

Irish Destiny
Manus O'Riordan
page 16

Palestine Visit
Conor Lynch
page 13

Labour Asleep . . .
Labour Comment
back page

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

March 2007

Vol.22, No.3 ISSN 0790-7672

and **Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.21 No.3 ISSN 954-5891

Northern Ireland

Beyond The Fringes

The strength, or weakness, of devolved government in the Six Counties (which 'political science' experts like Lord Bew have persisted in calling "*the Northern Ireland state*") was that nobody wanted it, and that it had no purpose for itself. The state—Britain—wanted it and had an (undeclared) purpose for it, which was to retain some leverage on the 26 Counties. But, within Northern Ireland, the only purpose of the Unionist Party (which voted against the Act establishing Northern Ireland) was to use it to retain "*the connection with Britain*". This absence of purpose was the strength of the arrangement.

After two generations of doing nothing much except holding down the Catholics, a Unionist Prime Minister was gripped by the delusion that Northern Ireland was a kind of state and that purposeful government of a more or less democratic kind might be conducted within it. He was encouraged in this delusion by Taoiseach Sean Lemass, who had no understanding of the North, and who put pressure on the Nationalist Party to pretend to be the Loyal Opposition at Stormont. But there was no function for a Loyal Opposition at Stormont. That was the weakness of the 1920 arrangement. The efforts of Capt. O'Neill, assisted by Lemass, led to melt-down in 1969.

It now seems possible, 30 years later, that a devolved government which will be something more than a flash in the pan will be restored at Stormont. But Stormont is not the legislature of a state now, any more than it was then. And there is no more scope for Loyal Opposition now than there was then. The difference between now and then is that Constitutional illusions have been discarded. Though the word "*democracy*" continues to be batted around, the structures of government are devised on the understanding that it is impossible. There is no role for a pretend Loyal Opposition. What in a democracy would be an Opposition aspiring to win an election and become the Government is here to be part of the Government as of right.

This more realistic arrangement is the outcome of a war waged for close on 30 years by the opposition which represents the actual feeling of the Catholic community about the structure called Northern Ireland. It does not provide for democracy—government by a party that wins an election—any more than the old system did. Its merit is that it does not pretend to do so.

continued on page 2

In The Matter Of Albert Luykx And Flemish nationalism

Luykx reply for Cathal O'Shannon

Cathal O'Shannon in a 'Hidden History' RTE television programme (16.1.07) saw fit to tar Flemish Nationalism in general with the Nazi brush, even though their collaboration with the occupation was no worse than that elsewhere, for instance, the British Channel Islands (where, moreover, there was no national question to complicate matters). A certain number of Flemings who fled to Ireland after the Second World War and became good Irish citizens were named and blackened.

O'Shannon called normal integration into Irish life "penetration" and "infiltration" of Irish society on his programme. Those traduced were not in a position to speak in their own defence. One man who came in for particular demonisation was Albert Luykx, one of the defendants in the Arms Conspiracy Trials. No doubt that he had been instrumental in the Irish State's military policy towards the North until Jack Lynch's *volte face* was an additional cause for revisionist rancour. In order to give readers a better appreciation of the Flemish situation, we reproduce below a substantial extract from a Statement drawn up by Albert Luykx for his legal advisers. It explains something of his own background and about the situation which Flemings found themselves in in the concocted state of Belgium.

continued on page 7

More on O'Shannon's
Hidden Nazis on page 26

Editorial Note: It appears that Britain and America are getting ready for an aerial attack on Iran: British forces are being withdrawn to safer locations and extra American troops are deployed to Baghdad in order to control a possible backlash by Al Sadr's forces. And is it coincidental that an Irish Parliamentary delegation has just cancelled a projected visit? With very little hard information about Iran, *Desmond Fennell's* observations below are of particular interest.

My Week In Iran

'Vulgar' is the mildest word I think of when I hear or read more moralising din about Muslim women's headscarves. 'Arrogant', 'prurient' are stronger words that come to mind. It reminds me of feminists in the early days of the movement who went around checking whether women were wearing bras, and upbraiding those who wore them as servile to men. But I must admit it was not western homogenising zealots who raised the headscarf issue when the Iran Air flight

for Tehran had just left Rome airport. There were many Iranian women on the plane, all wearing European dress and only three of them a headscarf. The chief hostess, when making her general address to the passengers in English before take-off, had signalled that this was Muslim territory by beginning: "In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate". The Iranian girl beside me had taken her coloured headscarf out of her bag and folded it triangularly over the back of the seat in front of her. Now, when we were in the air, the chief hostess spoke again briefly in Persian. The girl beside me, after

continued on page 10

CONTENTS

<i>Northern Ireland: Beyond The Fringes.</i> Editorial	1
In The Matter Of Albert Luykx And Flemish Nationalism. <i>Luykx reply to Cathal O'Shannon</i>	1
My Week In Iran. Desmond Fennell	1
The Casement 'Black Diaries'. Roger Sawyer (Letter)	3
Editorial Commentary.	3
Operation Ballast. Editorial	5
Shorts from <i>the Long Fellow</i> (Run Rabbitte Run; Latest Trick; L'Exception Francaise; Health Service Shambles; The Beginning And End	9
Ireland Helps Israel Military Complex. Tim O'Sullivan (letter)	12
Reflections On Palestine. Conor Lynch (Part Two)	13
Iran & Nuclear Development. David Morrison (Report)	13
Recognising Israel. David Morrison (Letter)	14
Irish Destiny And A Jewish Victim Named. Manus O'Riordan	16
Workers' Control Comments: a reply. Conor Lynch	18
Sinn Fein & Policing. (Resolution At Ard Fheis)	18
Slavery Anniversary. Editorial	19
Ruari Quinn Begg Some Questions. Jack Lane	20
Kipling, Connolly And The Kaiser. Joe Keenan (Part Two)	21
Irish Veto On India Joining Nuclear Club. David Morrison	22
Venezuela And The Bolivarian Revolution. Mark Langhammer (Part Two)	24
Big Jim's 60th Anniversary. (Report: Jack O'Connor, Manus O'Riordan)	25
Cathal O'Shannon At War. B. Clifford (Pt. 2 of <i>Hidden History</i> comment)	26

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

[Ireland Can Snore Away With Labour](#): Back Page

The media has consistently misrepresented what is the centre and what are the fringes of political life in Northern Ireland. As a result of developments since 1998, the "*centre ground*" has finally been reached, insofar as anything deserving that name exists. In other situations, political tendencies with impracticable notions are called the extremes, or the fringe. Media operatives, believing in the irresistible power of official propaganda, adopted the practice of calling Northern Ireland tendencies with impracticable notions "*the centre ground*". This mode of description has led to the absurdity that the 'centre ground' now consists of what commentators called the two fringes, while the real extremist fringes occupy the main stretches of ground on both sides.

Constitutional nationalism had its opportunity after 1998. What it did with that opportunity was reduce itself to a fringe. The speed with which this happened may have been due to incompetent leadership, but the development itself was pretty well inevitable. The apparent opportunity was an illusion, and Mark Durkan discredited the SDLP by mistaking the illusion for an opportunity, and by playing make-believe democratic politics with Trimble.

All that was ever possible in the political structure called Northern Ireland

was the conflict of the two communities, one of which was in 1921 given the task of policing the other as a condition of retaining "*the British connection*". The very large minority community was purposefully excluded from the democracy of the state, within which it might have settled down. The majority community operated the devolved system in order to remain connected with Britain, but without any other use for it. It had no agenda of its own to implement.

The rebellion of the Catholic community was a protest against life in a situation in which politics consisted of being policed by the Protestant community. The ending of Partition was adopted as an ideal, but that ideal was not what gave rise to the insurrection. The Protestant community on the other hand has had no purpose beyond a restoration of the arrangements of 1921-1969 (or 1972), which was proved to be dysfunctional.

The arrangements provided by the Good Friday Agreement cannot be regarded as a settlement by either community. For the majority it is a step towards the restoration of Unionist rule outside the democracy of the state (the British political parties). For the minority community it is a step towards participation in the democracy of another state.

This condition of things is not due to perverse wilfulness on either side. It is a necessity of the 1921 set-up—insofar as anything in politics can be held to be necessary.

The DUP programme for the election being held under the St. Andrews modification of the Good Friday Agreement is to bring about the ousting of Sinn Fein, the largest Catholic party, by the British Government. (It knows that instances of Sinn Fein 'misbehaviour' which it will bring forward will not bring about a cross-community vote to sanction Sinn Fein and relies that it will be able to pressurise a Secretary of State to do what a cross-community vote will not do.) The DUP objective is 'voluntary' power-sharing with the SDLP as a stepping-stone to a majority-rule constitution. That is its essential programme, though there are inconsequential social policy 'add-ons' in its election manifesto.

The Sinn Fein policy is to make the 'Northern Ireland State' work as a transitional stage to its abolition. It, too, has inconsequential social policy 'add-ons'.

Whilst there may be a considerable overlap in the social policies of the two 'extremes' which now form the centreground of Northern Irish politics, that is of no consequence, because the two parties face in different directions. What appears to be a centre-ground is anything but that. It is a battlefield on which a Truce has been called.

However Sinn Fein will use this period of Truce to do its utmost to provide a period of productive coalition government, because that is a necessary stage towards its ultimate objective of ending the pretence that Northern Ireland can govern itself. On its part, the DUP will use the period of Truce to try to wrong-foot Sinn Fein as a partner in Government in order to restore the position where Northern Ireland government is nothing more than a mantle for the idea of Union with Britain. And it has to be said that the leadership of the DUP is showing considerable political agility and sophistication in working towards its end. The days when Unionists could be described as lacking political finesse appear to be over.

Viewed in that light, the DUP is facing power-sharing with a negative objective and Sinn Fein with a positive one. It plans to make Northern Ireland work in order to dismantle it.

There is no way of knowing how this story will end: both sides are playing their parts, but they are also being changed by the parts they are playing. Interesting times lie ahead. ■

Editorial Commentary

SF Ard Fheis: The SF leadership won over 90% support from an Ard Fheis held in Dublin's RDS on 28th January for its resolution of conditional support for policing (see elsewhere in this magazine for the resolution). The Ard Fheis had been prepared for by a series of meetings in which leaders engaged with the republican constituency and explained their strategy.

John Kelly, the former Arms Trial defendant, continues to campaign against SF's conditional acceptance of policing. In a letter to the *Irish News*, he accuses SF of "political expediency" and "narrow and selfish interest in a self-advancement that feeds on the cult of personality". He suggests that the Provos did a deal at St. Andrew's, giving MI5 "political and security control to MI5 over the PSNI... without accountability" (IN 5.2.07).

Royal Irish Regiment: a letter from 'Newryman' in the *Irish News* gives SF the credit for negotiating the end of the domestic NI role of the RIR (successor to UVF, B Specials and UDR)—which could not have been achieved by simply joining the SDLP on the Policing Board. As for MI5: "The only way to end the overt involvement of MI5 here is to end British rule. Even then the organisation would probably continue to have a covert presence" (17.2.07).

Martin Connolly, Deputy Major of Newry, regretfully resigned from the Party after the Ard Fheis decision (IN 30.1.07).

Republican Sinn Féin is to put up six candidates against SF in the March 7th election. Joe O'Neill (v. Pat Doherty, W. Tyrone), Brendan McLaughlin (a Hunger striker, v. Martin McGuinness in Mid-Ulster), Geraldine Taylor (a former internee, v. Gerry Adams in W. Belfast); Michael McManus (ex-IRA prisoner, Fermanagh/S. Tyrone, where independent republican Gerry McGeough is also running against SF's Michele Gildernew); Michael McGonigle (E. Derry); and Barry Toman (Upper Bann).

Paisley Then—*Power-sharing With SF 'Over Our Dead Bodies'*, Paisley Declares: "No unionist who is a unionist will go into partnership with IRA-Sinn Féin. They are not fit to be in partnership with decent people. They are not fit to be in the government of Northern Ireland. And it will be over our dead bodies that they will ever get there." (To Independent Orange Lodge on 12th July 2006, IT 13.7.07).

Paisley Now—is said to have been infuriated by an article in the *Irish Times* by Tony Blair (8.1.07), which said: "My assessment from the detailed conversa-

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

In Tim O'Sullivan's interesting overview there are errors of fact which concern me personally, and I should be most grateful if you would publish corrections. Under Mairead Wilson's name the opening sentence reads: "When the Dublin-published *Sunday Press* newspaper, in the mid 1980s, carried a serialisation of the then recently published *Casement The Flawed Hero* by Roger Sawyer, Mairead Wilson, then a civil servant in Dublin, felt prompted to undertake her own investigations." *Casement, The Flawed Hero* has never been serialised.

Under Colm Toibin's name appears the statement: "He interviewed both Roger Sawyer and Angus Mitchell." Mr Toibin has never interviewed me.

Finally, under my own name it is said that I "remained firmly within the school of thought that the contested Diaries were genuine." In the third paragraph of the preface to *Roger Casement's Diaries 1910: The Black and The White* I said: "More than 30 years previously... I had entered the controversy from the opposite position. Living in the Republic of Ireland, as I was at the time, all the signs were that the diaries had been forged, partly to make sure that powerful figures would not support petitions for Casement's reprieve, but mainly to destroy his reputation as a national hero in Ireland and also in the United States." As everyone knows, the evidence led me in another direction.

Perhaps I should also point out two omissions. Reinhard Doerries withdrew permission for the RIA to publish his address because "Somebody in Dublin inserted things into my text and falsified other aspects to a degree that had to be unacceptable..." (Furthermore, when the time came to publish the 'Proceedings' of the Casement Symposium, the contributions of eight speakers were omitted and others were allowed to substitute contributions which they had not made).

The other omission is of the alternative, even-handed interpretation of the August 1910 Iquitos accommodation issue. As a historian from outside the controversy put it in a review: "There is an apparent discrepancy where the 'black' diary states that Casement stayed at an Iquitos hotel [*Le Cosmopolite*], instead of (as we know from his letters) at a private house: but it could as easily mean that he rejected the hotel room which he calls "dreadful".

Hoping that this information is useful.

Roger Sawyer (26.1.07)

tions I have had with the DUP is that, provided there is delivery of the Sinn Féin commitment, they will enter into government with Sinn Féin on March 26th and they will accept devolution of policing and justice powers in the timeframe set out in the St Andrews agreement or even before that date".

DUP Has 'Gone Too Far', says Cllr. Mark Russell of Craigavon, resigning from the Party for not adhering to its 2005 Manifesto pledge (IN 17.2.07).

Leslie Cubitt, a former DUP Deputy Mayor of Limavady, has defected to McCartney's UKUP and will be contesting Limavady (IN 14.2.07)

Robert McCartney is to stand as the rejectionist Unionist candidate in five constituencies: with the list system under the GFA, he will be able to nominate alternates if he is elected in all five seats.

British? Sinn Féin's Councillor Michael Henry McIvor has suggested that, while SF is an all-Ireland Party, the DUP is not a British Party, since it stands no candidates in GB (IN letter 12.2.07).

Conservative And Unionist: James Leslie, a former MLA who defected from the UUP in September 2006 and joined the Conservative Party had

Conservative leader David Cameron in North Down promoting his candidature. After UUP leader Reg Empey challenged Cameron about whether a Conservative MLA would sign up as 'Unionist' or 'Other' in the Assembly, Cameron said that the Conservative Party was strongly in favour of all parts of the UK remaining in the Union, adding: "Of course it is up to the candidates to decide what to do, and, having spoken to our candidates, I am sure if they have to designate they will designate themselves as unionist. But we ought to be getting away from this whole idea that you have to designate. One of the reasons we are standing is to say to people that politics does not have to be like this". Cameron thus knows very well that Conservative MLAs should designate as 'Other', but doesn't have the courage of his convictions.

Raymond McCord, whose campaigning brought about Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan's report on Police Collusion with loyalists in N. Belfast after his RAF son was battered to death by loyalists, is to stand as an Independent in N. Belfast. He says collusion affects both communities and will also be presenting a report

on collusion to Hilary Clinton and other US Presidential candidates around St. Patrick's Day (IN 24.1.07; IT 20.2.07).

UDA Leader Ihab Shoukri was granted bail after Justice Weatherup refused to consider Intelligence documents in support of the prosecution claim that he is a leading loyalist paramilitary. The High Court Judge said he could not accept such evidence in "*the climate of today*" (IN 30.1.07).

Pat Finucane: Mark Barr, acquitted of killing the solicitor in 1990, has been found dead. PSNI do not regard the death as suspicious. William Stobie, another suspect, was gunned down in 1999 (IN 10.2.07).

Collusion Report: Commenting on Nuala O'Loan's report, Jim Gibbons of Sinn Fein asks in his *Irish News* column: "*The perpetrators are in the spotlight but where are those who shaped and set the policy—MI5 and their paymasters in Downing Street?*" Relatives of four people killed under the collusion policy (Sharon McKenna, Peter McTasney, Gerard Brady, John Harbinson) are to sue Sir Hugh Orde, with the assistance of Relatives for Justice (IN 8.2.07, IT 20.2.07).

North 'Cold House' For Protestants... so Drew Nelson, Grand Secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge Of Ireland, told a meeting in Newtownards (IN 2.2.07).

NI Justice Ministry: When responsibility for policing and justice is devolved, the new Ministry should be based in Derry, says Albert Reynolds, in order to build nationalist confidence. He also suggests that the planned new police college should be based in the North-West, admit Garda and PSNI students, and be financed by both Governments. Hain subsequently announced it would be based near Cookstown and British-funded (IN 6.2.07; IT 21.2.07).

Policing Devolution: "*If nationalists are to share in running the northern state, they have to participate in running police so that they are seen to be their police and not just a restructured unionist police*"—Brian Feeney (IN 13.12.06).

PSNI & GAA: Having pressurised the GAA to admit Crown forces, Unionism now demands that it be made a 'declarable' organisation for PSNI officers. Robert Saulters, Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland wants it added to the present seven declarable organisations which are: AOH, Apprentice Boys of Derry; Freemasons; Independent Orange Order; Knights of Columbanus; Loyal Orange Institution; Royal Black Institution (IN 10.2.07).

Northern Bank Raid: last month we reported the dismissal of charges against two suspects, with Christopher Ward, a NB employee, now the only person on trial. Solicitor Niall Murphy described

the case against him as "*a loose interpretation of a series of coincidences. He is a victim of the crime. His home was taken over and he was told that his family would be damaged if he did not co-operate with the gang responsible*" (Frank Connolly, *Village* 11.1.07). Ward also worked part-time for the GAA in Casement Park, Belfast (which the PSNI raided in search of evidence). Shortly after the robbery, Ward gave an extended interview on BBC NI, describing his ordeal and protesting his innocence.

MI5 'Unlawfully Held' Republican reported the *Irish News* on 30th January. Bernard Fox, a former Hunger Striker, was held and questioned by two MI5 agents at Belfast Aldergrove Airport. His solicitor Ciaran Shiels of Madden & Finucane has lodged a complaint with the *Investigatory Powers Tribunal*, which investigates complaints about the Intelligence Services.

Community Restorative Justice: Mark Durkan, an RUC man's son, appears to have won out in his efforts to emasculate CRJ schemes. At present *Community Restorative Justice Ireland* (Director, Jim Auld), which operates in nationalist areas and is financed by charity, handles anti-social behaviour, assaults and domestic violence. Those involved are not criminalised, because there is no police involvement. New guidelines lay down that schemes in receipt of public money will only handle cases referred by the police, after fingerprint and DNA evidence is taken, and where defendants plead Guilty or there is *prima facie* evidence (IN 6.12.06; 6.2.07).

Oireachtas NI Committee: In the face of FG and Labour opposition to giving Sinn Fein MPs speaking rights in the Dail, Bertie Ahern has now proposed establishing an *Oireachtas Northern Ireland Committee*, which would include Westminster MPs but not MLAs. It would meet to discuss the implementation of the Belfast Agreement and N/S Cooperation. True to form, FG and Labour were cool about the proposal (IT 2.2.07).

All-Ireland Economy: Hugh Logue, special adviser in the Office

of First & Deputy First Minister, 1998-2002, has suggested that proposals for investment in the North, contained in the Irish Government's National Development Plan are being blocked because the British Government has not instructed NI civil servants to cooperate and has not promised a parallel financial commitment (see *Blueprint Could Hasten All-Ireland Economy*, IT 24.1.07).

James Downey, a former Deputy Editor of the *Irish Times*, who writes for the *Irish Independent* criticised Bertie Ahern for saying that coalition with Sinn Fein was not possible because of its economic policy, saying "*The true objection to Sinn Fein... is that the party is not fully democratic, and is hopelessly untrustworthy*" (10.11.07).

Tactical Targeting was an article in the *Irish Army's An Cosantóir* (Dec-Jan 07), describing attendance by two artillerymen at a 3-week, multi-national, course mounted by the British Army. Along with technological training, the Irish soldiers were given a liberal dose of propaganda, eg, about Iraq: "*the British and Americans have differing styles in dealing with the local population... The British style... led to troops wearing berets on patrol and, where the situation allowed, to sling weapons rather than carrying them in the alert position...*" And, "*The course was taught with the most up-to-date information available by professional and considerably experienced RSA staff, whose own experiences on recent*

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operations and exercises gave great weight to their lessons. All overseas students were given great opportunities to learn the British targetting process..."

Flood/Mahon Tribunal into Dublin Planning Corruption: has made 10 lawyers millionaires: nearly 34m Euros has been spent on legal costs so far. No end is in sight, though reduced payments to lawyers are now supposed to come into effect, but are being resisted by lawyers. PD Tanaiste Michael McDowell has called for the scrapping of the Tribunal, alleging it will cost 1 bn Euro, while Taoiseach Ahern wants it to continue, saying there are issues concerning himself to be sorted out. These include allegations made about him—and the publishing of leaked confidential information he gave to the Tribunal by the *Irish Times*.

Albert Reynolds said he is "shocked" at Ahern accepting loans from friends during his Judicial Separation problems: as Taoiseach he should have been told of these moves by his Minister for Finance (15.1.07).

Hazel Lawlor, widow of former TD Liam Lawlor, is planning a High Court action restraining the Tribunal from making findings about herself and her husband, "unless supported by evidence proven beyond any reasonable doubt, not on the basis of balance of probabilities". She also complains that Tribunal staff have given tax avoidance advice to its star witness, Frank Dunlop (IT 30.1.07; SI 4.2.07).

South Tipp Shenanigans: Senator Martin Mansergh has denied involvement in any campaign to oust Cllr. Mattie McGrath from the FF ticket for the next election: he'd topped the poll in the Selection Convention. McGrath, a Peace Commissioner, has been summonsed in connection with an incident in which he was trying to calm an argument between youths in his home town of Newcastle (II 28.1.07). It remains to be seen if he will be allowed to run for FF.

Martin Mansergh: An example of *Irish Times* disinformation is its brief report of Mansergh's remarks in the Senate (16.2.07), which it edited to make it appear that the Senator was criticising Bertie Ahern—who the Moriarty Report criticised for signing blank cheques to facilitate his Party leader, Charles Haughey. Here is what Mansergh said on 15th February, with square brackets indicating what the paper left out:

"[I would welcome a debate on the report of the Moriarty tribunal on which I would have plenty to say. A good number of the blank cheques filled out in the period from 1982 to 1987 were made payable to me for my salary and allowances as head of research for Fianna Fáil.] I often wish I had been sufficiently well-off to have left one uncashed and kept it as a souvenir of a cheque signed

"Haughey, MacSharry and Ahern". It would be a great exhibit for the debate." Martin Mansergh did not correct the IT report.

State Kept Interest On Patients' Income Illegally was the misleading front-page lead in the *Irish Times* on 25th January. To cover administrative costs, the State under all Governments, kept interest on money belonging to long-stay residents in homes who were unable to manage it for themselves. In September 2005, in response to a Dept. of Health inquiry, the Attorney General advised that this practice was probably not lawful—which is not the same as saying it was illegal. Since this legal advice was obtained, the State has made no charge for managing these monies.

PDEthics: In a fund-raising letter, signed by leader Michael McDowell, the Party invites donors to contribute just below the declarable limit of 5,000 Euros (IT 12.2.07).

Blow To Partnership: A Supreme Court finding in favour of Ryanair appears to have undermined the 2001 *Industrial Relations Act* by laying down procedures favouring companies in negotiations over labour conditions. The legislation was part of a Partnership deal and provided for the Labour Court to negotiate with companies which refused to recognise Trade Unions to which their staff belong. It remains to be seen what the Trade Union response to this emasculation of the legislation will be. (See DCU Law Lecturer Michael Doherty's article, *Ryanair Ruling Serious For Labour Court Role*, IT 2.2.07).

Labour/FF Coalition: An IT reader has rebutted a claim by Garret FitzGerald that Labour's support crashed after it joined FF in coalition in January 1993. In fact, polls found Labour was down 3%, to 16% in March, but the Party again rose to 18% in both July & October, just 1% below its General Election rating (Ciaran O'Mara IT 13.2.07).

Piano Music Books: Frank McNally raised the book used for teaching the piano in Ireland in a jokey way on 14th February (*Irishman's Column*, IT), mentioning that *Me And My Piano Part 2* features the British National Anthem, complete with picture of guard at Buckingham Palace.

Gaelic: Conradh na Gaeilge, the Union of Students of Ireland, the Union of Secondary Students and others have proposed that trainee primary teachers should spend at least one academic year being taught in a Gaeltacht College, and that a new Irish Syllabus should be developed (IT 6.2.07).

Northern Ireland: Two-thirds of NI's Gaelic-medium schools could be closed under new Government rules on minimum sizes of 'rural' schools (IN 26.1.07). This is though Sinn Fein was promised an *Irish Language Act* under the St. Andrew's Agreement.

Rural Housing in NI has been hit by 'one-off' planning rules: half of planning applications have been rejected while projects allowed were largely submitted before the changes came into effect. These rules were imposed by the NIO against the wishes of the majority of the electorate (IN 10.2.07).

Review Of O'Loan Report Into Police/Loyalist Collusion

Operation Ballast

(The numbering in brackets below relates to paragraphs within the Public Statement.)

On 22nd January, the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Nuala O'Loan, released the findings of her three-and-a-half-year investigation into a series of complaints about police conduct in relation to the murder of Raymond McCord Junior in November 1997.

Mrs. Nuala O'Loan upheld a complaint from his father, Raymond McCord, that over a period of years, police acted in such a way as to protect informants from being fully accountable to the law.

An initial investigation into Mr McCord's complaints revealed issues of concern in relation to a series of other incidents—including murders, attempted murders and drug dealing.

As a result, the Police Ombudsman's investigation quickly expanded to cover the period from 1991-2003. It looked at one police informant in particular—Mark

Haddock—and at his associates, many of whom were also police informants and members of a UVF unit in North Belfast and Newtownabbey.

The investigation has proved the most complex ever undertaken by the Police Ombudsman. More than 100 serving and retired police officers were interviewed, 24 of them 'under caution'. Members of the public were also interviewed.

Police computer systems were examined and more than 10,000 items of police documentation was recovered, including material held within intelligence systems, on personal records, in police journals, in crime files and from other sources. Corroborating material was also recovered from a number of other, non-police, agencies.

The Police Ombudsman has identified

that intelligence held within the policing system, the majority of which has been graded by police as "reliable and probably true", and which has been corroborated from other sources, which links police informants to:

- The murders of ten people;
- 72 instances of other crime, including:
 - Ten attempted murders;
 - Ten 'punishment' shootings;
 - 13 punishment attacks;
 - A bomb attack in Monaghan;
 - 17 instances of drug dealing, and;
 - Additional criminality, including criminal damage, extortion and intimidation.

Police Ombudsman investigators have also identified less significant and reliable intelligence which links Informant 1 and his associates to an additional five murders.

During this period the Police Ombudsman has estimated that payments of at least £79,840 were made to Informant 1, which included a series of incentive payments (30.0-30.10).

- The Police Ombudsman investigation also established a pattern of work by certain officers within Special Branch designed to ensure that Informant 1 and his associates were protected from the law.
- In addition, she has also identified a series of instances when they took steps to ensure that police informants who had committed crime were protected from police officers investigating those crimes and from other agencies within the criminal justice system, Informants were reportedly 'babysat' through interviews to help them avoid incriminating themselves, false notes were created and searches of houses to locate UVF arms and the search of a UVF arms dump were blocked for no valid reason (23.1-23.14.)

In addition, misleading information was prepared for the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and vital intelligence likely to have assisted in the investigation of serious crimes, including murder, was withheld from police investigation teams.

The Police Ombudsman's Office has encountered a number of difficulties during this investigation, including the fact that a number of documents were either missing, lost or destroyed. These included parts of murder files, decision logs and intelligence documents. This general absence of records has prevented senior officers from being held to account. The Police Ombudsman is of the view that this was not an oversight but was a deliberate strategy and had the effect of

avoiding proper accountability. (8.1-8.19 and 33.6)

Mrs. O'Loan has concluded that her investigation has established collusion between certain officers within Special Branch and a UVF unit in North Belfast and Newtownabbey. (32.1- 32.5)

"It would be easy to blame the junior officers' conduct in dealing with various informants and indeed they are not blameless. However, they could not have operated as they did without the knowledge and support at the highest levels of the RUC and the PSNI," she said.

Mrs O'Loan said she believed a culture of subservience to Special Branch had developed within the RUC which had created a form of dysfunction.

"The effect of that dysfunction was that, whilst undoubtedly Special Branch officers were effective in preventing bombings, shootings and other attacks, some informants were able to continue to engage in terrorist activities, including murder, without the Criminal Investigation Department having the ability to deal with them for some of these offences."

Mrs. O'Loan has said she believes the PSNI has made significant changes and introduced new policies in relation to its handling of informants. She said the PSNI have also accepted all of the recommendations contained in her statement:

"This has been a difficult and at times very sad investigation, both to conduct and to report on. I am satisfied that the PSNI have accepted the mistakes of the past and put in place policies and procedures to help ensure they will not happen in the future."

1. Murder of McCord Junior (9.1-9.35)

Raymond McCord Junior was found beaten to death in Ballyduff Quarry on 9th November 1997. Information held by the police, and corroborated from a number of sources, indicates that Informant 1, who was in prison at the time, ordered his murder and that another man, who was on leave from the prison, carried it out.

Informant 1 and his associates were eventually arrested for the murder, questioned and released without charge.

The Police Ombudsman has established that there were a number of failures with the murder investigation which may have significantly reduced the possibility of anyone ever being prosecuted for the crime. They include a failure to seize a suspect's clothing from prison and the destruction of exhibits, including the car believed to have been used in the attack.

The Police Ombudsman found no evidence that police knew what was going to happen to Mr. McCord, nor that they could have warned him or his family about the danger.

2. Murder of McTasney. (10.5 -10.16)

Peter McTasney was murdered at Bawnmore in Belfast on 24th February 1991.

Later that year, when police were interviewing suspects about an attempted murder, which Informant 1 had told them about and was believed to have been involved in, they established that the gun used was the one used to kill Mr McTasney and was linked to a series of attempted murders.

Informant 1 was arrested and interviewed a total of 19 times. His handlers' conducted the main interviews. One of those handlers has said they 'babysat' him though the interviews and that notes were completed which did not reflect what happened in the interview. Informant 1 was subsequently released without charge.

A combined file for the murder of Mr McTasney and the earlier attempted murder was prepared for the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Two men were subsequently convicted. Special Branch, with the agreement of a Deputy Assistant Chief Constable, did not disclose to the DPP the involvement of a police agent.

3. The Murder of Sharon McKenna.

(13.1—13.49) Sharon McKenna was shot dead on 17th January 1993.

A Detective Sergeant and a Detective Constable have both said Informant 1 admitted to them being one of the gunmen involved in the murder. Separate police documentation from the time also records 'high grade,' information that Informant 1 was involved.

Authorisation was given by Special Branch to arrest Informant 1. He was arrested, detained for six days, and interviewed 37 times. Some of those interviews were conducted by his 'handler'. Another of those officers present has told Police Ombudsman investigators he 'felt like a gooseberry' sitting in on the interviews, as he knew Informant 1 was a police 'source' and would say nothing of relevance in front of him. Informant 1 was subsequently released without charge.

No one has ever been charged with the murder.

In the weeks which followed, Informant 1's monthly retainer was increased from £100 a month to £160, despite the fact that he was a main suspect for the murder.

4. Murder of McParland (14.1- 14.17)

Sean McParland was shot on 17th February 1994 and died later from his injuries.

Police Ombudsman investigators have seen information which indicated that two days before the murder, police received information from an informant that someone was to be killed the next morning. They mounted a response at the relevant time and place during which they saw

Informant 1.

Later that day they received information that Informant 1 had been involved in the planned attack but that it was called off when police were seen in the area. Mr McParland was shot the following day.

Police Ombudsman investigators have seen additional information in which Informant 1 names another police informant as having carried out the murder. He also admits to having had an involvement himself.

5.6. Murders of Convie & Fox (15.1-15.11)

Gary Convie and Eamon Fox were shot dead on a building site in Belfast on 17th May 1994.

Informant 1 was a suspect for the murder and was arrested.

The gunman who carried out the murders was said to have a 'goatee' beard. Informant 1 when arrested had a 'goatee' beard but was allowed to shave it off while in custody. No identity parade was held. He was released without charge.

7. Murder of Brady (16.1-16.3)

Gerard Brady was shot on 17th June 1994. Police have intelligence which links Informant 1 and another police informant to this murder. Ballistic tests have also linked the gun used to Informant 1 and other police informants.

8. The Murder of John Harbinson (18.1-18.28)

Mr. Harbinson was beaten to death on 18th May 1997.

Special Branch had a significant amount of high-grade intelligence about the four main suspects for this murder, including Informant 1. They did not pass this information on to the police officers investigating the murder.

Special Branch also had information that those who had carried out the murder had fled to a location in Ballyhalbert where they were safely ensconced.' Again, they did not pass this information on to their colleagues. Forensic opportunities were lost.

9,10. Police Ombudsman investigators have seen information which links Informant 1 to the murders of **Thomas Sheppard** in March 1996 (17.1-17.5) and **Thomas English** in October 2000. (19.1-19.5)

Terrorism in the Republic (24.1- 24.20)

Informant 1 gave police information about a *planned bomb attack in Dublin* and helped them ensure the plan was aborted. Special Branch officers were instructed not to record the details of this planned attack.

Informant 1 later gave police information about *another 'high profile' attack* on a republican target and told them he had received the explosives to

carry it out. The police made safe the explosives and returned them to him, but did not mount an operation to see what the terrorists had planned or to arrest them.

Within two weeks there was a bomb attack on the *Sinn Fein offices in Monaghan*. Intelligence held by police implicates police informants, including Informant 1. None of this information was passed to the Garda.

Attack on Bar, Portadown (26.1 -26.14)

Special Branch received detailed intelligence from a police informant of a planned UVF attack on a bar in Portadown. They passed on limited information to local police. Only good policing in the area allowed those responsible to be apprehended.

Special Branch Block Searches (23.1-13.14)

Documentation indicates that police were provided with the addresses of people who had UVF weapons, including Informant 1, and the location of an alleged UVF arms dump. Special Branch blocked the searches of some of these locations.

Within weeks of these searches having been blocked, there is information that Informant 1 and his associates were again linked to murder and attempted murder.

Drug Dealing (27.1-27.19)

The Police Ombudsman has obtained around 70 separate intelligence reports held by police implicating Informant 1 in 17 instances of drug dealing in an area covering North Belfast and Lame. The material also links him to associated 'punishment' attacks. Despite this, his only conviction has been for the possession of drugs.

The full Public Statement can be found on www.policeombudsman.org in the Publications > Investigative Reports section.

Albert Luykx

continued

[The youngest of eleven children, Albert Luykx was born in 1917, married in 1942 and had 6 children, 4 of whom were born in Ireland. Coming from a business family in Belgium, he established several businesses in Ireland, including *Looks Well Ltd.*, employing 9; *Weluks Ltd*, employing 65; *Acqua Sports*, employing 8; as well as the Sutton House Hotel. (In the following extract the language, punctuation and spellings are as in the original.)]

"CAREER PRIOR TO COMING TO IRELAND

Educated in St. Joseph's, the Jesuits in Turnhout Belgium. Entered parents firm

end 1935, employing just over 200. In charge of the buying of raw-materials and general out-of-door "jack of all trades" for the business : general building, sawmill, veneer mill. I had to travel a lot.

Politics

My father and the family were very much involved in politics as member of the Flemish Nationalist Party : the Party had 18 members of Parliament and 9 senators. Even as student I was involved in the youth-groups of the party. - I grew-up as a real nationalist, reading and enjoying the history of Ireland, and other Irish Books, which we took as an example.

The Flemish Politic is a funny thing : - when the Belgian state was founded 21.7.1830, the first Prime Minister "de Brouquere" stated in his first speak "la Belgique sera Latine, ou elle ne sera pas" (Belgium will be latin, or it will not be at all) - the population of the new state was then 2/5 Flemish, 3/5 Walloons (French). No Flemish speaking could get any decent job, not work except labouring. - The intention of the rulers was the old landlord system "to keep them stupid, and we will keep them poor". - Nonetheless the Flemish survived, thanks also to the priests who kept declaring the new founded state as atheistic and anti-religious; even in 1880, when the state existed 50 years and big festivities were organised, the bishops forbade the flemish catholics to participate in these festivities for the above-mentioned reason. The Flemish were suppressed.

The Walloons (South of Belgium) who had very few children declined in population, the Flemish population grew considerably, and at this moment there are 3/5 Flemish in Belgium.

When the 1914-18 war broke-out, King Albert called to the population and urged the Flemish to join-up as volunteers, and he promised to give them their rights after the war. - They join-up in droves, but the army-officers were all Walloons (french-speaking), the Flemish did not understand the instructions given; as a result of this 80 % of all the Belgians buried along the Yzer were Flemish. After the war the King forgot to carry-out his promise.

I was born as 7th son of the family, and my Father called me "Albert" to show his traditionel loyalty to the King.

- My Father's firm was very often deprived from certain contracts because of his political affiliations; nevertheless he was one of the official contracts to the Belgian Army for the building of barracks, fortifications etc., because of the quality of his work and his honesty in dealing with large orders.

- My eldest brother was practically 100 % in politics, although he was senior executive in the firm. - Two more brothers were also in the firm; they were nationalists of course but not so much involved in daily politics.

- We strongly advocated a federal state.

War Time

- When the last war broke-out, the Party got very much pro-German and certain fractions of the Party did not agree with this policy. My theory was to keep our politics independent from Germany and from Britain and France of course, because I would not commit the future of Flandres to the problematic victory of any of the big powers. -
- Notwithstanding this disagreement I was a prominent member of the Black Brigade, the armed force of the Nationalist Party (V.N.V. Vlaams Nationaal Verbond) : on demonstration and meetings we wore a black uniform. The name and uniform of the Black Brigade had been the result of an amalgamation between the V.N.V. (whose militant force were the Grey Brigade) and the other nationalist Part, the VERDINASO (Verbond der Diets National Solidaristen), with Joris Van Severen as their leader, who was shot by the French in May 1940, whose militant force was the Black Brigade.
- The King had stopped the war 28th May 1940, and [told] his people to return home to their work. - Some of his ministers had gone to England and had set-up a new government against the King.
- My policy of independence did not please certain leaders of the Party and in January 1944 I was expelled.
- I never have been anti anything - considering a negative approach a waste of energy, - but my policy was completely opposed to the NAZI-theory.
- During the war I was 3 times arrested and brought before the officer of propaganda, who every time tried to change my policy, envain.
- When an S.S. regiment overran Fathers works and instructed us to work for them, I refused to do so without the necessary requisition-order signed by the Feldkommandant; but I was collected by armed soldiers, and later released again.
- One Sunday-morning I was out with my friend, each of us carrying a shot-gun, which we had hidden; we met some Germans, and on my declaration that both guns belonged to me I was arrested. - My eldest brother, the bourgemaster, got me out again as before.
- Notwithstanding my policy, I had several good friends amongst the German occupying officers. One officer was in charge of "Freistellungs-bescheinigungen" = everybody had to be employed, otherwise he was liable to be sent to Germany; so everybody had to carry a certificate issued by the Germans; from this officer I regularly procured certificates, signed and sealed. - My brother, the priest, who was a leader of a resistant-group and his colleagues in Holland were very thankful to me for these certificates.
- When the Germans had to retreat in

Sept. 1944, I was arrested again, this time with 29 other locals, including my father, brother Leo, brother-in-law, Gustave and brother, the priest, and held as hostages. It is only thank to the Providence that we are still alive, as in most cases these hostages were shot by the Germans before retreating further. The sudden arrival of the British troops has certainly saved us.

After the WAR

- Towards the very end of the war the Puppet-Government in London had made certain new laws, for example article No 118 A "...to shake the confidence in the King..." -
- When the war was over the London Government took control and started some 270,000 cases against citizens, 95 % of the accusations were under article No 118 - . - Meanwhile they made King Leopold abdicate.
- The intention of that government was quite simple : to use the big anti-Nazi feeling after the war to crush all the Flemish Nationalists by accusing them of collaborating with the Germans. - Immediately special military courts were set-up; anyone could grasp authority by wearing a tricolor arm-band, getting hold of a stem-gun and arresting anybody they had a disliking for; schools and public buildings were used to incarcerate men, women and children; dozens of people were shot to death or beaten to death without trial, very often after physically molesting them; women and children were raped, all under the banner of patriotisme, but in fact mostly for personal gain. Houses were burned to cover-up their lootings.-
- From approx. June 1945 the official police was matter [master?] of the situation, but what kind of police, as the general of the gendarmery him self was in jail, together with several junior ministers and very many High Dignities : the Lord Abbott of a Benedictine Monastery died in jail, dozens of Priests were in jail, many of them died there.
- Of my family my father, 4 brothers, father-in-law and 2 brother-in law were in jail. - My brother, the priest, was to receive a medal from General Montgomery for his action during the occupation, but he was to be released from jail to receive it.
- In March 1945 I was arrested, charged and 7th June 1948 convicted to 20 years.
- During that period the military court in Province Limburg (were I was) pronounced 12 death-penalties and 10 life-sentences within one day, and they were all individual cases. - The whole thing was like a farce, but in all some 170 were executed.
- Toward the end of June 1948 I was transferred to a camp and on 20th August 1948 I escaped, escaped from the blackest periode of the history of Flemish politics.
- What is the name of the famous french writer who said: "La Belgique est la pays le

plus cruel du monde".? Belgium is the cruelest country in the world.

- Through friends and priests I obtained an official Dutch Passport, and 8.10.1948 I arrived in Ireland, as a free man again. - My only friend in Ireland, Nic Stassen, brought me to the Aliens Branch in Dublin Castle and after 10 days I got a residence permit. - My wife with our 2 children arrived 20.12.1948, ready to start a new life in freedom.
- From the start I liked Ireland and its people : I relished the newly acquired freedom. - I even wrote article about "Free Ireland" in Flemish Papers.
- I have worked very hard in Ireland, always as a free-lancer. We made friends and gradually were accepted by the majority of the good people. Our 3th child was born 27th November 1949, a son, and 3 more daughters were born later.

Association with Neil Blaney.

- Around 1954 I started a pit-prop business in Ards Forest, Creeslough Co. Donegal, which ultimately developed into building a factory there.
- One day a man came to see us in the forest, he was Mr. Neil Blaney T.D. and he offered his help, if we ever needed any help.
- He called again and I got to like him. He invited me to the Dail. - I admire him as a good man as a real good Irishman.
- Due to our hard work and helped by the friendship of Neil Blaney the Veneer factory was built there. I brought another factory to Donegal, Precious Woods in Milford. Our whole family liked him as a down-to-earth good Irishman.
- I never had any dealings with N. Blaney, but if during a by-election he was short of transport, he knew that he could count on me, and I don't think I have missed one by-election when he was the director of election. During such days I got to know many other prominent Irishmen.
- In Ireland I have never been a member of any political organisation but very much liked Neil Blaney : we very seldom talked about local politics, but the general good of the country and its future were always the kernel of our discussions. I expressed my views on different matters, and regularly reported on points brought-up in continental circles, such as new industries and possible export-markets..."

Editorial Note: The depth of Cathal O'Shannon's analysis is shown by his remark in the programme, "*Blaney sent Albert Luykz to Europe to acquire guns for the Provisional IRA*". In fact, the Arms Importation, which Jack Lynch later prosecuted in Arms Conspiracy Trails, was authorised by the Irish Cabinet. And the guns weren't for the "*Provisional IRA*", a later development, but for the Northern Citizens' Defence Committees. These matters are conclusively proven in Angela Clifford's *Military Aspects Of Ireland's Arms Crisis Of 1969-70*. ■

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

RUN RABBITTE RUN

When the American tourist asked for directions the Irishman suggested that he should start from somewhere else. Or so the old joke goes.

The Labour Party should start from somewhere else. In 1994 Labour's moment of truth came. It had more seats than it had ever achieved and it had managed to depose the leader of Fianna Fail Albert Reynolds. Reynolds was replaced by the relatively more left-wing Bertie Ahern. At that point it seemed that the Labour Party had the largest political party in the state at its mercy. And what did it do? It brought down the Government in which it was a member in response to a story by *The Irish Times*.

The 'scandal' that *The Irish Times* exposed was that Reynolds's cabinet colleagues remained silent when Reynolds misled the Dail. It was not enough that Reynolds should resign but the whole Fianna Fail Party was deemed unfit for government. That was the infantile position that led Labour back to its destiny of being the junior party in a Fine Gael coalition and then into the political wilderness.

If Labour had learned any lessons, they were quickly forgotten with the Democratic Left take-over. Its leader Pat Rabbitte has made it an article of faith that Fianna Fail is unfit to govern and all policies are subordinate to this consideration. We are now reduced to the parlour game of what Pat will do when the numbers don't stack up. This is not politics: it is a substitute for it.

And surprise, surprise, *The Irish Times* has decreed that Rabbitte should be exempted from the consequences of political failure (see editorial of 19th January 2007).

THE LATEST TRICK

And then at the Labour Party Conference Rabbitte pulled a policy out of the hat...

The basic income tax rate is to be reduced from 20% to 18%. But there is no intention to compensate for this by increasing our low Corporation Tax rate of 12.5% or our Capital Gains tax rate of 20%.

Is it real or an illusion? Brian Cowen has suggested that it is an illusion if there is no commitment to at least index Tax

Credits (the best way of helping low income families) or no commitment to index the basic rate Tax Band.

But, if it is real, at a stroke the Labour Party has been transformed into the low tax party. Most media commentators have been enchanted by the cleverness of it all. The abandonment of Labour policies is seen as a means of wrong footing Fianna Fail.

L'EXCEPTION FRANCAISE

Dan O' Brien in the *Sunday Business Post* (18.2.07) has suggested that Rabbitte's latest trick is in line with the political approach pioneered by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. The left, in effect, capitulates and fights elections on the ground carved out by the right. But the right—at least in recent years—never feels obliged to abandon *its* policies.

The exception seems to be in France. While the socialist presidential candidate Segolene Royal seems to have adopted a tentative Blairite line, the right-wing candidate Nicholas Sarkozy has recently discovered such socialist icons as Jean Jaures and Leon Blum.

And the right-of-centre candidate (by French standards) Francois Bayrou has articulated his own vision of France's place in the world:

"France is the only country in the world which resists the dominant finance capitalist model. This is a need for the French and for the world. It is necessary to keep this. It is necessary to unite around this model and to unite other countries around this model. We are and will be a powerful reference point in the world on condition that Europe exists, otherwise we will be swept away" (*Paris Match*, 15-21 February, 2007).

Perhaps a bit Franco-centric, but one appreciates the sentiment!

HEALTH SERVICE SHAMBLES

Pat Rabbitte isn't the only person who shouldn't start from here.

The media has fallen over itself in support of Mary Harney's attempt to change the consultants' contract. And who could support the consultants? The American economist Dale Tussing who lectures in New York's Syracuse University said on RTE's *Prime Time* (6.2.06) that the Irish consultants' contract is the wonder of the world. They are paid a generous public salary, which requires them to be present at a public hospital for 33 hours in a week.

But, even within this 33 hours, consultants are not obliged to treat public patients exclusively. They are perfectly entitled to treat private patients in the public hospital they are assigned to. Indeed

they have an incentive to treat private patients because they are guaranteed a basic salary regardless of what they do. But the way to generate extra fee income is to treat as many private patients as possible, resulting in queue jumping by private patients at the expense of patients not covered by health insurance.

The only trouble with Harney's proposal is that, since she has become Minister for Health, she has done everything possible to facilitate the mixing of private and public medicine by giving generous tax incentives for the building of private hospitals in public hospital grounds. The highlighting of the consultants' contract a few months before the General Election looks like a political stunt to distract attention from the Health Service shambles which she presides over.

THE BEGINNING AND END

And the current leader of the Progressive Democrats doesn't want to continue from where his party started...

Since McDowell replaced Harney he has become even more frantic in his pronouncements. His attempt to trump Pat Rabbitte's proposal of a standard rate of 18% with a proposal not only to match the 18% of Rabbitte's but also to reduce the top rate from 41% to 38% looks like panic.

And what are we to make of McDowell's well-founded criticisms of the Tribunals?

More than any other Party in the state (with the possible exception of Dick Spring's Labour Party) the Progressive Democrats generated the political conditions which led to the tribunals. But the source of the Tribunals was not within the state. In a very interesting article Tom McGurk traced the sequence of events that led to the first Tribunal, the Beef Tribunal (see *Sunday Business Post*, 18.2.07).

First there appeared a series of stories in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Spectator*, linking Larry Goodman with the Provisional IRA. And then there was Granada Television's famous *World in Action* programme, which made some extraordinary and unsubstantiated allegations about Goodman's meat business, senior Irish politicians, and corruption.

The fact that the long and expensive Beef Tribunal found no evidence of political corruption was not enough to assuage the moralistic fervour of the Progressive Democrats.

But now the Progressive Democrats has decided that it doesn't wish to continue what it helped to start... Could it spell the end?

My Week In Iran

continued

glancing around at the heads of other Iranian women, said to me in Italian: "No one is putting it on". And I gathered that the chief hostess had recommended that women put their headscarves on.

Apart from these Muslim incidents the flight was like flights used to be in the old pre-Ryan-Air days. A full complement of stewards and hostesses, a blanket and pillow offered to each passenger, a hot meal served, and—for a four and a half-hour flight a luxury—connecting flexes offered for listening to radio or watching a film. An Iranian film with English subtitles duly began.

The girl beside me said she was studying art restoration in Perugia. The Italians had done a lot of work of that kind in Iran. There were a few good Iranian restorers, but she hoped to be the first woman restorer in Iran. Before she switched to this new career, she had been a television and theatre actress. It was very respected work in Iran, but in Italy it was not. The girls there thought that to be an actress you had to have a beautiful body, but that was nonsense, for good acting you needed no such thing. She had been going out with an Italian man in Iran, but after she met him in Italy, she hadn't heard from him again.

As the sunlight faded and the plane began its descent to Tehran international airport, my seat companion and the other Iranian women put on their headscarves. The immigration officials who had us line up to check our passports were young women dressed in chadors of fine 'uniform' quality. The chador, usually black, and covering head and body to the ankles so as to leave only the face exposed, is the traditional Iranian female dress in public places. (Later, on the streets of Iranian cities, I would notice a three-quarter-length version which leaves trousers or jeans exposed.)

For 863 Euros I had booked an eight-day tour with a Tehran travel agency.. That gave me overnights with breakfast in three-star hotels. Included in the tour package was an English-speaking guide on arrival in Tehran, a flight to Shiraz, and another English-speaking guide with car for Shiraz, Yazd, Isfahan and the return to Tehran. The Iran Air return flight cost another €320. It was Winter, January actually, not perhaps the best season for a tourist visit, but I was not in search of sun. I wanted an overall view of ancient Persia and the Islamic Republic Iran, and I got

that as abundantly as eight days allowed. What follows is a summary of what I saw and of what I was told by my guides and many others, either directly in English or through translation.

Iran is more than three times the size of France and has a population of 70 million, aged mostly under twenty-five. One tenth of the population lives in Tehran. It is absurd, but when you have been subjected to incessant propaganda about how sinister, oppressed and dangerous a country is, the first thing that strikes you is how 'normal' it is, even if that normality is tinged with the country's cultural distinctiveness. The dense traffic of cars on Tehran's streets and avenues lived up to its reputation. Petrol costs five euro cents a litre. Strangely for a country so rich in petroleum, part of the petrol is imported because Iran has insufficient refineries for the demand. Tehran's air pollution is serious, the Government is taking measures to reduce it, and the brand-new metro with its shining new trains is part of that effort. The streetscape is for the most part 'tatty Middle Eastern' in the sense of lacking that similarity of facades and heights of buildings which characterises European cities. The modernistic Parliament building stands out. But North Tehran, the wealthier part of the city, which has grown enormously since the Islamic Revolution, is another matter. Elegant high-rise apartment blocks and attractively designed supermarkets abound. I did not see South Tehran, where the poor live and from which the Revolution drew its main support.

I said that the 'normality' of the place struck me. I qualify that. The night of my arrival, in my hotel bedroom, I encountered one of the western caricatures of Iran seemingly confirmed. When I switched on Channel 1 on the television, a white-turbaned mullah was reading from the Koran. He read briefly, closed the book, and began to speak with a twinkle in his eye and a ready smile. The camera revealed that he was addressing several ascending rows of casually dressed young men, and subsequently, moving to the left, that there was a smaller number of chadored women similarly seated, one of them with spectacles taking notes. He used a blackboard to draw some diagrams. He was an engaging speaker, smiling frequently, and the camera showed a couple of the young men laughing quietly. A recall relieved my initial stunned reaction. I remembered that it was Thursday, the night preceding the Muslim Sabbath, and that on that night it was customary in mosques to give a scriptural sermon. So this might well not be the standard television fare, no more than a Mass on Sunday morning is standard

RTÉ.

Hotel Reception informed me that the man I had been waiting for had arrived. A business colleague of an Irish aviation engineer, he took me out to dinner in an expensive traditional restaurant. It was a very large cellar with the walls decorated in Persian-style ceramic tiles. Alcoholic drink being absent, I drank liquid yoghurt in preference to the fruit juices and the non-alcoholic beer. On a platform a singer cum comic performed, and several musicians played Iranian traditional music. At long tables there were three large dinner parties of about thirty persons each. One of them was celebrating a birthday, the other two were post-wedding celebrations. We were part of the 'other' customers who enjoyed the performance and the lively interchanges between the main performer and the long tables, which sometimes included rhythmic responses or hand claps.

A man approached our table and offered an open box containing a large number of small envelopes in rows. My host picked one, handed it to me, and gave the man some money. He told me the envelopes contained poems by Hafez, a famous mystical poet of the fourteenth century, which people treat as oracles to know their fortune or to receive advice. Since I omitted to ask him to translate my poem, I do not know what it said to me.

The question of how boy meets girl in Tehran had arisen in my conversation with my host. So around midnight he took me to see one of the ways in which this occurs. Remember this was Thursday-Friday night, the middle of the Iranian week-end. On a broad avenue running alongside a large public park, rows of three or four cars abreast were moving slowly in opposite directions, most of them occupied by a couple of young men or women and sometimes by one of either sex. My host explained to me that they were 'checking out' each other and that occasionally chats took place between adjacent cars or telephone numbers were supplied gratuitously or exchanged. (Every second person in Iran seems to have a mobile telephone.) The main reason why this amorous cruising takes place is that dancing in public places is forbidden, though it takes place at private parties.

On Friday night, the end of the weekend, crowds of people milled in the domestic terminal at Tehran airport (a splendid new international airport will be opened a couple of months from now). They were taking planes to every part of Iran. Passing through the large bathroom of the men's lavatory, I noticed a man washing himself ritually at a handbasin: hands and arms up to the elbow, nostrils

and mouth. This surprised me until I noticed later in the departure area two prayer rooms, one for men, one for women, and a trickle of intending passengers removing their shoes and entering each.

Shiraz in the deep south near the Persian Gulf is a beautiful city, Isfahan, nearly 500 kilometres northeast of it, even more so. Not far from Shiraz, I saw the extensive remains of Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire in the days of Darius, Artaxerxes, and Xerxes. In a night of drunken revelry Alexander the Great and his pals, male and female, set it afire, and his soldiers, taking example from them, burned it to the ground. A few miles away, cut into a rock-face, are the tombs of several of those Persian monarchs. In accordance with the 'fire-worshipping' Zoroastrian religion, the bodies were laid in the entrance doorway to be cleansed of flesh by vultures and only then were the remains deposited inside. A carved relief, from centuries later, shows Shapur I, emperor of Persia, triumphing over two Roman emperors. He holds one of them captive, by the neck, while the other kneels imploring mercy. Educated as I was in the glories of ancient Rome, it was interesting to see, so to speak, the other side of the story.

Within and without, the great mosques of Iran are shimmeringly beautiful constructions of elegant shapes combined with expanses of coloured ceramic tiles and, occasionally, of fragments of mirror glass. In Shiraz I visited one built in the ninth century, another in the nineteenth. This latter one was so special that, my guide said, non-Muslims were forbidden entry. But having told me to keep my mouth shut and to look pious, he smuggled me in. And there were the gardens, sometimes associated with rulers' palaces, always including a still, rectangular pool. As in Japan, so, too, in Iran, the garden is treated as a formal work of art.

The mausoleum of the poet Hafez, who had told my fortune in Tehran, is set in a large garden with rows of orange trees. The grave is marked by a slab surrounded by slender pillars bearing a canopy. The custom, my guide said, was to touch the slab and murmur verses of the Koran. He did so and I imitated him. Opposite us a girl, dressed in headscarf, leather jacket and jeans, did likewise. She then opened a volume of Hafez's poetry at random, glanced at the page, kept her finger marking the place as she closed the book, and stood gazing for a long time at the sky. Later, as we were entering the Hafez Study Centre, we saw her sitting on the ground beside a venerable bearded dervish, with the book open between them while he talked, presumably interpreting. In the Study Centre I read a couple of

Hafez poems in English and noticed mention of a tavern and of wine. The wine was intended spiritually, my guide said, but I was not convinced.

Our meals, for which we shared the bill, cost me between three and five Euros. I was paying in Iranian Rials, having changed some Euros at a rate of 1:12,000. Admittedly the weather was coldish, but all the hotel bedrooms during my tour were wildly overheated. I had to ask hotel staff to switch off the heating and then, with the window open, had to wait an hour or so until the room became bearable. This extravagance, I learned, is a result of the low price of gas fuel. A pipeline runs from the south northwards and so much is consumed en route that the most northerly parts of the country, where the need is greatest, have been suffering from gas shortages.

In the coffee bar of a hotel I talked to a young man who had some English and who is an officer in the air force. He had studied electricity and electronics. He said he was now researching "passive defence". That being? I asked. Well, he said, for instance, the carbon bomb. That being? It is a bomb which disables the enemy's electrical systems. He was a firm supporter of President Akhmadinejad. I asked him had he a girl friend. "No", he said, "but I have my God". "*Passive defence*" was no puzzle for my guide. An aeronautical engineer, he was a retired air force officer who had taken part in the Iran-Iraq war and been wounded. He said that the 'passive defence' doctrine had caused the air force to veer away from investment in aeroplanes and instead to go in for missiles, including very long-range ones.

In conversation and in the people's consciousness, 'the war' means the Iran-Iraq war. The men's faces displayed on large posters in public places mostly represent martyrs (we would say heroes) of that war. Interestingly, and unlike the case in Syria, you see no public pictures of the President. Instead, both in public and in offices, there are the twin photos of the successive Supreme Leaders, Khomeini and Khamenei.

I asked a businessman who spoke fluent English, and who said he had two relatives close to the Government, two questions. Is it true that Iran is intervening actively in Iraq? "Yes", he answered. "Are you going for the atomic bomb?" "Yes", he answered, "but it will take five years". A supporter of the Revolution who had suffered under the Shah, he was disappointed about the way things were going. Khatami, the would-be reforming President, had allowed 'the mullahs' to frustrate him. And, moreover, Akhmadinejad, who had been elected on the basis of promises to improve conditions for the poor, was also failing to deliver.

I got the impression that Akhmadinejad's political base is primarily the poor of the cities, towns and villages, who are also religiously the most conservative. His fiery declarations about Israel and the Jewish Holocaust, and his defiance of America, please them, as they also please the Revolutionary Guards and the other revolutionary cadres. But one man I met found these outbursts very irritating, spoiling the better relations with America and the West that had developed under Khatami. It goes without saying that many middle-class and educated people find the mullahs' restriction of press freedom also irritating—but no more than that, for Iranians have abundant access to what is going on in the world and what is being said about them. Tv satellite dishes are officially forbidden, but they abound and are tolerated and can supply up to 700 channels. In all the hotels I stayed in, I could watch BBC World News, CNN and Euronews, as well as a number of Iranian channels and a French-language and a Russian one. And all the hotels offered Internet services. Let me add that, to keep people on the straight and narrow, all the hotel bedrooms—as indeed in other Muslim countries—had a sign on a wall indicating the direction of Mecca.

Between the latter part of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, Isfahan acquired the main elements of its architectural splendour. The reigning shah laid out an immense rectangular piazza with a very large and beautiful mosque at one end; a smaller gem of a mosque for family use on one side; and on the other side, a several-storeyed palace. From a lofty terrace in this palace, he and his guests could view events on the piazza and in particular the New Year celebrations. All this can be seen today. But the broad river and its old many-arched bridges are perhaps the city's greatest charm. Along one side of the river formal gardens extend. I saw all this as the sun declined and the lights began to come on. Despite the cold a few small pleasure boats moved on the river. We crossed the bridge that consists of two superimposed rows of thirty-three arches of mellow light-brown stone. The lower arches are known for their good acoustics, and in two of them a young man stood alone singing, taking pleasure in his voice or practising a song.

Later, walking along a narrow street, we dropped into an open, empty store-room which a group of men were preparing for the 10th day of Muharram (January 20), when the ten-day Commemoration of Imam Husain would begin. On the walls they had hung up brightly coloured banners that bore slogans and phrases in large calligraphy (Persian uses the Arabic alphabet). Welcomingly, they invited us to sit on boxes, produced tea and biscuits,

and chat began. Imam Husain was the grandson of the Prophet. He was killed in battle in one of the family and tribal feuds that followed the Prophet's death and which had to do with the leadership of Islam. He was the son of Mohamed's beloved son-in-law, Ali, whom Shiite Islam—which most Iranians adhere to—regards as Mohamed's legitimate successor. (My guide remarked to me that Christians were very lucky that Christ never married, let alone had offspring!) On the coming holy days, men would beat themselves on the streets in mourning for Husain. Then, in the room in which we were sitting, they would partake festively of food and drink supplied by the local community. The women, who would not beat themselves, would have their parties elsewhere with the children.

Because of sanctions—since the Revolution Iran has been subjected to sanctions of one kind or another by America and others—credit cards are not normally usable. But in a carpet shop in the bazaar, one of the young men in charge said that, under a special arrangement with Dubai, if the purchase were for more than 300 Euros a credit card could be used. He translated mentally from American dollars. Everyone in Iran thinks of foreign money in dollars. Everyone who speaks or writes English speaks and writes American. Odd but true. In this respect, as a speaker of 'proper' English and as a European, I felt sidelined and humiliated. When the talk turned to the upcoming mourning-feast of Imam Husain, this young man said he greatly respected Mohamed as a profound knower of the human condition and read the Koran for its wisdom. But that was all that he took from the Muslim religion. His young colleague said he wanted to be a writer. That very morning he had written a piece about Nature and his feelings at this time of year. How did one become a writer? I gave him the standard, hard advice and he smiled ruefully.

Both those young men were dressed in good-quality pullovers and trousers, pleasingly coloured. But men in general in Iran pay little attention to how they dress, much less than many women do. Suit, or trousers with jacket or leather jacket, in grey, black or brown, shirts always tieless—the custom of the land, especially since the Revolution. Many women in public wear full- or three-quarter-length chadors, often, especially if they are young, with their faces carefully made up. (In the mosque the chador is obligatory.) At the same time, in the big cities, a great number of women wear publicly what we would call European clothes; in various combinations and—headscarf included—various colours. A further touch of colour and indeed elegance is added by those mullahs who, along with their white turbans, wear a flowing fawn

cloak over a light grey soutane.

Isfahan has communities of Armenian Christians, Zoroastrians and Jews. The latter count themselves Iranians and do not wish to go Israel. The Christians have a fine cathedral and extensive premises for communal use, endowed by the State. I visited the Zoroastrian fire-temple and saw the ever-burning flame that stands for Ahura Mazda, their God. In all the great mosques I saw, I loved how the people treated them as homes from home. One man sits on the carpet reading; another, praying, prostrates himself or stands; two old men sit on the ground chatting quietly; while from the women's section conversations or cries of lament or of devotion can be heard. Similarly, in the great courtyards of the mosques, when there was a bit of warming sun, people sat alone, or chatting together, on the step of the surrounding portico. Mothers watched that their children did not run too wild.

When my guide, Vali, retired from the air force, he took up guiding because, he said, his wife had never wanted to go out to work and he had to support her and his son and daughter, the latter now married to an Iranian in Canada. But I suspect it was also because he liked collecting carpets, of which he had a number from different regions of the country with their different designs. On the way back to Tehran I asked him to show me the great Martyrs' Cemetery on the outskirts of the city where many of the fallen of the war with Iraq are buried. He was in touch by telephone with the young woman in the travel agency who had acted as the solicitous organiser of my tour. She wanted to take me to lunch to mark the tour's ending, but they had to resolve a difficulty. Tehran has an odd and even numbers arrangement for cars entering the city and Vali's car had the wrong kind of number for the day. So they agreed that we would meet at the metro station beside the cemetery.

The graves of the ordinary soldiers, as distinct from the officers, were laid out together in long rows. For each there was a rectangular slab recording name, places and dates of birth and death—most had died in their late teens or a little older. Beneath these details a poem of eight lines or so was inscribed. At the head of the slab there was a metal stand about a metre and a half high which at its top, beside a photo of the young man, bore a box with a pane of glass. Vali explained that the great wish of all Iranian parents was to see their children married. That was why each box visibly contained the symbols of marriage, two silver candlesticks and a mirror, along with a flower. I asked Vali to translate one of the poems for me. The one we happened on began with sentiments about love of country, the love the lad had received from his parents, and regret that he had not lived to marry. At this point of his

translation, Vali, having seen the next line, bit his lip and stopped. Then he translated that line which went roughly: "*But be consoled, parents, I have gone to marry Imam Husain for eternity*".

I had checked about the etiquette of shaking hands with a woman in public. A man does not offer his hand, but responds if the woman offers hers, which is seldom. Sharareh offered hers so we shook hands. On the metro she sat down beside me, saying "This is the men's carriage, but it's all right for a woman to go into the men's carriage". Quietly astonished, I glanced through the open passage to the next carriage and saw that only women were there.

Later, at lunch, she told me how tourist numbers for Iran were down due to the latest political crisis about Iran's nuclear weapons. She showed me an email she had received that morning from Portugal, saying that the Director of a Museum had decided that "*for political and security reasons*" a group from the Museum would not be coming. I snorted in disgust. "What political and security reasons other than stupid muddleheadedness about 'the Middle East' or else American pressure?"

I asked her had she heard about what was called 'feminism' in the West. She had she said, and added: "Persian women rule in the home. They are very well educated. This year fifty-seven per cent of university students are girls."

In the very early hours of the next day Vali took me to the airport. Always attentive to my slightest request, he said that with little traffic on the streets at this hour he could take me to see Bobby Sands Street. That is the given address of the British Embassy since Bobby's hunger strike shook the world. But I said that no, thanks, I would take it for granted the street was there and bore that name. At parting he gave me a copy of the CD of Persian traditional music which I had often heard played in his car.

Desmond Fennell

Desmond Fennell's collection of essays, *About Behaving Normally in Abnormal Circumstances*, will be published early this year by Athol Books. He can be contacted at www.desmondfennell.com

Ireland Helps Israel Military Complex

Why isn't there more protest about the announcement that the Irish army is purchasing 12,000 combat helmets made in Israel by Rabintex Industries Ltd from an Irish import company? The deal comes to over two million Euro.

Tim O'Sullivan

Reflections On Palestine

Part Two

I have already dealt to a small extent with Jewish settlements in the West Bank and will come back to them. But there is one aspect of them that is usually forgotten or unnoticed. This is their economic necessity.

Above all neither the State or its citizens—or most of them—have the money to replace the crumbling buildings in which most Israelis live. There is hardly a dwelling in the main city, Tel Aviv, which is not falling to bits. Tel Aviv is home to about 400,000 people. And the problem is not confined there.

This city, and the Jewish parts of other towns, were jerry-built from the 1950s to the 1980s. Often sea water was used, which rots the metal joists. Rendering has crumbled away exposing bare cement brick. Huge cracks and even holes appear on virtually every building. These are crudely repaired or filled in, if at all, by a few incompetent and amateurish dollops of cement, which are never even painted over.

Main thoroughfares like Allenby, Ben Yahuda, and the avenues crossing them, as well as the housing estates behind them, are full of such buildings. Exceptions are some Arab and English buildings which were taken over early on by Jews, and which were made to last. But most of the Arab buildings in Tel Aviv—as distinct from nearby Jaffa—were taken over more recently or are still in Arab ownership,

and are physically crumbling to the ground. This is the result of one of Israel's more insidious laws.

A building cannot be repaired without planning permission. If it is owned by an Arab, that permission is not forthcoming. If repairs are carried out without permission and that is reported, which it will be, the owner is evicted. If he sells out to a Jew, then planning permission is granted immediately. These days that is usually too late. Arabs hang on to their homes beyond the point where the buildings are salvageable.

Even the apparently swanky concrete and glass buildings and luxury flats are, on close inspection, starting to deteriorate quickly. But outside of these places, the shopfront facias, the counters, the cafe furniture, and other minor structures, are repaired and held together with America's gift to civilisation—duct tape.

None of this makes these areas unpleasant to walk around. But it must make them hell on earth to live in. I have seen nothing like it in the Arab towns in the West Bank, where even buildings hit by tanks and planes or blown up with explosives are quickly and competently repaired or replaced.

To digress for a moment. A striking feature of the major streets in Tel Aviv is the number of beggars: Every fifty metres or so. Some of these adopt the most humiliating of poses. For example, kneeling with their face on the ground and their hand extended. Perfectly still. Donations are common but I never saw anyone give more than one shekel—about ten pence. Begging from cars stopped at traffic lights is also common.

The cost of rehabilitating most of Tel Aviv or Haifa or West Jerusalem or the many other Jewish towns is beyond what the State of Israel could afford. America will supply strategic roads and weapons but not housing. Rich American Jewish organisations and individuals fired by Zionist zeal find nothing romantic or idealistic about funding bricks and mortar on a grand scale.

But funding the extension of the frontiers of Western Civilisation is an entirely different matter. Money for this is constantly available. And there is also plenty of money available in America from the Christian Right. Donors might even get streets and institutions named after them. So settlements, especially on the scale on which they are currently being built, and given their admittedly high

quality, could go a long way towards replacing the crumbling buildings often built on the sand dunes along the Mediterranean seashore.

THE MECCA AGREEMENT AND RECOGNISING ISRAEL

As I write a peace deal has been agreed between Fatah and Hamas in Saudi Arabia. In fact it is a recognition that Hamas has not bowed to the threats or blockades against Palestine by the International Community (IC). It does not include the two demands of the IC, aka the Quartet: renunciation of violence and the recognition of Israel. The third demand, that Hamas endorse past agreements between the PLO and the Jewish State, was fudged to the point of irrelevance.

The Quartet are the USA, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. I must have missed the moment when the USA, Russia, and the member states of the EU and the UN (Costa Rica excepted) renounced violence.

I have to say that the Israeli press is a lot fairer to Hamas than its counterparts in the US or Europe. It is always made clear that Hamas won the elections and is the Government of Palestine. Besides, the Israelis have no greater love for Fatah—though they feel that elements in that movement can be manipulated or bribed in a way that is impossible with Hamas.

But what does the recognition of Israel mean? There is a certain political legitimacy attached to the partition of Palestine by the UN, under Soviet pressure, in 1947, even if there is not a shred of moral legitimacy about it. The maps on page 15 may help to make the matter clear.

The fact is that Israel is an ever changing entity and absolutely refuses to ever define what it itself is. Judaism, as taught in Israel, is a kind of *carte blanche*—deriving from Moses—to take whatever can be taken. Zionism is more moderate only in the necessity to establish an actual state in a particular territory before it goes on to acquire more. Israel is an ideal and Zionism is putting the ideal into practice in the real world.

Recognising Israel would be recognising not just past conquests but also any future conquests. It is a different matter for sovereign states to recognise the actual Government of Israel in order to do business with it. Crucially recognition of Israel by Hamas would contradict the essential policy that most Palestinians voted for. Hamas would thereby lose all political legitimacy.

So far as I know, the only other states in the region that recognise Israel are Turkey, Egypt and Jordan. I wouldn't describe Egypt or Jordan as especially stable states. Jordan is run by a small

Iran & Nuclear Development

The following letter was published in *The Guardian* in mid-February

Timothy Garton Ash says we must stop Iran getting the bomb. Why?

The government said in its white paper on our nuclear deterrent that nuclear weapons are "to deter and prevent... acts of aggression against our vital interests that cannot be countered by other means". This case applies with even greater force to weaker states, such as Iran, that may come under threat from stronger ones, such as the US and Israel.

Iran may or may not intend to develop nuclear weapons, but the government makes an excellent case for it doing so. North Korea's reward for having tested a nuclear weapon last autumn was the resumption of talks with the US.

David Morrison

See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/iran/story/0,,2010866,00.html>

Royal Clan but is more than 80% Palestinian. It is very happy to see an Israeli buffer zone along the River Jordan between itself and the rest of the West Bank.

The Mecca Agreement is seen as a victory for Hamas over Fatah. It was more a victory over the hidden participant in the talks—the United States. Most Fatah members are no more agreeable to renounce violence or to recognise Israel than are the members of Hamas. Within two days of the Agreement Fatah's military wing, the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, fought a battle with Israeli troops trying to enter South-East Gaza, and they launched rockets in the North of the Strip into Israel itself.

The hidden party won some concessions with the agreement to give some Ministries to "technocrats": Especially giving the Finance Ministry to Salam Fayyad. Technically a Palestinian, Fayyad is really an American Neo-Con. Though he will not be able to do entirely what he pleases with his Ministry, he will know what is happening, and be able to influence what is happening, in every other Ministry.

The Interior Minister will be appointed by Hamas from outside its organisation and with the agreement of Fatah.

Overall the Mecca Agreement has been a slap in the face for the International Community. The IC and Hamas have eyeballed each other since the election and the IC blinked first. The German Foreign Minister has worked himself into a right lather about the Palestinians defying his will. And doubtless others will follow. For two reasons this does not matter.

First because Saudi Arabia was one of the bankers holding on to Palestinian money under the terms of the US and EU blockade. This is no longer the case. Secondly it is giving \$1bn to the Palestinian Authority, which is more than enough to make up for the money being withheld by Israel and Egypt. It is likely that Egypt will also change its tune as it sees the Saudis usurp its position as the leading state in that part of the Region.

And what of Abbas? One can't help but feel that he is relieved to have been got of a rather unpleasant hook. He tried to push Hamas around physically and they gave his soldiers a bloody nose. People have talked about the waste of the bloodshed in recent weeks in Palestine. But the battle between Hamas and Abbas' troops was as crucial to the future of Palestine as any fought with the Israelis, and more crucial than most of them.

An interesting and important feature of the events in Mecca was the necessity for the leader of Hamas, Khaled Meshal,

to return to exile in Damascus after the meeting, as the Israelis had decided to assassinate him, as they did his predecessors, should he set foot in Palestine. His deputy, Ismail Haniyeh, will lead the new Government. Brave man!

New Assassinations

The *Palestine Times*, a paper which is favourable to Abbas and takes an almost pacifist line, reports that Israeli Prime Minister Olmert has ordered his security people, especially Mossad, to draw up a new list of Palestinian leaders to be marked down for assassination.

Al Aqsa Mosque

Readers may be aware of the fuss in Jerusalem over Israeli diggings and construction work at the Al Aqsa Mosque in the Old City—the central mosque for Palestinian Muslims. But the protests so far have been minor. Usually about fifty protesters, most fairly elderly, giving a fair account of themselves in a fight with the Israeli police.

It was a clear act of provocation by the Jewish State to flush out the Resistance in East Jerusalem. It has so far been unsuccessful and two Fridays have gone by. Access to the mosque has been severely restricted, yours truly being one of the uninvited.

At the gates of the Old City all Palestinian males are being stopped, searched, questioned, and often turned back. Non-Palestinians are allowed through without a word. Police and soldiers stand at road junctions in the wider city stopping and searching vehicles, including buses.

On the former Green Line between East and West Jerusalem there are guards every twenty metres or so, stopping Arabs. This is designed to give the impression that Jewish West Jerusalem is under siege. Especially to the easily frightened Jewish population and to visitors, particularly Jewish American visitors.

I have been told by several people that one factor in the lack of interest by Palestinian Muslims was a statement by the Mufti of Egypt. (Mufti is like Ayatollah for Sunnis but without quite the clout.) He said that Palestinians would throw their bodies under the bulldozers (there aren't any).

A widespread response has been: throw your own body and those of your sons, and we might take you seriously. This is a sign of political maturity among Palestinians, and there has been a dire need of such signs.

Conor Lynch

Recognising Israel

The following letter, sent to the *Guardian* around 20th February by David Morrison, was not published: but a very similar one from someone else was

The Mecca agreement between Fatah and Hamas on the formation a national unity government is in danger of making Fatah into international pariahs, as well as Hamas, since the recognition of Israel is not one of the government's founding principles.

When Palestinians are told that they must "recognise Israel" my first thought is: which Israel?

The history of Israel is one of territorial expansion and the expulsion of Arabs in order to maintain an effective Jewish majority within the expanded state. The 55% of mandated Palestine awarded to Israel by resolution 181 of the UN General Assembly in 1947 (in which nearly 50% of the population was Arab) was expanded to 78% of Palestine by Israeli military action in 1947/8 and large numbers of Arabs were driven out, in order to make the Arab minority manageable.

Are Palestinians supposed to recognise the 55% entity? Or is it the 78% entity? Or it is a future 90% entity, in which the large settlement blocks on the West Bank are included, with Palestinians having to be content with a mere 10% of historic Palestine, Israel having made the painful concession of giving up 10% of the land they currently hold?

Blair's Legacy:

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by *David Morrison*..

February 2006.

Labour & Trade Union Review Pamphlet.

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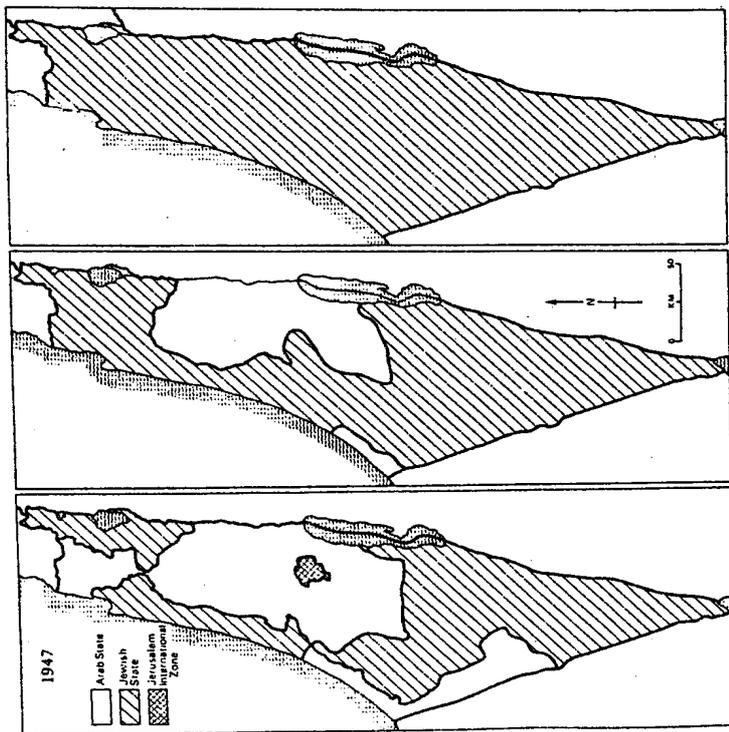
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1947-2002: How Jewish Forces have captured all of Palestine

* The first map shows in white the area allocated

by the UN for an Arab State in 1947

* The second map shows the much smaller area left to Arabs

after Israel's conquests

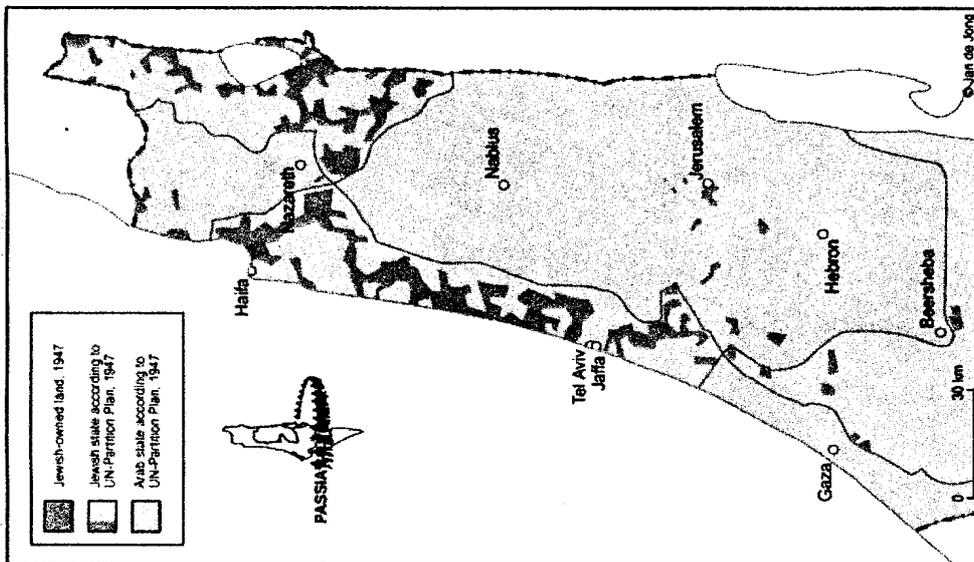
* The third map shows that Israel now occupies the whole of 1947 Palestine

* Jerusalem, which was to be internationalised under the UN Plan,

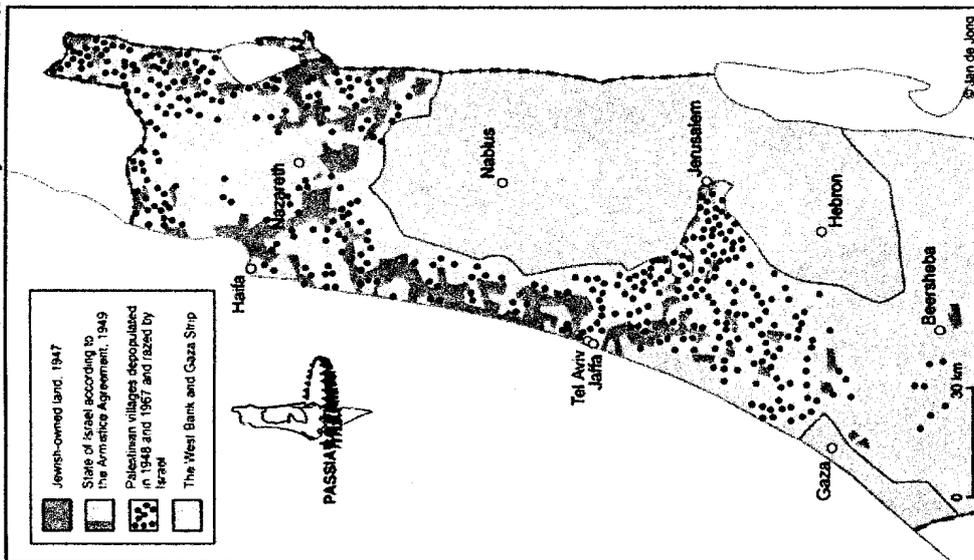
and which appears as an island in the main Arab area in 1947,

was partitioned at the end of the 1947-1949 'War',

but is now claimed by Israel.



Landownership in Palestine and the UN Partition Plan, 1947



Palestinian Villages Depopulated in 1948 and 1967, and Razed by Israel

Irish Destiny And A Jewish Victim Named

Last year RTE and the Irish Film Institute issued a DVD of a historically significant print, only discovered as recently as 1991 in Washington's Library of Congress, of the first ever feature film to be set during the War of Independence—*Irish Destiny*. Filmed during 1925 and released in 1926 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Easter Rising, it performed a healing function in the aftermath of the Civil War by re-instilling a pride in the unity of purpose that had prevailed during the War of Independence. A product of its time, this silent movie has all the schmaltzy scenes of other movies of that era that now seem so anachronistic to modern audiences. It was, however, a pioneering feature film, through its incorporation of newsreel documentary footage that ranged from the burning of Cork City to the burning of Dublin's Custom House. In addition, it had an actual adjutant of the IRA's Dublin Brigade, Kit O'Malley, not only playing the role of an IRA Commandant in the movie itself, but also acting as its military advisor for a staged ambush sequence somewhat reminiscent of Kilmichael. The DVD cover also reproduces the original poster advertising the film—

"Irish Destiny—The Great Spectacular Film of the War in Ireland; The Burning of the Dublin Custom House 25th May 1921—Presented by Eppels Films Ltd, Dublin".

The moral cowardice of RTE and the Irish Film Institute, who presumably feared that the likes of Eoghan Harris might otherwise accuse them of acting as *"Ireland's Nazis"* by re-issuing such an anti-British film, was, however, shamefully demonstrated on the final page of the accompanying brochure, which was entitled and given over to *"The Last Word—A Comment by Kevin Myers"*. Readers were subjected to a number of the hoary chestnuts constantly regurgitated by Myers and oft-times refuted in *Irish Political Review* :

"It confirms the audience's precious myths... from the moment of its introduction when we are told that 'the overwhelming majority of the Irish people' voted for Sinn Féin in the 1918 election. This is certainly what people believed in 1926 [had they really no memory of what they had actually done less than eight years previously?—MO'R] and many believe to this day: in fact, 47% of those who voted supported Sinn Féin [ignoring the even more overwhelming support for Sinn Féin in the uncontested constituencies!—MO'R]".

Irish Destiny had been both written and directed by a leading member of Dublin's Jewish community, the general practitioner and pharmacist, Dr. Isaac Eppel. He showed himself to have been extremely clear-sighted about every single word he scripted. At the very outset of the film—to the great horror of Myers—Eppel had indeed scripted the following prelude:

"For over 700 years the Fight for Independence continued in Ireland and in 1916 another insurrection took place. This determined effort left its mark and in December 1918 at a General Election the Irish people voted by an overwhelming majority for Sinn Féin Independence of Ireland. Their elected representatives met in a National Assembly called Dáil Éireann, which the English Cabinet tried to suppress. Ireland's forces were known as the IRA (Irish Republican Army), a body of volunteers who for over two years met the powerfully equipped and numerically superior English troops in guerilla [sic. Eppel used the exact same misspelling as Tom Barry!—MO'R] warfare. During this trying period, the help, sympathy and unity of the Irish people was the greatest weapon of the IRA. And in 1920, Ireland was in the throes of a cruel and bloody war. There was a reign of terror throughout the country, raids for arms and arrests of citizens were continually taking place".

In the opening sequences of the film the characters discuss the latest manifestation of that reign of terror, with the hero bringing the news: *"Bad news from Cork—parts of the city burned"*. Eppel had his director of photography Joe Rosenthal linger for quite sometime on a news item from the *Dublin Evening Herald*, 13th December 1920:

"A city of Ashes. Cork City's Latest Deluge of Fire. The city lies a mass of ruins with occasional sporadic outbursts of flame. Over 300 buildings destroyed".

Eppel next proceeded to incorporate dramatic documentary footage into this feature film in order to demonstrate to world-wide audiences the scale of devastation unleashed by that British pogrom of 11th December 1920.

In the *Sunday Independent*, on 4 December 2005, Eoghan Harris reviewed Conal Creedon's TV documentary, *The Burning of Cork*. While praising the quality of programme-making, he had no other conclusion to come to whatsoever to on its subject-matter, except to offer the

following excuse for British murder: *"Crown forces would see men like MacCurtain as a legitimate target. Historical truth hurts, but it is also a moral good"*. There is no indignation in Harris's heart at the burning of his own native city. In his same *Sunday Independent* column thirteen months later, however, on 21st January 2007, Harris now bestirs himself to passionate indignation in respect of a quite different fire. In reviewing the TV documentary *Ireland's* [sic] *Nazis*, Harris fulminates:

"Goulet, a sculptor in the heroic fascist style, did particularly well, swiftly securing a commission for the Custom House Memorial to the IRA men who had burned it down. Goulet's Irish admirers seemed blind to the symbolism of a Breton fascist forging a memorial to IRA vandals who had virtually destroyed most of the primary sources of Irish history when they burned the Custom House".

Given his Churchillian view of "history", it is also worth noting that Harris has not been moved to express any similar indignation at the June 1922 burning of the Four Courts and all its records by Michael Collins, acting on Churchill's orders. As an ecstatic Churchill went on to write to Collins: *"If I refrain from congratulation it is only because I do not wish to embarrass you. The Archives of the Four Courts may be scattered but the title deeds of Ireland are safe"*.

But to return to the attack on the Custom House on 25th May 1921, it cannot be denied that as a 'spectacular'—that was given headline news worldwide—it had the effect of forcing Britain to agree six weeks later to the Truce of 11th July. Moreover, the artistic celebration of the Custom House fire that went on to have the greatest impact both nationally and internationally was not the creation of any Nazi but was provided by the patriotic Irish Jewish filmmaker Isaac Eppel.

As already signalled by his advertising poster, Eppel presented the May 1921 fire as the dialectical antithesis—in every sense—of the December 1920 fire in Cork. In celebrating the former he did not minimise the fact that it had brought with it its own human cost. Eppel did not flinch from incorporating into his movie still more documentary footage from the post-battle round-up of Dublin citizens by the Black-and-Tans, in which their prisoners are shown lined up on the Custom House footpath alongside the bodies of dead IRA volunteers. But Eppel's patriotic pride is both to the point and unashamedly expressed in his accompanying sub-titles: *"A crackling Hell of Fire. The news of this daring act is flashed throughout the world,*

and for three days and three nights the firemen fought the flames".

Was Eppel just some sort of Jewish Uncle Tom who disregarded the 'truth' of the War of Independence, a 'truth' that had to await until 1999 its proper artistic portrayal in the novel entitled *A Star Called Henry* that Roddy Doyle was to inflict upon us? For Doyle, a one-time self-proclaimed Workers' Party supporter, portrays the War of Independence as being waged by a proto-Nazi IRA, whose leadership proceeds to order the murder of an elderly Jewish gentleman for no other reason than the vilest anti-Semitic hatred. But it is in fact the WP-inspired novelist who has nurtured the great historical lie.

The uncontestable historical fact is that Ireland's War of Independence, in which members of the Jewish community themselves participated, never saw a single Jew killed by the IRA, whether deliberately or even accidentally. Had Irish Republicanism on its hands the blood of any Jewish victim at all, we can be sure that—at this juncture of his political trajectory, having moved on from the SFWP fellowship that he once shared with an SS veteran—such a victim's name would have been regularly trumpeted by Eoghan Harris, with repeated demands for ongoing national apologies from the President downwards.

But we must now deal with a no less uncontestable historical fact—that a pogrom in Ireland had indeed directly claimed the life of a Jewish victim. No, not the 1904 Redemptorist attacks on Limerick's Jewish community, but the 1920 British pogrom against the citizenry of Cork as a whole. That this death has been somewhat inaccurately recalled in the form of folk memory is evidenced by David Marcus's 2004 book *Buried Memories*. Marcus, who was not born into Cork's Jewish community until 1924, attributes the following elderly reminiscences to his fictional character, "the last Jew in Cork", 90 year-old Aaron Cohen:

"The early twenties in Ireland and particularly in Cork, we had the British soldiers and the infamous Black-and-Tans. I was only about five at the time, too young to remember seeing any of the trouble—I imagine I was never taken into the city then, probably too risky and dangerous. But when I was a bit older and the soldiers had all departed, I used hear stories from the Jewish men who lived in Jewtown. One thing they all agreed was that they were never rounded up or threatened by the British army, because once they knew you were a Jew, they took it for granted that you were in no way involved with Irish politics and so weren't the enemy. Little did they know that the Jews in Ireland were all

agin' them. The Irish had made them feel at home when so many of them were refugees escaping from persecution, and anyway, the cruelty and savagery of the Black-and-Tans was hated by everyone. The Tans, in fact, were responsible for the death of one member of the Cork Jewish community, and in a way many people would have called it a sort of accident, sort of not deliberate. One night they broke into a shop in Tuckey Street that was owned by a Jew. But whether they knew that, was anybody's guess. The owner and his wife lived over the shop, and they were asleep when the noise of the break-in woke them up. When the Tans burst into their bedroom, the owner's wife screamed, and shouted 'Don't shoot, we're Jewish'. But she was so terrified that she had a heart attack and died immediately. It was reported in the *Cork Examiner* sometime in the very early 1920s, and if they still have copies of these year's papers, you may want to look it up—through it would take a lot of time and trouble, I suppose." (pp211-2).

Marcus erred in several respects. As we shall see, the Tans had to have known perfectly well beforehand the identity of the family whose home they were breaking into. Accordingly, while not deliberate murder, it was culpable homicide. The novelist's own faulty folk memory is mirrored in that of his fictional character. Marcus's purely literary purposes did not, however, actually require any greater precision, particularly when the possibility of some faulty recall was effectively signalled. But while the then 80 year-old writer was not at that stage of his life going to immerse himself in newspaper files in the attempt to get the exact story, Marcus—through Cohen's last sentence above—was clearly inviting journalists and historians to do precisely that.

This is something that one might reasonably have expected historians Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea would have undertaken for their 2006 book, *The Burning Of Cork*. If there was any street in Cork's city centre where the Black-and-Tans would have been thoroughly acquainted with all of its residents, it was none other than Tuckey Street, containing within its short stretch the very RIC Barracks in which the Tans themselves were housed. They would have already searched every single home on that street on several previous occasions, as O'Shea and White themselves have noted:

"That same night (on 17 November 1920) RIC Sergeant James Donoghue was shot dead by three Volunteers as he was walking down White Street. He had left his home on Tower Street and was heading for Tuckey Street RIC Barracks when figures emerged from the shadows and fired at close range" (p71). "At 9.30 am, 26 November... Volunteers William

Mulcahy and Christopher Morrissey were killed by an accidental explosion which ripped through the workshop of undertaker Daniel O'Leary on Watercourse Road. An hour later, the security forces launched two massive cordon and search operations in the city. One occurred near North and South Main Streets, Washington Street, Grand Parade and Tuckey Street." (pp78-9).

So the Tans knew exactly whose premises they were breaking into. For this was no search operation. It was a pogromist rampage of destruction that led to this Jewish death. The authors were aware of that, but decided against making even a passing reference to her death. How do we know they knew? Because one of their sources, from which they quote other extensive extracts, is the 2004 Aubane Historical Society publication, *The Burning of Cork: An Eyewitness Account by Alan J. Ellis*. This was no work of distant recall. It was the contemporary account of a young *Cork Examiner* reporter on the scene. And in his vivid narrative of the burning of Cork on the night of December 11th, together with the murder of the Delaney brothers that accompanied it, Ellis further explicitly reported that a Jewish woman on Tuckey Street had also died from a heart attack that resulted from the British campaign of destruction on that very night. The very least that might quite reasonably have been expected from O'Shea and White would be a repetition of that fact from Ellis, even if they had not been bothered to undertake any further follow-up research.

Elementary humanity, if not historical curiosity, should tell us that victims do in fact deserve to be rescued from anonymity. So who was she? Did she not have a name? Since Alan J. Ellis himself did not know her name on that evening, perhaps it did not figure subsequently in the files of the *Cork Examiner* itself. But the research required to find out that name is in fact quite minimal. Cork's Jewish community was always relatively small. December 1920 deaths would have been registered in the first quarter of 1921. A quick search of the registrar's entries for that quarter shows only one entry for Cork with a Jewish-sounding surname. So, it is indeed possible to rescue that victim from anonymity. She was Sarah Medalie, and her death certificate states that she was aged 53 when she died of shock after 1 hour at her home in 23 Tuckey Street. When her husband David, described as a general dealer, registered her death two months later on 14 February 1921, he incorrectly remembered her date of death as 10 December, but we now know from Alan Ellis's account that it was in fact 11 December, in the midst of the burning of Cork.

Do we know anything else about her? She was not living at that address during either the 1901 or the 1911 census. But both the National Archives of Ireland and the Irish Jewish Museum now possess a remarkable set of volumes, simply entitled, *Jewish Ireland Series*, and published in 2004 by Stuart Rosenblatt of the Irish Jewish Genealogical Society. The volume entitled, *Irish Jewish Census Records 1901-1911*, lists surnames in alphabetical order. In 1901, and again in 1911, Sarah Medalie had been living with her travelling peddler husband David at 10 Elizabeth Terrace, Cork, in the area off Victoria Road popularly known by Jew and Gentile alike as Jewtown. She had been born in Russia in 1869, making her two years younger than her death certificate suggested. As her first child—Lena—was aged 7 in 1901 and had also been born in Russia, and her second child—Joseph—was aged 2 but had been born in Cork, it would have been during the second half of the 1890s that she emigrated from Russia to Ireland.

By 1915 David Medalie's economic circumstances and occupation had improved from that of peddler to draper, and the family moved home into rooms above his own city centre shop in Tuckey Street. Another Rosenblatt volume, *Hebrews Of Cork*, suggests further family tragedy when detailing burials at Cork's Jewish cemetery. The third of their five children—Myer Medalie (1899-1926)—is described as "a bit doo lally" and "living in a mental institution". The entry in both volumes for the victim herself—Sarah Medalie (1869-1920)—also explicitly states: "Black-and-Tans knocked down doors and [she] died of shock".

Although Isaac Eppel's son Derek and his brother Simon were given walk-on roles in *Irish Destiny*, there was not a single Jewish reference in the film. Neither were any other Irish historical—as distinct from fictional—victims named. But when, five years after it had occurred, he portrayed the burning of Cork as the British pogrom it undoubtedly was (without ever using that term), Eppel was undoubtedly conscious of the fact that the victims killed numbered not only the Catholics, Jeremiah and Cornelius Delaney, but also his own co-religionist, the Jewish Sarah Medalie.

Manus O'Riordan

Sinn Fein And Policing

The following motion was submitted to the Sinn Fein Special Ard Fheis on 28th January 2007:

This Ard Fheis reiterates Sinn Féin's political commitment to bringing about Irish re-unification and the full integration of political, economic, social and cultural life on the island.

This Ard Fheis supports civic policing through a police service which is representative of the community it serves, free from partisan political

Workers' Control Comments

a reply

John Clayden (letters Feb. *Irish Political Review*) says I have a transcendental view of the British State and also of the events surrounding the Bullock Report on industrial democracy in the 1970s. Even with the help of a dictionary I'm not at all certain what this means. But I will assume he means that my views are not connected with reality.

My idea of the British State is that it is not of, by, or for the people. And certainly not from the people. It existed prior to anything that could be recognised as a British people. It formed and continues to form the people. And it thinks that it can do the same with other peoples. It is not for fun that we are engaged in a fierce conflict with elements of the British State about the history of Ireland at the moment. I will not dwell on this as I believe the matter is also being dealt with elsewhere in this magazine.

John disputes my claim that Ernest Bevin was a dictator during the Second World War on the ground that he carried his Union with him. He did and, in opposition to those to the left of him, carried a great many Tories as well. It's what successful dictators do. However he may have wished things were otherwise, he knew the British State and the British people well enough to know how things had to be done.

The role of the Communist Party in the struggle over workers' control will form part of the current series of articles. Suffice here to say that the Party's evidence to the Bullock Committee was both hostile and dishonest. Otherwise the CP tried to avoid public debate and engaged in a whispering campaign against industrial democracy.

I'm not sure what the bulk of John's letter is about other than saying that there were good people in the CP doing good things. I don't doubt it. Its election work for the Labour Party was part of its attempt to have its ban from membership overturned. The Comintern view was that it should support the Labour Party "as a rope supports the hanging man".

The CP would not have remembered Bevin during the War for his action against the Jolly George supplying weapons to the Poles for their war with the Soviet Union. They would have remembered him for his efforts to keep them out of the T&GWU and especially his denunciation of them during the 1937 bus strike.

John explains the failure of the workers' control campaign by the opposition from the employers. This was ineffectual. The Trotskyites were neither here nor there. The failure arose because the Government was unwilling to implement the Bullock Report without substantial Trade Union support (as distinct from the presence or absence of public support—seldom important in Britain). Trade Union support was not forthcoming and that was the end of that.

The influence of the industrial revolution on the psyche of the British worker and the matter of the ethos of the 1960s are matters which need much more attention. Here I'll just say that it was the agricultural revolution that was most important—and whose details have been erased from the public mind, except perhaps in Scotland. The ethos of the 1960s, as I understand it, had to do with individualism and hedonism. It was the final act in the destruction of anything resembling a society in Britain. But what do I know?

Conor Lynch

Workers' Control: Conor Lynch's history of the *Workers' Control* movement in Britain is transferring to our sister-publication, *Labour & Trade Union Review*, where the first article in the series will be reproduced in the March issue.

control and democratically accountable.

We support fair, impartial and effective delivery of the rule of law.

The changes to policing secured in legislation need to be implemented fully. The truth about wrongdoing by British military, intelligence and policing agencies needs to be uncovered and acknowledged. Sinn Féin supports the demands for this from the families of victims. The PSNI needs to make strenuous efforts to earn the trust and confidence of nationalists and republicans. Gardaí corruption and malpractice—which has been exposed in the Morris Tribunal and the Abbeylara inquiry in the 26 counties—shows the need for constant vigilance and

oversight. These inquiries and the ill-treatment of republicans by the Garda Special Branch also provide compelling reasons as to why the responsibility of political parties and representatives should be to hold the police to account in a fair and publicly transparent way.

This Ard Fheis is totally opposed to political, sectarian and repressive policing. The experience of nationalists and republicans in the Six Counties is of a partisan, unionist militia which engaged in harassment, torture, assassination, shoot-to-kill and collusion with death squads.

The Good Friday Agreement requires and defines 'a new beginning to policing' as an essential element

of the peace process. The Good Friday Agreement also requires functioning, powersharing and all-Ireland political institutions.

The British Government have agreed to the transfer of powers on policing and justice away from Westminster to locally-elected political institutions and have set out the departmental model to which these powers will be transferred. In these circumstances authority over policing and justice will lie in Ireland.

We note the British Government's new policy statement of 10 January 2007 which removes MI5 from policing structures in Ireland. This removes the proposals to embed MI5 into civic policing and removes the danger of again creating a force within a force.

We note also the commitment by PSNI Chief Constable Hugh Orde that plastic bullets will not be used for purposes of public order/crowd control and his acknowledgement of the hurt resulting from injuries and death of innocent people including children.

These weapons should never be used again. Sinn Féin will continue to campaign for a total ban.

This Ard Fheis notes the refusal of the DUP leader Ian Paisley to publicly commit to powersharing and participation in the all-Ireland political institutions by 26 March 2007.

Before the Ard Chomhairle meeting on 29 December the DUP had agreed words which they would release in response to the Ard Chomhairle accepting the policing motion put by the Party President. We note the DUP's failure to keep to this commitment.

It is clear that elements of the DUP are determined to use policing and other issues to prevent progress, resist powersharing and equality and oppose any all-Ireland development. This is unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of the two Governments and pro-Agreement parties across the island to resist this and to ensure the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Sinn Féin is committed to justice. Sinn Féin is committed to law and order and to stable and inclusive partnership government, and, in good faith and in a spirit of genuine partnership, to the full operation of stable power-sharing government and the north south and east west arrangements set out in the Good Friday Agreement.

The responsibility of the police is to defend and uphold the rights of citizens. In order to fulfil this role they require critical support.

Sinn Féin reiterates our support for An Garda Síochána and commits fully to:

- * Support for the PSNI and the criminal justice system.
- * Hold the police and criminal justice systems north and south fully to account, both democratically and legally, on the basis of fairness and impartiality and objectivity.
- * Authorise our elected representatives to participate in local policing structures in the interests of justice, the quality of life for the community and to secure policing with the community as the core function of the PSNI and actively encouraging everyone in the community to co-operate fully with the police services in tackling crime in all areas and actively supporting all the criminal justice institutions.
- * The devolution of policing and justice to the Assembly.
- * Equality and human rights at the heart of the new dispensation and to pursue a shared future in which the culture, rights and aspirations of all are respected and valued, free from sectarianism, racism and intolerance.

To achieve this the Ard Chomhairle is hereby mandated to:

- * Appoint Sinn Féin representatives to the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnership Boards to ensure that:
 - a civic policing service, accountable and representative of the community is delivered

as quickly as possible,

- the Chief Constable and the PSNI are publicly held to account,
- policing with the community is achieved as the core function of the PSNI,
- political policing, collusion and "the force within a force" is a thing of the past and to oppose any involvement by the British Security Service/MI5 in civic policing.

* Ensure Sinn Féin representatives robustly support the demands for:

- equality of treatment for all victims and survivors,
- effective truth recovery mechanisms,
- acknowledgement by the British State of its involvement in wrongdoing including collusion with loyalist paramilitaries,
- to ensure that there is no place in the PSNI for those guilty of human rights abuses,

- * Resolutely oppose the use of lethal weapons in public order situations
- * Authorise Sinn Féin Ministers to take the ministerial Pledge of Office.
- * Achieve accountable all-Ireland policing structures.

The Ard Chomhairle recommends:

That this Ard Fheis endorses the Ard Chomhairle motion. That the Ard Chomhairle is mandated to implement this motion only when the power-sharing institutions are established and when the Ard Chomhairle is satisfied that the policing and justice powers will be transferred. Or if this does not happen within the St Andrews timeframe, only when acceptable new partnership arrangements to implement the Good Friday Agreement are in place.

Slavery Anniversary

Britain decided to abolish the slave trade a hundred years ago. For a century before that it had been both the biggest slave trader in the world and biggest organiser of slave labour. The slave trade was part of the Triangular Trade, which was Britain's embryo world market: slaves from Africa to America; slave produce from America to England; manufactured goods from England to Africa.

English prosperity in the 18th century was founded on the slave trade and industrial production based on slavery in 'the West' and on the plunder of India. These generated huge surpluses which in turn fuelled a new industrialism. By the early 19th century a system of industrial capitalism based on wage-labour was established in England itself and an anti-slavery agitation slowly developed with the support of the wage-labour capitalists.

In 1807 Parliament voted to stop its own slave trade and prevent other countries from trading in slaves. It did not abolish slavery. English industrial production using slave-labour continued for a further thirty years. When it was abolished Parliament compensated the slave owners for the loss of their property. The slaves were not compensated for having been enslaved. Their former owners were relieved of the necessity of feeding them, and they were thrown on their own resources on islands in the Caribbean which had been mere slave labour camps for over a century, and in which there was no society.

BBC Radio 4 broadcast a self-congratulatory programme on February 22nd on the ending of the slave trade. Lord Melvyn Bragg explained:

"There was a slave trade in parts of Africa and across the Atlantic long before the British got there. It was run by African kings, chiefs, Arabs and other European traders. And there was a slave trade in Africa long after the British rejected it."

This is one of those statements which misrepresent the situation grossly even though they state facts. Britain was not one slave trader amongst many. It became the top slave trader in the world in the early 18th century as one of its gains from victory in the War of the Spanish Succession. It sought and won the monopoly to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies in America as well as to its own. Its dominance in the slave trade came about as a consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which threw slave-trading open to free enterprise, and ended official supervision of the conditions under which the slaves were shipped. And the vast slave-labour camps in the Caribbean, conducted with a high level of wastage (as was the British slave trade itself), as producers of commodities for the market, was something quite new in the world.

John Locke, the famous ideologist of Liberty for the Glorious Revolution, who denounced the government of James II as slavery for Englishmen because James was a Catholic and tried to introduce freedom of religion in place of Protestant Ascendancy, was an investor in the slave trade and he wrote Constitutions for the slave-labour colonies being established in America.

A couple of centuries later John Kells Ingram published a history of slavery. Ingram, though he was the author of *Who Fears To Speak Of 98*, was an ideologist of the Glorious Revolution world view, and a Unionist. His history of Slavery did not have a chapter on the contribution made to progress and Liberty by the century and a half of Glorious Revolution slavery. The intimate connection between Liberty, prosperity and slavery in English development is a touchy subject.

The English Navy, which dominated the world for centuries and was the real foundation of the British state, was less squeamish on the subject than the

progressive intellectuals. The Maritime Museum at Greenwich put on an exhibition on *Trade And Empire* to mark the Millennium. It explained that "*the cruelties of slavery*" were accepted as "*an unavoidable evil of a necessary system*" when making "*the whole earth... the market for Britain*". And there was a particularly enlightening section on:

"The Drawing Room

"Elegant 18th century British society was supported by slavery. Indian coffees and China teas were sweetened by sugar grown by slaves in the West Indies. As tea and coffee became more popular so more sugar was imported into Britain and more Africans were enslaved to grow it. Other trades developed

alongside the sugar, tea and slave routes.

"This global trade helped to create a wealthy and increasingly industrialised nation at the end of the 18th century. It also helped to create a self-consciously civilised society. Although British society was at first able to ignore or accept the slave trade, eventually many Britons began to feel slavery was incompatible with civilised values."

By then, the "*civilised*" elite had 'a secure alternative foundation in Manchester industrial capitalism based on wage-labour, and their sensitive consciences obliged them to close the slave-labour camps'. (No, the Naval Exhibition didn't quite say that, but it came near enough to saying it!)

not equate the two. He put the economic factor into the equation as far as the study of history was concerned—did so brilliantly and that was all. Other factors drove man and society but they are the great blanks for Marxists and that is why they are now overwhelmed by the way the world continues to develop. Poor Marx.

Quinn goes on:

"Ireland's population peaked at 8.5 million in the middle of the 19th century, as nearly every school child will know."

This figure is typical of those used about the population of Ireland in the mid-19th century. But the facts do not support it. The census figure of 8.2 million for 1841 was an underestimate by anything up to a third because of the methodology used and the popular attitude to Government in Ireland at the time. In fact the real numbers of Irish was between 10 - 11 million.

Moreover, the rapid growth in the birth rate meant that, by the time of the full force of the Famine in 1847—6 years after the Census—there would have been a possible 12-13 million.

This clearly puts the Famine death numbers in the realm of Holocaust figures but pointing this out seems to be about as popular as denying the latter. The problem is that the dead were never counted at the time and, despite all the commemorations about it recently, no authoritative figure is yet available. So school children, of all ages, do not know the facts.

Quinn continues:

"What was new to me [from the book, JL] was that, from 1600 to 2000, eight million people emigrated from Ireland to Britain, mainland Europe, North America and beyond. That voyage of humanity, not all of it involuntary or destitute, has created a Diaspora that continues to require a dialogue between itself and the home country."

Gaelic society was deliberately and systematically destroyed over centuries and this 'voyage of humanity' was the result. Quinn's description should win a prize for euphemism. But while emphasising the voluntary aspect of it, what a pity he did not try to establish what percentage of it was actually a voluntary voyage? 1 per cent, perhaps?

But what does it matter really? Did not the 'involuntary' globetrotting millions in their misery and destitution have the satisfaction of being the glorious harbingers of a globalised Ireland—if they only knew it?

Jack Lane

Ruairi Quinn Begg Some Questions

In a book review recently Ruairi Quinn says:

"The quest for national identity in a changing world is not new. Likewise, the processes of globalisation have been here before. Back in the middle of the 19th century, the Gold Standard, the steam engine and the telegraph machine transformed the world in a way never previously seen. That era of globalisation ended brutally in August 1914 and did not fully resume until the autumn of 1989 with the collapse of the Berlin Wall" (Irish Times, 13 Jan. 2007; review of *Re-imagining Ireland: How a Storied Island is Transforming its Politics, Economy, Religious Life and Culture for the 21st Century*, Edited by Andrew Higgins, Wyndham University of Virginia Press, 288pp. \$34.95).

This begs a few questions. What he is describing here is the creation of the world market by Britain in the second half of the 19th century. Quinn calls it the first attempt at globalisation—and presumably therefore a good thing—but that's just another name for the same thing, one that obscures its origins.

But what is the relationship or connection between the British-created capitalist world market and the outbreak of the First World War—which was initiated by Britain in August 1914 when it decided to turn a conflict in Europe into a world war? The creator thereby destroyed the natural progression of his creation. Why? Why did the glories of globalisation not make such a war unnecessary, unthinkable?

If globalisation was (and is) so wonderful why were all countries at the time not allowed to be full participants? In economic terms Germany wanted freedom

of the seas which would seem to be the just the small change of a globalised economy.

But that was not allowed. Maybe the War was a 'mistake' but then why was it not rectified at Versailles when the victors led by Britain, the daddy of globalisation, had the world in the palm of its hand? Was there another great 'mistake' that led to more or less endless wars, or mistakes, ever since? Did history in the past century become a series of mysterious mistakes that took it away from its true globalising destiny? Was the world full of complete fools?

Quinn is a broken-down Marxist. He clings without saying so to the traditional view that capitalism caused WW I. It is vital to invent a new term like 'globalisation' to cover the same old thought-process and seek thereby to give the impression that there is some new thought going on. It also avoids mentioning names and embarrassing the neighbours. So we have this type of meaningless waffle.

"Ho Chi" Quinn must have once read enough of his Marx to know that Charlie Marx himself once exclaimed that he was most definitely NOT a Marxist. He was reacting against the popular understanding of his views that history was economically determined. This is what Quinn is saying—without saying it—about WW I.

Marx was not an economist or economic determinist—he was a political economist and politics was primary for him. But in this respect he really fought a losing battle against the Marxists. And that is the main reason why Marxists are now an endangered species. Marx sought to highlight the importance of economic factors in history and society—but he did

Kipling, Connolly And The Kaiser

After momentarily taking a '*plague on both your houses*' position, from August 1914 until his murder in 1916 Connolly consistently took a pro-German position on the War. And he consistently made it clear what it was he had allied himself to and why.

In *The Irish Worker* on August 29th 1914., he wrote:

"So other nations began quietly to challenge the unquestioned supremacy of England in the markets. They began first to produce for themselves what they had hitherto relied upon England to produce for them, and passed on from that to enter into competition with English goods in the markets of the world. Foremost and most successful European nation in this endeavour to escape from thralldom of dependence upon England's manufactures stands the German nation. To this contest in the industrial world it brought all the resources of science and systematised effort. Early learning that an uneducated people is necessarily an inferior people, the German nation attacked the work of educating its children with such success that it is now universally admitted that the Germans are the best educated people in Europe. Basing its industrial effort upon an educated working class, it accomplished in the workshop results that this half-educated working-class of England could only wonder at. That English working class trained to a slavish subservience to rule-of-thumb methods, and under managers wedded to traditional processes saw themselves gradually outclassed by a new rival in whose service were enrolled the most learned scientists co-operating with the most educated workers in mastering each new problem as it arose, and unhampered by old traditions, old processes or old equipment. In this fruitful marriage of science and industry the Germans were pioneers, and if it seemed that in starting both they became unduly handicapped it was soon realised that if they had much to learn they had at least nothing to unlearn, whereas the British remained hampered at every step by the accumulated and obsolete survivals of past industrial traditions...

...
"It was determined that since Germany could not be beaten in fair competition industrially, it must be beaten unfairly by organising a military and naval conspiracy against her. British methods and British capitalism might be inferior to German methods and German capitalism; German scientists aided by German workers might be superior to British workers and tardy British science, but the British fleet was still superior to

"*The weak an' the lame be blowed!*"
Rudyard Kipling

the German in point of numbers and weight of artillery. Hence it was felt that if the German nation could be ringed round with armed foes upon its every frontier until the British fleet could strike at its ocean-going commerce, then German competition would be crushed and the supremacy of England in commerce ensured for another generation. The conception meant calling up the forces of barbaric powers to crush and hinder the development of the peaceful powers of industry. It was a conception worthy of fiends, but what do you expect? You surely do not expect the roses of honour and civilisation to grow on the thorn tree of capitalist competition – and that tree planted in the soil of a British ruling class". (*War Upon The German Nation*)

In *The Workers' Republic* on March 18th., 1916:

"The German Empire is a homogeneous Empire of self-governing peoples; the British Empire is a heterogeneous collection in which a very small number of self-governing communities connive at the subjugation, by force, of a vast number of despotically ruled subject populations.

"We do not wish to be ruled by either empire, but we certainly believe that the first named contains in germ more of the possibilities of freedom and civilisation than the latter." (*The German Or The British Empire*)

In *The Workers' Republic* on April 8th., 1916:

"Germany has shown a lesson to the world in this respect. That country had the best educated working class in the world, the greatest number of labour papers, daily, weekly, and monthly, the greatest number of parliamentary and local representatives elected on a working class platform, the greatest number of Socialist votes in proportion to the entire population. All this was an index to the high level of intelligence of the German working class, as well as to their strong political and industrial position. This again was an infallible index to the high civilisation of the whole German nation. Germany had builded well upon the sure foundation of an educated self-respecting people. Upon such a foundation Germany laid her progress in peace, and her success in war." (*Forces Of Civilisation*)

The Workers' Republic of October 9th., 1915 published a report from the *New York Times Magazine* reviewing the newly published *Socialized Germany* by "United

States Commissioner of Immigration of the port of New York" Frederick C. Howe—a study of German society which concluded:

"The State socialism of Germany—a condition of government which prevails nowhere else in the world and which has never before prevailed in the world as it does in the Kaiser's domain—is the explanation of Germany's victories in Russia, France, and Belgium; it is the explanation of Germany's ante-bellum victories in manufactures, trade, and shipping. State socialism will permit Germany to turn from war to peace with much the same formidable preparedness with which she turned from peace to war..." (*The Secret Of Germany's Success*)

Five months later, on February 19th., 1916, *The Workers' Republic* published a substantial part of the final chapter of Howe's book.

(*Connolly And German Socialism* by Brendan Clifford, published by Athol Books in 2004, goes into Connolly's position on the War in great detail. It includes the core of *The Workers' Republic* extract from *Socialized Germany*, most if not all of *The Secret Of Germany's Success*, and a great deal more. Frederick Howe was an American lawyer who had gone into public, especially civic, development and reform. He was a member of the Ohio Senate for two years from 1906, director of the New York People's Institute and a founder of the National Progressive Republican League. After the War, in the New Deal years, he was Consumer's Counsel in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and Special Adviser to Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture. A substantial bourgeois with a progressive, reformist, outlook on public affairs.)

While Connolly would not have invited or tolerated German rule in Ireland, he recognised German State Socialism as a framework within which the working class could live free of the fears and debilitating anxieties that plagued workers and their families under the capitalism red in tooth and claw that was the Anglo Saxon ideal (in both Greater Britain and the United States). And he saw how the same state structures which kept the wolf from the worker's door served also to facilitate the peaceful development of working class power, with German Social Democracy growing year by year within them. What had begun as Bismarck's 'bribery' embedded itself contrariwise in German life as the generally accepted condition of working class industrial and political organisation; the social basis of the

workers' ever-increasing strength.

What the Kaiser in his council said to the peoples who struggle, and pant, and sweat was anathema to Kipling and the Greater British Lords of Misrule. They cried shame on it, shouting "*The weak an' the lame be blown!*". And conspired world war upon it.

But what the Kaiser, presiding over the deliberations of representatives of workers and employers in the Berlin Social Congress, had said was nothing more than a pledge to uphold the dignity of labour. Connolly had no quarrel with that.

Kipling then set himself over the years to further the coming war against the German Nation. And that conspiracy proving at last successful he wrote the poem which begins:

FOR all we have and are,
For all our children's fate,
Stand up and take the war.
The Hun is at the gate!

The poem that ends:

There is but one task for all—
One life for each to give.
What stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?

Well England lived but Kipling's son John was killed in October 1915. It wasn't a blow that gave him pause. Earlier in 1915 he had described the Allied war effort as a simple thing, just "*the rampart put up by Man against the Beast*". In a speech in 1917 he spoke of how the Germans—

"...do evil deliberately. It is their nature. It is the mark of their nationality. They are like microbes—wherever they abound the evil develops and infects everything roundabout. Civilized nations must resort to the sterilizing process; they must put into force measures of international hygiene. Beware of the German microbe."

After the War Kipling wrote a two-volume history of the Irish Guards (which I haven't got round to reading yet) that I think was probably the last substantial thing he did. Then it was just a matter of endlessly touring war cemeteries and forever railing against the latest depredations of Huns and Bolsheviks. Really, the Great War was in great measure the end of him. We don't think much these days on William Ernest Henley and we hear little enough of Rudyard Kipling.

Connolly's war was not at all like Kipling's. It was neither vicarious nor vicious. It was not immediately victorious either. Connolly brought his army out, it fought well for longer than anyone can

have expected and surrendered honourably. After which Connolly, and Patrick Pearse and the other were murdered.

But his army went on to fight the Empire to a standstill, which was the first of many imperial failures down the years. The Empire is gone now and British talk of setting out to rebuild it is all vain and futile.

The US wants India to become the world's 6th "official" nuclear-weapon state

But Ireland Can Stop It

There are five 'official' nuclear-weapon states in this world—the US, the UK, Russia, France and China—that are permitted to possess nuclear weapons under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the NPT) [1].

The US is currently proposing that India be granted the privileges of these 'official' nuclear-weapon states, even though it has refused to sign the NPT and developed nuclear weapons. In effect, the US is proposing that India be recognised as the 6th nuclear-weapon state in this world while remaining outside the NPT.

Ireland is in a position to stop this happening.

IRELAND'S LEADING ROLE

On 20 November 1959, on the initiative of Ireland, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proposing that the UN Disarmament Committee consider the feasibility of an international agreement under which the nuclear-weapon powers would not hand over control of nuclear weapons to other states, and non-nuclear-weapon states would not manufacture such weapons.

For the next decade, Ireland was to the fore in seeking international agreement on preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and on nuclear disarmament. This led in 1968 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the NPT), which was formally proposed by Ireland. On 1 July 1968, the NPT was opened for signing and was signed by 62 states, including Ireland and Iran.

Some states, notably India, Pakistan and Israel, refused to sign the NPT. India regarded it as discriminatory against non-nuclear states, in that the five states that possessed nuclear weapons prior to 1st January 1967—the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, France and China—were allowed to keep them under the Treaty, but states without nuclear weapons that signed the Treaty were forbidden to acquire them.

India developed nuclear weapons, exploding its first nuclear device in 1974. Since it hadn't signed the NPT, it didn't break any international obligations by doing so. But, there was a price to pay. In

Paraphrasing the greatest, if almost the only, poet of Greater Britain just so as to give us closure here: A surfeit of frantic boasts. One foolish word too many. The Captains and the Kings depart and all our pomp of yesterday is one with Nineveh and Tyre! Ah well, an empire's only an empire, but a good cigar is a smoke.

Joe Keenan

response to its nuclear test in 1974, the US imposed sanctions on it, forbidding the export of nuclear-related material and equipment to it from the US. Those sanctions are still in operation today, over 30 years later.

NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP

India manufactured the nuclear device it tested in 1974 using fissile material from reactors imported from the US and Canada for civil purposes. This prompted the formation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) [2] of exporting states, its objective being to ensure that in future such exports were not used for military purposes. The NSG's Guidelines [3] are the generally recognised international rules regulating these exports today and, as such, are a key instrument in enforcing the non-proliferation requirements of the NPT.

At the present time, the NSG has 45 member states. Ireland is one of them.

Since 1974, it has been very difficult for India to import nuclear goods and it has become more difficult over time, as the NSG has tightened its Guidelines. These Guidelines apply to all states apart from the five "official" nuclear-weapon states. Since 1992, they have required an importing state to have all nuclear facilities under its jurisdiction subject to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (the IAEA). In IAEA jargon, an importing state is required to have a "*full-scope*" or "*comprehensive*" safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

Non-nuclear states that have signed up to the NPT must have such a "*comprehensive*" safeguards agreement with the IAEA under the terms of the NPT itself, and they should all therefore meet this central NSG criterion for importing nuclear goods.

However, some states that meet this criterion, for example, Iran, are subject to other sanctions that limit their ability to import nuclear goods.

India does not meet this central criterion. Very few of its nuclear facilities are under IAEA safeguards, and since 1992 it has become next to impossible for it to import nuclear goods.

India has a civil nuclear power programme fuelled by indigenously mined uranium and it wants to expand this programme to meet its rapidly expanding energy needs. To that end, it is very keen to import nuclear-related material and equipment. But, it can't at the moment

because it doesn't satisfy the central criterion in the NSG Guidelines.

EXCEPTION FOR INDIA

The US is determined to change this. It wants the NSG to change its Guidelines to write into them an exception for India, so that India, and India alone, is allowed to import nuclear goods without having a "comprehensive" safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

If the US has its way, the NSG Guidelines will be amended so that there will be one rule for India, and another for other importing states. What the US is proposing is akin to amending an important piece of domestic legislation to write into it an exemption for a named individual.

The NSG operates by consensus and the sustained opposition of any one of its 45 member states would be sufficient to prevent such an extraordinary anomaly being introduced into its Guidelines. As a member of the NSG, Ireland is in a position to prevent it happening.

The next decision-making meeting of the NSG is scheduled to take place in South Africa in April.

US-INDIA NUCLEAR AGREEMENT

The US proposal to grant India this extraordinary privilege is part of a sustained effort to make India a reliable ally in world affairs. To that end, the US signed a nuclear agreement with India in Washington on 18th July 2005. In this agreement, the US administration undertook to try to persuade the US Congress to amend US law on the control of nuclear exports to make an exception for India, and to persuade the NSG to amend its Guidelines to make an equivalent exception.

The United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act 2006 [4], passed last December, fulfils the first undertaking. India will not be required to have "comprehensive" IAEA safeguards as a condition for importing nuclear goods from the US, providing the US manages to persuade the NSG to make an equivalent exception in its Guidelines. This condition is written into the Act itself, so the ban on India importing nuclear goods will continue, unless and until the NSG is persuaded to amend its Guidelines. If such an amendment is made, India will be free to import nuclear goods, not just from the US, but from any supplier state.

CONGRUENT FOREIGN POLICY

In Section 102 of the Act, Congress sets out its reasoning for passing the Act. It makes interesting reading. Specifically, it seeks to reconcile what it states to be the critical US foreign policy objective of nuclear non-proliferation—and the central role of the NPT in achieving that objective—with conferring a unique privilege on India, which has refused to sign the NPT and engaged in nuclear proliferation by

developing nuclear weapons.

Congress concludes that—

"it is in the interest of the United States to enter into an agreement for nuclear cooperation ... with a country that has never been a State Party to the NPT", providing:

"the country... has a foreign policy that is congruent to that of the United States, and is working with the United States on key foreign policy initiatives related to nonproliferation; ...

"such cooperation will induce the country to give greater political and material support to the achievement of United States global and regional nonproliferation objectives, especially with respect to dissuading, isolating, and, if necessary, sanctioning and containing states that sponsor terrorism and terrorist groups that are seeking to acquire a nuclear weapons capability or other weapons of mass destruction capability and the means to deliver such weapons; ..."

Not much doubt there that, in seeking to grant this extraordinary privilege to India, the US is simply pursuing US foreign policy goals. The interesting question is: are all of the 45 members of the NSG happy to assist the US in pursuing these foreign policy goals?

NO CONDITIONS ATTACHED

It should be emphasised that the US is not proposing that the exception for India be conditional upon its joining the NPT, or restricting its nuclear weapons programme in any way. As the Indian Government stated bluntly on 29th July 2005 [5], shortly after the original agreement was signed:

"The issue of India's nuclear weapons or NPT has not been raised in our dialogue with the United States. Our dialogue is predicated on India maintaining its strategic [weapons] programme. Our nuclear deterrent cannot be [the] subject of negotiations with foreign governments and is strictly within our sovereign domain. India has rejected demands for joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State."

The NPT is a most unusual treaty, in that there are two classes of signatory with very different rights and duties: (i) "nuclear-weapon" states, which are allowed to keep their weapons, and (ii) "non-nuclear-weapon" states, which are not allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. However, Article IX(3) of the treaty limits the states allowed to sign as a "nuclear-weapon" state to those that "manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967", namely, the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, France and China. India cannot sign the NPT as a "nuclear-weapon" state since it didn't explode a nuclear device until 1974, so, if it were to join the NPT now, it would have to sign as a "non-nuclear-weapon" state, and give up its nuclear weapons in order to do so—which it isn't going to do.

INDIA THE 6TH NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATE

The matter is now in the hands of the NSG. If it succumbs to US demands to make an exception for India, then any sense of fair play in the international rules governing nuclear affairs will be at an end. Not that there was much to begin with, since the NPT granted the five powers that possessed nuclear weapons in 1967 the right to keep them and forbid other signatories from acquiring them. But this US proposal adds a further twist to the unfairness.

In effect, the US is proposing that India be recognised internationally as the 6th nuclear-weapon state in this world while remaining outside the NPT.

The five official nuclear powers enjoy two privileges (1) they are not subject to sanctions, economic or otherwise, because of their possession of nuclear weapons, and (2) they are free to import nuclear-related material and equipment without having all their nuclear facilities subject to IAEA inspection. Today, India does not enjoy those privileges, but if the NSG amends its Guidelines as the US wants then India will enjoy those privileges.

In effect, it will have been recognised internationally as the 6th nuclear-weapon state in this world.

Ireland is in a position to stop this happening.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

President Bush signed the Act paving the way for India to be recognised as the world's 6th nuclear power on 18th December 2006. Five days later, on 23rd December 2006, at the instigation of the US, the Security Council imposed (albeit nugatory) sanctions on Iran, which, like Ireland, has been a signatory to the NPT from the outset, does not possess nuclear weapons, and the IAEA has found no evidence that it has a weapons programme.

Iran is being sanctioned for refusing to halt its uranium enrichment programme, a programme that is its "inalienable right" under Article IV.1 the NPT, which states:

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

One could be forgiven for thinking that double standards are being applied.

David Morrison

18 February 2007

www.david-morrison.org.uk

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- [1] www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Infcirc140.pdf
- [2] www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org/
- [3] www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Inf254r2p1.shtml
- [4] www.david-morrison.org.uk/other-documents/us-india-act.pdf
- [5] pmindia.nic.in/pressrel.htm

Venezuela And The Bolivarian Revolution

Notes from a visit 27 November–6 December 2006

MILITARY CIVIC CO-OPERATION

Another interesting effort has been the effort to get the military to use spare capacity to assist community efforts—a key plank of the Chavez programme. Under the *Plan Bolivar*, the military are deepening their involvement in local projects, building works, land and farm reclamation and other community efforts. There is a palpable difference in the way that ordinary Venezuelans view the federal military in a more relaxed manner than the police, who are under municipal control. There appears to be movement the other way too, with the military training of community defence units in guerrilla warfare muted by several we met, in the event of any future US inspired invasion. I did not get a sufficient account of this activity to write with any authority, but such activity would be a basic and prudent step in view of US activity to undermine Chavez.

THREATS TO BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION

Until 1998 Venezuela was a most submissive player to US policy, with the US on the verge of being the principal benefactor of efforts to privatize Venezuela's lucrative oil industry. Then came Chavez, paving the way for Venezuelan oil wealth to benefit the mass of Venezuelan society for the first time.

The terrible crime of the Chavez administration, earning it to be branded within (along with Cuba) the Latin American *"axis of evil"* and listed on the US "terrorist watch" along with North Korea and Iran, is that it is engaged, however modestly, in redistributing wealth to a very poor people. Chavez's economic policy is moderate—at best social democratic—but hardly revolutionary.

What has raised high alert in Washington is Chavez's key role in revitalizing the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) along with Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Libya, Indonesia, Algeria and Nigeria, (as well as establishing strong ties with non OPEC producers such as Norway). That Chavez maintained links with Cuba, undermining the 40 year US embargo, is another key Washington concern.

Crude US attempts to simply arrange for or support the overthrow of inconvenient foreign regimes—such as happened in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Congo in 1960, the Bay of Pigs in 1961, Brazil in 1964 and Vietnam has given way to more 'subtle' tactics of *"democratic intervention"*. Subsequent US activity in Venezuela has followed the template of

1980's Nicaragua in intervening in electoral processes, or that of Chile (1970's) and Haiti (1990's) of regime change by *coup d'etat*.

Since coming to power in 1998, Chavez has had to counter serious and constant efforts to destabilize the administration. These have included a (briefly successful) coup d'Etat in April 2002, a bosses strike or "lock out" in Winter 2002/03, the *Guarimba* "recall" referendum in 2004, an opposition boycott of the National Assembly elections in 2005, along with backing trenchant opposition from the private sector dominated media, as well as 'blind eye' toleration of the assassination threat of Columbian and Miami based terror hubs. The assassination of National Prosecutor Daniel Anderson is seen as the tip of a large iceberg.

At every turn, these efforts have been met with increased democratic support for the Chavez administration and an entrenched will on the part of Venezuela's *"have nots"* to defend their Bolivarian Revolution.

Although relations with the Clinton administration were frosty, the programme of US destabilization only accelerated under the Bush regime. Key to US efforts have been the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), who's current annual budget to "promote democracy" in Venezuela is currently over \$1,000,000 and USAID, which has a \$5,000,000 budget.

All funds support active opponents of the democratically elected government, with not one cent, penny or Bolivar going to any group remotely sympathetic to the Chavez regime. US support for "promoting democracy" is a one way street.

The NED operates by funding a number of *"Core Grantees"*—effectively "intermediate funding bodies". These include, the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS) and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

IRI is a far right wing grouping headed by the Republican Presidential front runner candidate John McCain, a key defender of the global "war on terror". The NDI is headed up by leading Democrat, Madeleine Albright. IRI and NDI represent Republican and Democratic party channels to disparate foreign aid recipients—a sort of *"horses for courses"* strategy. ACILS has ensured funding and links with the Confederacion de Trabajadores Venezolanos (CTV, an anti Chavez trade union movement linked with

the former AD and Copei regimes). CIPE has had a track record in shaping the aggressive, neo-liberal *"good economic development"* policies of Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

These in turn fund a veritable array of political organizations and parties including Primero Justicia, Proyecto Venezuela and the left wing MAS, as well as the discredited former governing parties—Copei and AD. Polling organizations such as Sumate are funded to shape public opinion. Media and broadcasting organizations (Instituto Prensa y Sociedad), educational groups (Asamblea de Educacion), business confederations (Fedecamaras), and ACSC (Civic Alliance of Civil Society) are all funded to foment discontent. Accion Campesina has been funded to provoke rural opposition to the Chavez land reforms. Funding to opposition groupings, in every corner of civil society, have helped prevent the Bolivarian development of Chavez from being allowed to settle down.

Internal opposition to Chavez has been characterized by division and ineptitude. US aid has been integral to shaping the opposition to the Chavez administration and ensuring its convergence to back a single anti-Chavez election candidate. This resulted in a creditable *"papering over the cracks"* presidential election campaign from Manuel Rosales, a wealthy cattle rancher. However, Rosales polled only 36% to Chavez's increased 62.89%. Given that massive US funding has only produced increased politicization and awareness amongst the Chavez regime and grass roots, it can only be assumed that a more direct approach by the US is being contemplated. Whilst *"regime change"*, assassination or invasion may be on the cards, the Bush regime is hampered by both internal US politics and by external priorities such as Iraq, Afghanistan and the *"spectre"* of Iran. Circumstances have been helpful to Chavez.

A bewildering and complicated picture of US aid to bolster opposition to the Chavez regime has been charted by a brave young US/Venezuelan attorney, Eva Golinger. Her books *"The Chavez Code"* (2004) and *"Bush vs Chavez"* (2006) list an horrific catalogue of interference by the US in Venezuelan affairs. The full detail of Golinger's investigations (and she considers that she has only exposed the tip of a very large iceberg) can be read at www.venezuelafoia.info Golinger, unsurprisingly, lives under constant threat of death.

How far the Bush administration is prepared to go to remove what Condoleezza Rice described as *"a real problem"* for the region remains to be seen.

VENEZUELAN ELECTRONIC VOTING
One impressive feature of the Vene-

zuelan election was the independence of the National Electoral Commission and its system of electronic voting.

The Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) is the Electoral Commission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which organizes and supervises everything related to popular elections by way of universal direct and secret voting. It can organize the election of trade unions and civilian organizations on request. It regulate electoral laws and resolves doubts or problems resulting from any omissions within these laws. It can apply sanctions when laws have not been followed and is able to declare null and void any election, either totally or partially.

The Consejo is appointed by the National Assembly following a public appointment process. From some 200 non party political applicants, 5 were chosen by consensus of all parties in the Assembly.

A feature of the Venezuelan electoral system is its use of an electronic voting system. Voters are initially verified by a fingerprint swipe (Venezuela has a national fingerprint database). Then, by a process similar to an ATM transaction, the voter chooses his/her chosen candidate. The voter then confirms his/her choice, and a paper ballot is printed out. The voter puts the paper ballot in a ballot box, which forms a verification "paper trail" for the system.

The computer network at each polling station is disconnected from any telephony system, to guard against the prospect of hacking.

At the end of voting, an electronic tally is taken. An agreed statistical sample is taken from the paper ballot box and, if verified, the system is connected to the internet and sent to central electoral HQ.

The system is not contentious, largely because the computer coding for the open source software on which the system is based is available on the internet for scrutiny by the computer wonks of any and all interested parties. This is in contrast to the private sector developed system developed in the US and elsewhere (including Ireland) where the code is considered privately owned "intellectual property"—reducing overall confidence.

Voting is slow, with voters taking 4 to 5 hours in queues at polling stations.

Other factors of interest in Venezuelan elections are a two day embargo on campaigning in the days before the election. Equally, there is a three day ban on public sales of alcohol. Both measures are aimed at reducing tensions and appear to be largely respected.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the Bolivarian Revolution is a highly encouraging development, but a "work in progress" Its spirit is one of popular involvement and localized organization. Although the high levels of active participation may dip over time, the humane philosophy underpinning the economic and

social development of a "rich, poor" country is highly commendable. As an alternative to neo-liberalism, it is venturing in a positive direction, travelling in hope, largely free of dogma and content to face hurdles and 'events' in a pragmatic frame.

How "revolutionary" is the Bolivarian development? Although the means of production is still largely in private hands, strategic state enterprises, and significant numbers of smaller co-operatives are tilting at that balance. Hosting principles for foreign investment are yet to be proven, but worth trying. Creating a significant sphere of economic activity not given over to the aim of private profit is a good start.

The state has been an active player in redistributing state wealth—although hasn't greatly interfered with private wealth. Venezuela has opposed the various US promoted "Free Trade" agreements and have instead entered a range of trading agreements based on reciprocity, oil for doctors (with Cuba), oil for cows, and software (with Uruguay), oil for city technology in waste and traffic management (with London). Similar agreements exist with Argentina, and Ecuador. This non market trade emphasizes solidarity and co-operation over competition and moves in a useful direction. The extent of the scale on which this could be undertaken remains an open question.

The system of government itself, freed up by massive oil revenues, has been able to avoid the sway and influence of private capital. The use of the military for civic tasks loosens the propensity of the state to regulate capital. The "bottom up" popular involvement of citizenry has also helped to put "people first" rather than private capital.

Venezuela hasn't broken free. It's Bolivarian revolution is under constant threat. But it has chosen a very interesting and hopeful path.

Mark Langhammer

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Some further information

www.venezuelanalysis.com

www.venezuelafoia.info

Richard Gott: *Chavez And The Bolivarian Revolution*

Hugo Chavez tackles the "lunacy" of consumerism, "developmentalism" and car culture in *Drawbridge Magazine*, July 2006

Eva Golinger: *The Chavez Code* (ISBN 959-09-0307-X) and *Bush vs Chavez* (forthcoming) give a full account of US efforts to fund opposition political and civil society groups in Venezuela.

Marta Harnecker: *Understanding the Venezuelan Revolution*, 2005

Green Left www.greenleft.org.au has regular Venezuela articles.

Haiman El Troudi and Michael Lebowitz: *Socialism for the 21st Century*

Report

Big Jim Larkin's 60th Anniversary

Big Jim Larkin died on 30th January 1947 and—although one would not have guessed it if dependent on non-existent press reports—his 60th anniversary was commemorated on the very same date this year in a ceremony held at his graveside in Glasnevin Cemetery. SIPTU Campaigns Director Anne Speed presided and welcomed the attendance, with the Trade Union presence being led by SIPTU's General President Jack O'Connor, its General Secretary Joe O'Flynn, and Assistant General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Peter Bunting, who is also Congress's Northern Ireland Secretary.

Family members present were led by two of Big Jim's granddaughters: Hilda Breslin, daughter of James Larkin Junior, and Stella McConnon, daughter of Denis Larkin—both brothers having followed in their father's footsteps in holding office as General Secretary of the Workers' Union of Ireland. Former Labour Party leader Ruairi Quinn and Sinn Féin Councillor Daithi Doolan were also present. Wreaths were laid on Big Jim's grave by both of his granddaughters and by Jack O'Connor and Peter Bunting, after which the latter announced that Congress will be organising a series of events in Northern Ireland later this year to mark and celebrate the Belfast strikes of 1907 when, as he put it, "*Jim Larkin was the catalyst, the spark that soared into a flaming torch that inspired the working class of Britain and Ireland*".

The following is the text of the graveside oration delivered by Jack O'Connor:

I want to welcome you all here today, officers and staff of the ICTU, SIPTU, members of the Larkin family, Trade Union sisters and brothers, political friends and comrades.

This is the 60th anniversary of the death of Big Jim Larkin and the 100th anniversary of his arrival in Belfast. This centenary year marks 100 years since the 1907 Belfast strike of dockers and carters. That famous struggle united catholic, protestant and dissenter under the banner of Trade Unionism. It is a struggle that still stands out today as a shining example of working class solidarity and unselfish determination in the face of employers who tried and failed to divide and conquer the workers. Larkin showed leadership, delivered with a combination of steadfast courage and inspired oratory. The dockers and carters responded by sticking together through all the privations and political chicanery that the employers and their

political allies threw at them. When the employers tried to divide the workers with a provocative Orange march, Larkin organised a larger and more successful counter demonstration of working class solidarity. Clear and unequivocal leadership is as necessary today in the city of Belfast as it was then. And in that regard I would like to recognise and to salute the leadership given to their community by the Sinn Féin ard-fheis decision on Sunday last. It can only advance the interests of all working people in Ireland, of people on this island living together in peace. It is something that Larkin would have welcomed.

Jim Larkin was a committed socialist and undertook his first task in Ireland by organising Belfast City dockworkers. As a Trade Union syndicalist, Larkin put great hope in a united working class that opposed sectarianism. The men worked long hours in a city that was still undergoing the tremendous transformation of the industrial revolution. Dockers and carters were the poor relations of the industrial working class. Many dockers, especially the mainly catholic deep-sea dockers, were only employed on an hourly basis and at that for only a few hours at a time. The pay was poor and conditions were harsh when deep sea and cross channel dockers forged their alliance in the 1907 strike. The employers of Belfast met the full force of this newfound solidarity with confrontation and strike breaking. Larkin employed innovative new tactics that have become the basis of Trade Union solidarity, the refusal to handle goods produced under conditions of strike breaking. Thus the dockers and carters met the employers' challenge and laid the basis for permanent employment on the docks. Jim Larkin's experiences in Belfast also led him to see the need for a new Irish Trade Union that could generalise the lessons learned there and that would attract the mass of the unorganised to the banner of Trade Unionism. The founding of the original ITGWU by Larkin and Connolly led to the creation of a Trade Union with over 100,000 members within a few short years.

Conditions in both parts of Ireland today bear no resemblance to the conditions of the mass of workers back then. For this we are indebted to the struggles and the leadership of those like Big Jim and countless thousands who went before us. Nevertheless the conflict between the overbearing interests of capital and the needs of labour for equality and justice remain the overriding challenge for the Trade Union movement, just as it was in 1907, 1909, 1913 and in 1916. Now, as then, for workers to succeed in improving our conditions, we must organise. Without the organisation of political and industrial strength, we will not succeed in advancing the interests of working people on this island. Our labour force today is more diverse, with migrant workers joining our ranks every day. Jim Larkin was a migrant worker, and so was James Connolly—Larkin from Liverpool and Connolly from Edinburgh. Both went on to emigrate to work in the US before

returning to Ireland. Who can deny that Irish society has benefited from the legacy of James Connolly and Jim Larkin? We should take our lead from James Connolly, the first politician to produce election literature for migrants recently come to Ireland, when he produced material in Yiddish for Jewish workers. We in the Trade Union movement of today unite people of all backgrounds, using many different languages in engaging with Ireland's ever-changing workforce, but with one message, that of our common humanity.

Larkin would have been outraged by this Government's failure to protect workers' rights. As the son of Irish parents forced to emigrate, who spent over half of his adult life in Britain and America, he would have been among the first to champion the rights of immigrant workers here. But he would also have excoriated the unscrupulous employers who have been raised to the status of gods solely on the basis of their capacity to exploit these vulnerable people. He would have been particularly incensed by the spectacle of the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheal Martin, paying out 4.3 million Euro in redundancy rebates to Irish Ferries.

We are not here just to pay homage to a great labour leader, but also to reaffirm his legacy, a living legacy. We need to organise labour, to bear witness to the exploitation of vulnerable workers, to challenge the cynical strategy of displacement, and to resist the greed of corporate capital. We best pay tribute to Jim Larkin by preparing our ranks for these new challenges, and by shaping and building our unions to carry out these tasks. Sisters, brothers, comrades, let us rededicate ourselves to nourishing the legacy of Jim Larkin. In those inspiring last words of Joe Hill, the martyred Swedish immigrant and American labour

radical at whose Chicago funeral Big Jim himself gave an oration, "*Don't mourn, organise!*"

SIPTU Head of Research Manus O'Riordan next recited the Irish language poem *Jim Larkin*, which Brendan Behan had penned in February 1947 in the immediate aftermath of Big Jim's funeral, followed by O'Riordan's own English translation. The 60th anniversary ceremony at Larkin's graveside concluded with O'Riordan singing *Roll Away The Stone*—his setting to music of the December 1944 poem by Frank O'Connor entitled, *Homage to Jim Larkin*.

O'Riordan's English language version of Behan's poem is as follows:

He was us! He was me!
Each and every mother's son!
We ourselves. Self-reliant. Strong.
As we would wish ourselves to be
Knowing such strength could make us free.

Himself first-clenched confronting
oppression
To release from servitude's knee-bending
servility
Ourselves to mourn in his funeral procession
Those great angry roars through this open
mouth city.

Last night as we followed his coffin
Through Dublin's garrulous din
Were we ourselves in that same coffin?
Not so: on the streets were now marching
our ranks
Alive, Alive O! To the Dead we give thanks.

Manus O'Riordan

Editorial Note

The series *To Be Or IRB* by Manus O'Riordan will resume in a future issue.

Cathal O'Shannon At War

Part Two of a comment on RTE's *Hidden History* programmes on Nazis in Ireland

Cathal O'Shannon's sensationalist exposé of Irish collaboration with Nazism (RTE *Hidden History*, 16.1.07) begins its narrative with the statement: "*On the 1st of September 1939 the 2nd World War began when Germany invaded Poland*".

But a German/Polish War could not possibly constitute a World War. The combined weight of the two as a component of the world in 1939 fell far short of the critical mass necessary to cause their own conflict to be in effect a world conflict.

Britain was the only state with the ramifications throughout the world necessary to bring about a World War. All the world wars of modern times have been brought about by Britain—the Seven Years' War in the mid-18th century, the 1793-1815 war against France, and the two wars against Germany. Britain fights

its European wars as World Wars because its purpose always lies beyond Europe.

An accurate statement would be: *Britain availed of the German attack on Poland to begin the 2nd World War.* (And it did so without intervening, in support of Poland, in the German-Polish War.)

O'Shannon's account of the end of the World War was presented in the form of a statement by an Australian academic, Dan Leach:

"The situation at the end of World War 2, between the West and the Soviet Union was very fraught. The Western Allies were concerned that the Soviet Army had been so successful on the battlefield, and were certainly the largest Army in Europe at the time, that it could quite possibly overrun all of Western

Europe and not stop at Berlin. At that stage both the Western Allies and the Soviet Union realised that in all likelihood they could easily come to blows."

And then, said, O'Shannon,

"Ireland, like most Western European countries, didn't see Nazism as the enemy, but Communism".

This is a long way from the German-Polish War, and it is inexplicable in terms of O'Shannon's narrative.

Russia, like Ireland (and America), was neutral in the World War declared by Britain on 4th September 1939, a few days after the outbreak of the German-Polish War. But in 1945 Russia had been "*so successful*" in the World War, as an ally of Britain, that it had become a danger to Britain. And, at that juncture, with Nazism defeated, "*Ireland didn't see Nazism as the enemy, but Communism*". And the tone of the programme suggested that this was an unreasonable view of the situation.

How did it come about that Russia was "*so successful on the battlefield*" in this World War launched by Britain—a war in which Russia sought to be neutral—in the moment of victory it was the pre-eminent threat to British interests? The short answer is: because Britain left the battlefield in June 1940, but kept Europe on a war footing by use of its Navy and Air Force, and manipulated European instability with a view to bringing about a German-Russian War.

It succeeded in this object, and then left Russia to do the fighting. When America was attacked and brought into the war it pressed Britain to return to the battlefield by opening a Second Front against Germany. Britain resisted this pressure in 1942 and 1943, but agreed in 1944 because by then it was evident that Germany and the Soviet Union were not engaged in a war of mutual destruction, but that the Communists were going to win. If the Second Front was not opened in 1944, 1945 might see the Red Army at Calais.

England began a war in 1939 which it never for a moment had the intention of fighting with its own resources—as by way of exception it had done to a considerable extent in 1914-18. The decision to make war was effectively taken in March 1939, with the military encirclement of Germany, but preparations for war were ludicrous, and gave Hitler to understand that he could deal with Poland on its own. He did so, with Poland's Great Power military allies looking on.

Britain and France declared war on Germany but did not fight it in a way that was of any use to Poland. Britain intended that the French should bear the brunt of the fighting. But the French, whose realistic policy of European settlement

had been sabotaged by Britain in 1919, had neither the will nor the means to fight after Britain left the battlefield in June 1940. That was when the necessity of World War presented itself in dead earnest.

There were only two possible bodies of cannonfodder in the world that were sufficient for the task after Germany had been brought to a position of dominance in Central and Western Europe: America and Russia. America was not going to be drawn into a war to save the British Empire and I doubt that in any case it could have locked horns with Germany in Europe after June 1940. So that left Russia.

Britain succeeded in bringing about the German-Russian War: but the purpose for which it had itself declared war was destroyed by that success. The Soviet Union was an ally of absolute desperation. It was Britain's fundamental enemy in the world, and was therefore a possible ally only when Britain was in a state verging on collapse—an ally which would revert to being an enemy in the moment of victory.

Britain has lived in Churchillian mythology ever since June 1940, when the dominant world position gained in 1918 gave way. But from first to last Churchill regarded Bolshevik Russia as the fundamental enemy. He was disgusted that bungled foreign policy by the Empire had made the Fascist ally against Bolshevism into an enemy. The war against Germany was repeatedly described by him as the unnecessary war. A war that got in the way of the necessary war. In 192 he described the British position in the world quite accurately:

"The British nation is now in the very forefront of mankind. Never was its power so great, its name so honoured, its rivals so few. The fearful sacrifices of the war, the stupendous victory with which it closed, not only in the clash of arms but in the triumph of institutions and ideals, have opened to us several generations of august responsibility" (30 May 1920).

But then came the Tory back-bench revolt of 1922, that deprived him of power, began the era of "*the second eleven*", and led to the absurdity of the Anti-Fascist War which brought the fundamental enemy to dominance in central Europe. (It is all there in his memoirs, though it plays little part in the Churchill mythology, which is mere escapist fantasy.)

Poland, urged on by the British offer of military alliance, refused to negotiate the transfer to Germany of the German city of Danzig which Poland had proved entirely unable to govern. Germany invaded Poland and the Poles were left to fight alone. Five years later German power was facing destruction and Poland was being liberated. And a Polish patriot in Warsaw wrote a poem of welcome to the

liberating Army, which had arrived at the far side of the river:

"We are waiting for you, you red pest,
To deliver us from the black death:
A salvation to be welcomed with loathing...

We are waiting for you, power of the masses,
Dehumanised under the fist of your rulers.
We are waiting for you to crush us
underfoot...

Do you know, hated redeemer,
The kind of death we wish on you,
And how we wring our hands in despair
Asking your help, you slimy slaughterers..."

Russia took half of Poland for itself (which it had grounds for doing), gave it a bit of Germany in exchange, and incorporated the new Poland into the sphere of interest which it gained by defeating Germany.

In 1939 the Poles had refused either to negotiate with Germany over Danzig, or to form an alliance with Russia against Germany, either of which could have secured its position. Britain, though not responsible for Poland's irrational conduct, encouraged it with its military guarantee, and with its own refusal to make an agreement with Russia. Then in 1944-5 it had to pretend that its pledge to Poland was redeemed by the Soviet occupation.

If Britain had remained a free agent in the course of this catastrophic war that it started but was unable to finish, it would have tried to retrieve the situation by nuclear bombing Russia—Or Churchill would have done so if he had remained in office and had the bomb. But it was not a free agent. It was entirely dependent on America. Churchill could only launch an ideological war on the powerful ally which had saved him. And, before America was ready to act according to his wishes, Stalin had made The Bomb for himself—so there could only be Cold War, with limited hot war fought by proxy on the fringes.

O'Shannon's tone suggested that it was self-evidently unreasonable for Ireland to have taken Nazism to be over and done with and to have gone along with the general Western Cold War preoccupation with the powerful position gained by Communism through having defeated Nazism.

He played some extracts from a televised interview with Albert Folens twenty years ago, but apparently never broadcast, and interspersed these extracts with comments by himself and by Senan Moloney, who had conducted the interview. (Folens had been a Flemish nationalist, who co-operated with the German occupation of Holland. He came to Ireland after the War and became a very successful book publisher—though I had never heard of him until this programme):

Moloney (present-day): "Albert Folens had a plausible story made out, a script to which he attempted to stick as

we went through what he did during the War, and as he was confronted with various things, he had a line of fall-back positions in relation to what he actually did. He denied that he was in the Waffen SS. He conceded that he was a mere foot-soldier in the Eastern Front, and had been invalided out. And then he claimed that he had lived quietly for the rest of the War."

Then there was a clip from the interview:

Folens: "So the Flemish Legion was formed on the understanding that we would have our own Flemish Legion, our own insignia, and everything would be independent."

Moloney: "And you're saying they were set up by the Waffen SS."

Folens: "And gradually they started to incorporate us in the Waffen SS."

Moloney (present-day): "It later descended into a form of a rant. He made a point that from his outlook, that what had the Allies gained by waging and winning the 2nd World War. He made the claim that in fact they'd sewn the seeds of destruction, because they had given away too much territory to the Red Army.

Folens: "I still think that the Americans are stupid and criminal to have asked for a complete surrender. But, no, to please Stalin they wanted a complete surrender and a complete vacuum in Middle Europe so that the Hungarians and Czechs and so on, and so on, are now under Russian domination. And that's the stupidity of Roosevelt. A sick man with a sick mind and ignorant."

Even without making allowance for the fact that Folens was not fluent in English, I do not see how this can be described as a rant.

Perhaps "*singleminded*", rather than "*stupid*" was the word to describe Roosevelt. He was singlemindedly dedicated to the expansion of the American sphere of interest in the world. His concerns were not European. He was intent on getting rid of the British Empire and making it an American market. To achieve his own purpose he seemed willing to divide the world with Stalin. He had little patience with Churchill's covert anti-Stalinism. And he died before he needed to deal with the European outcome of this attitude.

The opinion that the unconditional surrender policy was ill-conceived from a European viewpoint is one I have seen expressed by people who could not be accused of being pro-German. I have seen it defended as being necessary to ensure that Stalin did not make a separate peace. By means of it Stalin committed the West to war on Germany until his army met theirs.

Europe had nothing to say in the matter. It had no presence within the counsels that

were determining what should happen in the world, and it still hasn't. British balance-of-power strategy had in the end reduced Europe to a negligible quantity in the affairs of the world. And Britain itself was only hanging on.

For forty years after the victory of the Anti-Fascist Alliance, the antagonism between the Allies was such that the Western Allies justified an extensive range of political and military atrocities as being necessary to curb the influence of the Communist state which had defeated Nazism. Malaya had to be brutalised because it had played a part in the Anti-Fascist War along with the colonial power but not as its instrument. The independent anti-Fascist movement in the Malayan colony was judged to be Communist in orientation and therefore it had to be destroyed. And the Government of Guatemala had to be overthrown because it showed its Communist proclivities by a reform in the interest of its national capitalism, which interfered with the free international activity of US capitalism. The Cold War justified everything that was done in the cause of stopping the spread of Communism, and everything done in its name was held to be democratic in a larger sense, even though in a particular case it might involve the overthrow of a democratic Government, as in Guatemala.

Now I never came across a case where anything like this was done before 1939 for the purpose of curbing Fascism.

Fascism had been the accidental enemy and Communism the accidental ally—a deviation caused by the foreign policy bungling of the British Empire after it achieved world dominance in 1918.

This course of events is reflected in a series of about a dozen novels of contemporary history published during the War and the post-War years by Upton Sinclair, who was a world-famous American socialist writer. Shortly before 1939 he had a public dispute with American Communist, Eugene Lyons, who turned against Communism and began to depict Russia as the great source of evil in the world. Sinclair dismissed this as the hysteria of a Utopian idealist discovering that ideals get knocked about when they succeed in grappling with realities. But his series of novels reflected the prevailing liberal opinion of the West year by year during and after the War, and the final novel, published in the early 1950s, is thoroughly McCarthyite.

Hollywood produced a major feature film called *Mission To Moscow* in 1943 as a contribution to the war effort. Its subject is the Moscow Trials of 1937. It depicts the exposure of Bukharin and his associates as a Nazi Fifth Column. The message of

the film is that Stalin saved the world from barbarism by rooting out the Fifth Columnists who had subverted the defences of other states. A very few years later Hollywood began its vast output of McCarthyite films about Communist infiltration and brainwashing.

The West—effectively Britain—brought about the historically absurd situation in which it had to turn to Communism to save it from Fascism, which had saved it from Communism, and then get back to its starting point of presenting Communism as the deadly enemy of civilisation.

O'Shannon suggests that, after 1945, after Nazism had been overthrown by Bolshevism, Western Europe should have continued to treat Nazism as the enemy, and should have punished, or at least ostracised, everybody who had played a part in it. If that had been done, what would Western Europe have been?

Brigitte Mohnhaupt, a survivor of the Baader-Meinhoff group, is about to be paroled from prison in Germany.

Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhoff and their colleagues were young West Germans, largely of Protestant middle class background, who came to realise in the 1960s that they were living in a state and a society that were largely staffed at crucial points by personnel from the Nazi regime.

John Bowman occupies a curious position in the Irish state. It would be wrong to describe him as the Irish Goebbels—if only because Goebbels has been reduced to a mere demon—but within a narrower sphere, in much less extreme circumstances, he has conducted a kind of broadcasting *gleichschaltung*. And one of his themes is the crucial importance of middle management in the life of the state. He says that Britain and America understood this in handling Germany in 1945, but forgot it in Iraq in 2003, hence the different outcomes.

In fact, the Western Allies understood little about either Germany or statecraft in 1945. (Hans Habe, a Hungarian Jew, with extensive experience of German life, who was a kind of press Commissar with Eisenhower's Occupation Force in 1945, suggests that Allied understanding was infantile.) What saved the Germans from the fate of Iraq at the hands of their conquerors was the looming presence of Bolshevik power. It was not the case that principled understanding was applied, but that principle was cast aside in the service of Cold War expediency. The Germans of the Western Occupation Zones had to be won as allies against Bolshevism, therefore the de-Nazification programme was aborted.

Insofar as the 'middle management' principle was applied with understanding, it was Adenauer. And, by doing it, he

ensured extensive continuity at that level between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic.

Around 1960 the Democratic Republic (East Germany) published extensive exposés of the Nazi presence in the apparatus of Adenauer's Republic. I did not disbelieve them. I did not think that the Baader-Meinhoffs were at war with phantoms. What I concluded was that Adenauer was one of the outstanding democratic statesmen of the 20th century, who understood that Justice is a thing to be pursued with moderation and discretion in matters of statecraft in times of political upheaval.

It appears that O'Shannon brooded for half a century over slights that he suffered in Dublin because of wearing a British military uniform, and that he is now getting his own back. And I do not deny that it is highly moral for him to do so as somebody who served the British state. Supporting the winner has to be moral—else where would morality be? The British state treasures old animosities, keeps them simmering, because one never knows when they mightn't be useful again. There is endless pursuit of Justice for the victims of the vanquished—and no Justice at all for the victims of the victors. But I do not see why the Irish state, which was not amongst those victors, should play it that way.

A handful of European nationalists, at odds with the states that held them, co-operated with the Germans for their own purposes. A handful of them came to Ireland, where they seem to have made very useful contributions to Irish economic life.

If one wants to find very large numbers of actual Nazis in public life after 1945, the place to find them is in the Federal German Republic, the vanguard of the free world—until the Soviet collapse.

Adenauer conducted a functional German state from the materials available, and those materials were Nazi in great part. Nazism was almost as integral a development of German society (out of the chaos induced by Versailles arrangements—as Imperialism was of British society (in pursuit of world dominance) after about 1880. It would have been as difficult to construct a German state without Nazis after 1945, as it would have been to construct a British state without Imperialists if Britain had been defeated in 1918.

Adenauer, as Mayor of Cologne, had pioneered the variant of Christian Democracy with which he took Western Germany in hand in the late 1940s. He was sacked as Mayor of Cologne in 1933, and in 1945 was untainted by collaboration with Hitler—as, for example, Britain was: which he always bore in mind in his dealings with it. But he recognised that the Nazi state was, for all his rejection of it, a legitimate state for the most part.

In Iraq in 2003 there was no hostile Great Power in the offing to exercise a restraining influence on the morally self-righteous destructiveness of USUK. Nor was there any equivalent of Adenauer's movement to take the country in hand if USUK had been half-sensible. (Eoghan Harris's friend, Chalabi, was only a confidence trickster.)

Anyhow, there was continuity of Bowman's "*middle management*" in Germany. Which meant that wherever idealistic young anti-Nazi Germans looked, they saw Nazis in positions of power. And that was the situation that gave rise to the Baader-Meinhoffs.

They were of course denounced as mindless terrorists by right-thinking people who didn't want to know—who didn't want to see what they saw. But what they saw was there.

They had some marginal connection with the Communist Party as far as I recall. The Communist Party was the force that destroyed the Nazi regime. And, in the freedom of the Federal Republic, which existed only because of the power of the Red Army, the Communist Party was made illegal, and there was a comprehensive Black List of Communists who were legally excluded from an extensive range of occupations—many of them ex-inmates of Concentration Camps on account of their Resistance work.

In that period, when the Baader-Meinhoffs were being denounced as lunatics, there was at the same time a rich literature, in fiction and pseudo-fact, about Neo-Nazism, and films like *The Odessa File* and *The Boys From Brazil*. (One of those films was about the danger posed to the world by the cloning of Hitlers in South America from some fragment of him that had somehow been got hold of, by Martin Bormann no doubt. With this film Nazism was removed altogether from the arena of historical development.)

But Nazism had served the function of creating a German State out of the chaos of the Weimar ultra-democracy, and much of the State was continued into the Federal Republic. So what basis was there for Neo-Nazism?

The Russian Occupation Zone became the Democratic Republic after the Western Zone was made the Federal Republic. It was governed by the Party which the Nazi movement had saved Germany from in 1933, and which had saved Germany from the Nazi movement in 1945: the Communists. Despite being recognised as a legitimate state by the Federal Republic after the death of Adenauer, the Democratic Republic was treated after unification (and after the collapse of the Soviet State which defeated Nazism) as having been nothing more than a criminal conspiracy. Those who served the regime established by the liberation continue to be punished in unified

Germany in various ways, while those who served the Nazi regime are treated as servants of the legitimate German Government, with continuity of pension rights, etc.

When the Cold War of attrition finally led to the collapse of the Soviet Union around 1990, Bolshevism began to be described as the most monstrous criminal conspiracy known to history, and I did not hear a single public voice raised in dissent. European history was thereby rendered senseless.

Chancellor Kohl wanted to subsidise Gorbachov, to make possible a gradual reform of the Soviet regime. His proposal was brushed aside by Thatcher. Instant collapse into market democracy became the only policy, even though the student of Edmund Burke (as Thatcher affected to be) should have known that neither functional democracy nor a functional market are things that could be collapsed into. The collapse of the Soviet Union was soon followed by the collapse of Christian Democracy, which is now only a name. NATO, a counter to the Warsaw Pact, was given a new object after the Warsaw Pact was disbanded. It became an instrument of USUK world domination, and British Socialists who opposed it in the days of the Warsaw Pact are now running it. And hostility to Russia as the centre of the Communist system has been transferred to Russia as a capitalist state which has begun to tend to its national interests, instead of leaving itself open for its resources to pass into American ownership. And world war is now a more practical project than ever in the era of the conflict of social systems. (Stalin was of the opinion around 1950 that world war was unlikely because the system of capitalism, rather than the particular interests of capitalist states, would be at stake in it. But he also thought imperialist war remained a probability, i.e. war to decide which capitalist state should be top dog.)

The surprising thing about press comment on O'Shannon's programme is how critical, even dismissive, some of it has been, e.g. Emmanuel Kehoe (*Sunday Business Post*, 21 Jan), and T. Ryle Dwyer (*Irish Examiner*, 13 Jan).

Kim Bielenberg (of the Cork University stable of revisionists, who was part of the pack that tried to howl down factual criticism of Peter Hart's inventions) wrote in ominous terms about "*the cead mile failte extended to Skorzeny, a key figure [!!!] in Hitler's tyrannical regime*" (*Irish Indep.* 6 Jan). A reader, R.G. O Domhnaill, replied that—

"Skorzeny was tried as a war criminal, but the only thing the Americans could charge him with was having his men wear American uniforms during the Battle of the Bulge. The trial soon fell apart when it was pointed out that the Americans had also worn German uniforms to infiltrate enemy lines".

And he rejected Bielenberg's assertion that Skorzeny had tortured the would-be Hitler

LABOUR continued

the Irish and good for the immigrants. As of now, we have a system that is not serving the interests of either." (25.1.2007).

Labour leader Pat Rabbitte described the speech by Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny on immigration as "*thought-provoking*" and "*powerful*" and called for a wider debate on the issue:

"From what I read of his speech it was very thoughtful and there is absolutely no reason why we should have a taboo on discussing this issue," he said on a constituency visit to Tipperary.

"Mr Kenny said on Monday that immigrants should be refused entry if they had serious criminal records and deported if they were jailed here for five years or more. Ireland had the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of other countries and to benefit hugely from those who had come to live in Ireland, he said." (Irish Times, 27.1.2007).

Mr. Rabbitte said yesterday immigration had the capacity to—

"greatly enrich Irish society" but only if we *"patiently and carefully manage it"*.

"As I pointed out a year ago, and I am glad that the rest of the political establishment has caught up with me now, there is a necessity for us to patiently manage it and not just regard people coming here as a source of cheap labour."

He agreed with Mr Kenny's proposal for the appointment of a Minister of State for Immigration and Integration. *"I have*

schools in my constituency that have more than 40 nationalities, many who cannot speak English. The teachers are absolutely stretched. There is no provision for the teaching of English, for example."

He said there were a number of ideas in the speech, which he described as "*a powerful one*" which must be taken seriously.

Mr. Rabbitte said there were no plans for the two parties to do a joint proposal on immigration before the election, but said it was something the two leaders had broadly discussed in the past.

LABOUR AND FINE GAEL

If Fine Gael fail to gain a foothold in Government at the coming General Election, it could be 2012 before the opportunity rises again. If the Labour Party fails to gain a place in Government on this occasion, considering the 'huggermugger' relationship with Fine Gael, surely it would be in the interests of both parties to seriously consider forming a single Social Democratic party?

"Labour are primed to be the engine of electoral change. That prospect seemed to make them nervous rather than happy." (Irish Examiner, 12.2.2007).

The Standard Tax rate is now on its way down from 20% to 18%; the top rate will be down from 41% to 38% if McDowell and the P.D.s have their way—and we have two more pre-Election Ard Fheisanna. Who said politics isn't exciting!

And don't forget about the 15 Euro coin Bertie has introduced in co-operation with the Croatian Central Bank!

What a Summer lies ahead—hope there's no riots!

FORMER Labour spin doctor Fergus Finlay was back, quite literally centre stage, at the party conference. The former chief adviser to Dick Spring and Pat Rabbitte left the party backroom two years ago to become chief executive of Barnardos.

At the front of the stage on Saturday night, Finlay acted as director for the live TV address, letting speakers know how much time they had left and when to wrap up. (Irish Independent-12.2.2007).

The Labour Party may end up in the unique position of holding three National Conferences this year.

The party must hold a separate full Conference before the end of the year to elect a new National Executive. However, if Labour makes it into government after the election, it must convene a Special Conference to secure approval for the leader's post-election strategy.

By the way, the Polish bread was outstanding. The 'tiger' Irish have lost the ability to even bake a good loaf.

assassins of July 1944. Bielenberg replied that by virtue of being in the SS Skorzeny was a criminal; and that, if he did not torture the conspirators, he helped to round them up, *"demonstrating his Nazi zeal by the way he ripped off their badges"* (11 Jan).

Regarding Skorzeny, O'Shannon interviewed an English officer who met him after the War and asked him why the Nazis had not made allies of the Ukrainians etc. in 1941. He claims that Skorzeny replied, *"Because they are sub-human"*.

I was at a public meeting in London around 1960 at which the British attempt to return to Egypt in 1956 was debated. An MP said it was necessary to return because, when the English left the previous year, they were seen off by *"wogs jeering on the jetty"*. *"Wog"* was a normal descriptive term, in ordinary British political discourse, for a large section of humanity for at least a generation after the defeat of Nazism. And it carries much the same meaning as sub-human.

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According to the *Sunday Times* (7 Jan): "Brian Girvin, a historian, says de

Valera was well aware of the extermination of Jews by Nazis during the war but still identified with Hitler's Army" (*De Valera Helped Nazi War Criminals* by Nicola Tallant).

I don't see how De Valera could have been *"well aware"*, but I don't suppose an extravagant revisionist needs much persuasion that he was. The Allies never made Nazi Jewish policy a war issue. Jan Karski was given the brush-off in London and Washington after he made the dangerous journey from Poland to present evidence of the Extermination Camps, gathered at great risk by the Polish underground (which was anti-Semitic to a considerable extent, but did not support extermination). And I have heard a Hungarian Jew, who became a well-known rabbi in England, say that, when they were rounded up in 1944, they knew nothing of the exterminations. The SS wanted it kept secret, and it had not even got into the Jewish grapevine. And then there was the fact that British propaganda had discredited itself thoroughly within living memory by its 1914-18 atrocity claims, which were

later admitted to have been concocted—and even boasted of. So how could anybody who heard a rumour tell if it really was a wolf this time?

As for Dev identifying with Hitler's Army, that is something I never heard of before.

*

Britain launched a European war with no serious intention of fighting it. That War was lost, as far as could be seen, by the collapse in France in 1940. People began to adjust to the situation of German victory—which is what Britain has always required people to do in the case of its own victories. In the event, Germany was defeated, but not by the states that declared war on it, and the victorious state was less acceptable to many people (who would have welcomed a British victory) than the state which it defeated.

Life is not lived but in the particularity of time and place. And decisions were reasonably taken in Europe after June 1940 on the assumption that the Battle of France had set the political framework of things to come for a considerable period.

Brendan Clifford

LABOUR continued

"The document, 'Immigration and Integration: Realities and Challenge', is to be launched today." (Irish Independent, 12.2.2007).

Two things here, Fr. O'Riordan! I cannot recall ever being asked: "*whether we [I] want immigration*". The arrogance and naivety of those who denied the electorate that prerogative has changed very dramatically indeed if in such a short time they are suddenly seeking a Ministry to "*prevent raceriots*". What's happening?

Compared to past pre-election conferences, the weekend gathering lacked Labour's customary cut and thrust.

Doubtless, this reflects the party's deep-seated desire to get into government. (Editorial, Irish Examiner, 12.2.2007).

Labour Party and Taxes

Finance Minister Brian Cowen said Labour had undergone a "*Road to Damascus*" conversion on tax rates and this won't be accepted by the voters.

"It is simply not credible that Mr Rabbite and the Labour Party will now implement a policy approach in Government that they have opposed so strongly for the past 10 years," he said. (Irish Independent, 12.2.2007)

Enterprise Minister Micheal Martin said the policy change lacked credibility. "*From our perspective, we are the party, with the Progressive Democrats, who brought low taxation into this country.*" (ibid).

Although he was in favour of lower taxes, Mr. Martin said Labour's promises, combined with its plan to create a €2.5 billion fund to help young homebuyers, could threaten State spending. "Fianna Fáil won't get into auction politics." (Irish Times, 12.2.2007).

Surely, if this is the case, Cowen and Martin will state unequivocally that there is no way Fianna Fail will have any truck with the Labour Party after the next election—the media have hounded the Labour Party leader on this issue for twelve months, is it not now appropriate in the light of the 'Helix' for the media to turn the same question on Fianna Fail?

As for "Auction Politics"—have Brian or Micheal ever heard of Jack Lynch and the The abolition of Domestic Rates and

Car Tax in 1973, the consequences of which still live with us in the scandalous price of housing. Surely the "Daddy of All" ideas ever devised in the name of "*Auction Politics*".

There is no doubt about it, the Labour leader spoiled the fun when he proposed to take the Standard Rate from 20 cents to 18 cents. But he spoiled something else too, he destroyed whatever facade existed in the perception that any real political difference exists between the major parties in Leinster House.

How many in the Labour Party electorate if given the choice of a full, comprehensive, universal health system or a two per cent reduction in the Standard Tax rate would choose the latter? The present writer has yet to see the country which can boast of a thorough Welfare State and a low tax regime!

Could the tax 'distraction' also not be an admission that the Labour Party is no more capable of taking on the vested interests in the Health service than its political counterparts?

"However, he said the key issue today is not tax, but on providing the services and infrastructure needed for a five million-strong population: 'That's where the real pressure is. The priority won't be the level of tax in my view. We will continue to reduce taxes as resources permit, but it's not going to be the big issue,' Mr Ahern said." (Irish Times, 12.02.2007).

ARE FINE GAEL A 'BEATEN DOCKET'?

It is hard to believe that Fine Gael were last elected directly into government in December, 1982, under the leadership of Garret FitzGerald, that was 25 years ago almost. They gained power by default in 1994 under the leadership of John Bruton and lasted to May, 1997.

The reaction to Enda Kenny's speech on Immigration on 23rd January 2007, provoked a response from one of the 'godfather' families of Fine Gael which makes distressful reading for those who believe the party may have a future in politics in this state:

"Had Enda confined his comments to Christianity he would have had the doubtful merit of at least being consistent with our constitution.

"But that 'Celtic' reference smacks of nationalistic bilge, with its toxic implications of racial purity and blood sacrifice, the sort of quasi-mystical nonsense championed by Patrick Pearse, Sinn Féin/IRA and the mercifully

dwindling band of xenophobic primitives who still haunt the nether regions of Fianna Fáil.

"It was very painful to resign, as I did, from the party that my family had represented in the Dáil and Seanad for over 50 years.

"After two deeply uncomfortable years of Mr Kenny's leadership I finally realised that Fine Gael had no ideas, no courage and no convictions.

"But even then it was a hard decision to make.

"Had I realised Mr Kenny believes in this kind of twaddle, it would have saved me the soul-searching.

"As I say, poor old Fine Gael, a party for which I retain a considerable affection, a party of decent people who are daily betrayed by the gaping void that is its leadership." Maurice Dockrell, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

(Irish Examiner-27.1.2007).

We print below the remarks by Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny at a special meeting of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party and Dáil candidates on 25th January 2007 at Clontarf Castle, Dublin, which occasioned this protest:

"The recent dramatic growth in the rate of immigration into Ireland is resulting in what is arguably the greatest economic and social transformation of our country since independence.

"I believe that this transformation presents Ireland with both a huge challenge and huge opportunity. Given Ireland's history of emigration, the country has a special responsibility to address the challenge of immigration.

"I believe that immigration can be excellent for Ireland's future. But the thing is we must get it right.

"We live in a country that exported our people... not by the boatload... or by the planeload... but by the generation.

"We live in a country where hundreds of thousands of families lived for the postal order that put food on the table and clothes on their backs... thanks to a father and often his sons... slaving on the building sites of London and New York and San Francisco.

"So, it's safe to say, that we live in a country where you'd have to have a very small mind, a very short memory and a very hard heart not to welcome the stranger, who is trying to make a better life, a more hopeful life for themselves and their families.

"As a Celtic and Christian people, we understand better than most the special challenges of immigration and integrating new communities. Now is time for a real national debate on these issues so that we can make the necessary changes to meet these new challenges. We have a chance to get this response right and to avoid the mistakes that were made elsewhere.

"I believe that immigration and multiculturalism can be good for Ireland but the current system is not being managed well. We need a system that is good for

continued on page 30



Immigration—Tax Cuts—Fine Gael Ireland Can Snore Away With Labour

ON THE morning the Labour Party held their pre-election Conference in Dublin, shoppers in Shandon Street in Cork learned to their dismay that the last of that old street's 13 bakeries had finally closed after 86 years. You can't stop change. This writer went to a neighbouring shop and the only bread he could get was a Polish loaf. Aye, things change all right, don't they? Though people on the Northside of Cork still eat bread!

In reading the national broadsheets, and viewing the RTE coverage on Saturday morning (10.2.2007), and the leader's address this writer came across just one single reference to Immigration. Remarkably, the coverage on that subject was exactly the same at the Progressive Democrats Conference in Wexford on 17th February 2007.

Crime, Health, Education, E- voting, Waste, and Climate Change: they were all listed and pronounced upon, even the complex theme of Happiness and Quality of Life was addressed. But no, the "I" word was not mentioned. It used be the "N.I." word. But you dare not mention the 'North' in Dublin company these days. And to be truthful : if their response to the "I" problem is anything like their spineless attitude over 30 years to the "N.I." problem, they will need more than a Ministry to "prevent race riots".

**DICK SPRING
ON IMMIGRATION**

The most important political declaration made on the weekend of the Labour Party Conference was not the leader's speech, it was the remarks made by the former leader of the Labour Party Dick Spring on RTE on the Sunday morning when he called for a debate on Immigration.

Dick Spring said there is a need for "an open debate" on immigration and accused politicians of being afraid to grapple with the issue.

On RTÉ Radio 1's *Marian Finucane* programme on Sunday, February 11, 2007, Mr 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". It came down to

"what number of people we can actually cope with", he said. "I don't know how Brendan Drumm, the HSE, is feeling about 200,000 more people to provide services for at a time when the health services are in crisis and will be for a long time to come given what is not happening."

"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."

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14 New Comen Court, North Strand,
Dublin 3, or
PO Box 339, Belfast BT12 4GQ or
PO Box 6589, London, N7 6SG, or

Labour Comment,
C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City.

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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."

"Labour has also been stuck in a policy rut and has been slow to come to terms with the changing nature of the economy and the collapse in trade union membership among private sector workers." (Irish Times, 12.2.2007).

**"MINISTRY NEEDED TO
'PREVENT RACE RIOTS'"**

"A JUNIOR ministry overseeing integration should be created to help prevent race riots in the future, a major study has found.

"And the call has received the backing of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, which commissioned the document.

"Centre director Father Tony O'Riordan said: "I think we are at a unique stage in relation to immigration in Ireland.

"We are beyond deciding whether we want immigration—it is here to stay. It is a question now of how we manage it."

"Fr O'Riordan said there were still large questions to be dealt with regarding the Government's immigration policy, which was "very focused on providing labour and people to fill job vacancies".

"A minister for state, dealing specifically with integration, would add coherency to this policy, he added.

"To allow Government policy go on in an ad-hoc way is imprudent and it is only storing up problems for the future if we don't take a co-ordinated approach now," Fr O'Riordan said.