation: in the party's own interests and in the interests of the democratic life of the country.

The TNS MRBI opinion polls during the election were the most accurate of all the opinion polls. Its three polls showed a consistent upward trend in support for Fianna Fail. On the Monday before polling day its opinion poll (after the deduction of the 5 percentage points) gave Fianna Fail 41% which was very close to what it actually won in the election.

The accuracy of *The Irish Times* commissioned opinion polls makes the rest of that newspaper's coverage ("melt down manor" etc etc) all the more inexcusable. ■

Labour Representation: Some Background

For close on thirty years this journal was associated with a movement which attempted to make the Six Counties part of the democratic political system of the United Kingdom, so that Catholics and Protestants could engage in political action within the party politics of the state. The Northern Ireland 'parties' were not, and could not be, anything more than expressions of the communal antagonism on which that pseudo state was based.

That movement originated on the Catholic side and included many people of Republican background. Over the years it also attracted some support from the Protestant community. It was disbanded in the early 1990s when a number of eminent people joined it for the purpose of giving it a Unionist twist.

That movement lobbied both the Labour and Tory Parties on the issue. The Labour lobby group was called the *Campaign For Labour Representation*. In the late 1970s the CLR invited Paul Bew to address one of its monthly meetings in Belfast. He had just published a book about Northern Ireland, jointly with Henry Patterson, in which he did not mention the fact that the devolved government in Northern Ireland had been required to function outside the democratic political system of the state. He was asked to explain how that could be right, and why he thought what the CLR was attempting was wrong. But he was then in the high mode of Althusserian Marxism, within the Official Republican movement (Stickies), and could not bend his mind down to the trivial matter of the detail of representative government. He spent much of the time criticising a minuscule group called BICO, which, judging by what appeared in the media, had absolutely no influence. In fact he seemed to be obsessed by it. All he said in criticism of the CLR was that it was proposing a solution, and solutions were "*ideological*", i.e. not scientific.

Bew went on to be made a Professor, and he has now been made a Lord for services rendered to—something or other. As Professor he became political adviser to the Ulster Unionist Party leader, Lord Trimble. A little over 20 years after his dismissal of the CLR he proposed in the *Guardian* that the Labour Party should admit Northern Ireland residents to membership as a Unionist gesture of support for Trimble, who was coming under pressure from Anti-Agreement sentiment in his own party.

This matter cannot be understood

unless the particular meaning of Unionism in Northern Ireland is grasped.

The CLR—which generated considerable momentum in Northern Ireland until it was effectively sabotaged by Unionism around 1991—had the object of eroding communal ("*sectarian*") politics through involvement in the democratic party politics of the state. Its object was not to "*maintain the Union*", and it did not support 'the Northern Ireland state'. It pointed out that Northern Ireland was not a state, and said that its concern was that the Six Counties should be included within the democratic system of the state, which happened to be the British state.

The SDLP and its supporters within the British and Irish Labour Parties were fiercely hostile to the CLR and declared it to be Unionist. If it had been Unionist, it would have been of no concern to them because it would have had no Catholic support—and in fact it would not have existed, because at the best of times it had little Protestant support.

The Unionist Party was hostile to it no less than the SDLP.

The Unionist Party was an agency of the Unionist Council, which was the collective body of 'the Unionist Family', as the Ulster Protestant community referred to itself without embarrassment until very recently. Its purpose was to maintain 'the British connection' by means of the Northern Ireland system—a political system connected with the state, but outside the democracy of the state.

At the source of Unionist hostility to the CLR, and to the Tory lobby group, the CEC, was an apprehension that involvement by the Protestant community in British party politics would erode its communal solidarity, diminish its obsession with the demonology about Papism, and thus open the way to a United Ireland.

The CLR, lobbying for the extension of the Labour Party to Northern Ireland, did not disagree with the Labour policy of the time, which was "*unity by consent*". Its only position was that, pending consent to Irish unity, the region should be governed through the democracy of the state. In the late 1980s Dr. Boyd Black, who had been active in the CLR for many years, suddenly resigned from it on the ground that he could not agree to the principle of unity by consent. This seemed to us to express an apprehension that, unless the possibility of unity by consent was ruled out, consent might be forthcoming.

By 1990 the CLR was developing strongly in Northern Ireland, and had

a strong presence in the Labour Party. At that point an emigre Unionist MP in the Labour Party, Kate Hoey, who had recently become associated with the CLR, established a rival body called *Democracy Now*. This canvassed Protestant members of the CLR and attracted most of them into it, got sponsorship from the *Daily Mirror* and other sources, and launched itself at a lavishly-funded gathering at the Labour Party Conference, at a meeting festooned with Union Jacks. The issue was thus made Unionist and died.

Dean Godson was unfortunate in the timing of his massive biography of David Trimble. It was published at the moment when Trimble was becoming a political has-been.

Trimble in defeat suddenly became an advocate of British party organisation in Northern Ireland, having opposed it until he had made a shambles of the Unionist Party and saw it overtaken by Sinn Fein. And Godson took up the matter in the *Times* on June 7th, in an article entitled *At last, Ulster voters can have a say on their rulers*.

The article is hung on a visit to Belfast by British Education Secretary and Deputy leadership contender, Alan Johnson, at which he made a statement on the issue. Johnson was a member of the CLR for many years (when a Trade Union General Secretary) and seemed to understand that it was not Unionist, but he went along with the Union Jackery by which Kate Hoey wrecked it. It lay there as a dead horse for fifteen years, but now he apparently sees some point in giving it a kick, in order to distinguish himself from Peter Hain, who wants to let it lie.

Godson writes that "*Labour's ban owed much to the fear of offending nationalist Ireland*". But it was not just "*Labour's ban*". The Six Counties, in the act of being cut off from the rest of Ireland and retained within the British state, was excluded from the political life of the state by a consensus of all parties, even though it was clear what the consequences would be. And in those times Britain positively relished giving offence to Nationalist Ireland.

Given Partition, good government of the Six Counties required their inclusion in the political life of the state—but in the moment of Partition they were for the first time excluded from the political life of the state.

The purpose of that bizarre arrangement was to provide a means of exerting continuing British pressure on the part of Ireland that had to be let go. And it has proved to be a very effective means of doing just that.

Godson refers to a law-suit to make the Labour Party accept N. Ireland residents into membership. That was broached

within the CLR in the late 1980s. It was opposed by the majority, who held that it was in conflict with the political lobbying which was steadily gaining ground. But a minority, with Graham Gudgin and the late Derek Peters to the fore, were insistent about it and pressed ahead with it regardless—and in the course of it became part of the Unionist tactic which wrecked the political movement.

The matter was argued out at the last major meeting of the CLR in Belfast. It was put that the state had not set up the bizarre Northern Ireland system without knowing what it was doing, and that it was not resisting the CLR agitation by all the means in its power without having a positive purpose for Northern Ireland which was incompatible with democratisation, i.e. leverage on the Republic. Peters and Gudgin rejected that view with indignation. It seemed important to them to believe that the state had done all that damage to the Six Counties without knowing what it was doing.

Unionism And The Academic Boycott Of Israel

On Wednesday, June 13th, the *Guardian* carried a full page advertisement (on page 22). At the foot of the page was the slogan *Stop The Boycott*, and an electronic address:

www.stoptheboycott.org.

The boycott in question is that by the UCU (University and Colleges Union—the union of NATFHE and the AUT—the National Association of Teachers in Higher and Further Education and the Association of University Teachers, which absorbed the Polytechnic teachers' union). It is a boycott of institutions of higher education in Israel—all of them, and not just those directly involved in supplying the military with physical and psychological support.

The headlines to the advert are: **Bad for Britain. / Bad for academic freedom. / Bad for Palestinians. / Bad for peace.** None of these points is explained—possibly they are on the website, but there is, here, a full 'Berliner'-sized page for them to be addressed.

There is also the following legend:

"We the undersigned condemn the recent decision of the University and Colleges Union Congress to promote a boycott of Israeli universities as the

actions of a small and unrepresentative minority that flies in the face of academic freedom and is bad for Britain. We therefore call on the General Secretary to honour her pledge to ballot all of the UCU's 120,000 members so that the true voice of British academia can be heard."

There are a lot of holes in the above argument. Every Union Congress, whether of lecturers or lorry drivers, has an 'unrepresentative' aspect, in that it is attended by the activists, the people who are committed to Trade Unionism. However this boycott is by no means an arbitrary or a recent event: it was mooted long before being implemented and Union Branches had plenty of time to consider mandating their delegates to vote otherwise. What the well-heeled advertisers cannot admit is that the academic boycott of Israel is one that resonates with people well beyond the militant left.

Most of the "undersigned" are Jewish. (There is nothing remotely sinister about such a matter—Israel is after all The [one and only] Jewish State—they have every right to oppose the UCU's decision. Though it is reasonable to ask if they would have taken the same attitude if a punitive attitude had been taken to academic institutions in an Arab, or any Muslim state.)

The most striking thing about this advertisement is the number of Ulster Unionist academics who have appended their names: Prof Lord Paul Bew, Prof Arthur Aughey, Prof Henry Patterson, Prof Liam Kennedy, Prof Greta Jones (Lady Bew). All these are from QUB or the University of Ulster.

There is also Dr Denis MacEoin, who teaches at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Some of these might object to the 'Ulster Unionist', or even just 'Unionist' description but it is difficult to define them otherwise. They are hardly signing this document because they cling to an old-fashioned Irish Nationalist fondness for elements of Zionism.

The Irish Times And "Herr Hitler"

A Postscript

Conor Cruise O'Brien's 1965 exposure of the pro-Nazi sympathies of the *Irish Times* was highlighted in the April issue of *IPR*. O'Brien had drawn particular attention to the occasion on 4th March 1933 when the *Irish Times* hailed "Herr Hitler" as "Europe's standard bearer against Muscovite terrorism". Such sympathies continued until such time as it became apparent that Hitler's own preference for an Anglo-German understanding - by which Empire and Reich might rule the world between them - was not going to materialise. Only at that point did the pro-British imperialist priorities of the *Irish Times* lead to its editor R.M. Smyllie belatedly turning his back on his erstwhile Nazi heroes.

Evidence of just how long Smyllie's enchantment with Hitler lasted has emerged as a by-the-way in the recently-published book by Gerry Mullins entitled *Dublin Nazi No.1—The Life Of Adolf Mahr*. On pages 63-66 Mullins quotes the following from the *Irish Times* on 21 December 1936:

"A very enjoyable Christmas Party was held by the German Association in Dublin at the Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin, yesterday afternoon... The Reverend Wilhelm Tanne said... they could be glad that their country was not only strong and united again today, but there was no room for bitterness there... If a stranger asked how that had been done, and what was the recipe for it, one must answer that there was only one recipe for a German—Adolf Hitler, who had put into effect what could not be done by books, and certainly not by newspapers... The party concluded with the singing of *Deutschland über Alles* and the (Nazi anthem) *Horst Wessel Lied*... Among those present were... Mr. R.M. Smyllie."

Mullins comments:

"It is unfortunate that the newspaper style of the era did not include the name of the reporter beside the report; furthermore, it is written in such a way that it is difficult to know where the Reverend Tanne's

Mahon Transcripts

Daily transcripts, a day or two old, from Mahon can be called up with ...

<http://www.planningtribunal.ie/asp?ObjectID=310&Mode=O&RecordID=468>

Delightful stories, such as how star Tribunal witness Gilmartin found rival developer Owen O'Callaghan in his wardrobe (or thought he did!), can be read in full on this official site.

opinions end and those of the reporter begin. It can be assumed, however, that the editor of the *Irish Times*, R.M. Smyllie, wrote the piece: not only is he listed as one of those who attended the event, but he was also a German-speaker. The speeches were all delivered in German... The *Irish Times* had always regarded itself as 'the newspaper of record'; at the time, it was owned and run by an Anglo-Irish elite. From the report of the Christmas gathering, it seems that he was still by that time under Hitler's spell, but during the war he became anti-German and pro-British..."

"The Christmas party in 1937 followed a similar formula, but different from the earlier one in some important respects. Both the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* reported (20 December) on the celebrations, which took place in the Gresham Hotel on O'Connell Street. The *Irish Independent* reported that the 'Swastika and the Tricolour draped the balconies', and the *Irish Times* said: 'Smaller flags embossed with the Swastika were evident along balconies and on the tables'... 'The German Minister, Herr Eduard Hempel asked those present to rise and salute the leader and Chancellor of the Reich. With right arms raised in the Nazi salute, the gathering sang *Deutschland über Alles*, the *Horst Wessel Lied* and *A Soldier's Song*.' It is difficult to believe that Eamon de Valera and his advisers would not have noticed this public display of support for a foreign power. Those in attendance were listed in the newspaper reports; the attendees included... R.M. Smyllie."

An *Irish Times* celebration that the self-proclaimed "newspaper of record" would now no longer wish to record.

Manus O'Riordan

Report

Hornes On Display

There is yet another WWI exhibition. This one is entitled, "The Great War Revisited: Ireland and World War 1", is in Trinity College Dublin and runs until 31st August.

The exhibition was featured on the *Pat Kenny Show* (presented by Tom McGurk) RTE Radio 1 on 13th June. Professor John Horne (Manus O'Riordan's antagonist at last year's Irish Labour History Society meeting) is associated with the exhibition, as is the poet Gerald Dawe who is launching an anthology of Irish war poetry.

McGurk interviewed Horne, whose line is that there are two separate Irish "discourses" or logics about WW1 (the implication being that both republican and imperial discourses are equally valid); and that WW1 happened because a European power got too big for its boots. McGurk challenged him on the freedom for small nations issue and Horne floundered.

Pat Muldowney

A Michael O'Riordan Letter On History And Politics

INTRODUCTION

On 11th November 2006 [on the eve of what would have been my late father's 89th birthday] I received an email from a New York friend, Arieh Lebowitz, informing me:

"Gail Malmgreen—my girlfriend, who is an archivist at the Robert E. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University, found something she thinks might be a letter from your father in the collection of the Transport Workers' Union. It was apparently in a file of material associated with Michael Quill. At any rate, she asked me to scan images of the first and last pages, and to send 'em to you to see if they possibly are from your Dad. So, please take a look at the attachments, and get back to me. It's my understanding that if there is a family connection, she'd be glad to have the letter copied and sent to you."

I promptly replied:

"It most certainly is a letter from my father—I recognised his handwriting immediately and then, of course, my grandparents' address. The signature 'Mike' slightly puzzled me at first until I realised he was writing to a Yank. For I can also tell you who the 'Dear Bill' was: Bill Gandall, a Lincoln Brigader, to whom my Dad became very attached in Barcelona. So, it goes without saying that I would love if Gail could send me the full letter!"

On 7th March, Gail Malmgreen herself, as Associate Head for Archival Collections at the Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at NYU, placed the following notice, under the heading of "O'Riordan letter found", in the *Abraham Lincoln Brigades Archives Digest*:

"Members may be interested to know about a newly discovered letter written by Irish volunteer Michael O'Riordan to his good friend, US vet Bill Gandall in 1939. The letter was just discovered, not in any of our ALBA collections, but in the papers of Mike Quill, long-time President of the Transport Workers' Union of America. The handwritten letter is actually 24 pages long and gives a detailed account of the labor movement and political struggles in Ireland, from a Communist Party point of view. There are also scattered references to their shared experiences and comrades in Spain. The letter can be found in the TWU Records (Wagner Archives)."

By 24th March Arieh Lebowitz had completed the painstaking task of making jpeg scans of every single page of that letter and forwarding them to me, one

by one. That this letter had been found among the TWU records was indeed most appropriate. In 1934 Irish Republican and Communist workers in New York's Transit System had founded a new union and, inspired by the legacy of Larkin and Connolly's ITGWU, had named it the TWU. Its International President was Michael J. Quill, from Kilgarvan, Co. Kerry, while the President of its key section, New York Local 100, was Austin Hogan from Cork. In 1937 Quill went on to be elected to New York City Council, as an American Labor Party candidate. Returning home briefly to Kerry for his wedding during Christmas 1937, Quill also made a particular point of meeting up in Cork with a 20 year-old Michael O'Riordan who was about to set out to fight in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War.

My father's 1939 letter is here reproduced in full, the personal as well as the political. For the personal was itself political. In that letter he expressed his concerns about the welfare of two of their female comrades from the Spanish War, Jeanne from France and Amparo from Spain itself. I have no knowledge of their subsequent fate during the Second World War. I do, however, at least know the surname of Amparo, whose escape from Barcelona ahead of its occupation by the Fascists was greeted by my father with such relief, though coupled with ongoing concern about survival under the harsh conditions of the camps into which Spanish refugees had been herded by the Government of the French Republic.

My father, having carried the flag of Catalunya across the River Ebro on 25th July 1938 in the final offensive of the Spanish Republic, had been wounded on 1 August during the ill-fated battle for Hill 481 outside the town of Gandesa. Hospitalised along with British volunteer Jack Jones and Irish volunteers Eugene Downing, Andrew Flanagan and Tom O'Brien, he was to form a very close friendship with another wounded Brigadista, the New York Jewish volunteer Bill Gandall. [When later stationed with US forces in Northern Ireland during World War Two, Gandall was able to send some parcels of provisions down South to my father while the latter was imprisoned in the Curragh Internment Camp 1940-43.] As my father had not yet fully recovered from his wounds, he was unable to participate in the final parade of International Brigaders through the streets of Barcelona on 16th October 1938, but he watched it from a window. It was also

in war-ravaged Barcelona that he passed his 21st birthday on 12th November, just weeks before his evacuation from Spain on 7th December 1938.

After my father had been wounded on the Ebro, he cabled his mother to tell her not to worry, that he'd pull through. The post office worker delivering the telegram to my grandmother venomously thrust it at her, saying: "*it's dead he should be! He's fighting against Christ!*" This was a double hurt for a deeply religious mother. So, the gift that my father brought my grandmother home from Barcelona was to be particularly welcome to her. It was a cloth portrait of a characteristically ornate Spanish statue of Mary and her infant son Jesus, being serenaded by a guitarist. But this was a rather unique religious icon, for the Madonna and Child were adorned with a plentiful supply of ribbons that bore the red, yellow and purple colours of the Spanish Republic!

My father had also brought home a second copy of that same cloth portrait for himself. In the bottom left corner it was signed "*A mi querido camarada Miguel (To my dear comrade Michael), Bill Gandall, NYC*". At the top right corner it was signed "*Suerte en tu trabajo (Good luck in your work), Sola Rodríguez*". But it was the top left corner that carried the date 5.11.38, coupled with the warm dedication of "*Siempre te recordaré con cariño (I will always remember you with love and affection), Amparo Niemro*".

Anthony Beevor's 2006 history, *The Battle For Spain—The Spanish Civil War 1936—1939*, notwithstanding its relentless anti-Communist thrust coupled with a sustained animosity towards the Spanish Republic itself, tells it like it was following the fall of Barcelona to Franco's troops on 26th January 1939. Beevor quotes the following account of a Young Communist militant, Teresa Pàmies:

"Of the flight from Barcelona on 26 January, I will never be able to forget the wounded who crawled out of the Vallcarca hospital. Mutilated and covered in bandages, half-naked despite the cold, they pushed themselves towards the road, yelling pleas that they should not be left behind to fall into the hands of the victors. Those who had lost their legs crawled along the ground, those who had lost an arm raised the other with a clenched fist, the youngest crying in fear, the older ones shouting in rage and cursing those of us who were fleeing and were abandoning them".

But flee they must. All fighting had ceased, yet Beevor recounts:

"The nationalists and their supporters killed some 10,000 people in the first five days of 'liberation'. Italian [Fascist]

officers were shaken by these massacres in cold blood."

As Franco's brother-in-law Serrano Suñer told the special correspondent of the Nazi newspaper *Volkischer Beobachter*,

"The city is totally bolshevized. The decomposition is absolute. The population, whose deeds I myself have checked up on, is morally and politically sick. Barcelona and its citizens will be treated by us in the way one would attend to someone who is ill" (pp. 377-8).

Amparo was among the 450,000 Spanish Republican refugees—including 170,000 women and children—who, over the next few weeks, embarked on a horrendous mid-Winter climb over the Pyrenees mountain range. But their reception by the French Republic was to be no less horrendous. The reference in my father's letter to the sand holes of the refugee camps indicates some knowledge of what awaited them, yet it is doubtful if he was then aware of the full scale of horrors that they contained. Beevor recounts:

"The places to which the defeated republicans were sent consisted of stretches of coast, wet, salty and without any protection from the wind. The first camp to open, in the middle of February, was at Argelès-sur-Mer. It was little more than a marshland divided into rectangles of a hectare apiece and surrounded by a perimeter of barbed wire guarded by Senegalese troops. There was a shortage of drinking water, many resorted to drinking sea water, and nothing was done to provide washing facilities or latrines. The food they received was scarce and of bad quality. The men suffered from scabies and lice. The 77,000 refugees, many without proper clothing, belongings, money or food, had to build huts for the sick and wounded. The rest dug into the sand to shelter from the wind. Only after the first few weeks were they given drinking water in cans and wood to make latrines next to the sea ..."

"In an attempt to improve the wretched conditions in the large camps, the French authorities tried to move some of the inmates to the initial sorting camps of Arles and Prats de Molló in the mountains, but they had to stop the practice because too many died literally of cold. The camp of Vernet-les-Bains... was a punishment camp from the First World War cut off from the outside world. About 50 hectares in area, and divided into three sections all surrounded by barbed-wire fences, it held those republicans the French authorities considered 'a danger to public safety', among them... 150 International Brigaders segregated in a sector known as the 'leper colony'. Under the Vichy government the camp passed to the Germans, who rebuilt it according to their own concentration camp guidelines. Yet Arthur Koestler wrote [in 1946] that

'from a point of view of food, installations and hygiene, Vernet was worse than a Nazi concentration camp'. In such conditions it was predictable that many thousands of refugees should have died" (pp. 410-3).

Beevor also reproduces the eyewitness account of one inmate of such a French concentration camp who had been a comrade and personal friend of my father in Spain. In his 1979 book *Connolly Column*, my father recalled the final month of preparation that led up to the Ebro offensive:

"[At the end of June 1938] some of the Irish were sent with others to a 'Cabos' (Corporal's) School in the nearby (Catalan) town of Marsá. There many of them were to meet for the first time a Soviet Volunteer. He was Emil Steinberg, the instructor who lectured on many aspects of warfare. To the combined classes of Spanish and varied English-speaking soldiers he spoke in Russian, being translated into English by a comrade from the Canadian Battalion of Ukrainian extraction, whose translation in turn was rendered into Spanish by Manuel, Mexican-American officer attached to the 'Lincolns—Washingtons' US Battalion. At the conclusion of the course there was a 'breaking-up' celebration which developed into an international concert at which the two best vocal renderings were judged to be the traditional ballad, 'Kelly from Killane', by an Irish volunteer (naturally), and 'Stenka Razin', the song about the famous Russian peasant fighter, by Emil" (p. 125).

Some years later my father was in fact to have a Moscow reunion with his friend Emil, where he clarified that his surname was actually Shteingold, and that this International Brigade and Red Army veteran was of Latvian Jewish origin. Beevor was to retrieve from the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow—and proceeded to quote in detail—a document entitled *My Last 10 Days In Spain* by Emil Voldemarovich Shteingold, in which my father's teacher and comrade bore witness as follows to his treatment in the largest French concentration camp of them all, Saint-Cyprien, where up to 90,000 men had been herded:

"Imagine a gloomy sandy spit of land with no vegetation, which was about two kilometres long, and about 400-500 metres wide. It was washed by the Mediterranean Sea on one side and ended up in a swamp on the other. This area was fenced by barbed wire and divided into square corrals. Machine-guns were placed along the perimeter of the camp. A latrine was erected on the beach, which consisted of a long log fixed on piles, under which the tide flowed back and forth. This was how we were welcomed by republican France with its socialist government. As a sign of gratitude for this warm welcome, we decided to call

the latrine area 'The Daladier Boulevard'... The sand looked dry, but it was only dry on the surface. We had to sleep out on it in groups of five to ten men. Some of the greatcoats and blankets we put underneath, and with other coats and blankets we covered ourselves. It was not a good idea to turn from one side to another, as the wet side would freeze in the cold wind, and this could lead to pneumonia ... Wounded and sick men were brought here too. The mortality was very high, it reached 100 people every day." (p.411).

Some international context has hereby been provided for the political analysis in my father's 1939 letter. I will let the letter speak for itself, without either taking issue with, or adding any further arguments in support of, whatever of his formulations might be considered controversial. I have also retained my father's use of capital letters as his own form of emphasis, and left his few errors of dating uncorrected. "Warts and all", as Cromwell had first put it.

But there is one element of false hope in that letter which came to nought within a fortnight of being written. In his letter my father referred to his renewed IRA membership as a CPI "sleepers", and how he could not openly criticise IRA policies with which he disagreed. He presented the IRA's own logic for the 1939 bombing campaign in England, but we can infer—from the suggested welcome in his statement of belief that the campaign had already come to an end by that April—how he had been in fundamental disagreement with it. He was, however, mistaken in assuming—notwithstanding IRA Chief-of-Staff Seán Russell's wishes towards that end—that it had been undertaken with the support of Nazi Germany [as previously Russell had sought military assistance from the Soviet Union, being ideologically indifferent in the most honest-to-God manner]. The January 1939 IRA bombing campaign had actually taken Germany's intelligence services by complete surprise. Indeed Tom Barry had effectively sabotaged an earlier effort by Russell in that direction. For, driven as much by his own firm anti-Nazi convictions as by his fears that Russell was about to embark upon a type of campaign to which he himself was utterly opposed, Barry as the then IRA Chief-of-Staff had in fact paid a 1937 visit to Germany in order to scotch Russell's earlier plot.

Jim O'Regan was a fellow-Corkman who had been a comrade-in-arms of my father in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War. I know from conversations with my father that he had tried to dissuade O'Regan from volunteering for that 1939 campaign. Even though Jim himself may not have fully agreed with that campaign—unlike my

World War Commemorations

A letter by Commandant Edward Horgan was published in the *Irish Times* on 13th June, with a criticism from Sean Coleman appearing on the 14th. However, letters from Jack Lane and Tim O'Sullivan continuing the argument, which appear below, failed to find publication

EDWARD HORGAN (COMMANDANT, RET'D), NEWTOWN, CASTLETROY, LIMERICK:

The colourful first World War commemoration ceremonies at Islandbridge in Dublin and at Messines in Belgium are truly sad when we examine the false heroism attributed to those who died in the most useless and wasteful of wars.

President McAleese spoke of the Irishmen from different traditions "who had a common cause . . . a goodness, a graciousness, a kindness, a love, a cherishing of one another. . . it is a shared memory and we need such shared memories".

Balderdash. Most of the Irish soldiers who fought and died in that war were conned into joining up by Redmond, Carson and the Lloyd Georges of this world. The "shared memories" or myths that our President tells us we need would be better replaced by some home truths. The lies that fooled people into fighting in Flanders included fighting to "defend small nations" such as Belgium (but don't mention the Congo). This was the "war to end all wars", a war of liberty against tyranny.

Such lies have reappeared in recent times to justify the Iraq war—weapons of mass destruction, a war against terror, bringing freedom, peace and democracy to the Middle East. Tony Blair lied that the war in Afghanistan was partly to cut off the supply of drugs to the West. These wars, like the first World War, brought only death, more tyranny, torture of prisoners and crimes against humanity.

Most of the Irish soldiers who were lost in the first World War died miserably, not honourably. They went, scared, "over the top" because they would have been court-martialled and shot if they refused. The President fails to mention all the young German soldiers who were needlessly killed by Irish young soldiers. The youngest Irish "soldier" recorded as killed in action was a 12-year-old bandsman from Waterford. Surely that was child abuse, not heroism. Those who survived by deserting were the wise ones, and there were few heroes.

In order to get men in large numbers to do stupid and morally reprehensible things, you first have to find ways of getting them to switch off their minds. Imagined or invented shared memories, flags, bugles, pipers and uniforms are essential parts of this process of turning men into military morons. When war memorials are being called "peace parks", the dogs of war are being trained for unleashing. Lest we forget, again.

JACK LANE:

Sean Coleman is 'truly sad' that Edward Horgan's freedom to express his sentiments was 'purchased' with the lives of those killed in WW1 (letters 14 June 2007). It would indeed be sad if it were true.

However, I had the impression that the rights of all citizens in this country to express their sentiments were purchased with the lives of those who fought for our political independence here in this country.

Furthermore, I have the distinct recollection that those who fought for Britain in WWI were to the fore in preventing that independence, i.e., Messrs, Maxwell, French, Strickland, Percival etc and all the Auxiliary forces that they employed.

Have I got this all wrong?

TIM O'SULLIVAN:

Sean Coleman (June 14) attempts to sell us the official British view of the Great War, a war supposedly fought for the sake of small nations. The "small nations" line was part of the "Iraqi WMD" of the time, a useful expedient to manipulate the public.

As the burgeoning international crisis of summer 1914 was slipping inexorably into open warfare, the attitude of the British Empire to the widely expected invasion of Belgium by Germany was never spelled out and remained unclear. When the Germans opted for what appeared militarily their best option and invaded Belgium, a pained cry of moral outrage was orchestrated.

Mr Coleman appears enthralled by material on WWI emanating from Birmingham University, and a certain Prof. Sheffield. While he stands in abject awe, mouth open with cap in hand transfixed by the very eminence of the great house of learning across the water, I hope he will not be too offended if others of us are less impressed. Could it be that empires, even those long past their zenith of power, as a matter of course, maintain an infrastructure of ideology and propaganda?

Should we, as a political community much inclined to proclaim its independence, develop a capacity for independent thought? Without a capacity for independent thought political independence becomes little more than the freedom to ape.

father—his IRA loyalty and discipline was unconditional and remained intact. Arrested and charged with conspiracy and possession of explosives, O'Regan was tried at London's Central Criminal Court in October 1939 and sentenced to 20 years' penal servitude. When my father married my mother Kay Keohane in November 1946, their honeymoon took the form of a journey to Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight in order to visit Jim O'Regan and his fellow Republican prisoners.

My father's mistaken view that the bombing campaign had come to an end by April 1939 was understandable, as not alone had there been a lull in activities, there had also been mounting opposition within the ranks of the IRA itself. Moreover, Russell had departed on a fund-raising mission to the USA on 8th April. His chosen successor as Chief-of-Staff, Stephen Hayes, was, however, to set the bombing campaign in motion yet again on 5th May. And so it continued throughout that Summer. Although targeted at property and not people, the campaign precipitated its own downfall on 25th August when a bomb in Coventry resulted in five civilian deaths. The campaign fizzled out after that.

My father took four full days to write this 24 page letter to Bill Gandall in April 1939, beginning in black ink, next switching to pencil when the ink ran out, and then switching back to newly obtained blue ink. In the wake of his direct personal experience of 1938 as a year of savage warfare, this 21 year-old veteran of Spain was obviously experiencing 1939 as a year of considerable unreality and frustration. He therefore welcomed the opportunity of writing such a letter as an expression of political release. I am extremely grateful to Gail Malmgreen and the Wagner Archives for permission to publish it for the very first time hereunder.

1939 was also to my father's last year of liberty for quite some time. On 22nd February 1940 he was imprisoned without trial in the Curragh Camp by an order signed by the Minister for Finance (and future President of Ireland) Seán T. O'Kelly. He would not be released from internment by the Minister for Justice, Gerald Boland, until 9th August 1943. But that is quite another story in its own right.

Manus O'Riordan

Freedom, which if it could develop into a fight for Proletarian Freedom, would be the salvation of the British Working Class who were also oppressed by the enemies of Ireland and the Irish people—British Imperialistic Feudalism.

The French Revolution had its re-action in the Rising of 1798 here; again in 1847, '67; and then a newer generation was born which was to rise in Revolt in 1916. The Easter Rebellion of 1916 was a little bit more than a National Rising. Three years previous, the capital of Ireland, Dublin, had experienced the greatest battle in its Trade Union History. The Irish T.G.W. Union [the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union] went about to organise the workers of Dublin in the Transport System (which was owned by a Single Family who controlled and still does the most important Industries in Ireland). The Bosses of the Tramway Coy. undertook it to make it a test case of the strength of Ireland's Union which had just been founded, and to do so organised a "Lock Out" of all their Workers. The Union took up the challenge, and the Bosses resorted to the usual tricks, Military and Police (native) smashed up the Union meetings, batoned the pickets, arrested the Union Leaders; and even murdered some workers in their assaults with loaded rifles and batons on the Workers meetings. (The old usual story etc.).

The Union was then led by two leaders, Jim Connolly and Jim Larkin. The latter was a determined Agitator for the Workers' Rights in Ireland and in his day rendered invaluable help in organising the working class here and is still in public life here, but is not the "Old Firebrand" that he was. But it is the former whom the credit of inspiring and leading the workers goes to. He had spent many years in U.S.A.; joined, organised with the Socialist Party and the I.W.W. [the Industrial Workers of the World], and came back to Ireland a Socialist and Marxist. He wrote many books on the economic causes of the previous Rebellions and worked also to secure coordination with the purely National Leaders, Pearse and others. (I have just run out of ink, so must continue in pencil). Connolly, seeing that the Union and the workers could not secure any redress against the Brutality of the Military and Police, decided to place the workers in a position that they could forge the weapon of Resistance—armed Military Resistance; so he founded the Irish Citizen Army who had as their objective the "Irish Workers' Republic". Sometimes it was called just the Republic; other times the Cooperative Commonwealth. The I.C.A. was confined to Dublin and was a little active in the North of Ireland (still at present under British control) and did not spread to the other parts of Ireland because of absence of an intensified Class Struggle such as they had in Dublin. Then came the World War of 1914. Britain introduced conscription

THE 1939 LETTER

37 Pope's Quay,
Cork City,
Ireland

April 23rd, '39
24th, 25-26

Dear Bill,

I was ever so glad to receive, via Tom [O'Brien] a few days ago, your letter, and also the parcel of literature. *Muchas Gracias*. [many thanks, Sp.] Well, I was beginning to think that you had forgotten all about the guy who used, once upon a time, eat all your bread rations etc. Your letters and literature mean a lot to me, isolated now as I am from 100% Party Activity, even from the activity of a tiny Party here in Ireland [the Communist Party of Ireland] which, because of its numerical strength and the lethargy prevailing here, cannot be up and doing as it should be. Still, I suppose there is no unit of the Party but had to undergo the same difficulties and misunderstandings in their beginnings.

I am so glad that you like my letters and find them interesting. I hope I will be fully capable of conveying to you the situation here in Ireland in regards to the Opinion of the Irish People to the Class Struggle, relations with Britain, the International Situation etc. You asked me about Partition and Ireland's position if England goes to War against Hitler aggression. You have no doubt read of the sabotaging which is being done in

Britain by Irishmen, members of the I.R.A. [the Irish Republican Army]. (No doubt you will remember I told you that on the Party's Instruction I had rejoined the I.R.A.). The tactics of sabotage which are now being used in Britain are an attempt at the present time of Tension, Crisis and War-preparedness, to intimidate or force the British Government to withdraw the British Troops from 6 of the 32 Irish Counties. (Roughly they hold _ of the area of Ireland still).

Well, for you to understand all about the action taken by the I.R.A. in that respect, it would be necessary for you to know a little bit of Irish History, so I am going to give you a concise review of Irish History:

Ever since away back in the 12th century when Britain conquered Ireland "for to civilize it and restore peace there", (Sounds familiar; *a de la* Hitler style, doesn't it?) there has been in every generation of Irishmen an armed attempt to fling aside the yoke of British Imperialism and Domination in our country. Always it has been a solely national effort and always has been an abortive one, but has been of a sufficient determined type to focus the attention of even Marx—who was in his period busily writing his '*Das Capital*'—but had time to comment on the "Irish Question": in the style that an armed Rising of the Irish People for National

in Ireland, but that was resisted and opposed by the people, so they dropped it. Then they gave out a half promise that with the participation of Irishmen as volunteers for the British forces fighting in France, Ireland would be granted Home Rule (a form of constitutional government within the British Empire). Thousands of Irishmen joined the British Forces and Native Irish Regiments were formed in them. Some went because of the lure of the pay, others of a hatred of the Kaiser, who they believed was torturing the people of "Poor Catholic Belgium", others because the uniform and gallant marches the British recruiting bands used to play etc. When the half promise of Home Rule was given, the British Officers in Ireland threatened to revolt against the Government of Britain and that they would hold Ireland in the Empire whether the Empire liked it or not! They were members of the Orange Order, which is the Irish equivalent of the Klan, Silver Shirts, Black Legion etc.. They formed in the North an Orange Army and ran guns openly to supply and drill that Army. Connolly and the National Leaders then saw the possibility of arming and then began the equipping of the Citizen Army and of a new body, the Irish Volunteers, who were simply concerned with National Freedom.

Connolly was not only a brilliant socialist and Marxist, and author, but developed himself into an efficient Military Commander. He studied in his own time and way the technique of street fighting and openly declared that, with or without the help of the Irish Volunteers, the I.C.A. would rise and fight. The Irish Volunteers had in the meantime become a nationwide organisation and was much stronger than the I.C.A.. They were negotiating with Germany for arms, for the projected Rising in Ireland, and plans were made for the assistance of German guns (Back again in Ink) but the German Submarine bringing the guns was discovered and the Rising, which was to be an all-Ireland one, was confined mainly to Dublin and was not so much an attempt at military success as it was to be a sacrifice of the men of the I.C.A. and of Volunteers to re-awaken by their deaths the feeling of national resurgence of the Irish People: a Provisional Government with Pearse the National Leader as President and Connolly and 6 others as members. Connolly was General Officer commanding the Dublin area. They issued a Proclamation proclaiming "the right of the Irish people to National Freedom, equal rights and opportunities for all Irish Citizens—the Wealth of Ireland belonging to the people of Ireland".

Connolly himself was responsible for the clauses which were inserted in their Declaration guaranteeing Social Justice for the Irish People. He did not suffer from the illusion that a free Ireland would be sufficient. He coined a slogan for all those who believed National Freedom was

incomplete without freedom for the Workers. His slogan was "The Cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour, so the Cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland".

The Rebellion was a failure in a military sense, owing to the overwhelming superiority of the British Troops. Connolly was wounded during the course of the fighting; badly wounded. The British Court Martial sentenced him to death. He was taken in a bath-chair, wheeled out in front of the Firing Squad and then shot as he sat in the chair. ("God Save the King!").

Well, the British thought that by shooting all the leaders of the Rising, imprisoning the participants, establishing Martial Law, they had pacified the Irish people. But then they found the more they coerced the Irish people the more they resisted. Then "Sinn Féin", a new organisation, began to forge ahead, uniting all the people in a drive for National Freedom and was able to organise to such a pitch that it set up its own Parliament or Dáil, with its various Departments including "Sinn Féin Courts". The I.C.A. and Irish Volunteers were more or less amalgamated in a new body, the Irish Republican Army. They, by the tactics of guerrilla warfare, disarmed the Police and Military Patrols, harassed them, burned their barracks and took over their duties as Police etc..

Then England (British Government) hit on a new plan. It recruited as an Auxiliary Force to the British Military in Ireland a body which, because of their Police-cum-Military duties and uniform, were nicknamed as the "Black and Tans". They were mostly comprised of the Scum of English Jails, the Lumpen-Proletariat and Professional Thug, and were let loose on the Irish People to murder, burn and destroy in a campaign of Terrorism. They were just about equal in ruffianism and murder to Franco's Moors. The I.R.A. met them and, in the course of the war which then ensued, developed into a Military Body capable, by the use of the tactics of "Hit and Run", to harass the "Black and Tans", so that eventually the British "condescended" to have truce parleys. Delegates went from Ireland to London to agree as to a truce or treaty. Lloyd George and the then British Cabinet presented their terms with an Ultimatum—that if the Treaty of theirs was not signed by the Irish Delegates, Ireland would become subject to "an immediate and more terrible War" (Note again the Hitler Style). The Irish Delegates weakened in the face of such threats and the Treaty (which partitioned Ireland, kept her in the British Empire, created Two Puppet Parliaments subject to the British Privy Council etc) was signed. The Delegates returned to Ireland and laid the Treaty before the Dáil (Parliament). The Dáil split on the issue of the Treaty, so likewise the I.R.A..

The "Treatyites" believed that such a

measure of freedom was good and could be used as a stepping stone to 100% National Freedom. The "Anti-Treatyites" looked upon it as a sign of National Surrender and was not a victory but a defeat for the Irish people. Gradually the rift grew wider and then a series of incidents began which led up to a Civil War. Irishmen fought against Irishmen. The British were gleeful and supplied the "Treatyites" with guns and assistance and said that the "Free-Staters (the Treatyites) were keeping Ireland for the Empire with an economy of English lives". The reason, I believe, for the Civil War was because the Irish people in one way wished to finish with war; and Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. did not see the advantage of reviving the ideals of Connolly in regard to Social Freedom; they were too busy in the matter of National Freedom. But it is worthy to mention a young leader of the "Republican" (the anti-Treatyites) who, before he was executed, drew up some notes defining the Freedom of Ireland (He was Liam Mellows, after whom I believe there is an Irish Workers' Club named in U.S.A.) as Working Class Freedom, and urging that if the Republicans were victorious that they should set up a "Workers' and Working Farmers' Republic".

The Republicans were defeated and a "cease fire" order was issued by De Valera (the present Premier), who led the Republicans. He ordered them to "dump their guns but to hold them again for another day when the fight would re-commence".

Jailing and Coercion were the rule by which the "Free-State" Justice enforced the King's Law in Ireland; a Free State Parliament proper was established and all Deputies and Members had to subscribe to an Oath of Allegiance to the British King on admittance and when taking their seats.

The Republicans believed in resistance and opposition to the working of the Free State Government, resistance which was passive and otherwise militant. De Valera and some of his followers broke away from the I.R.A. to enter the Free State Parliament in 1925; the I.R.A. continued to drill and arm, be jailed and hunted; until, with the pressure of some Left-Wing Leaders, the IRA in 1930 embarked upon a political venture in the nature of a program based on Connolly's teachings and the recognition of Working Class Freedom as the only freedom worthwhile. They called their organisation Saor Éire ("Free Ireland") and went about to organise the Broad Masses of the people in opposition to National Surrender by the Free State Government and to the economic slavery etc of the present Social System. They continued active in this line, even in face of a Rigid Coercion Bill which was then in force. But that program had not the support of all the I.R.A., those who were not politically developed enough to perceive that

only on those lines could the I.R.A. awaken the people from their lethargy in which they now slept and secure their confidence for a militant effort to overthrow the Free State Government; so, as it had not the support it should have, and to avoid a split at the time, the promoters dropped it.

Even though the Irish people voted again, at an Election, the Free State Government back into power, they detested the Coercion Bills of the Government. De Valera with his new Political Party (Fianna Fáil) went to the country during the 1932 Election and on the promise of abolishing Coercion, Partition and the declaring the Republic for the entire portion of Ireland, also by the introduction of his Economic Policy (i.e. a system of Tariffs on Foreign Goods, so enabling the people to manufacture goods in Ireland which they needed and, owing to the tax on foreign goods, Irish would be cheaper—so creating a false short lived circulation of currency etc.). De Valera got into power and is still there; conditions in Ireland have not improved under his Government, as naturally they cannot, owing to the same rotten social system, which is here as elsewhere.

1939 finds the Irish political situation thus, under the heading of the various Movements.

[1] The Government Party (Fianna Fáil) under De Valera—who believe that De Valera is a Superman destined by God to save the Irish people from Foreign Domination and give them, by his policy of Self-Sufficiency for Ireland, a comfortable social existence; false ideas which they will soon lose.

[2] The Parliamentary Opposition Party (Fine Gael)—is the Old "Free State" Party, which in 1936 sponsored the Blueshirt Fascist Movement led by General O'Duffy (who went to "aid" Franco you remember). That Party is now secured by good jobs and pensions to work with de Valera and his Government on anything. O'Duffy, of course, is a potential "*El Caudillo*" [the Leader, Sp., *Führer* or *Duce*—Franco's self-styled title]. So, although he has a fat pension, he cannot be trusted. At present is quiet, but only waiting for his opportunity, I believe, to make a comeback.

[3] The Labour Party—as a working class organisation very bad, is just composed of mild Reformers and opportunists. Its policy is mild, and any attempt to "left" it a bit is opposed by the Church in Ireland. When they speak the rabbits run back into their holes, and pass resolutions condemning Fascism and Communism as twin evils! They follow the social policy of "Our Holy Father", the Pope's, and pledge their allegiance to Connolly's!

The Non-Parliamentary Portion.

4. The I.R.A.—is composed of those

who believe that only by armed force can the British be forced to evacuate Ireland; tastes a little of "Direct Actionism", and a bit Anarchist in the National Sense. Can be a great force for Good or Evil, in the sense that it is the major Revolutionary Force in the country. Organised in the Military style and has its units all over Ireland, even in England. Is responsible for the sabotage in England at present. Such sabotage is alleged to be financed and directed with Nazi help. This sabotage is being very effective in creating a panic amongst the English people, and they regard the Irish as "terrorists". It can be stopped by Britain withdrawing her troops from the North of Ireland and respecting Ireland's Independence and Neutrality in the next War. I think it is up to Britain to do this, because an unfree and unfriendly portion of the population will continue to sabotage and can do great damage to England during the next War. A free Ireland would be quite the reverse, as it would then take its stand against Hitler aggression.

5. The C.P.—is only confined to Dublin and Belfast and has isolated members like myself throughout the other parts of Ireland. As yet is almost a negligible factor as a Party, and is going through the same difficulties as all new units of the Party had to go through when working in a country which is 96% Catholic, do you understand. It has yet, of course, to be given a chance to lead the people on the right lines towards Economic Freedom and—although when the time comes—although it may be small in number, it will I am sure have a big influence in the political situation which has yet to develop here.

6. Republican Congress—is "left" of the I.R.A. and is now almost negligible except in Dublin. Sponsored the "United Front" Movement in Ireland and, by doing so, was disowned by the I.R.A.. The 'UF' was a failure but, like the C.P., has yet to get the real chance.

So, you see how things stand in Ireland now; how little chance we have of doing real Party work, as I believe you do in the States. The Party directed me to go back into the I.R.A. and do my best to contact with the lads there and so show them that National Freedom may be all very fine, but also there is another struggle just as important—the changing of the entire social system and, at the proper time, the setting up of a "Workers' Republic" here in Ireland.

There are many things that I as a C.P. member disagree with in the I.R.A., but I cannot afford to say so there. British Imperialism is as hateful, and more so, to me as a German and Italian Fascism. Britain holds Ireland, India, Egypt etc against the will of the natives of these places, as Spain, Austria, Albania etc are held by the Fascists.

Partition is being enforced in Ireland by

a type of Fascism which is England's Own. In the North of Ireland, Irishmen are being interned and imprisoned for being Republicans. The Orange Order, like the Nazi Brownshirts, are the Storm-Troops who enforce the Laws of Imperial Britain, shoot and terrorise the Catholic minority, break up Republican and C. Party meetings alike, keep alive the greatest curse of all, religious sectarianism, so splitting the Catholic and Protestant workers.

Some people in England, sincere and all as they are, (but whom I simply regard as "Armchair Revolutionaries"), think that only Germany and Italy practice Fascism. But here in Ireland, in the portion which is still under the control of Britain, the Fascism of Imperialism is being enforced to make Irishmen foreigners in their own land, bans free speech, victimises the minority because they are Catholics, in the same way as the Jews and Negroes are being treated throughout some parts of the world.

The Anti-Fascist movement here in Ireland prevailed on the I.R.A. to drop the campaign of Sabotage in England, because they did not want anything to happen which "might obstruct the Democratic Front in Europe and to prevent the IRA from maybe becoming the tools for the Nazis in England". BUT, can we honestly call Britain democratic when she has sold Spain the way we saw it being sold; also that goes for Austria, Czecholovakia etc? Britain is continually allowing Hitler to go eastwards because she wants, if possible, to see the Soviet Union smashed (She thinks it can be) and now, as I see by this evening's papers, '*La Populaire*' says that if Hitler makes just a tame Reichstag speech, the British propose to drop "negotiations" with the Soviets. This, of course, is only a rumour; but it will be proved by the time you get my letter.

Now to skip a little from the line I have given about Ireland—How do you find things in the States? Glad to see you are doing some concrete work as you informed me. I can tell you I was delighted to receive that note from Loretta, glad to see she is back again in the "Line". I am sure she will find plenty of work looking after the C.P. work and also after you. I am glad to hear Amparo is safe and sound (I will write her today), even though they are being treated like dogs in the Refugee Camps. I sent you a few papers showing the farewell of the Brigade and pictures of the Refugee Camps. They stand out today as eloquent testimony to the fact that Spaniards who wish to be free would rather live in sand holes rather than under Franco.

I got a few letters from Jeanne in Paris and she told me you have written her also. She is a very good comrade and her letters are most interesting. You remember that I gave Amparo her address for to send some

propaganda to her. She informed me that a Spanish comrade, to whom Amparo had given her address, called to see her in Paris after the capture of Barcelona.

I am entertaining great hopes of going some way or another to N.Y.C. [New York City] for the World Fair. I have no proposals but great hopes. I wrote an Uncle of mine in Boston whom I thought had some *dinero* [money, Sp.], but it was no good; either he is as broke as myself—or else he thinks there are at present sufficient "Radicals and Reds" in the States.—BUT—Today I bought a Sweepstake ticket for both of us and if we win I will be travelling over *a de la* "Royal Suite". Here's *suerte* [luck, Sp.] to both of us. By the way, I think you would be able to get rid of some of those tickets over there in N.Y.C. at a profit; they are in Books of 12—2 tickets commission, or else 4 dollars. If you want some I will get them sent to you from Dublin.

My greetings to [Mike] Quill, [Austin] Hogan and all over in the Union [the Transport Workers' Union of America], and in the Party [the Communist Party, USA].

Do you ever knock across Jack Yellin? if so give him my warmest regards.

Thank Loretta for the note she enclosed in your letter; give her my best fraternal and revolutionary greetings.

Well I did prove a better judge of women than you, Bill; you can see this by now. Someday I will tell you the secret. (Tell her to write to me again with the latest line on you; confidential, of course).

Well you asked for a detailed letter from me—here it is. Excuse my writing and my bad knack of putting things. I hope I have not proved too chauvinistic in my little information as regards my country and Great Britain.

Revolutionary Greetings for May.

Mike.

PS: As regards the articles for '*D.W.*' [the '*Daily Worker*', organ of the CPUSA], I was thinking of settling down to do some serious writing for them. I want your candid opinion of my letter, viz. my style. It's OK to write to the Pope's Quay address now, I think.

PPS: How do you like the Irish stamp which commemorates the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution? The translation of the Irish message is "The People of Ireland congratulate the people of the U.S. on their Constitution".

Michael O'Riordan

Ersatz Intelligentsia

A couple of generations ago there was an influential ecclesiastical intelligentsia in Ireland. It no longer exists. If it had been displaced through conflict with a secular intelligentsia the function of an intelligentsia would have continued to be performed. But it was not superseded through conflict. The only public conflict in which the Church was confronted by an antagonist was conducted by our sister-magazine, *Church & State*. The spheres of public life in which the Church was exercising an informally legal authority which it ought not to exert in a modern state were worked out in its pages, and its publisher, Pat Maloney, initiated the first legal action ever taken against the Church for the purpose of restricting its sphere of authority.

What we did in the 1970s was not approved of in the 1970s by those who subsequently slotted themselves into the place vacated by the Church, and who now stand in place of a national intelligentsia although they aren't one: the newspaper columnists.

Gene Kerrigan took note thirty years ago of what we were doing and said we shouldn't be doing it. I think it was in *Magill* magazine that he said the position of the Church would be undermined by the forces of economic determinism, that it was unnecessary to engage in public confrontation with it, and that, since it was unnecessary to do so, it was wrong. The thing to do was let economic determinism do its work of undermining the Church, prudently tending to one's affairs while this was happening, and amending one's comment so as to reflect each moment of the evolving situation.

The public status of the Church was certainly eroded in the course of the 1980s, and it collapsed in the course of the 1990s. And then, when it was down, the opinion-formers who had done nothing to bring it down set about kicking it. But, by following this prudent course of action, they did not constitute themselves into a coherent and purposeful secular intelligentsia. By relying on the influence of external forces to disable the clerical Hierarchy, they made themselves the creatures of those same external forces. And what are they now? Smart Alocs for the most part. Certainly not a national intelligentsia. Their centre, their principle of action, lies outside themselves. For academics it is in Oxford and Cambridge. For journalists it is in the service of the Oath-bound Directory of the *Irish Times* which has the coherent purpose of aborting

Irish national development, or of Sir Anthony, whose title tells all that needs to be known about him in this matter.

Fifteen or twenty years ago I noticed that there was a fashion in post-nationalism. I was taken up at the time with an attempt to make Northern Ireland British in its political life by incorporating it into the political system of the British state. I was not guided in that attempt by any moral view of the British state as either good or bad. Britain was the state in which Northern Ireland existed: the British state functioned by means of the most effective system of party-politics in the world, whose ability to over-ride religious and national differences was plainly evident. Northern Ireland was excluded from the political system of the state when it was established as a devolved government in 1921. Those facts seemed to me to explain why political life in the North was so abnormal as compared with the rest of the state, and I wasted no time in metaphysical groping after such things as identity—or in moralising against conduct which arose within a perverse structure of state.

I never found out what post-nationalism was. I think I read a book about it. I'm sure that I opened one. But if I read it, all I can say is that it left no distinct idea in my head. The post-nation remains a mystery to me. I suppose it might be the circuit in which Fintan O'Toole circulates—a rut left behind by a nationalism he rejected but could not escape from. Something like the pre-nation of the 18th century, left behind after the nation has come and gone. The function of its literary stratum in the 18th century was to caper about for the entertainment of the middle-to-upper class English, and so it seems to be again. (I don't mean the English in Ireland and who returned home and provided much of the English literature of the century. I mean the Irish who, having been educated on the Continent because of the Penal Laws, came home to a problematical situation, and began to hover around the English theatre.)

When, ten or fifteen years ago, I noticed the insistent suggestion in certain quarters that what I had always taken to be English literature was Irish literature, I misunderstood the meaning. I mistook it for the expression of an inferiority complex. When I left Slieve Luacra in the late 1950s and went to London I came across a professional, or middle class, circle of Irishmen who made great play with the notion that so many famous

English writers were really Irish writers. This consoled them for the fact that they were Irish. Because of their accents they could not escape from being Irish, so they made Ireland seem important by reciting the Anglo-Irish litany—Congreve, Steele, Swift, Goldsmith, etc, etc. Without the Anglo-Irish, Ireland would have been a worthless place to them—an embarrassing point of origin which they had left but could not escape from. I didn't argue the matter with them. I saw that they had an existential problem about being Irish in London middle class circles and felt a bit sorry for them.

When, thirty years later, I came across the *Irish Times* insistence that certain English writers were Irish, I took it to be the same thing. But I found out that it was something quite different. It was part of an ambitious project to delete from Irish culture all literature that was not English—with a handful of exotic exceptions, e.g. Joyce and Myles na gCopaleen.

This struck me when Martin Mansergh, in the *Irish Times*, denounced the *North Cork Anthology* not only for treating Elizabeth Bowen as an English writer (though including her), but for including a selection from the Parish Priest of Millstreet, Fr. Ferris, because Ferris made the indisputable factual observation that England was a warlike country.

I grew up within a body of Irish literature that England had no use for. That is the literature that is being—has been—deleted. But it is the literature that produced me, and I have no intention of trying to cut it out of myself in order to 're-invent' myself as recommended by Whatsisname Kiberd. I read some of the English literature that is now decreed to be Irish. But I read it as the literature of another society—not because somebody instructed me that it was, because I had no instruction whatever in the matter, but because that is what it was. I found some of it interesting, but none of it as interesting as Goethe, Dostoevsky and Stendhal, who I also came across in Slieve Luacra.

Irish culture in that period—the 1940s-50s, now transformed by false memory into a claustrophobic nightmare—left one open to European culture. The altered culture of the present day, judging by its products, seals one up in an attachment to English culture—except of course for the music-making, which is incorrigible and continues to do what it has always done.

In 1969 I suggested that the Ulster Protestants should be treated as a distinct nationality so I was a traitor to advanced thinkers in Dublin. I spent twenty years trying to get the North into the political system of the UK, so I was a lover of British Imperialism. I discovered that James

Connolly aligned himself with Germany in the World War, and said I thought he acted reasonably in doing so, therefore I was an Anglophobe. I showed that Connolly's combination of nationalism and socialism had only one European counterpart, and that he acknowledged his affinity with the Polish socialist nationalism of Pilsudsky, so I misrepresented Connolly as a militant fascist and was therefore suspect of being one myself. And so it goes on.

I have been figuring out the 2nd World War almost since it stopped. At a certain point I decided it was useless to start with evaluations, and I set about establishing sequences of undisputed facts. This was of course a dangerous proceeding as it did not allow the discounting of awkward facts by prior evaluation.

A particular group of facts presented one with the military encirclement of Germany by Britain in 1939. Martin Mansergh was greatly irritated when I pointed this out. But he did not show that it was not the case; he only adopted a tone of voice.

I didn't say whether I thought it good or bad that Britain, having facilitated the growth in power of Nazi Germany since 1933, decided in March 1939 to make war on it. I only said that the unique military arrangement which Britain set up between itself, France and Poland discouraged the Poles from negotiating a settlement over Danzig; and that a state which finds itself within a powerful military encirclement must take account of the fact.

Mansergh's tone of voice suggested either that there was no encirclement, or that it had no bearing on German-Polish relations; but more than anything else it suggested that culchies are not equipped to think about such things, and should abide by the maxim: Cobbler stick to your last!

I don't disagree with the maxim. But its application requires that the social stratum whose business it is to think about these things in the public interest should do so. In well-set-up societies the equivalents of the Irish culchies do on the whole leave such matters to the intelligentsia of the state, and if they don't the intelligentsia ignores them. But the Irish state has no intelligentsia, and so it happens that an important figure like Mansergh is nettled by what is said about the history of international affairs by a group of Slieve Luacra culchies. And all he can produce in rebuttal is a tone of voice.

It is reasonable to describe the military alliance formed against Germany by the two major military Powers, England and France, and a medium military Power, Poland (which had defeated the Soviet Union in 1920), as an encirclement of

Germany. And it was so described at the time in a communication from the South African Government (which was strongly Imperialist in sentiment) to the British Government. And the South Africans took it that it was a measure leading to war.

A unique feature of this military alliance was that Poland was given the power to activate it. This was the first time that Britain had ever made such an arrangement with another state.

Now that might have been a good or it might have been a bad thing. That is a matter of opinion. That it was the case is a matter of fact.

I have never been able to see the world as consisting of lists of good things and lists of bad things, but that seems to be how it is for most of those who occupy the space that should be filled by an intelligentsia. And morality consists of presenting the good things as being even better and the bad things even worse.

In the days when we had an ecclesiastical intelligentsia with a supernatural and eternal source for morality, moral judgments took account of contingencies and circumstance much more than tends to be the case now that we have got rid of all that eternal nonsense. Moral judgements which now emerge from the places where there should be an intelligentsia tend to be both capricious and absolute. They consist of absolute fragments generated by impulse and are beyond the reach of thought.

I am fortunate in being computer illiterate, so much of this passes me by. But I have recently been sent pages printed out from a website (Indymedia), conducted, I am told, by a discarded *Irish Times* journalist called Chekhov Feeny, and find these ejaculations concerning myself.

"Clifford wanted the Nazis acquitted."

"Clifford is sneering at the poor Poles who died bravely to save their city from the Third Reich.

"...he expresses gloating admiration for aspects of both Hitlerism and Stalinism..."

"Clifford's admiration for Stalin's brutal annexation [of eastern Poland] is sickening, especially since the terrible Katyn massacre of Poles took place at this time."

"So collaborating with the Nazis like Quisling and Petain did was alright? He insults the brave resistance fighters like Camus and Tito."

"...Clifford's disgusting contempt for the Polish and Norwegian victims of Totalitarianism..."

"By the way, did Mansergh steal Clifford's girlfriend or something?"

"...a former Loyalist turned Sinn

Feiner - gloating at the slaughter of Polish civilians..."

"So Clifford is saying a (flawed) democratic British government was worse than a genocidal dictatorship".

This is the kind of thing that used to be scrawled on the walls of English public lavatories thirty years ago. And, like that lavatory graffiti, it goes on and on and on. And I suppose much of that graffiti too was scrawled by inadequate intellectuals.

The last scrawl I have quoted is unusual in that it aspires to be part of an argument. Before that sentence, it says:

"The British did send a small force to Norway to help them fight off the Nazi invasion—I think at the request of the Norwegian government, to respond to Quisling's call to the Nazis to invade Norway. It was NOT a British invasion. So Clifford" etc.

I don't think it is denied by any military historian that Britain acted first in breaching Norwegian neutrality, or that it had the ambition of occupying Sweden to stop it from supplying raw materials to Germany, but was thwarted when Finland settled with Russia.

The counterposing of Democracy and dictatorship with regard to genocide is groundless historically. The most successful genocides of modern times were practised by Britain, in North America and Australia (where it continues in attenuated form: the current Government is threatening to force the remnants of the Aborigines to send their children to school to be made over, on pain of losing welfare payments). These genocides were the more successful for being done openly by the democratic social elements, instead of being secretly done by an elite, as with the Nazis.

My "*sneer at the Poles*" has to do with the refusal of the Warsaw city authorities to surrender the city to the surrounding German Army after the Polish State had fallen and the Polish Army had been broken. The bombing of the city after it refused to accept the outcome of the war was condemned as an atrocity by the Allies at the time, but it did not figure in the Nuremberg indictments, because it became common practice on the part of the Allies to bomb undefended cities—which were not even given an opportunity to surrender.

According to the Nuremberg ideology there are laws governing the conduct of war, regardless of whether the war itself is regarded as lawful. One still hears it said by people who know better that the targeting of non-combatants is a crime. But the Allies deliberately targeted non-combatants in undefended cities by fire-bombing and nuclear bombing. If they had subsequently prosecuted themselves for this and given themselves severe punishments, it would have given an

element of reality to international law. The punishment of defeated states under the form of law only served to discredit law, when everything done by the victorious states was excluded from the process.

As to Katyn, I made myself a Nazi apologist in the eyes of many right-thinking people about forty years ago when I said the Soviets did it, and pointed to the fact that the perpetrator sat on the bench at Nuremberg when an attempt was made to pin it on the Germans. It is now officially conceded that the Soviets did it. And the information released about the British handling of the Enigma system puts it beyond all reasonable doubt that the British knew very well at the time that the Russians did it.

As to my libelling of Mary McAleese: Martin Mansergh, by misrepresenting the matter, made it necessary for me to publish the legal proceedings along with a general account of the affair. After a year and a half she settled without costs or damages, even though she had been at considerable cost in bringing the action and pursuing it for so long. The incident would have been left in obscurity, but Mansergh (whose mode of reasoning is very similar to that of these Internetters) threw it into his general abuse of these irritating culchie who were getting above themselves. And at some point one has to respond to the blackguarding.

A very remarkable thing has just happened. An incisive factual criticism of Cathal O'Shannon's *Irish Nazis* television programme has been published in a magazine, patronised by academia, *History Ireland*, which hitherto has been undistinguished for quality. I thought it was a sign of Irish intellectual life reviving—until I got to the end and saw that it came from an academic in an Australian University, who had made an objective study of Breton nationalism, had been interviewed for the programme by O'Shannon, but had been misrepresented by the clip used in the broadcast.

The Breton organisation, presented by O'Shannon as an active contingent of the SS turns out to have been a defensive organisation against the French Resistance.

If a history of the War from the viewpoint of Irish neutrality had been produced, it would be generally known in Ireland that the French Resistance was thoroughly nationalist and Imperialist in outlook, where it was not Communist and to some extent even where it was. The French Empire in all its glory had declared war on Germany and lost. But the Resistance was not going to allow the Breton nationalists to avail of the defeat of the French state to escape from French nationalism.

The Resistance became the state again in 1944, and the war with Germany was barely over when it began killing Algerians wholesale. The first bombardment of an Algerian city, which as far as I recall was on the scale of the German bombardment of Warsaw in 1939, occurred in 1945—years before the Algerian War with all its atrocities—also conducted by the Resistance.

Brendan Clifford

Editorial Digest

Election Quirks: In the Irish Election of 24th May, Sinn Fein got 140,000 First Preference votes, an increase of 21,000 on the 2002 General Election, but still going down from 5 seats to 4. The Progressive Democrats secured 56,000 votes and lost 2 out of eight seats, including leader, Michael McDowell's. Labour won 200,000 votes, going down from 21 to 20 seats, while the Greens, with 100,000 votes remained at 6 seats. Bertie Ahern ignored SF, however, when putting together his three-element coalition.

SF's Jim Gibney commented: "*Sinn Fein's electoral project was squeezed by an electorate concerned about Fianna Fail being replaced in government by a Fine Gael-Labour coalition. The electorate were frightened about their economic future*" (IN 31.5.07). Gibney is probably right that some would-be SF voters felt that FF needed their votes more, but he is wrong about their motivation. Economic determinism does not explain the endorsement of Ahern and rejection of FG-L. Rather, there was an endorsement of Bertie Ahern's sheer ability as leader, FF's national stance, and the reasonable competence of the outgoing Government. Fine Gael is regarded as less national, a trait magnified by Rabbitte's Stickie bias: and the two parties would be an unknown quantity in government.

Fine Gael has been forced to deny an allegation by Independent TD **Finian McGrath** (see IN 31.5.07) that its representatives met with republicans in the effort to win power. However Enda Kenny is no John Costello, prepared to share power with IRA Chief of Staff Sean McBride—which is part of the reason why he remains on the Opposition benches.

This December will be the 25th year since FG won sufficient votes to take the lead in forming a Government. that was Garret FitzGerald in 1982. In 1992 Dick Spring's Labour had the balance of power, formed a first-ever Coalition with FF, but switched its support to John

Bruton's FG in 1994. But Bruton was ousted by Bertie Ahern's FF in June 1997, and that has held power ever since.

Labour Coalition policies as regards FF have revived a moribund FG twice, in 1994 and in the pact with Enda Kenny, and now look likely to ensure that the PDs find a breathing space to regroup.

Labour was forced into alliance with FG when FF had a core value of single-party government. It has failed to readjust to the new situation, so allowing the formation of more right-wing Governments. However, the **Greens** now look to have occupied the slot which should have been held by Labour. They did well to win two major Ministerial Departments: John Gormley in Environment & Local Government, and Eamon Ryan in Communications, Energy & Natural Resources.

As one of the best TDs in the Dail, Finian McGrath much deserves his part in the Ahern multi-coalition.

Bertie Ahern won an amazing third consecutive term as Taoiseach by 89 to 76: the 78 Fianna Failers were joined by the 6 Greens, 2 PDs, and 3 Independents (Jackie Healy-Rae, Finian McGrath, Beverley Cooper Flynn). Voting against were 51 FG, 20 Labour, 4 Sinn Fein, and Tony Gregory.

British Labour has struck a deal with Andy McGovern to drop his race discrimination case, which challenged its failure to allow its Northern Ireland membership to establish constituency associations. Now NI members are to be allowed to establish a Forum, once 200 members have joined. Currently there are 130 (IN 1.6.07; IT 30.5.07). **Irish Labour** has had a Forum in NI for some time now and this is campaigning to be allowed to put up candidates in local elections.

The Presbyterian Church was condemned by unionist victims' groups for inviting NI Education Minister Caitriona Ruane (Sinn Fein) to attend its Education Debate at Church House (IN 6.6.07).

A Famine March has been given State recognition by Conor Lenihan, junior Minister in Foreign Affairs in the outgoing Irish administration. Michael Blanch, Chairman of the Tallaght-based Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims, welcomed the move after a four-year campaign. The Committee has held annual period-dress marches and does lobbying. *"It has been estimated that the Famine could have indirectly halved the population of Ireland, which was over eight million in 1845 and had shrunk to approximately four million by the 1911 Census"* (IN 15.5.07).

Senator Maurice Hayes, a former NI Ombudsman and current Director of Sir

Anthony O'Reilly's News International, has queried the value of the Saville Inquiry into the 1972 Bloody Sunday killings by the British Army in Derry, suggesting that it is merely *"picking at the sores"* of the past. However SDLP leader Mark Durkan rejected the criticism, saying that, but for the Inquiry, the Widgery Report—which exonerated the Army—would stand as the truth of what happened (IT 5.6.07, IN 6.6.07). However, there is more than truth at stake in the Saville Enquiry: its report will hopefully help to explain to unionists the anger and bitterness of the republican backlash which followed.

Equality Commission: Cllr. Charlie Tosh (DUP Castlereagh) has threatened to take the Equality Commission to court after discovering that it employs a disproportionate number of Catholics and so breaches its own guidelines. It currently employs 88 Catholics, 49 Protestants and 2 undefined. Bob Collins, the new Commissioner, has failed to redress this imbalance in its workforce (IN 31.5.07). What Cllr. Tosh failed to question, however, is what c 140 people are doing policing Equality in NI!

Pádraig Mac Fhearghusa: PRESS STATEMENT

Wrong Move From Fianna Fail On Irish Language Education

The Minister for Education, before she leaves office, has decided to put an end, effectively, to early total immersion education in infant classes in all *gaelscoileanna* throughout the state, against the recommendation of the NCCA. (Cork Examiner, 14 May '07. etc)

Is this to be the Minister's primary contribution to the improvement of the teaching of Irish?

Let us remember that this internationally recognised approach is highly successful, that no one is forced to send their child to a *Gaelscoil* in any case, and that the education outcomes in English in *gaelscoileanna* are higher than the national average, as the Minister should know.

The Minister is also aware that the principle of early total immersion education will be defended in court, but this does not seem to perturb her, or perhaps it is just that one becomes insolent as a result of being too long in office.

Whatever their politics, however, people concerned for the future of Irish should contact their local candidates immediately, and defend the right of all-Irish primary schools to choose early total immersion education in infants, so that this education option continues to remain available to parents.

The Minister should be made aware that she is making a lot of people very angry—parents, founding committees and friends of various schools—and that a few individuals will not be allowed to roll back the advances made in all-Irish education since the seventies.

War planes

continued

warplanes can titillate punters and their children on Salthill's promenade and by Thursday they can be killing families in Iraq or elsewhere.

The air show organisers would like to write off the Galway Alliance Against War (GAAW) as a small bunch of spoilsport protesters, but the reality is different. Six city councillors have consistently opposed funding for the show and a survey commissioned by GAAW last winter showed that 46% of households in Salthill and Claddagh were opposed to the show either in its present militarised form or at all.

But it isn't a question of numbers, it is a moral question. Do we lionise those who have invaded Iraq, who are the cause of more than 650,000 deaths, or do we stand in solidarity with the Iraqi people and oppose these warmongers? Or, to put it another way, should the planes that kill other people's children be considered fun for our children?

Niall Farrell

Galway Alliance Against War
Oranmore, Co Galway

As founder and chairperson of *Gaelscoil Mhic Easmainn* for 15 years from 1978 to 1993, I consider the behaviour of the Department towards early total immersion education in recent years outrageous. I complement the Board of *Gaelscoil Mhic Easmainn*, Trá Lí, on their professional defence of the school's ethos, and I ask anyone who is committed to the future of Irish to defend the majority of *Gaelscoileanna*, who utilise the early total immersion approach in infants.

Remember that this Minister of Education has gone against the recommendations of the National Council for Curriculum & Assessment, and that she should not do so without good reason. Can the Minister point to any piece of valid national or international research, which supports her inference that early total immersion in a second language has a negative effect on English language outcomes. Or is she to be allowed to vent pre-election spleen against successful *gaelscoileanna*, although she is fully aware that her decision to effectively end early total immersion education in infants in all-Irish schools is not sound in law?

The Minister might consider the first principle of language teaching—listen. She could begin with what the recently published Harris Report has to say on the matter. Furthermore, being unsound in law, what she proposes will not be adhered to by schools which follow best practice in total immersion education.

Pádraig Mac Fhearghusa, editor of FEASTA, the Irish language monthly magazine, is a founder and former chairperson of *Gaelscoil Mhic Easmainn*, Trá Lí, and a former primary and secondary teacher.

THE strong religious faith of the "new Irish" will help strengthen our own faith, the Bishop of Cork and Ross said yesterday.

Most Reverend Dr John Buckley made his comments from the altar as dozens of immigrants from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Asia and Africa—many for the first time—took part in the city's 81st annual Corpus Christi procession from the North Cathedral. (Irish Examiner, 11.6.2007).

EU: REFUGEES AND EXILES

WIDE-RANGING reforms to the asylum and refugee procedures have been proposed by the European Commission.

These are designed to prevent situations like last week's when disputes left illegal migrants clinging to tuna nets in the Mediterranean for three days. They are also aimed at ensuring every EU member state takes its fair share of refugees and that higher common standards are applied to stop "asylum shopping".

Greater cooperation should also reduce the numbers of illegal migrants that go missing each year in the EU after their request to stay has been rejected.

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles and the Irish Refugee Council welcomed the proposed changes and described them as long overdue.

But Robin Hanan, CEO of the Irish Council said he feared that member states will negotiate lower standards when they get their hands on the proposals.

The original intention of the earlier rules—to reduce the number of illegal migrants coming into Europe—appears to have been successful. While the numbers of displaced people is increasing all over the world, those seeking asylum in the EU has halved over the past five years to 182,000 last year.

But the burden is falling unevenly on member states, with those on the periphery of the EU, especially Malta, Spain and Italy, suffering far greater influxes than other countries.

These latest moves follow last week's tragedy when Malta and Libya fought for three days over who was responsible for illegal migrants in the Mediterranean and later when a French vessel had to remove bodies from the sea.

Help could be provided through a European support office that would co-ordinate training and work to take pressure

off countries finding it difficult to cope when they were hit by an unexpected influx of migrants.

A review of existing procedures also showed there is a problem with illegal immigrants disappearing. Of 40,000 applications rejected, more than 24,000 of them disappeared. It was also discovered from fingerprinting of applicants that 12% had made applications in more than one country.

Migrants are still finding it worth their while to shop around as some countries reject 90% of applications from economic migrants while others like Sweden accept more than half.

TRADE UNIONS WIN EU EQUAL PAY BATTLE

THE RIGHTS of Trade Unions to take industrial action against the use of cheap labour from Eastern European nations were bolstered by recommendations issued at the European Court of Justice on 24th May 2007.

The Court has found that Trade Unions should be allowed to compel companies from other member states to comply with local wage agreements.

The Court's Advocate General also found Unions could take action against vessels hiring cheaper workers from another country.

The Court gave legal opinions in two cases.

In the first case, Swedish builders in November, 2004, picketed a school being built by a Latvian company employing Latvian workers who were being paid less than the rate agreed collectively between Unions and the Social Partners in Sweden. As a result, work was halted and the company, Laval, filed for bankruptcy.

The Swedish Government and the European Commission came out in favour of the Swedish workers, although Internal Market Commissioner Charlie McCreevy backed the Latvian company.

Laval took the case to the Swedish courts, which asked the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg to rule on whether the workers' action was compatible with EU legislation. The opinion from the Court's Advocate General said EU law allowed strikes and industrial action to protect workers and prevent social dumping, provided it was proportionate and was not in fact protectionism.

In the second case, The Viking Line in 2003 wanted to reflag its Finnish vessel, the Rosella, in Estonia where it could employ sailors at a fifth of the Finnish rates.

The International Transport Workers Federation, which campaigns against this kind of reflagging and insists companies should apply the conditions of the company's home country, instructed its Estonian Trade Union affiliate not to

co-operate.

Viking appealed the issue to the British Courts where the federation is located.

The Advocate General said Unions could take action against vessels hiring cheaper workers from another country but, once the company owning the vessel has relocated, such action would be illegal. The Federation could not instruct Unions to take such action as each Union must be free to decide for themselves.

The two opinions are not binding on the Court, which will issue a full judgement in several months. However, in 80% of cases, the Advocate General's opinion is upheld.

REPORT

War planes for some, fun for others

The Salthill Air Show, which takes place on June 24, is rapidly becoming an arms exhibition and military showcase.

Not only will the Eurofighter Typhoon warplane be seen for the first time in public outside of Britain, but the air show's website informs potential exhibitors, "We only seek displays that have relevance to the air show; for example, military-related exhibitors."

On top of that, the attendance of the US Air Force's Thunderbirds demonstration squadron is a propaganda *coup* for Bush's Iraq war. These Thunderbird pilots have already boasted in the media how, before becoming Thunderbirds, they all had combat experience over Iraq and some over Afghanistan. However, they don't elaborate as to the number of "kills" they may have notched up or how many innocent men, women and children they may have killed.

No, we get the soft sell about the pilots' Irish connections and the local media in Galway has given them the feminine touch, introducing us to Major Nicole Malachowski. No hard questions, please.

She wasn't asked whether she fired any missiles that wiped out entire families. That would be impolite, considering the Salthill Air Show is family entertainment, co-sponsored by Fáilte Ireland and Galway City Council.

To complete the Iraq war connection with the show, there will be a reception for these "top guns" hosted by a man who also played his part in the occupation of Iraq, the US ambassador to Ireland Thomas Foley. Between August '03 and March '04, Mr Foley was part of the US administration running Iraq.

The show organisers continue to insist it is all good, clean fun. However, the Thunderbirds' website states that the F16 fighter planes which will fly over Galway Bay can, within 72 hours, be ready for combat. So, on a Sunday, these

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law is redrawn. He remains the only Democratic figure with the clout to withstand the fierce lobbying that is likely from the Left on the Bill.

"This is not the architecture of an immigration bill I would have initially liked to see, but we're not dealing with that. This is a legislative process", Kennedy said last week. (Sunday Business Post, 20.5.2007).

MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION?

In February 2007, former Tánaiste and Labour Party leader Dick Spring said there was a need for "an open debate" on immigration and accused politicians of being afraid to grapple with the issue.

On an RTÉ Radio One programme Dick Spring noted that at current levels of immigration, within four years 20 per cent of the population would be non-native Irish.

He said politicians were afraid to grapple with the issue for fear of being associated with "a taboo subject". He acknowledged that "Enda Kenny, in fairness, tried to start the debate but he got poo-pooed by the intellectuals and others".

He continued:

"We need to see what the needs of the economy are, what numbers of people we can cope with in terms of infrastructure, in terms of health services. The debate during the week was all about schools and the lack of teachers to teach children who do not have English as a basic language. These issues are going to have to be faced up to."

Where existing immigrants were concerned, he said, "We are not providing any, adequate services in terms of integration. You see them in rural Ireland on a Friday evening going to the supermarket and off-licence, just stocking up for the weekend".

He added: "They are certainly not participating in Irish society at the weekends and I think that is extremely dangerous."

DOG WHISTLES

The following appeared in the *Irish Examiner* last February, after the speech made by Enda Kenny, the leader of Fine Gael, referred to above by Dick Spring. Labour leader Pat Rabbitte described the speech by Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny on immigration this week as "thought-provoking" and "powerful" and called for a wider debate on the issue" (*Irish Times*, 27.1.2007).

"Enda Kenny's description of 'Celtic and Christian' Ireland was a dog whistle to immigration sceptics—with a message that he is defender of our way of life and speaks for Middle Ireland, writes Political Correspondent Shaun Connolly" (*Irish*

Examiner, 8.2.2007).

"Sneak the dog a bone

"Fine Gael's dog whistle tactics have stirred Fianna Fáil. Michael McDowell accused the party of using the race card, while he himself floats counter-measures such as Irishness tests and detention centres for asylum seekers.

"ENDA Kenny launches his election campaign with a whistle-stop rally tonight but the dogs of war have already been unleashed in the emotive arena of immigration policy.

"Cloaked in a speech warm with respect for newcomers, the hardships they endure and how their tribulations of dislocation and struggle mirror the experience of Ireland's own lost generations, forced to scour the back streets of Camden, New York and Sydney for the chance of prosperity, the Fine Gael leader laid down the carefully loaded trigger-phrase description of this country as a "Celtic and Christian" land.

"In political terms, it was a dog whistle, unheard by the majority, and intended to sear into the ears of a certain section of voters who may grasp the economic necessity of immigration, yet feel deeply uneasy at its medium to long-term social consequences" (*Irish Examiner*, 8.2.2007).

Is Shaun Connolly one of the poo-pooers Dick Spring is referring to? Connolly is a British journalist who came to Dublin to work for the *Irish Examiner*, one of the influx of British media personnel who have descended on the Irish scene in recent years we referred earlier. He comes of Irish parentage. He certainly has a lively turn of phrase!

IMMIGRATION MINISTER

"THE next Government must establish a minister with direct responsibility for immigration and integration, and use cross-departmental models to ensure Ireland avoids the kind of racial tensions that exist in other countries, the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) said yesterday". (*Irish Examiner*, 9.6.2007).

Outlining its key recommendations, the Council said that any new structure aimed at implementing integration policies should either be a stand-alone department, or work within the Department of the Taoiseach.

The Council also claimed that a senior Minister for Immigration and Integration should be appointed with a seat at the Cabinet table—an idea called for in past years by the ICI and already mooted by the former Cabinet in August 2006.

Dr. Claire Healy told the conference that Ireland was lagging behind other countries and had problems with planning and data collection, as well as a large

number of different agencies catering for various aspects of immigration and integration policy.

Fergus McCafferty, a former head of the economic immigration division at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, said Ireland needed to improve at implementing policies: "In all my years as a civil servant, I never worked in a place that was such a horrific mess" (*Irish Times*, 7.6.2007).

Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of the Council said that the ICI would be responding to an estimated 10,000 people this year and that "the stakes could be high" if Ireland fails to tackle the immigration issue.

The Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs has already called for the appointment of a full Cabinet minister with responsibility for immigration and integration.

The Committee spent several months in 2006 studying immigration into Ireland and concluded that it is one of the single biggest issues facing this country in the coming years.

A source close to the Committee told the *Irish Examiner* that the scale of the challenge is enormous.

"Immigration needs to be gathered into one Government department. You need that kind of weight of Cabinet status, especially when you have a million people coming into Ireland over the next 10 years," the source said. "Everybody understands it will have to be dealt with" (*Irish Examiner*, 24.3.2006).

GENERAL ELECTION 2007

In the May 2007 General Election, the *Immigration Control Platform* fielded three candidates: Ted Neville (Cork SC, 5 seats) polled 804 first preferences; John Donnelly (Dublin North, 4 seats) received 286; and Pat Talbot in Dublin Central (4 seats) polled 239 votes.

In the 2002 General Election, Neville polled 372 first preferences in Cork South Central, so he more than doubled his vote on this occasion. In a local radio broadcast in Cork involving all the General Election candidates in which Neville featured, he came across in a very sensible and rational manner for anyone concerned about the impact of an open borders immigration policy, which undoubtedly contributed to his increased support.

And after all, didn't Cyprian Brady take a Dail seat with 939 first preferences!

PRO Aine Ni Chonail says:

"We represent Joe Soap, and he wants to wash the car, take the dog for a walk, go for a pint. And that's the perennial difficulty. So no matter what our size is, it wouldn't reflect the genuine concern of the population in general" (*Irish Times*, 19.5.2007).

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McAleese and Ivana Bacik believe will work in Dublin, where it failed in Bradford and Leeds.

The Irish media industry appears to be a haunt for a plethora of these disillusioned individuals. They and their soul mates in the Pale have succeeded in bringing whatever remnants of a national press down to a level even below Fleet Street at its vilest.

The very things they are running away from: they are unconsciously espousing in their journalistic scribblings here in Ireland.

"Still, the returned Irish may be driving forward many of the changes reshaping our social order, bringing with them not just skills from overseas but different value systems" (Martina Devlin, Irish Independent, 7.6.2007).

THE UNITED STATES

Under a new deal hammered out in Washington on 17th May 2007, millions of illegal immigrants, including 50,000 Irish could be eligible for residency in the United States.

But the proposed Bill faces fierce opposition from both Democrats and Republicans. Conservatives have condemned what they characterise as an amnesty for illegal immigrants, calling for better border security and tougher penalties for employers who hire undocumented immigrants.

Some Trade Unions and immigrants' rights groups object to a proposed temporary worker programme and a points system for future immigrants that would favour those with skills and qualifications over those with family ties to people already in the US.

Under the Bill, undocumented immigrants who entered the US before 1st January 2007, could apply for a new "Z" visa after they pass a background check. "Z" visa applicants would have to pay a \$1,000 (€744) fine for heads of households and an additional \$500 fine for each dependant, as well as a processing fee of up to \$1,500 and a \$500 state impact assistance fee. If they want to become permanent residents, "Z" visa holders would have to pay a further \$4,000 fine and return to their country to make the application.

The most controversial element in the new Bill is the proposal to introduce a two-year guest-worker visa that could be renewed only twice and would require the workers to leave the US for a year in between.

Foreign Affairs Minister Dermot Ahern said:

"We have had false dawns before but from my contacts with those on Capitol Hill, it appears we have agreement between the various sides and support from the White House".

"At last we have what I believe is a deal which will end the nightmare for thousands of illegal Irish and allow them to gain residency in the US."

The breakthrough came when negotiators struck a bargain on a so-called point system that would for the first time prioritise immigrants' education and skill level over family connections in deciding how to award Green Cards.

The draft Bill, has yet to be approved by the US Senate and the House of Representatives.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops, which has spoken out on behalf of immigrants, said the Church was unhappy with plans to weight skills and education over family connections in a points system for future immigrants. And Unions oppose the terms of a new guest worker scheme in which low-skilled immigrants would have to leave the country after temporary stints and would have limited opportunities to stay and get on a path to citizenship.

"Without a real path to legalization, the program will exclude millions of workers and thus ensure that America will have two classes of workers, only one of which can exercise workplace rights", said AFL-CIO president John Sweeney.

Democrat Byron Dorgan yesterday proposed an amendment that would scrap the temporary worker programme, arguing that it would depress wages and create a new class of workers with few rights.

"It is just a fiction that these are jobs Americans aren't willing to do. The main reason that big corporations want a guest worker programme is that it will drive down US wages," he said.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison said she has "great concerns about the Bill" and announced she would seek to alter it to mandate that illegal immigrants go back to their home countries before gaining legal status.

"House speaker Nancy Pelosi has said she will not introduce immigration legislation unless President George Bush can guarantee that at least 70 Republicans will support it but conservatives remained unimpressed yesterday. "What part of illegal does the Senate not

understand? Any plan that rewards illegal behaviour is amnesty", said California congressman Brian Bilbray, chairman of the Immigration Reform Caucus" (Irish Times, 19.5.2007).

"U.S. President George W Bush yesterday said he was confident that the most sweeping overhaul of his nation's immigration laws in two decades will ultimately clear Congress.

"Speaking in Bulgaria's capital Sofia, Mr Bush acknowledged disappointment that the legislation—aimed at bringing 12 million illegal immigrants out of the shadows—collapsed on Thursday in the Democratic-controlled Congress.

"Listen, the immigration debate is a tough debate. I'm under no illusions about how hard it is", he said. "There are people in my [Republican] party that don't want a comprehensive bill. There are people in the Democrat Party that don't seem to want a comprehensive bill".

But he said that he would, upon his return to Washington, get in touch with leading Democrats and Republicans who do support the legislation to get it firmly back on track.

"I'll be going to the Senate to talk about a way forward on the piece of legislation", he said.

"I'm going to work with those who are focused on getting an immigration bill done and start taking some steps forward again. I believe we can get it done. I'll see you at the bill signing" (Irish Examiner, 12.6.2007).

FAMILY OR BUSINESS?

The proposed Bill will overhaul the way emigration to America is calculated, with a new points system favouring English speakers and skilled workers.

The vast majority of the almost one million green cards awarded annually go to family reunification categories, which heavily favour Latin American and Asian countries, which already have large numbers of immigrants in America.

Since the 1965 Act that created the family preference system, Ireland and other European countries have effectively been frozen out of America, apart from people working there illegally.

Last year, for example, Ireland received just 2,000 Green Cards.

However, there has been sustained pressure from the White House in particular, to bring in a system similar to the Canadian and Australian systems where a percentage of the Green Cards go to skilled and English-speaking workers.

The Bill faces strong opposition from the Left, especially among the Hispanic and Asian lobbies, who want family preferences left untouched.

"Ironically, Ted Kennedy, who was a key mover behind the 1965 Act, is now the key figure again as immigration
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Comment

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Immigration: US Debates Ireland Flounders

What a breath of fresh air! Agree or disagree with the Americans, no holds are barred when it comes to outright debate and discussion, not like the snivelling, snaky leaders of the Irish political establishment who run away from any debate that might 'polarise' the community, that might prove divisive.

And is it not amazing that Foreign Affairs minister, Dermot Ahern, has probably made copious pronouncements on US Immigration policy, while not issuing a single serious view in what direction Immigration is taking in our own community?

Imagine the fulminations of the Dublin 4 set, if a proviso existed whereby every immigrant to the state had to "learn English". Or was forced to learn the first language of the state: Gaelic!

Apart from a paragraph promising to appoint a Minister for Immigration in Fine Gael's *Contract for a Better Ireland*, none of the mainstream parties addressed the issue of immigration in the May General Election. It affects all public services, health and hospitals, schools, jobs, housing, social welfare, crime, transport, water and sewage.

Instead the campaign was led astray by the Dublin media baying about irrelevancies like the Taoiseach's house.

At least 400,000 immigrants have landed in Ireland over the past three years, equivalent to one-tenth the population of the entire Republic, affecting all public services.

Four out of five Irish people have expressed concern about this out-of-control immigration almost all from Eastern Europe, yet not a single Irish political party (beyond the paragraph in the Fine Gael manifesto) addressed this huge problem.

If immigration continues to rise at its present level, a figure of another half a million immigrants is realistic over the lifetime of the 30th Dail.

In May, 2007, President McAleese

made a state visit to Lithuania. She lauded the contribution made by Lithuanian immigrants in Ireland. Her Government claims that with 24,000, the Lithuanians make up the second largest non-national community in the state.

The Lithuanian Government, however, says "*the figure is closer to 100,000*" (*Irish Times*, 24.5.2007).

The Irish figure is based on the 2006 Census returns, an exercise which turned out to be a farce: everybody knows this except the sleepwalkers in Leinster House.

Tens of thousands of immigrants failed to fill in the census forms. The numerators themselves in large part, have vowed never to get involved in such a farce again, it was so frustrating. Some of the numerators were non-nationals and hadn't a clue about the areas they were supposed to cover.

There's a naivety in the Irish body politic regarding Immigration! Perhaps it derives from a guilt complex when for decades millions left our own shores and nobody gave a damn. In fact, they were encouraged to go, there wasn't room for them here: the late Brian Lenihan was honest enough in 1990 to proclaim:

"We can't all live on a small island".

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The difference in the official stance then to their emigrants and the official attitude now to the immigrants is staggering. The politicians, the media and the Church are in the business of 'talking' immigration up in sound-bites and photo-calls.

The one thing they refuse to countenance is a really serious debate on the issue.

It was a non-subject in the General Election. Fine Gael advocated the creation of a Minister for Immigration. No, not a bloody emigrant, of that you can be sure. The other parties didn't say a peep!

THE BRITS

A vital aspect of any debate would have to be the influence of the massive influx of British Immigrants—some of the dreamier elements wouldn't even consider these as immigrants in the same sense as a Pole or a Latvian—sure, they're "*one of our own*"! We're all entwined! Aye, well!

According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), 200,000 of the 400,000 immigrants in the past few years have come from Britain. If you listen to the airwaves or read popular journalism, you could hardly be blamed for thinking that its the dream of every first or second generation Irish person in Britain to scuttle back to the 'old' country.

When Wayne Rooney's mother, was asked "*Could Wayne have played for Ireland?*", She said: "*Nah*"—*he's English on the outside*", paused for a second and then said: "*...but Irish on the inside*". Maybe the woman is correct but the present writer has not met too many of the Wayne Rooney type over here. Most of them seem to be English both outside and inside.

A lot of the professional and middle-class type who descend on 'Erin Go Bragh' are deserting a country that's riven by crime, social decay and the breakdown of community values—"*the multicultural dream that failed*". The one that President

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