

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Culture vs Politics

Ireland tags along behind Britain in European and foreign policy matters. It could not do otherwise because, at the official level of the state, it has lost all historical sense of itself. As we go to print it is taking part in the attempt to starve the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip into abject submission to an Israeli state that has never defined its borders. The fig leaf for this policy is that Hamas does not recognise the state of Israel and must therefore be excommunicated. If the Irish state had not lost all historical sense of itself, it would have some historical sense of the predicament of the Palestinian people in the face of ongoing conquest by the Jewish State, which was founded by British foreign policy when there were few Jews in Palestine and Britain was denying independent statehood to Ireland in defiance of a General Election mandate.

The collapse of Ireland's historical sense of itself, and therefore of the world, is entirely due to Fianna Fail. It was Fianna Fail that insisted on Ireland becoming independent. Fine Gael and Labour, having submitted to Britain's Treaty ultimatums of 1921 and 1922, settled down to domestic self-government, under the authority of the Crown, within the Empire/Commonwealth.

De Valera and his colleagues refused to settle down under the Treaty. They worked up popular anti-Treaty sentiment into a functional party which made the state independent in the 1930s and has dominated its political life ever since 1932.

But political independence was not consolidated in the intellectual sphere—in the Universities and in the 'Third Estate'—and those spheres now operate in antagonism with a Government which is in great measure the state because of the lack of a viable Opposition party.

Fianna Fail remains dominant as the superior managerial party. But it was not as a managerial party that it became dominant. Its rise to dominance came about through a political purpose that went far beyond the ordinary purposes of a political party. It then consolidated its political dominance by developing managerial skills—a development which is evident in the autobiography of Todd Andrews: Liam Lynch's die-hard, 'extremist', adjutant, who was hunted out on the bogs and the hills in 1923, and subsequently created Bord na Mona without any show of repentance for his earlier activities.

*continued on page 2*

## Jihad. Crusade. Colonisation

*Does Islam Encourage Terrorism? Yes*

That was a screaming headline in the *Irish Times* on 13th August, over an article by Susan Philips. She is described as "a political analyst" but her political analysis excludes politics:

"Factors such as the existence of Israel and the occupation of Iraq by western armies may provide a focus for Islamists. But none of these so-called provocations existed in the 7th century when Islam spread like wildfire, mainly by the sword. Many consider Islam to contain peaceful approaches, but within its literature, significant space exists to nurture a vanguard force, which is religiously driven and committed to world domination through a process of jihad. Unless Islam is understood in such terms and is held in check by world opinion, the power of western institutions or moderate Islamic elites, it will continue unchecked in its quest to establish global caliphate." (The *No* case in this *Irish Times* is presented by Syyed Siraj H Zaidi. Though technically in the form of presenting the cases for and against the proposition, the *Yes* appears as part of the headline in the way the page is laid out.)

Philips is repeating the battle cry of the "war of civilisations" proclaimed by the

*continued on page 4*

## Iran:

Part Two

## Ethnicity And Nationalism

I had assumed before going there, on no actual evidence, that Iran, unlike Iraq, was a fairly homogeneous country. Wrong again. Less than 50% of the population of about 65 million are Persians. There are over 25 million Azeris who speak Turkish. About 2 million Turkmen, and the rest are made up of Arabs, Kurds, Armenians and 'others'.

I remarked to a Turkish Turk that his

language had a very Slavic sound to it. He agreed and said that it was because of the Turkish extensions into Eastern Europe. He added that if I wanted to hear pure Turkish spoken I would have to go East of Turkey and that there were over 200 million Turkish speakers in the world including the 70 million in Turkey itself. Turkish was spoken in most of the Southern Republics of the Soviet Union, but also in

parts of Iran, Pakistan, India and China.

Turkmenistan is a vast country with only 5 million people plus the 2 million within Iran. It was only here that I came across an obvious presence of Iranian soldiers because of an American presence in Turkmenistan. The Turkman people are a strange mixture. The majority were of Cossack appearance with the men wearing fur hats, tunics, baggy trousers and long evil-looking knives in their belts. The women wore clothes made in the most brilliant colours.

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Garret FitzGerald is the anti-type of Todd Andrews—the pampered son of a member of the Treatyite elite who declared himself a Commonwealth man sixty years ago when Fine Gael declared itself to be Republican for the purpose of scrambling back to office in alliance with a recently retired Chief of Staff of the IRA. But in recent years it is only FitzGerald, amongst the leading politicians and academics, who has said anything thoughtful in support of political independence.

This apparent absurdity is actually in accordance with the present nature of the state. Fianna Fail, insofar as its leadership is concerned, is only a managerial party. It does not exist in the sphere of ideology—in academia and journalism. If anything thoughtful is to be said in support of the independence of the state, it must be said by somebody else.

As to the independence of the state, the essential thing is that it is an accomplished fact. It cannot be undone. It cannot return to the British womb and start again. It cannot even return to 1931 and take up the thread of Treatyite development. Fianna Fail made it independent, and its only choice is between being spirited or craven. At the moment it is pretty craven.

It is not normal, and in the long run it is not functional, that the government dimensions of the state should exist in continuous

antagonism with the academic and journalistic dimensions.

In functional states the harmonious functioning of these different dimensions is achieved by patronage. In a well-conducted state the patronage is so discreetly operated that it is scarcely noticed. But there is always patronage. And academic freedom operates within practical parameters set by patronage.

Effective state patronage of the academic system by discreet means requires that the major political forces have a strong presence within academia. The problem in Ireland is that the dominant political force appears to have scarcely any presence within academia.

The outcome is not that there is no patronage of academia, but that there is British patronage. Thirty years ago the founder of the Irish Sovereignty Movement, Raymond Crotty, called upon the British ruling class to take Irish intellectual life in hand once more. It has done so.

Forget about Dublin, Cork and Galway. Forget even about Trinity. Look to Oxford and Cambridge, to Manchester, and even to Liverpool—which in the form of Professor Marianne Elliott revealed a few years ago that there was never such a thing as a British Penal Law system against Catholicism in Ireland, but that on the contrary the 18th century was a century of

opportunity for Catholics in Ireland.

As an imperial entity with plenty to feel bad about, Britain has had plentiful recourse to historical myth. But there is no revisionism of sacred myth in the light of historical fact, and there is no interference with academic freedom to prevent it. About ten years ago John Charmley used his academic freedom to engage in some revision of the Churchill myth. He wasn't sacked. The *Times* even gave him some space to set out his criticism. But the thing was a nine-days-wonder, and was soon lost amidst the mass of academic orthodoxy supportive of the ideology of the state.

Broadcasting is likewise controlled discreetly in Britain within parameters set by the political requirements of the state. But occasionally things get slightly out of hand.

The BBC was designed to function within the party-politics of the state. That is the meaning of the official requirement that it is 'impartial'. It is not independent. But its position in Northern Ireland is anomalous, because the region is outside the party-politics of the state, and BBC, NI is liable to conceive illusions of independence. About twenty years ago its regional Director commissioned interviews with Martin McGuinness and Gregory Campbell. McGuinness was still imagined to be an outrageous revolutionary in those times. Mrs. Thatcher questioned the propriety of broadcasting the interview. The Director General supported the regional Director. The Government put its foot down. Vincent Hanna (who came of a Belfast middle class nationalist family) was then in the position that Jeremy Paxman holds now. He led a strike against Government interference, and asserted the independence of the BBC, which he described as a kind of independent guild of broadcasters. A flimsy semblance of compromise was arranged to obscure the climb-down of the BBC. The Director General resigned soon after, and Vincent Hanna was a spent force. Paxman sometimes asserts that the BBC functions independently of Government, but he knows from the Hanna episode that he must never put it to the test.

Four years ago BBC radio got into conflict with the Government over an accurate report by Andrew Gilligan of a discussion with Dr. David Kelly about the "dodgy dossier" justifying the invasion of Iraq. Tony Blair demanded Gilligan's head and got it, and other heads along with it.

A Commission to inquire into the matter found in favour of the Government—as British Commissioners always do. ■

In Iran they work the rice fields near the shores of the Caspian Sea. But mostly they are semi-nomadic, driving herds of sheep from one pasture land to the next, accompanied by donkeys and some camels. There is an effort to enclose the lands and the animal drivers are often forced to move and camp along the roadsides —albeit that the roadsides can extend for several hundred metres. Though a tougher life, the nomads cling on to their old travelling ways as much as possible.

The Turkmen people live to a ripe old age. The Guinness Book of Records once decided that a man from this area was the oldest recorded person in the world at 165. But the entry was deleted when the scoundrel was found to have fibbed and added 10 years to his age and doctored the Tsarist records! 120 years is quite usual and these old people are very fit. I was introduced to one old man who hadn't a clue how old he was but reckoned he was old enough to swap his donkey for a motorbike. As I have discovered in life, the so-called backward peoples are a thousand times more individualistic, interesting and intelligent than the modern, semi-homogenised carriers of civilisation.

The Turkman area is quite racially mixed—most look Russian but many are of Mongolian appearance. Like Northern Syria there is also a good sprinkling of what appear to be Kerry men—red hair and freckles.

I didn't get the opportunity to visit the Azeri part of the country, but met many Azeris in Tehran. Several younger ones talked about wanting to live in the West. I reminded them where the airport is. There are no restrictions on movement, either internal or international, in Iran.

There are about 50,000 Jews in the country. Recently very large sums of money were offered to them to move to Israel. The Jewish leadership was publicly very irate about this. They said that they were in Persia long before many other peoples and intended to stay there and were insulted by what they called the attempted bribery. Nevertheless they regularly go on holiday to Israel. They are guaranteed a seat in the Iranian Parliament.

After the Second World War the Azeris set up an Autonomous Socialist Republic. But within Iran and not the USSR who didn't much want them anyway. This was put down by the Tehran Government in 1946. The Azeris are the businessmen of the country and look down a bit on the Persians, and find it irksome that the Persians in turn look down on them. But I found no evidence of any movement to link up with the now independent Azerbaijan across the border.

continued on page 4

## Romantic View Of Fianna Fail?

My yearly subscription comes to an end in August 2007 and I wish to renew for the coming twelve months. As a freelance journalist with broadly left republican views I really enjoy your publication. Your romantic view of Fianna Fail's alleged republicanism apart. That particular party are in my view deeply partitionist and in the pocket of multi-millionaire property developers and big business interests. They may be progressive when compared with Fine Gael, or the Thatcherite Progressive Democrats, but that's not really saying anything. I would also suggest that maybe you find room in your publication for adult learners of Irish. Maybe you could have a small page in basic pass leaving certificate standard Irish. (Reader, Co. Meath)

**NOTE: We will endeavour to restore an Irish column to the magazine: Ed.**

## China In The Irish Press

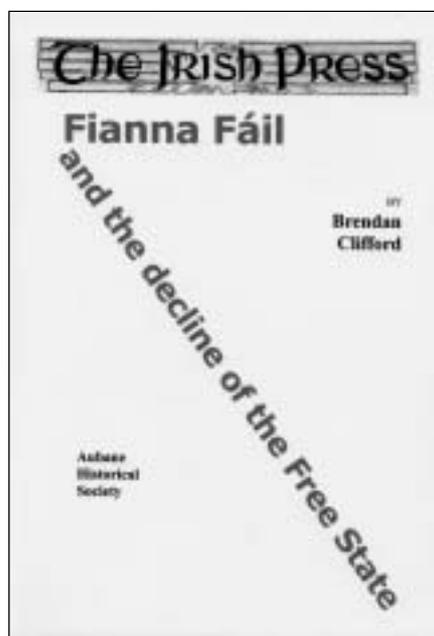
I was intrigued by the review of "Letters from a Chinese Official" which appeared in the Aubane book *The Irish Free Press*. But when I looked it up, I found it was listed as the work of an English historian called Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, a man linked to the Bloomsbury Group. It was published anonymously and among those fooled was William Jennings Bryan, anti-evolutionist and three-times Presidential candidate for the Democrats. Dickinson had earlier published *Letters from John Chinaman and Other Essays* under his own name, and another called *The Greek View of Life*.

Looked at critically, what's said is rather too Western. It fits in with a long tradition of using some outsider to say things that the author would regard as 'rational', but which would not occur to an insider. Besides, "prosperous farmers" were rare in China in the early 20th century: landlords were much closer to the ordinary population than they were in Ireland but they were just as much parasitic. They wasted the rural surplus on a genteel life-style and had no interest in agricultural improvements.

If you want a typical educated Chinese view in pre-Communist days, take a look at the work of Chiang Yee. He wrote a series of books entitled *The Silent Traveller in.....*: I've read only the one for London but there are many, including one of Dublin. The comments are interesting but distinctly shallow and lacking in any wider social vision.

Fascinatingly, Chiang Yee's *The Silent Traveller in London* includes the tale of 'Mr Blockhead', at the end of his chapter 'On Men'. It's the same Chinese legend that Mao used in his famous essay *The Foolish Old Man Who Removed The Mountain*. Chiang Yee was well-educated and became a professor, but just could not organise his thoughts in a way that is fairly routine in the West. That needed the injection of Marxism for it to happen in China.

Gwydion M. Williams



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There was a large scale transfer of Armenians to the USSR, but many still remain. I need to know more about Armenians as I've come across them in large numbers in Iran, Syria and Palestine where they seem to have a lot of property and a very vibrant church. After the break-up of the USSR they attacked Azerbaijan. But this was not a religious dispute as Christian Georgia supported the Azeris, while Iran, Russia and America supported Armenia.

There are many Arabs, including Sunni Arabs in the oil-rich area bordering Iraq. Their behaviour, along with that of the Azeris further up the border over the last thirty years, brought home to me again the extent that nationalism has taken hold in the larger countries of the Middle East—in spite of the artificial borders constructed by the imperialist countries in many places there.

The Iran-Iraq War was really two wars. Throughout the eight years of these wars the Shias formed the backbone of the Iraqi army on the border. And the Arabs on the Iranian side were loyal to Iran.

In 1980 Iraq, with Western urging and backing, launched an attack on the oil rich Iranian border area. They took advantage of what they and the British and Americans assumed was chaos following the setting up of the Iranian Islamic Republic. The chaos was far more apparent than real. By 1982 the Iraqis had been driven back across the border and the war could have ended at that point.

But the Iranians were full of confidence, and decided to capture the holy cities of Karbala and Najev which, in effect, meant capturing most of the Southern, Shia, part of Iraq. They were in turn driven back to their borders after about three years. What followed for the rest of the eight year war was mostly devastating bombing of Iranian cities.

I stayed in Abadan and Khormanshahr on the border—the latter is about 30 km. South of Basra. The older parts of both cities are functioning and several villages are being rebuilt to incredibly high standards. But there are miles of former urban areas which are almost completely flattened. I could make out the routes of former streets and house foundations, with the odd bit of wall sticking up. The closest thing I've seen like it were news reels of Hiroshima after the dropping of the atom bomb.

Here the Tigris forms the border, and the harbour area of Khormanshahr is still full of bombed wharves and cranes and the rivers are littered with rusting cargo ships. Abadan airport was once a major international hub. Now it is a minor regional airport.

Iran takes an anti-occupation line on Iraq and acts accordingly. But you'd be

hard put to find an Iranian who loses any sleep over the sufferings of any Iraqis—Sunni or Shia.

There are repeated attempts by the Americans to control and direct disaffected groups in Iran. These efforts come to virtually nothing. The substantial danger to Iran is within the clerical leadership and it is the British who are working in that area, as explained in Part One of this series.

The most serious armed group fighting the Iranian Government is the MKO (Mojahedin-e Kkalk). These arose from the Islamic Mojahedin which was one of the main groups fighting the Shah and was then suppressed by the Islamic Republic. They reorganised later in Iraq. The Americans used them for a while against Iran but they soon turned on the Americans and joined the Iraqi insurgency.

In Iran they are still conducting attacks on their own behalf against the Government. But they do not have the strength or the support to conduct a guerilla campaign and mostly confine themselves to assassinating political leaders and internal security personnel. While I was there they blew up a leading cleric in Aswad, and a few years ago set off a bomb in the Presidential Palace, killing the President.

For a long time there was a large Afghan refugee population in Iran. The Iranian Government offered a deal where for every family that returned to Afghanistan, one family member would be given a permanent work permit to stay in Iran and so be able to support his family. This has been hugely successful and there are very few Afghani refugees remaining.

One thing that makes Iranians of all shades proud of being Iranians is the overall sense of community. They are an honest people who would rarely, if ever, demean themselves by cheating or thieving. Their welcome for outsiders is genuine and almost extravagant. And given the attraction of the holy city of Mhashad for millions of foreign pilgrims, and of the pretty cities like Isfahan for people from all over the world, there are a great number of outsiders to contend with. In this the Iranians are like the Syrians and the Palestinians (apart from Bethlehem).

They are proud to contrast themselves to what they consider to be the degenerate Muslim countries like Egypt or Morocco where much of the population demean themselves trying to shake down foreigners and steal from each other. Saudi Arabia is not considered degenerate because the people by and large are not degenerate—only the ruling elite. I will deal with the religious dimension in part 3 of this series.

**Conor Lynch**

## JIHAD... continued

United States a few years ago—and then denied for the purpose of prosecuting that war more effectively. The purpose of denial was to bring "moderate Islamic elites" onside for the war on Islam. But, if Islam is inherently impelled by the sacred texts of the religion, to strive for global dominance, using the means by which it established itself as a power in the world 13 centuries ago, then the "*moderate Islamic elites*" are not Islamic at all. And doesn't everybody know that they are the kept men of the US and the EU, corrupt themselves and keeping down their people by force, and doing an occasional bit of torture for the West.

The expansion of Islam by force was stopped on the borders of France over a thousand years ago. Islam settled down in Spain where it existed peacefully for many centuries, developing a highly civilised way of life, until it was conquered by a Crusade which reduced the region to a kind of Christian barbarism for centuries, with Inquisitions and *autos da fe*.

A later conflict, in the east of Europe, between the Ottoman Empire and the Hapsburg Empire, ended with a Christian victory at Vienna over three centuries ago.

The history of the world since then has been dominated by Christian globalism, in which the sword has played the dominant part, and the Ottoman state was in decline.

In 1914 Britain (with Irish Home Rule support) declared war on the Ottoman Empire for the purpose of taking over Arabia and making it part of the British Empire, connecting India with Egypt. It thought in the first instance that it could take over the Middle East by means of a simple Imperial conquest. It had been describing the Ottoman Empire as "*the sick man of Europe*" and expected it to crumble at a touch from the British Army. When Johnny Turk gave the Imperial forces a hard time for a year, Britain decided it needed allies in the region.

In November 1914 it had rejected an offer of Alliance from an Arab nationalist movement in Basra, not wanting to prejudice its rights as military conqueror. Then in 1916 it procured a declaration of Jihad against the Turks by the Governor of Mecca, signing an agreement to recognise an Arab state in the Middle East in the event of the Turks being defeated. But, when the Turks were finally defeated in 1918 (an event now usually referred to as a "*collapse*"), Britain used its power (supported by France, to which it allocated the northern part of the region) to prevent the establishment of the Arab State. It Balkanised the Middle East into several subordinate states—which it called 'national' states—suitable for manipulation. And it allocated Palestine to be the territory of a Jewish state even though its population was 90% Arab.

None of those spurious national states was Islamic in the sense in which Crusaders like Susan Philips (and David Quinn) use the word. The 'Islamist' development occurred separately through the Wahhabi revival which consolidated itself in what is now Saudi Arabia. Britain in the 1920s

protected its puppet states from the Wahhabi expansion northwards (mowing the Wahhabis down in the desert with machine guns), and then formed a close alliance with Wahhabi fundamentalism in order to secure its position in the region—as the US did a short time later.

Britain governed India for centuries, and in the late 19th century it recruited Irishmen from the Christian Brothers Schools to take part in its Indian administration. Two of them wrote books about it, which our present-day admirers of the British Empire prefer to ignore.

One of them was Sir Michael O'Dwyer from Tipperary, who was the civil Governor responsible for the Amritsar massacre after World War I. He justified the massacre in his Memoirs, and urged the British Government to put down charlatans like Gandhi with a strong hand.

The other was Charles James O'Donnell, who joined the Indian administration with the intention of improving the world. He resigned his position in the early 1900s on that grounds that, under Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty, England began to lay the basis for ruling by the manipulation of religious conflict, setting Muslim against Hindu. When joining the Empire he had understood its purpose to be the fostering of a civil society stratum drawn from all religious sources to be an Indian governing class. Two generations later, Britain presided over the Partition of India in the course of which a million people died while the British self-righteously washed their hands of responsibility for the outcome of centuries of British government.

At the same time it washed its hands of responsibility for the product of its Palestine policy. It had built up a big Jewish population

in Palestine, though it was still far short of being a majority (while of course not opening its own borders to Jews).

The Jewish minority turned on its patron. It made a declaration of independence and launched a terrorist campaign in support of it. In the face of that campaign Britain gave up responsibility for the Zionist project that it had launched in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration. It handed over the project to the United Nations, but used its Veto to prevent it becoming the business of the Security Council—where it would still have responsibility for it. It became the business of the General Assembly, which had no executive powers. There were few states in the UN then. A few European states, the white Colonies, and the USA and the USSR, with their client states, acting as the world community, authorised the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. It set out borders for that state, which it had no means of enforcing. The Jewish colony quickly spread beyond those borders set by the UN, and hardly anyone now remembers what they were. Further Jewish colonisation of the residue of Palestine continues down to the present day under effective UN authority in the shape of the US veto.

Susan Philips had a go at Hamas (for winning an election and not letting itself be swindled out of the result by Fatah, which is now armed with US/UK weapons and Intelligence) in the *Irish Times* on 22nd August. On the same day one of the Jewish terrorists who made war on Britain in 1945-7 had an article published in the *Financial Times* in which, although he is now a Harvard Professor, Amitai Etzioni disdained the great humbug of our time by presenting himself as a successful Jewish terrorist. (See: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bb894a8c-5047-11dc-a6b0-0000779fd2ac.html> .)

Ireland is now fully implicated in the humbug as an active member of the EU. It is doing its best to make life miserable for Palestinians in Gaza in the hope of inducing them to sell their souls. Is there any good reason why this should not be called Souperism?

Europe atones for making a sacrifice of the Jews by making the Palestine Arabs a sacrifice to the Jews. And Ireland with its *ersatz* Europeanism is doing its bit.

Review:

## "Eyal Weizman: *Israel's oppressive architecture of occupation*

The occupied West Bank, 1999. A group of Israeli settlers complain that their mobile phone reception cuts out on a bend in a road from Jerusalem to their settlements.

The mobile phone company Orange agrees to put up an antenna on a hill overlooking the bend.

The hill happens to be owned by Palestinian farmers, but since mobile phone reception is a "security issue", the mast construction can go ahead without the farmers' permission.

Other companies agree to supply electricity and water to the construction site on the hill.

In May 2001 an Israeli security guard moves on to the site and connects his cabin to the water and electricity mains. Then his wife and children move in with him.

In March 2002 five more families join him to create the settler outpost of Migron. The Israeli ministry for construction and housing builds a nursery, while donations from abroad build a synagogue.

By mid-2006 Migron is a fully fledged illegal settlement comprising 60 trailers on a hilltop around the antenna, overlooking the Palestinian lands below.

This blow-by-blow account of just one example of the ongoing Israeli colonisation of Palestine appears in the opening pages of a fascinating new book by Eyal Weizman, the dissident Israeli architect.

Called *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, it is an extraordinarily detailed account of exactly how the occupation works in practice, focusing on the physical organisation of space and the political dynamics that shape it.

The 300 page book is packed with fascinating diagrams and photographs that shed a revealing light on almost every aspect of the occupation."

*Socialist Worker* 2065, 25 August 2007  
([www.socialistworker.co.uk](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk))

This review can be read in full at: <<http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=12838>>

*Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* by Eyal Weizman is published by Verso and available from Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop, for £19.99. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to » [www.bookmarks.uk.com](http://www.bookmarks.uk.com)

### United Nations GAZA Situation Report for 15-23 August

#### SUMMARY POINTS

1. In the last 72 hours, 12 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in the Gaza Strip, including two children.
2. Fuel supplies resumed on 22 August to the Gaza Power Station for the first time since 15 August. However, power cuts are still expected due to a continuing lack of capacity.
3. Continuing strikes by the Gaza city municipality have led to thousands of tons of solid waste piling up on street corners, posing public health concerns to those living in surrounding areas.
4. Karni, Gaza's principal crossing point, remains closed. Basic humanitarian supplies from the private sector and humanitarian agencies are entering through Sufa and Kerem Shalom.
5. All Gazan exports have been blocked since mid-June. Raw materials essential for the Gaza businesses and economy have not been allowed to enter Gaza, preventing production of basic supplies. For example, more than 350,000 UNRWA textbooks

cannot be printed because Gaza printing shops lack the requisite raw materials.

6. Paltrade reports that as of 14 August, the direct and indirect potential losses from the closures have reached an estimated at \$8 million for the furniture sector, \$15 million for garments and textiles and \$3 million for processed food. The agriculture sector has estimated export losses at \$16 million. 85% of manufacturing businesses have now temporarily shut down, with over 35,000 workers laid off. An additional 35,000 workers have been laid from other sectors including construction, trade and the service sector.

For more information please contact Judith Harel, OCHA, 054 66 00 528 [harel@un.org](mailto:harel@un.org)

Link to the latest OCHA report : [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/Gaza\\_Aug23.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/Gaza_Aug23.pdf)

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## Harris In The Seanad

In appointing Eoghan Harris to the Seanad Bertie Ahern has shown a sense of humour, or rather a sense of devilment, contempt for the Seanad and a concern for the afflicted.

The devilment will be in seeing a court jester supporting Fianna Fail in the Seanad. As Lyndon Johnson explained why he gave a job to J. Edgar Hoover—it was better to have him pissing out of the tent rather than have him pissing into it. Harris will play the same role.

FF once abolished the Seanad and it was a good day's work. Second chambers are fifth wheels that can only obstruct the democratic process. They are held in contempt by democrats. This Seanad may be more a centre of entertainment than anything else and take some attention away from the Dail for no good purpose. But Harris may have to debate rather than declaim and that might make him more responsible but don't hold your breath.

Harris is afflicted with a severe dose of self-loathing. He is not alone; it pervades the media and academia, and it's just that he personifies and expresses it more bluntly and crudely. By comparison people like Myers and Bruce Arnold have just become or rather remained true Brits. Harris is more complex. Cork seems to have a habit of producing pristine examples of Irish types. What goes with this self-loathing is the most extraordinary false memory and when reading it one does not know whether to laugh or cry. Laugh at the nonsense or cry that any person needs to write such nonsense and seems to have a need to believe it.

Harris is a product of West Cork/Cork city Republicanism and much as he is detested there now it is also necessary for Republicans there to figure out how such as Harris was ever produced from their midst. Obviously there are personal factors and there is no knowing the full extent of these in Harris's case no more than in any one else's case. But there is a political context for all political behaviour and that is all we can hope to cope with . . .

His original hero, or icon, was Tom Barry and he was clearly shaped by the spell of Barry and the whole Barry *persona*. One of the most amazing false memory creations was when Harris claimed that, after reading Peter Hart's book on Kilmichael, he realised that Barry had always really agreed with Hart when he recalled his conversations with Barry about 40 years earlier! It's akin to Hart's infamous interviewing of dead Kilmichael survivors.

Barry was a military genius who organised very successful ambushes and who was also able to organise and win a major battle of manoeuvre such as Crossbarry, overcoming overwhelming odds. The latter was the largest field battle in Britain or Ireland for centuries.

But Barry was not a political animal. An

unfortunate fact is that his equivalent in the city, Sean O'Hegarty, did not enter mainstream politics after the war. Neither did Florrie O'Donoghue. All this left a great vacuum in the evolution of Cork Republicanism and one result was that Cork Republicanism became dogmatic, ideological and detached from mainstream realities. Harris comes from that tradition.

In North Cork the military leader there, Moylan, helped develop and evolve a lasting comprehensive political orientation for his Brigade area and a similar vacuum was avoided for Republicanism. This evolution was argued out over years in houses, farms and cross-roads but of which there is now no record left.

I recall first encountering Harris over forty years ago as the doyen of the UCC student debating Society, the Philosoph, dressed in FCA uniform. This was to give the impression to gullible undergraduate that this was really an IRA uniform to fit the rhetoric and demagoguery that spouted forth. More than one student was convinced he was the Chief of Staff and Harris did not disabuse them of such notions. He was never a member and his contribution to Irish military development was to try to get the FCA to have commands in Irish. The IRA never indulged in such levity. It could lead to a lot of friendly fire.

The only regular target available for him were the little old dears selling poppies every year—genuine remnants of WWI and not the professional, politically motivated Poppy beggars of today.

The harassing (Harrising?) of them by young Republicans seemed to take on the significance of Kilmichael or Crossbarry for him and he exulted in it. I found his performances on this disgusting, his justifications at the Philosoph intellectually insulting as well as feeling shock and disbelief that this seemed to be the best that UCC could produce. Where Finbarr taught did not seem to have Munster learning much, to misquote its motto.

I had assumed the war of independence was over (Harris was still fighting it), we had won it and it was time for other things like socialism, maybe communism, Maoism or some new political experiment but not the same old story recycling the obvious. Harris was living in a time warp. Time had stood still for him and his political metier. He was politically paralysed at birth by this and was forever afterwards desperately and frantically trying to catch up with the world.

Republicanism was then at its lowest ebb for decades. If Harris had any positive contribution to make to its evolution it was the time to do it. Instead he was just a sucker for the 'Stickie' development which was based on lies, scheming and fantasies about Irish history and politics. He had no inbuilt critical faculties to cope with this and became one of its main propagandists.

Had Harris actually joined the IRA in Cork in the late 60s, instead of just fantasising about it, he may have experienced some serious politics, for development of a kind did take place. As well as learning one end of a gun from the other, many of its members took part in creating the Cork Housing Action Committee. But Harris was above getting involved in things that that. The Cork IRA also functioned as a kind of Citizen Army—or to be more precise—Mickey Mullin's private army in the ITGWU's battles with the newly arrived multi-nationals. Then the Cork IRA took itself off to Derry in August 1969 and stayed there.

It all went really sour for Harris when the Provos proved to be the substantial republicans in the crucible of the North and when Moscow, the spiritual and physical home of the Stickies, collapsed. I can fully understand why the consequences of these developments involves so much self-loathing for him. Such disastrous misjudgements are not easy to accept at an individual level.

His consolation is to be a bit like Plekanov's fly on the mudguard of the wheel of history imagining he is the cause of all the dust being raised around him. He promotes a Zelig-like *persona* and will no doubt now be telling us that he is responsible for all Bertie Ahern's success. Laugh or cry, take your pick, but there is no need to take any of it seriously. The fact is that he is being rescued by FF and is back where he should have begun nearly fifty years ago.

In his *Sindo* piece immediately after the appointment, Harris concentrated on how he would sort out Northern Ireland and his new analysis is that Sinn Fein is the now the "centre of social democracy" there (4.8.2007). I am sure it is news to every single person who voted who for SF in the North that they voted for social democracy. Has anyone anywhere in the world voted recently for social democracy? If anyone in the North did so they may have voted for the actual Social Democratic party there—the Party that lost comprehensively. But Harris knows better. It is unbelievable that anyone should seriously think that the electorates in the North voted for anything other than a nationalist or unionist party of some variety.

The only interesting issue is what type of nationalist voted for Sinn Fein and what is their current base. The Northern nationalists have two fundamental choices now and historically—Republican nationalism or Hibernian nationalism. That is a choice between separation from the UK or a nationalism that is pro-British and satisfied with the Union. The question is—which is Sinn Fein at the moment? All else is nonsense and a red herring and Harris as usual personifies the nonsense. The real world remains a parallel world for him

Ahern may not succeed in making him learn even the most basic bits of common sense despite his best efforts to help him.

Jack Lane

# Shorts

from  
the *Long Fellow*

## LABOUR DEBATE

Brendan Howlin has made a thoughtful contribution to the debate on the future of Labour (<http://www.labour.ie/press/listing/1184940932560782.html>). Using some of the inelegant marketing terminology of Pat Rabbitte, Howlin hints that its electoral pact with Fine Gael has undermined the Labour "brand". Although Labour "flatlined" in the last election, it was in circumstances that were more favourable than in 2002.

Howlin admits that the Labour Party's failure in the last 10 years to engage proactively in government formation allowed the Progressive Democrats undue influence.

Another point that Howlin makes is that Labour and the left in general is perceived as being negative in relation to the Celtic Tiger. This negative view doesn't accord with people's experience of life.

If the left is to make progress it will have to understand the Celtic Tiger.

## THE CELTIC TIGER

The three principal determinants of the Celtic Tiger are: 1) social partnership 2) EU transfers (the CAP and structural funds in the 1980s and 1990s) and 3) low corporation tax attracting American capital.

The last of these three determinants—the low corporation tax rate—has become the most important. Indeed the success of this policy turns left wing orthodoxy on its head. The Yankee imperialists have not been screwing us; we have been screwing them. The Long Fellow read recently that Microsoft paid the equivalent of 300 million dollars in taxes to the Irish State. In the same year it paid 17 million dollars to the US. This is not because the Irish State has lower taxes but the opposite. Our low tax rates have encouraged such corporations to transfer profits earned in the US to Ireland.

Accountants transfer the revenues of Research and Development expenditure to Ireland even though most of the costs were incurred in the US. It is particularly easy for IT and pharmaceutical companies to do this because a high proportion of their total expenditure is in R & D. And it is no accident that these are precisely the type of Multinational industries that are located in Ireland.

In Marxist terms a portion of the surplus value which was created in the USA has been handed over to the Irish State. It is difficult to see how the left can do anything except support this policy. How long this situation will last is another question.

## LOW TAX STRATEGY?

But while a low corporate tax strategy has contributed to our current prosperity, it does not follow that low taxes in general have had anything to do with it. Low income taxes and low capital gains taxes have meant that the loot, which has been extracted from abroad, is unevenly distributed in this country.

Probably the most iniquitous feature of the Celtic Tiger has been the dramatic increase in property prices, which has been fuelled by cheap credit and low taxes. The working class has not benefited from this. About five years ago this magazine calculated that in a housing development in Lucan €40,000 per each housing unit went into the hands of the land speculators. This €40,000 per housing unit was as a consequence of the Council rezoning from agricultural to residential. This does not include the amount that went to the builder or even the developer. It relates purely to the administrative decision of the Council. At least 20% of the mortgage payments paid by householders are, in effect, to keep land speculators in the manner in which they are accustomed.

The amazing thing about this country is that there has not been more corruption with such a system. The solution is not the setting up of tribunals but the full implementation of the Kenny Report, which advocated a 100% tax on all such speculative gains.

## FIANNA FAIL

If the Labour Party is to make any progress, it will have to come to a more realistic understanding of the most successful political party in the state. Fianna Fail is not a corrupt party and neither is the state a corrupt state. The benefits of the Celtic Tiger have not been confined to an elite. The moralistic denunciations of Fianna Fail have not benefited the working class. The main beneficiary has been the legal profession through the hundreds of millions spent on the Tribunals. Such denunciations have been an excuse by the left to avoid thinking about politics.

Fianna Fail is a genuine all class alliance. It is not an ideological free market political party. The working class has not done badly in the last 20 years. Even before the Celtic Tiger took off, welfare provision was increased at an annual rate above the level of inflation. Pension increases have also been very generous.

A weak point has been in health. The Progressive Democrats were in danger of exposing the contradictions within Fianna Fail by pushing its free market agenda and therefore alienating the working class element of the Fianna Fail class alliance. There is no doubt that the free market is completely inappropriate in the area of health, where the suppliers (i.e. the doctors) determine the demand. The Fianna Fail

answer has been to throw money at the problem. The queues have reduced dramatically but at enormous cost through the national treatment purchase scheme, which involves the state buying from the private sector.

Labour is doomed to irrelevancy unless it bases itself on the working class. It must show that it is ruthless in pursuing the interests of that class and ignore the bleating of the media, most especially *The Irish Times*, which has a different agenda.

## THE IRISH TIMES OPPOSITION

It is difficult to understand what is happening within *The Irish Times*. If there has been a post mortem following its disastrous election campaign it has not been conducted in public. About 3 months before the General Election the Long Fellow had the unaccustomed pleasure of discussing Fianna Fail's electoral prospects with a Government Minister. The latter was quite optimistic about his party's prospects. He said that since October 2006 and *Bertigate* the opinion polls had indicated that the Irish people felt that the media was the problem. As the election drew near wavering voters would gravitate towards Fianna Fail because of fears of Government instability. And that is what happened.

The problem with the media is that it is a thing in itself, which is impervious to democratic control. When it decides something it acts with one voice. The Long Fellow believes that the source of the unity is *The Irish Times*.

And following his election victory Aherne showed his contempt for *The Irish Times* by appointing Eoghan Harris as senator. The latter's denunciation of the media on the *Late Late Show* just before the election needed to be encouraged in order to break the media consensus. But on the other hand his revisionist views ruled him out of a position on the RTE Authority which he had been looking for. A seat in the Senate was the ideal compromise from Aherne's point of view.

Harris has been open about his mental health problems and his writing on recent history owes more to political expediency than factual accuracy. But the Long Fellow does not accept that he is a crackpot. In the last 20 years he has pursued a coherent anti-national agenda. His alliances with John Bruton, David Trimble etc have been consistent with this political orientation. And he has gathered around him a coterie of journalists in the largest selling Sunday newspaper, which shares his views.

In Northern Ireland the Taigs beat the Prods. But who won the war? Within the Northern Catholic community there has always been a division between Hibernianism and Republicanism. The Hibernians were happy to settle down within the Empire as long as they were treated decently. Harris's suggestion that

Sinn Fein embrace social democracy is a euphemism for Hibernianism.

Ahern is a brilliant tactician but it is unclear whether he has a long-term strategy. It is by no means certain that Fianna Fail will be able to tame Harris.

#### THE IRISH TIMES REFUGEE

The Long Fellow has seen no explanation for the transfer of Marc Coleman from *The Irish Times* to the *Sunday Independent*. As Economics Editor, Coleman was one of the most prolific writers in the business pages and the Long Fellow thought that this journalist's barely concealed contempt for Fianna Fail would ensure a glittering career at the daily newspaper.

But in retrospect, Coleman showed a worrying capacity for independent (pun definitely not intended) thinking. The Long Fellow remembers one article by Coleman suggesting that the left should oppose Benchmarking because V.I. Lenin was in favour of a cheap, efficient state. This is not wrong. Lenin believed that high salaries in the public sector had the effect of making the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy identify with the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois state apparatus should be smashed and replaced with a state apparatus consisting of employees with salaries equal to the average worker. Perhaps Coleman was playacting, but who knows where such thoughts might lead?

And then, in one of his first articles in the *Sunday Independent*, he opposed Ireland rejoining the Commonwealth. It appears Coleman is an Anglophile, but not of the kind approved by *The Irish Times* as the following extract demonstrates:

"Rather than being a dyed-in-the-wool Shinner, I'm a Jacobite (we haven't gone away you know). My problem starts not with Britain, but with the nature of its monarchy. Being the central binding force of the Commonwealth, that same monarchy and what it stands for is crucial. The principle on which the current British monarchy is founded—the Act of Settlement—should be unacceptable to any modern pluralist democracy.

"The 1704 act bars any Catholic from ascending to the throne of England and bars any British monarch from marrying a Catholic.

"You can imagine the furore if Bunreacht na hEireann barred Protestants from becoming President of Ireland. We are rightly proud of the fact that one of the first presidents of Ireland, Douglas Hyde, was a Protestant....

"If Ireland is to rejoin the Commonwealth, then that organisation must be led by a monarch whose selection is based on the law of hereditary succession, and not religious bigotry. But perhaps the most problematic issue for Ireland joining the Commonwealth is a statue that still stands outside the Houses of Parliament: the statue of Oliver

Cromwell.

"As any objective historian agrees Cromwell engaged in the systematic depopulation of Ireland, wiping out over one-fifth of the native population.

"Not content with that he sent letters to parliament rejoicing in the slaughter of what he called the 'barbarous wretches'.

"His confiscation of land from the native Irish laid conditions for a sequence of famines from which this country is only beginning to recover.

"For some this is ancient history. Sorry, but no matter how long ago it occurred, genocide must never be forgotten or forgiven. The deeds of Hitler must always be remembered, lest they are repeated. Likewise, those of Cromwell. Cromwell was a racist and a mass murderer who plunged England into its darkest period of intolerance and bigotry (*Sunday Independent*, 29.7.07).

Those are sentiments that would never appear in *The Irish Times*. Coleman is a Jacobite but that paper is irredeemably Cromwellian.

## Sacco and Vanzetti

Last month was the 80th anniversary of the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian anarchists who were convicted of murder. The executions in the USA were greeted with outrage throughout the world. To commemorate this event we reproduce an editorial by P. Vaillant-Couturier, which appeared on the front page of the French Communist party newspaper *l'Humanité* on 23rd of August 1927.

## Electrocuted !

The Proletariat will avenge them !  
Declaration of war

The proletariat had done everything to

save them....

Day of grief and anger.  
Hurrah for the dollar!

A triumph of science, of hygiene, of Fordism and the Bible.

Class justice has just killed Sacco and Vanzetti.

Because they were militant workers.  
Because they were innocent.

Because the whole world cried it out.  
Because the dollar is infallible.

And because American capitalism must always be great, even in crime, above all in crime.

A rational murder.

The automobile industry had supplied Governor Fuller.

The religious industry, Judge Thayer...

The police industry, the false witnesses and the necessary bombs.

The electrical industry supplied the current of two thousand volts...

All carried out in the most efficient manner of scientific brutality.

Sacco and Vanzetti burned alive on the electric chair. It is the last word in capitalist "civilisation". Bourgeois America, the America of trusts, of the Ku Klux Klan, of the automobile for all, of lynching and of the American Legion; all of it is there.

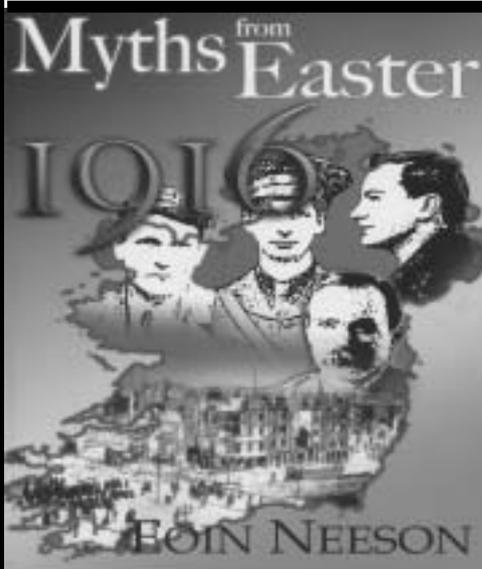
But against this, to the other America, those of the workers tied to the factory, to the office, on the land or in the mines that we address...

The flag of American capitalism can no longer fly except under the protection of the police, of the paid touts and *provocateurs*.

For the fearful bourgeois, for the small minded intellectuals of the "consensus", the murder this morning is a "regrettable judicial error".

It is not a judicial error.  
It is an "example".

For the proletariat, it is an open  
DECLARATION OF WAR!  
THIS EVENING, TO THEBOULEVARDS!  
(Translated by **John Martin**)



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## Press Freedom: The Right To Misrepresent?

Cathal O'Shannon's sensationalist television documentary, *Ireland's Nazis*, which was broadcast by RTE, was the subject of complaint by Mrs. Clissman with regard to its presentation of her husband, Helmut Clissman, as a Nazi war-criminal, although he had not been charged with war crimes, still less found guilty.

RTE pleaded in defence of its broadcast that—

"the programme did not include any false statements about Helmut Clissman and that an offer to participate in the programme had been made to a representative of the family, but had not been accepted. On this point it is RTE's view that the inclusion of an interview in the programme with a representative of the Clissman family was not necessary for the programme to be fair to Mr. Clissman or his family."

It then entered the explanation that:

"the documentary was in two parts; the first part dealt with people who were war criminals who came to Ireland after the war, the second part dealt with other people who had participated in some way with the German forces during the war, but were not necessarily war criminals. Helmut Clissman's story was told in the second part" (from Broadcasting Complaints Commission website).

In this pleading, as in the programme, the distinction between people who were war criminals and people who were not war criminals is effectively abolished.

A defence pleading was also entered by David Farrell on behalf of Tile Films, the company that made the programme, arguing that—

"their portrayal of Helmut Clissman was fair and accurate and should not have left the audience with the impression that he was a war criminal".

We doubt that anybody who watched the programme in a receptive state of mind, and who was not otherwise informed, would be left with any impression but that Clissman was a war criminal.

The misrepresentation of fact by means of atmospheric context was so blatant that the Complaints Commission upheld Mrs. Clissman's complaint:

"On viewing the broadcast material, the Commission was of the opinion by reason of the context in which reference was made to Mr. Clissman, that the impression was created that Mr. Clissman was a Nazi War criminal. At no stage in the broadcast was his treatment adequately separated from that afforded others who were the subject of the programme. There was no clarification made that he was not a war criminal. The Commission acknowledges that there was no claim made in the course of the broadcast that he was a criminal.

However, in the context of the overall programme, a viewer could reasonably have assumed that Mr. Clissman was a war criminal... The Commission upheld the complaint on this basis."

Tile Films, while claiming that if it did not give the impression that Clissman was a war criminal, hinted that it might have done so by use of "extensive material available from British and American intelligence". This amounts to an attempt to justify the impression which it denied giving. As far as we know, it has not published this material which it did not use but which it considers relevant to its defence of its misrepresentation of Clissman.

RTE said that—

"ultimately what Ms. Clissman wanted was that the programme would make no reference to Helmut Clissman. This could not be agreed to."

Since the programme was in substance about war criminals, and RTE admitted that Clissman was not a war criminal, *why* could it not be agreed to? Perhaps because RTE itself was taken in by the slick editing and did not realise in time that Clissman was being misrepresented.

Tile Films says that Cathal O'Shannon phoned Inge Clissman to ask for a

representative of the family to take part in the programme but failed to get through. Some months later Inge Clissman phoned the producers and said—

"she would consider it if she had some editorial control on how the interview was used. They pointed out that they could not agree to any editorial input or control and their offer of an interview on this basis was declined by Ms Clissman."

Editorial independence, you see! Editors cannot forgo their right of misrepresentation.

Freedom of the press etc. would be a fine thing if we were all litigious millionaires like Albert Reynolds and could meet these powerful media institutions on something like equal terms on a level battlefield.

A release form of the kind which people being interviewed for RTE documentaries must sign before they are interviewed shows what editorial independence means. The document resembles the Official Secrets Act in Britain. And it requires you to give the producers the right to misrepresent you for their own purposes, and obliges you to maintain secrecy about it. Below is such a form, which is currently in use by another company producing documentary films for RTE. Readers are invited to judge for themselves.

TO BE CONTINUED

### Release Form

Production Company: **Reel Story Productions Ltd. (The Associate)**  
Production Title: **[Title of Programme omitted] (The Production)**

I agree to participate in the production of the above mentioned programme, the nature and composition of which has been explained to me, and hereby give consent for the filming and recording of my activities, acts and performances.

I agree that the tape may be cut or edited for the programme or publicity material associated with the programme, and may be used in association with the exploitation of same.

I hereby grant and consign to Reel Story Productions Ltd the copyright and all other rights and interests of whatsoever nature in my contributions to the programme and the rights to exploit the same worldwide in all media for the full period of copyright including any extensions, renewals and revivals thereof and thereafter to the extent possible in perpetuity. I hereby also waive any moral rights that may be deemed to be in existence in relation to my contributions and participation in the programme.

I acknowledge and agree that my contribution towards the programme and my name and/or likeness may be advertised and used in the exploitation of the programme, at any time and from time to time throughout all the countries of the world in perpetuity. I hereby waive any claim I may have for loss of opportunity to enhance my reputation as a result of the non-inclusion of my contribution in the programme. I confirm and warrant that I'm entitled to enter into this release, and am not under contractual or any other obligations precluding me from doing so. I undertake to keep confidential any matter which comes to my attention relating to the programme. I undertake to execute all and any deeds and take such steps as are reasonably required by Reel Story Productions to give effect to the intent of this release. I am not entitled to a credit in relation to my contribution.

Agreed & Accepted..... (PLEASE PRINT NAME)

Signature:

Address:

Tel/Mobile No.:

Signed for Reel Story Productions:

# Hidden History Of 'Ireland's Nazis' Programme

## Part One

The self-styled documentary *Ireland's Nazis* was made for RTE's *Hidden History* series by *Tile Films*, in association with the *History Channel*. Irish audiences saw it in two parts in January, while British audiences saw it in May. Filmed on location in Auschwitz extermination camp, the programme presenter Cathal O'Shannon referred to how those Allied soldiers who had liberated the Nazi camps could never forget the horrors they had experienced. Among such soldiers known personally to myself was Bill Alexander, who had for a period been the Commander of the International Brigade's British Battalion during the Spanish Anti-Fascist War until he was wounded in 1938. Bill subsequently fought right through World War Two as a captain in the British Army, and his participation in the liberation of the Nazi death camps had indeed marked him for life.

In 1996 a Jewish International Brigade veteran, Dave Goodman, organised a summer school in the potteries district of England on the theme of the War in Spain. I represented my father and spoke of the Irish involvement, while Bill Alexander spoke of the role of British International Brigaders. At that school Bill went on to denounce a third party—in his absence—as a "*fascist filmmaker*", and if one is hooked on Eoghan Harris's teachings in respect of "*acting with good authority*", Bill's wartime experiences might be regarded as giving him every right to be so judgemental. Another cause of profound irritation to Bill, and to which he also reacted quite viciously, was when the subject of the English writer Laurie Lee's autobiographical account of his own fight against fascism in Spain came up. For the truth of the matter was that Lee had never fought at all in that War. In all fairness, however, it should also be pointed out that Lee did indeed have the courage to volunteer to do so. But after his arrival in Spain, through no fault of his own, he had been rejected as being unfit for combat, because of recurring epileptic fits.

Nonetheless, one can imagine how infuriated Bill Alexander would have been at Cathal O'Shannon's documentary boast—twice pronounced, at the start of both Parts One and Two—that "many Irishmen like me went to fight for the Allies". For this was a claim that he had to qualify immediately in his *Irish Times* interview of 6th January: "*He had joined up at 16, but serving when the war in Europe was over and that in the Far East was ending, I never raised my hand against the Germans!*" It is, however, greatly to

be regretted that when mythmaking about his 'war record' was compounded by outright slander of others {because, of course, a dead man can't sue for libel} O'Shannon refrained from correcting his cheerleader's traducing of another man's good name. So it was that Eoghan Harris was allowed to get away with the following in the *Sunday Independent* on 14th January:

"O'Shannon started his film with a flat statement: he joined the RAF to fight the fascists ... Let me drop a name ... about O'Shannon's not getting a great welcome when he returned to Ireland from fighting [sic] ... There was no lack of frost in the *Irish Times* itself. In fact when Cathal O'Shannon reported back from the RAF, Douglas Gageby, who was later to edit the *Irish Times*, called him a *traitorous c\*\*t*."

This is an outrageous calumny—quite apart from the fact that it was actually with the *Irish Press* that Gageby was working when O'Shannon returned to the *Irish Times*, while Gageby himself would not commence his own involvement with the latter paper until 1959. Harris has twisted beyond recognition the following anecdote from Mary Maher, in her contribution to *Bright, Brilliant Days*, the book edited by Andrew Whittaker about Douglas Gageby and the *Irish Times*. She recounts:

"There was the [senior staff] conference... at which someone suggested we should expose the inadequacies of the Garda training system... with the comment that all they learned... was how to shine their buttons... Ordinary members of staff... tend to see [the conference] more as a point-scoring exercise among people jockeying for position... On this particular day, someone piped up to remark that when he was in the RAF, the squaddies had special buttons that didn't need to be shined. Douglas Gageby peered up over his glasses and said in his drawling ironic tone... 'Is that so... when you were in the RAF you didn't have to shine your buttons. Wasn't it well for you—you fucking traitor.' Tolerating fools, even momentary fools, was not his strong point, quite apart from the fact that any whiff of West Britism brought on thundering wrath."

This occurrence had nothing whatsoever to do with O'Shannon. The senior staff offender in question was a hoity-toity Anglo-Irishman whom Gageby had cut down to size for invoking his RAF shiny buttons in order to sneer at the police force of the Republic of which he

was a citizen. Yet O'Shannon has let Harris put it about that he himself had been victimised by Gageby for "*fighting the fascists*"! Had Bill Alexander—who had to fight against everything the fascists had to throw at him over the course of two successive wars—been able to foresee O'Shannon's 'war record' boast a decade down the road, his 1996 denunciation of him would have been even more vituperative. For it was none other than O'Shannon himself whom Alexander had denounced as a *fascist filmmaker*.

Such a charge, however, was profoundly unfair. When it came down to brass tacks, Bill was indeed an Anglo-centric bigot, whose devotion to the word "Great" was as high as to any other word in his one-time formal title of Assistant General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The context for Bill's charge was his criticism of myself for showing O'Shannon's pioneering 1976 documentary "*Even the Olives Are Bleeding*" at that summer school. In sharp contrast, Dave Goodman was to side with me in agreeing that Bill had gone over the top with such a denunciation. Dave himself had been taken prisoner in the company of Irish International Brigaders Frank Ryan, Maurice Levitas and Bob Doyle, as they marched into an Italian fascist ambush in March 1938. Having got to know them even better as fellow prisoners during the year he was to spend in the Spanish fascist concentration camp of San Pedro, Dave had quickly come to an objective appreciation of Irish politics, subsequently reinforced by his marriage to an Irish-woman. Bill's objection to Cathal O'Shannon's documentary had been to the fact that Cathal had interviewed Irishmen who had fought on both sides of the Spanish Civil War. Irish International Brigaders themselves, however, had no such objections. They knew that they had performed far better than their Blueshirt opponents—on both battlefield and screen! But such was O'Shannon's own superb and scrupulous research, together with his objective presentation and fair-minded interviews of all concerned, that nobody, from any Irish quarter, could ever question the integrity and professionalism of that documentary.

And so it was over the course of O'Shannon's own programme-making career. More's the pity, then, that in a year of vulnerability within months of being widowed, Cathal O'Shannon allowed himself to be flattered—and a childish sense of RAF grievance to be nurtured—in order to front a programme that was not his own but had been researched and scripted well in advance by others who were more than willing to cast programmatic integrity to the wind when it came to seeking a commissioning contract from RTE. This latest product from *Tile Films*, as originally envisaged, had no provision

for O'Shannon to play any role in it whatsoever. RTE, however, subsequently imposed the condition that O'Shannon should be brought on board, in order "*to lend gravitas*" to the programme and to complain about not being able to coat-trail his RAF uniform in public during the years 1945-47. What was unconscionable, however, was the significant exclusion also agreed to by the producers in order to kow-tow to RTE's own corporate concerns about "looking after their own", of which more in Part Three.

O'Shannon's own lack of personal research for this programme was revealed in the ignorance he displayed during the course of his *Irish Times* interview:

"Sixty years on, even a mass killer such as Artukovic [the Croatian fascist Interior Minister who had been responsible for the Second World War extermination of 30,000 Yugoslav Jews and 750,000, or two-and-a-half times as many, Orthodox Serbs—MOR] is largely unknown here. O'Shannon admits that he hadn't heard of him until a year ago".

Small wonder, then, that the Lilliput Press publisher Antony Farrell was provoked to write to the editor of the *Irish Times* in a letter that appeared on 15th January:

"Madam—it seems both remarkable and improbable, even in this amnesiac age, that 'veteran journalist' Cathal O'Shannon, or his programme researchers, were unfamiliar with the essays of Hubert Butler ('the Artukovich File', *Escape from the Anthill*) published by both Lilliput and Penguin Books in the late 1980s and 1990s, and subsequently in New York and Paris... In his writings Butler smoked out the Croatian mass murderer and traced Artukovitch's presence in Ireland in 1947-48 and the role of the Franciscans in giving him shelter on his passage west to California, prior to his eventual extradition to Yugoslavia in 1986... Due acknowledgement should be made."

Apart from the implicit charge of plagiarism, the most salient point in the above is the "passage west" reference. This was a point that was further elaborated on to much greater effect by Daniel Leach of the University of Melbourne, in an article for the May-June issue of *History Ireland*, entitled *Irish Post-War Asylum*. Leach was listed as "*historical advisor*" to the programme, but already as early as January itself he had been forced to protest against both the "*Ireland's Nazis*" label (describing it as "*itself quite a sensationalist title*") and, far more seriously, against gross misrepresentation of what he himself had to say on the Breton question, which will be dealt with in the third part of this article. But taking note of how quickly O'Shannon's commentary had glided over

the fact that—in their outright refusal to accede to Tito's 1946 call for his extradition in order to face war crimes charges in Yugoslavia—the British authorities had speedily decided to set Artukovic free, the following observations by Leach are very much to the point:

"The British had captured Artukovic in Austria and despite being fully aware of the allegations against him, released him with 'no security objection'. After a single year in Ireland, he spent almost 40 times as long in the US. Moreover, the Vatican and Western governments assisted and funded operations in Croatia, in which Ustasha (Croatian fascist) guerrillas fought Tito's Communist rule. Similarly, in an operation codenamed 'Jungle', the Western Allies parachuted agents into the Baltic States (many of them former members of the German SS) soon after the end of the war, to destabilise the rule of their former Soviet allies and support anti-Soviet partisans. Indeed the Americans entire intelligence network in Eastern Europe was inherited wholesale from the Nazis, and even run by its former head, Gen. Reinhard Gehlen."

I had personal experience of US policy on such matters. While studying in the USA 1969-71, one of my closest friends in SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and its campaign against the US war in Vietnam, was an Estonian-American anarchist who had been born in Germany in 1948 but had come to the USA as a two-year-old. One day in 1970, in his home city of Buffalo, New York, he introduced me to his non-English speaking grandmother as yet "*another Communist*" and translated back to me her reply in Estonian: "*Nice to believe in; not so nice to live under*". But then his uncle appeared on the scene and we were introduced without any further elaboration. It was only after we had left the house that he informed me that his uncle had been Deputy Commandant of a Nazi Concentration Camp who was now living quite openly as a respectable US citizen and "*refugee from Communism*".

Antony Farrell had dated Hubert Butler's essay as the late 1980s. It had in fact been published in 1985 and I had helped him with a small amount of research. I had managed to obtain for Butler the 1948 Dublin birth certificate of Artukovic's son, which established that he had been living at that time under the pseudonym of 'Anic' on Zion Road in the Dublin suburb of Rathgar. Apart from my keen support of the principle of 'the truth will out', my research had also been personally motivated by factors of both shame and admiration.

My sense of shame did not relate to any Irish Government role. As highlighted by Leach, this war criminal had been indulged and entertained by the USA for 40 years,

compared with which the bare year he had spent *en route* in Ireland—having been quite deliberately let loose by the British authorities—was quite minimal. The shame I felt was instead directly related to what was going on in the USA itself during that very period of the mid-1980s. The most prominent US public figure to the fore in voicing support for Artukovic—as a "*good Catholic citizen*" who should not be extradited—was a relation of my own, Tadhg Manning, the Cardinal Archbishop of Los Angeles. Manning was the son of the blacksmith of Ballingearry, and his mother had acted as matchmaker for the arranged marriage of my paternal grandparents with whom, in turn, he himself had lived in the Pope's Quay O' Riordan family home when studying at University College Cork.

The admiration factor was the respect I had for Hubert Butler himself, and for whose memory I continue to retain a soft spot, notwithstanding justifiable criticism in this journal of a number of his writings exhibiting Protestant bigotry and arrogance. He could, after all, just as quickly turn his fire on those of his own background, as when he described the Anglo-Irish as the most reliable collaborators that the Nazis would have found in Ireland, had they had cause to invade:

"I think when the success of the invasion had been assured, it would have emerged that the respectable Xs, the Anglo-Irish *Herrenvolk* of Ulster and the Dublin suburbs, would prove the more satisfactory accomplices in establishing the German hegemony. The Jersey [occupied Channel Islands] treatment would have been applied to them, insofar as they were civilians. There would have been dazzling displays of 'correctness'. It is probable that at Greystones [Co. Wicklow] and Newtownards [Co. Down], as at St. Helier and at Peterport, divine service with prayers for the King and the British Empire would continue to be permitted in the Protestant churches... The British Naziphiles were romantic, traditional, imperialist. Irish separatism would have been incompatible with their Kiplingesque ideal of a merry, beer-drinking 'old' England, allied with Germany, grasping once more in her strong right hand the reins of empire and dealing out justice to the lesser breeds... Nazi philosophy was permeated with race snobbery and we are outwardly a rustic and unpretentious people. When a Nazi leader, Ribbentrop, visited Ireland, it was with a Unionist leader, Lord Londonderry, at Newtownards that he stayed. In the Nazi hierarchy of races the Irish would not I think have ranked high" (*The Bell*, November 1950; *Escape from the Anthill*, p109).

"*History repeats itself; the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce*"—is a statement often attributed to Marx, if not

originating with him. In 1952 Hubert Butler had been denied free speech regarding the wartime massacres and persecution by Croatian Ustasha regime of the Orthodox Serbs, and suffered the consequences of a bitter public ostracism. Twenty years later I was witness to another denial of free speech to Butler, but it was no Catholic who shouted him down on this occasion. It was at a so-called "*Christian-Marxist Dialogue*" Conference in Malahide, Co. Dublin, where the 'Marxist' objective was to win over 'progressive' Catholic clergy to various international peace initiatives favoured alike by the USSR and Yugoslavia. This was at a time when Tito's Yugoslavia was more intent on keeping the lid on Serbian nationalism and assuaging the Croats, and was not at all anxious at that particular juncture to have the Artukovic issue raised. The first time I ever encountered Hubert Butler was at that 1970s Conference, once again cast in the role of a loner, as he insisted on having his say about the war crimes of Catholic Croatia, despite being harangued from the Chair by the most prominent champion of Titoism in Ireland, Dr. John de Courcy Ireland, who condemned Butler for raising issues that he pronounced extraneous to that Conference.

During another session a number of us insisted on drawing attention to the Elephant in the Room, the conflict taking place at that very time in Ireland itself between Catholic Nationalism and Protestant Unionism, at which point the Conference collapsed into disarray. It was as a result of this encounter that a certain mutual admiration developed between Butler and ourselves, recognising kindred spirits prepared to puncture cosy consensus and act as disturbers of the peace by insisting on having our say. Butler afterwards went on to give us some assistance in setting up *Church & State* magazine. It was, however, to be regretted that Butler never saw fit to put pen to paper in public recognition of what he himself was now effectively acknowledging to be taking place (notwithstanding his own previous pronouncements of Protestant superiority)—that Fenians were doing it for themselves and needed no Anglo-Irish ideological guidance in order to fight for the separation of Church and State. It should also be recognised that it was not only his Slavophilia but also his deep-seated anti-Catholicism that had acted as such a driving force behind his championing of the cause of Serbian Orthodoxy, to such an extent that his demonstrable myopia concerning Serb nationalism leaves me in no doubt that Hubert Butler would also have uncritically championed Slobodan Milosevic hook, line and sinker.

None of this criticism invalidates Butler's moral courage in insisting on

bringing his "Artukovitch File" to public notice, nor does it justify the shabbiness of the *Ireland's Nazis* programme in refusing to acknowledge such pioneering investigative work. This was a sin of omission on the part of that programme. But there was also a far greater sin of commission present in O'Shannon's unconscionable willingness to deliver a script of character assassination in respect of Frank Ryan that was at variance with everything that he himself had previously written and pronounced regarding Ryan.

So it was that we had O'Shannon declaiming on screen, in tones of such certitude, that Abwehr intelligence officer Helmut Clissmann "*saw Ryan as the key to getting IRA help for the Nazis' plan to invade Britain*". O'Shannon knows very well that nothing could be further from the truth. In 1961 Enno Stephan's book *Spies in Ireland* had authoritatively quoted Helmut Clissmann on the purely defensive role envisaged as a possibility for Ryan in Ireland, where they both might "*act as military contact men between the Irish government and the German Army in the event of Anglo-American occupation of Ireland and to help organise guerrilla warfare against the aggressors*".

*Ireland's Nazis* went on to feature US historian Mark Hull giddily make the following outlandish allegations (that he himself nowhere saw fit to set down in print in his own 2003 book, *Irish Secrets*):

"Frank Ryan and some others came up with the idea to recreate the idea from the First World War of Roger Casement to take British POWs of Irish extraction to form them into a unit of Irish nationals... They overestimated the reception they got... They thought they were going to be welcomed with open arms... They were almost physically attacked".

Once again it was O'Shannon himself who also provided the commentary for a squalid 'dramatic re-enactment' that was pure fiction: POWs were shown launching themselves forward in attack, but then being held back by the German soldiers protecting the fictitious "Frank Ryan", who was portrayed as a cowering coward. Yet O'Shannon also knew full well that both Clissmann and Ryan regarded such a proposed "unit" as a crazy idea, and that Ryan's only role was to vouch for the personal integrity of any POW foolish enough to present himself as a volunteer. As Clissmann had also told Stephan:

"Ryan and I visited the camp dressed as civilians. We were both very sceptical as to whether our mission could have any possible success. As a matter of fact Frank Ryan was immediately recognised by several of the prisoners and greeted with a friendly 'Hello Frank'."

Readers can access a more detailed

assessment in *Was Frank Ryan A Collaborator*—my review of Fearghal McGarry's biography of Ryan, available on <http://www.geocities.com/irelandscw/docs-Ryan2.htm>. I will, however, conclude this article with two excerpts penned by Cathal O'Shannon himself, before the producers of *Ireland's Nazis* persuaded him to sing from a different hymn sheet. During the course of his review of the most recent biography of Ryan by Adrian Hoar, O'Shannon had arrived at the following conclusion in the *Irish Times* of 8th January 2005:

"Years ago when I made a film with Irish survivors of the Spanish Civil War, there was a plain unease among a few of them at Ryan's sojourn in Germany, though they wouldn't express it publicly. Hoar deals with this charge a little uneasily himself and comes to the conclusion I came to many years ago. Frank Ryan was not a collaborator in the sense that he helped the Germans to fight a war against his erstwhile comrades, but kept faith in his anti-imperialist past."

Two months later, on 16th March 2005, it was at my invitation that Cathal O'Shannon was to launch the second edition of my father's book *Connolly Column*. During the course of an address that was both generous and thoughtful, Cathal advanced the following perspective:

"And, of course, there is a good deal about the great Frank Ryan. Michael O'Riordan has always been the guardian of Frank Ryan's reputation, which he praises and defends in the original edition. In this new edition there is very detailed account of the Ryan controversy in a long review by Manus O'Riordan... provocatively entitled 'Was Frank Ryan A Collaborator?' ... Manus argues convincingly that Ryan's sojourn in Nazi Germany after he was freed from Burgos was free of collaboration in the sense that he changed sides or opinions... What is written in this book will not completely end that controversy about Ryan, but it must be taken as a very important contribution, in the most reasoned and detailed manner, to the controversy".

So be it. All a far cry from the Ryan caricature in the "Ireland's Nazis" pantomime.

(to be continued)

**Manus O'Riordan**  
**POSTSCRIPT:** On 25th June 2007 the Broadcasting Complaints Commission found in favour of a complaint from Mrs. Elizabeth Clissmann that the programme lacked impartiality in its portrayal of her late husband Helmut Clissmann. This decision can be accessed at [http://www.bcc.ie/decisions/jun\\_07\\_decisions.html](http://www.bcc.ie/decisions/jun_07_decisions.html) where it is the first item on the list.

# Getting Sophistication

Report of Trevor/Bowen  
Summer School 2007, Mitchelstown

On the Bank Holiday weekend of 3rd to 5th August 2007, the first Trevor/Bowen School was launched by Mitchelstown Literary Society. Mr. Liam Cusack welcomed about one hundred attendees in the Firgrove Hotel and spoke of how the event came about. He was in Dublin with some friends and they were talking of how to market their town. One man there spoke about William Trevor. The others had never heard of him despite having obtained honours English in the Leaving Certificate. But when they heard of his eminence and having been born in the town—they went out and got some of his books. *The Ballroom of Romance* spoke to them of a time they all knew so they were delighted and then they heard of Bowen nearby of the Big House. So they were delighted as the success of Summer Schools around Ireland was growing and now they could have their one too. They needed sponsors and the biggest one around was Dairygold but they refused.

Eventually they got local businesses amongst whom were Riverdeep Interactive Learning, Almedian Graphic & Web Design, Brooks & Co. Solicitors, Cusack & Co. Accountants, Firgrove Hotel and a few others. Since that initial meeting, there now is a very successful Music Festival and of course the William Trevor Short Story Competition which has produced successful short story writers, amongst whom is Clare Keegan.

Billy Keane, son of the late John B. Keane the playwright, officially launched the School. Keane spoke of the very successful Listowel Writer's Week and told how, when his father was alive, they had tough times too but it was now regarded as a world-wide literary event. So from small beginnings—big things can grow. He congratulated those who started this school and wished them well and acknowledged that their writers were indigenous to the locality and were not just shipped in. Billy Keane spoke of the parallels between his father and William Trevor which seemed to consist that they both went over to England for work. Billy got involved with writing for a national paper (*Irish Independent*) on sports when the great outbreak of foot and mouth broke out and his dog writing articles for the *Sporting Press* were over. P.G. Cunningham read his stuff and liked it and he was very lucky. So, like William Trevor, he started his writing career late in life—late 30's early 40's. Keane spoke with a comedic touch about doing law with his friend, now a solicitor—who was present and was known to him as Brooksy from West Cork and he was Keansy. The Law Society

stopped the latter from practising for some little jape which merited widespread audience laughter.

But now, Keane got serious and said the British Troops had withdrawn from the North, our 800 years were over, the Big House now is seen very differently which is right, and at last Croke Park has opened up—something his late father always favoured. In Trevor's time, we ran Protestants out of the place—that was a very bad time. His own uncle called on Mr. Leslie of the Big House in Tarbert and these people were so scared—we should remember this and be rightfully ashamed. Even now there was a Fermanagh Protestant player who was thinking of giving up GAA playing because he has been targeted for sectarian abuse. {This was a storm in a tea-cup and the lad has since gone back to playing but not before the Dublin media—especially Fintan O'Toole—made a huge row about it for their own agenda as usual. JH.} Keane continued, saying we had made a huge transition in the South and now that was happening in the North. He said the Civil War formed the State. Keane then dilated about the atrocities of ambushes, and the Crown Jewels and poor Sir Arthur Vickers shot as the Volunteers hunted for them. The same people shot an RIC man inside of Waterford border—30-35 miles from their present location and still there is not a name on his grave. He went on, bizarrely, to sing the lines from a song "*Torn between two lovers*" and his voice shook.

When he met William Trevor—this man who won all the Bookers—he was so overawed and asked him how to write. {Anyone who has ever met the quiet writer Trevor would know he'd have been appalled at this approach, JH.} and then there was an appalling story about some men going to Croke Park who went to a Prostitute and, asking if she was any good: "Shure says she—haven't I two All-Ireland medals" which she had got from the *oinseachs* who already had dealings with her. (Audience laughter but muted). Keane then spoke again about Listowel Writers' Week, which is now run by his sister Joanne who is the Chairman. All the Bookers Prizewinners told him "Tell your story". And when he asked Brendan Kennelly—he just said "*its arse on seat—just write the shagging thing.*"

Keane returned to *The Ballroom of Romance*, which was on TV and said "*that the Anglo-Irish were the ones dragging Ireland into a pluralist Ireland*". Keane then spoke of the Rotary Club and said it was the Rotary Clubs who put up a "*beautiful statue*" of his father in **small square** (this seemed to annoy him) and Neil Tobin hoped that, like in Ballinspittle, the John B. Keane statue might move—but so far it is still.

Keane then spoke of his nostalgia of college life where John Brooks and he as

students were up to everything and he was always writing to his father for money for books but really it was for drink.

Though Keane was there only to launch the event and introduce us to the evening's main speaker, Donncha O'Dulaing, he really ate into the time and it was now quite late. However Donncha was in good humour and spoke of his famous walks and remembered his first one was in a pony and trap. Afterwards he did one every year and his walk to Santiago de la Compostella in the footsteps of St. James was hugely successful. But he told us how he had worked in Soho and he had seen the women there and he went to confession. Like the Confessions of St. Augustine he thought he would get a decent hearing. But for his pains he got the Stations of the Cross—**three times**. {Much laughter as he wasn't being a smart Alec like Keane.} And to put the cap on things he was told by the priest "*you have all the makings of a thundering blackguard*" which suggested the priest was definitely Irish.

Anyway Donncha went off to UCC and after graduating went to the English Professor, a very eminent lady by all accounts—one B.G. McCarthy. She suggested, as he was born in Doneraile, that he should do his MA on a writer from there. When Donncha said Cannon Sheehan—Ms McCarthy replied with a tightening of her lips "*I don't think so*" and said she was thinking of Elizabeth Bowen. Donncha never heard of her and was told to read her *The Death of the Heart*. He read it and didn't understand it but after another meeting with an unrelenting B.G., who gave him tea and cucumber sandwiches, and told him to cultivate sophistication, he gave in and did his Thesis on Elizabeth Bowen. Donncha went off to RTE where he was told he had an impediment to success and that was his country accent. But he found a niche for himself with the Holy Well trails and walks and did lots of other stuff as well. But how now to introduce us to Elizabeth Bowen. He brought flowers to her grave yesterday, he said.

He asked us if we ever heard of Molly O'Brien—Elizabeth's housekeeper, who was brought down to Bowen's Court from Tipperary when she was just a young girl of seventeen, and was never to see her homeplace again. Donncha often stopped on his way to Dublin and had many the whiskey with her and recalled old days. But his first meeting with Elizabeth was when he went down to Kinsale where she was staying with Lady Vernon and Major Vernon. Donncha had bought a new overcoat for the occasion and was appalled to see his new overcoat being taken by the butler and thrown down in a corner.

Elizabeth was tall, gaunt and a great conversationalist. She also had a stammer. When he interviewed her for RTE in the BBC's studio, they knew when to cue her

in and out over the stammer. She spoke to him about Spenser when they visited Kilcolman Castle, and he was told she belonged to the Henry James school of writing. She was reared in Dublin, her father was a lawyer and only began to read at seven and never stopped. "She had the greatest feeling for the countryside—loved *land more than people*". Donncha said that her book *The Last September* was the best account of the War of Independence. One of Donncha's great regrets was that, when he met Bowen—she had already sold Bowen's Court with the hope of the patter of little feet from the new owner but that never happened and it was torn down.

She told the story of how one night, her house was invaded by the Whiteboys or some such and the family were put upstairs. Next morning they had "*taken nothing*": only reading Kipling during the night and this she told with great glee. {This story is very different to the story told by O'Dulaing when he lectured us during the Elizabeth Bowen Centenary Conference in UCC 2nd -4th July 1999, see report in the IPR.}

Bowen never shrank from admitting how her family came to own Bowen's Court but this was a time "when England and Ireland *turned upon one another*". Today things have changed. Now Paisley and Martin McGuinness are in a joint deal of governing Northern Ireland. He said Kate O'Brien opined that "*We Irish have seldom paused to look at the great gifts of the settlers*". Bowen's Court was a wonderful Italianate building; the top floor was the great long room, where all the hunt balls and big parties were held. Lady Livingston—whom he said none of us would know where she came from {but it was Doneraile Court, JH}—did an ad for Ponds Cold Cream. Sean O'Faolain whose father was a groundsman loved the Big House and even had picnics with Bowen herself.

Bowen was so important to the world of literature and also above all—to *the area*. She was a North Cork woman who lived in London. He then switched on his tape, where E.M. Foster and Elizabeth Bowen talked to O'Dulaing about '*Aspects of the Novel*'. And in that hotel room a few minutes from Mitchelstown, we listened to the voice of Bowen—this North Cork woman according to O'Dulaing, whose plummy accent made the present English Queen sound common.

Bowen was very funny about Lady Sybil Thorndike. *Encounter* was an incomplete attempt to say something that was never said before. The world of cars, women driving with scarves flowing, was another kind of life. Old Lady Doneraile—great picture of Elizabeth Bowen—great friend of O'Dulaing—she didn't understand anything about the locals, nor Cork but South Africa. During the RTE interview

Bowen spoke of 'A Celestial Omnibus' by Foster. Tremendous enthusiast. Was it a man? The feminine in him was quite a pleasing way. She spoke of other authors, Gide was criticized by Katherine Mansfield and she didn't agree with her. Proust was "*a great gift to our civilization*". {Bowen's cough was awful—she died of lung cancer, JH.} Proust influenced her—even just the appearance of a page—and then there was his dialogue. Jane Austen, though, was the King and Queen of dialogue. O'Dulaing ended by saying Bowen coloured everything he ever read afterwards. Then he finished by asking if there were any questions.

Q: A man asked when was the interview recorded and O'Dulaing said 1970.

Q: A woman asked where she could access his Thesis, as he spoke so knowingly of Bowen.

A: "*I am delighted that you asked that question. B.G. gave me a Pass in my MA and I was very upset and demanded it back so I could get an honours degree. But time went on and what would a gob-daw like me do back in academia. I tore the thing up and forgot about it. I was involved with the Little Flower trip around Ireland and since then I have a programme in RTE called *Faillte Isteach*.*"

As there were no more questions he received a rousing applause.

Mr. Liam Cusack made an announcement that Dolores McKenna who was due to talk at 8.30 the following day couldn't make it as she had put out a disc and was on a trolley as he spoke in a Dublin hospital. She had been due to speak about William Trevor as she had written a biography on him.

4th August 2007. Farrahy Church. Dr. Eibhear Walsh, UCC on 'Elizabeth Bowen and The Fields of North Cork'. 3 p.m.

As Eibhear Walsh walked up to the front of the church, he turned round and with a mischievous smile said he couldn't resist it and walked up onto the pulpit. Mitchelstown, he said, was very lucky in its connections. Elizabeth Bowen and its landscapes became well known through her work. He said her short story *Happy Autumn Fields* was part celebration of that landscape but also there were ambiguous notes there. Tenuous connections some might say but in times of war, she always came back—again and again. But the whole thing was never straightforward. The fields and hills a complex one—there was complexity and ambiguity. She was born in Dublin and spent her summers here. She tells her story about her ancestor Col. Bowen and his two hawks. Cromwell took one of his hawks and strangled it. A flight of a hawk and he got all the land the hawk flew over was what Cromwell said. But actually we know that a hawk flies straight up and down but Bowen liked the

story as a family myth about getting their land.

When Bowen was 7, her father had a breakdown and all this stopped. She was exiled to an island but she always thought Ireland was *the first island* and so felt sorry for England. He quoted her words about Ireland having "*left prints on our eyes*". During the War of Independence she was living in England and so experienced it second-hand. She was always waiting for the letter to say that Bowen's Court was burnt down. It has often been questioned if she was an Irish writer—"*places loom large*" for her in her topography. London became '*Mysterious Kor*' during the second World War. But she herself was clear about the colonial system that won her family the lands it owned in Ireland. There is a quotation from her about "*these fields were murderous*". A writer has an inner landscape but also needs an outer landscape and she was aware of her hyphenated identity. Her mother didn't want her to read or write until the age of eight—she was very close to her cousins. Rooms, landscapes lent themselves to her ghost stories and they had an ability to humanize her imagination. Her house had a humanized presence. About war, she writes brilliantly, also family, class and identity. Her literary imagination as a novelist/short story writer was worked on by the darker versions of the fields and this sense of a beleaguered House. Roy Foster said the past for her was a remembrance of landscape which as Proust wrote was like "*history eavesdropping*". During the War of Independence, Bowen's Court and other Big Houses according to him were "*besieged Houses*" with "*murderous fields around them*".

In 1929 when she wrote *The Last September*, she was at a distance in Italy. She admires, as does he, her House and her people who carry on their lives amidst the War of Independence. She didn't like the middle class, especially the officer's wives if they tried to make their way into the drawing-room. In that book Daniels-town was Bowen's Court and Louise sees it in terms of a thing of such beauty—were they to be murdered or smothered as long as they were not afraid. She too conveyed snob values as she thought the officered classes "*talked too much about their innards*". The Big House people were more afraid of their niece Louise being engaged to an officer than the figure of the IRA man—*this shadowy figure* running through *their wood*. They danced in the Big House and they played tennis and all the time a new Ireland was emerging with which they had no engagement or even thought. So *The Last September* is "*an elegy for the Anglo-Irish*" according to Walsh. In the film of that book, the house is burnt down; it is, Walsh said the "*visual*

blueprint" for the "death of three Big Houses" that night. The book ends with the great doors burning open to the countryside.

Bowen inherited the Big House in her thirties. She was a novelist, essayist. She had lived in Oxford and had a flat in Regent's Park, London. Many of her novels had English characters. *The House in Paris* contains an account of a visit to Cork—Montenotte.

During WW2 she produced *Bowen's Court, Seven Winters*, many short stories and her novel *The Heat of the Day* which has a long sequence in Ireland. Identity—"every pore open during the War". Her sense of the abnormal—"lucid abnormality". In her critical war, the Blitz—the air-raids—her house hit many times. {Wrong—her windows blown out once, JH.} Walsh was keen to say that her paid visits to Ireland only betrayed "her naivety"; she could "translate Ireland to England. She defended Irish neutrality". There was "no espionage as she had no access to important enough material". In *The Heat of the Day* she wrote about treason and the spy's name was Robert Kelway—if she was a boy—she would have been named Robert. Heather Bryant Jordan {who was the first to notate her payments from the UK Government, JH} quotes that "she tried to present the idea in 1942 to her friend and lover in the Bell—Sean O'Faolain—that there was a valid place for the Big House". O'Faolain did an important job—a place for assimilation—her tone is "jaunty and optimistic". When she was writing *Bowen's Court* she sent out chapters in case of it being lost. {Walsh mediated on her work and its connections to the landscape but he never says it is through the House that the landscape is seen—she never saw it any other way but from the perspectives of that Big House.}

When Alan Cameron died in 1952, she continued with the House but more and more of her money was drained into it and she had to finally accept that she couldn't keep it on. So she sold it and said "This House long played its part and is now at an end". But Walsh says "that space is not empty—the fields around Bowen's Court are always seen through the eyes of Elizabeth Bowen".

An announcement was then made that on the 9th September an Anglican service for Elizabeth Bowen would be held in Farrahy Church by Dr. Ian Dalton.

On Sunday 5th August at 2.30 p.m. we made our way to the Firgrove Hotel for the *Irish Times* Literary Critic Eileen Battersby for her lecture on William Trevor. We waited and nothing happened. Then we were told that Ms Battersby had been sent plane tickets to Cork Airport and two lads had gone up to collect her but she was not on the plane. Contact was impossible as her mobile was off and in the end she

never came. There was no apology from her.

Instead we were offered our money for the lecture back and we did not take it. The poor organizers were very upset. But Fr. Luke from Mount Melleray Abbey went ahead with his talk on *Monastic Life and Today's World*. There was a full audience and it was without doubt the best lecture of the school. Father Luke was a former teacher and this was very evident. He delivered his lecture with a fluency that the rest could only hope for. He was enthusiastic about monastic life and he had a wall chart on which he wrote the more important points of the Benedictine Rule.

SILENCE. BALANCE. HARMONY.

Father Luke went from the Fall of the Roman Empire to our own day. He was very insistent on the monastery as a place of hospitality—high tradition in St. Benedict's Rule. 150 years ago Matthew Arnold felt sad about the "dying faith in the nineteenth century" "this strange disease of modern life". Sick hurry of Ireland of 2007. More and better products.

People work harder and longer hours to satisfy their consumerist lives. But there is now a beginning of a questioning. He then spoke of life in Mount Melleray and Humility, freedom, love and prayer were paramount. Silence allowed the monk to listen.

Questions.

Q: What time did he have to get up? 4 a.m. (general groaning).

Q: A man with an English accent said what was the value of their life when there is so much war in the world.

Father Luke spent much time on this question saying how important prayer was—that it was not *not doing anything* but hard work and the quiet of monastic life seemed to bring lots of different kinds of people and some say they are changed and some say not.

There was much more to this lecture but I leave it with Father Luke inviting anyone interested to come visit Mount Melleray. There is guest accommodation, there is no set charge but a donation is invited.

Julianne Herlihy

## Lecture in a Cathedral

### **Hubert Butler Society Goes American**

The latest initiative from the Hubert Butler Society, an "inaugural lecture" from a prominent international speaker held as part of Kilkenny Arts Festival, drew a huge audience but failed in its primary purpose. It failed because the speaker, Samantha Power, was a mismatch for the image of Hubert Butler the society is trying to project, and because she is too closely aligned with the US political establishment to strike the right chords with an Irish audience.

It is hard to know exactly what the Hubert Butler Society is: they have no website and issue no literature that I am aware of. Samantha Power thanked the novelist, Colm Toibin, for inviting her and Fintan O'Toole, Assistant Editor of the *Irish Times*, for introducing her but neither of these is likely to be an officer of the society. Still we know from previous events organised by the society that it is one of the organisations currently pushing an Anglo Irish agenda. In any event the choice of Colm Tobin and Fintan O'Toole as facilitators is enough to indicate the society's political complexion.

The lecture was given in St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny on the evening of the 25th August. The audience of what to me looked like respectable *Irish Times* reading theatre-goers, easily numbered a thousand. Overall the ambiance was not propitious of a robust exchange of political views,

but things got better as the night progressed.

Before introducing Samantha Power, Fintan O'Toole delivered a short homily on the virtues of Hubert Butler. Being the best informed of human generations we are knowledgeable about all the horrors of our time—Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur etc, but somehow the true horror doesn't register with us. It takes a writer like Hubert to speak directly to our hearts and minds, to focus in on particular individuals in particular circumstances and catch the 'specificity' of it all. What Hubert had was rare because he could combine journalistic skills with philosophical understanding. He could speak to our hearts and minds but he understated his message and never lapsed into sentimentality. Moving on from these suitably eloquent reflections he introduced the main speaker by saying simply that she was an appropriate person to give the first of what is to be an annual lecture in Hubert Butler's memory.

Samantha Power is a professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. She has worked as a reporter in places like Bosnia for the *Economist* and other publications. A Democrat, she is a member of Barack Obama's team of advisors. Her website invites media queries on: foreign policy, human rights policy, international law, non-governmental

organisations, Rwanda and the UN. Her main claim to fame is her book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, which won her a Pulitzer prize in 2003. She has just completed a biography of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN troubleshooter who was killed in a targeted bombing in Iraq.

The audience had come to see a class act and she was all of that. Her opening line was, "So yo'all fans of George W Bush?" Next she flashed her Irish credentials (she was born in Ireland and left at age nine) by thanking at least a dozen of her Irish connections. She also punctuated her talk with references to her high regard for Tom Arnold of the Concern charity who was in the front row. The trick behind her lecture was to win the support of the audience with anti-Bush jibes without stating anything that could be used against her in US political discourse, and at the same time to win sympathy for the basic US role in the world in subtle ways. Typical of the latter was describing Sergio de Mello as having been a Paul Bremer-type colonial governor of Bosnia. Having won us over to putting de Mello on a pedestal, suddenly we were being persuaded that Paul Bremer wasn't so bad either.

It all eventually came unstuck but she did have some interesting things to say. Referring to the mess that the New World Order has become she quoted Machiavelli to the effect that nothing is harder to deliver than a new order of things. She identified a number of changes in the tectonic plates governing international relations. The standing of the US has declined in all sorts of ways; new centres of power are emerging as with the petro-authoritarian states like Russia and Venezuela; new economic powers have developed as in India and China; and new diplomatic alignments had sprung up as in the G77 non-aligned grouping of Southern hemisphere states that includes Brazil, Nigeria, and South Africa.

As advisor to Barak Obama on international relations and therefore a possible future Secretary of State she felt that imposing democratic institutions on the developing world was not the way to go. Instead she quoted from a speech of President Roosevelt that the important freedoms were freedom from fear and freedom from want. She was critical of the G77 states because they had too much respect for the sovereignty of states and not enough for human rights. She saw hope for the future in the work of NGOs rather than of states, hence her high regard for Tom Arnold, head of Concern International. She also favoured the emergence of public opinion as a source of pressure on Governments regarding international topics. She thought that while the standing of the US internationally had

nose-dived no other state or group of states was stepping forward to provide alternative leadership.

She was critical of the low priority given to diplomacy in the US. Diplomacy was an important activity not least because it afforded opportunities to get to know the enemy. US officials should talk to everyone, even people like Ahmadinejad. She had made a point of studying the confessions of the individual who had transported the suicide bomber who blew up de Mello, Abu Omar al-Kurdi, who was working for Abu Mosab al Zarquawi. Al-Kurdi had worked out rationale as to why the UN should be targeted ranging from UN collaboration in places where Muslims were oppressed to its involvement in the sanctions against the people of Iraq, and its granting of legitimacy to the Iraq invasion by setting up in Baghdad. He was supportive of Indonesia in its oppression of East Timor.

She seemed to run out of steam towards the end but the overall gist of the lecture was that the New World Order needed to be re-thought.

The first questioner was a woman who felt uneasy about the idea of engaging in dialogue so as to better know the enemy. Should it not be to better understand the other? She also was wary of opposing the G77 group.

I was the second speaker. I agreed with the first speaker that the G77 development was deserving of support and a welcome development on the world stage. The problem of genocide in various parts of the world could only be effectively addressed through a proper system of international law. The existing system lacked moral authority as it was based on the settlement following the Second World War. The people responsible for the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and of civilian cities in Germany had not been brought to court. A proper system of international law required that the US sign up to the important international Treaties, in other words that there be an internationally agreed body of law; and that there should be some means of enforcing that law through an independent international military force. I said I had misgivings about using public opinion as a force in influencing international events. You would need to have great faith in the international media not to think that public opinion could be manipulated, that the media could operate its own agenda, or that the heart strings of the public could be plucked in pursuit of some agenda or other.

The next speaker was concerned about the extent of corporate influence in US policy formation, including in the area of foreign affairs. In replying to the points about the G77 Samantha Power focused

on the example of Zimbabwe where the African Union had opted to give priority to sovereignty above human rights. On international law she agreed that rule based order was a worthy aim but she felt that as international agreements depended on states who acted out of their own interests, it was difficult to deliver. An international army was also a relevant concept but it too ran up against the reluctance of states to hand over their troops to be used by an international civil servant. An alternative option sometimes discussed was to raise a privatised army of mercenaries, accountable only to an international body.

Regarding my point about public opinion she averred that in the US anything that countered the power of corporate influence was to be welcomed. Otherwise she disagreed with the premise behind my question.

The next questioner wanted to know if the US Constitution could be used to withdraw all US bases on foreign territory.

The following speaker wore a chain of office and he may have been Councillor James Brett, Fianna Fail Chairman of Kilkenny Borough Council. He asked an important question about the use of Shannon for rendition and other military purposes: how would the US react if Ireland withdrew them?

Surprisingly Ms Power said Bush would immediately find somewhere else but that such an action from a friendly state could well force a re-think. She was clearly saying that withdrawing the use of Shannon could have a positive effect on US policy. On the question of the Constitution all she would say was that Obama was an unrivalled expert on the US Constitution.

At this stage Fintan O'Toole elected to make his contribution and for me one of his points constituted the defining moment of the evening. Clearly mindful of her account of al-Kurdi's confession statement he said that Ireland was unusual in having more people than anywhere else, who at some point in their lives may have sympathised with terrorist activity. They may have thought after the IRA bombing that followed Bloody Sunday: 'serves the British right', before quickly coming to their senses and reprehending themselves for such a lapse from moral probity. My reading of Samantha Power's body language while this point was being made was that she did not like it. In truth O'Toole was only blurting out in his own inimitable style what was happening at the lecture: the audience was not hearing her message in the way she had intended them to hear it.

There were no questions or contributions from speakers with pro-US or right wing opinions. The next speaker wanted to know why the US media which had played such an important role in

building opposition to the Vietnam war had become so quiescent about Iraq. On this she was able to come back with one solid point. The journalist responsible for releasing details of the My Lai massacre was Seymour Hersh and he was continuing to provide good coverage of the Iraq war. It was not unusual for the New Yorker to allow Hersh to work on a story for over a year. Hersh broke the story about Abu Ghraib and also a recent story about military preparations to attack Iran with nuclear weapons. She considered that one problem was the new ways that media were being accessed. Her students read their papers on-line and merely ran searches on issues they were interested in.

Other questions related to reform of the UN Security Council, the role of the World Bank, and the African Union but she said nothing new in her replies. Fintan O'Toole wrapped up the meeting after prolonged applause for the speaker. He said she would be staying around to sign books, that an orderly queue should be formed between the podium and a distant graveyard.

While vigorously joining in the final applause a man sitting beside me who had earlier told me he had been a tenant of Hubert Butler's, said out of the corner of his mouth he had great difficulty staying awake for her answers to the last few questions. As we filed out of the cathedral I overheard one woman ask another, "What d'you think of it?" "Ah", her companion said, "very American." That about summed it up. Out of curiosity I returned to the cathedral about twenty minutes later to see if anyone had bothered to stick around to get the author's signature. Disappointingly there was still about five people waiting patiently in line.

Fintan O'Toole had said that Samantha Power was an appropriate person to deliver the inaugural Hubert Butler lecture. That puts the esteemed essayist in the company of an apologist for US foreign policy, even if she had critical things to say about Bush. Has the Hubert Butler Society lost its way or simply followed the logic of its Anglo orientation? It will be interesting to see who they get next year.

**David Alvey**

Republicans if a United Ireland was ever to come about. Furthermore it was a position developed by people who were manning the barricades in the face of RUC, B-Special and Loyalist attacks in Belfast in 1969. And there weren't too many of them about.

The Hibernians understood that their immediate goal of dominating Northern Protestants in whatever constitutional format they both ended up in was better expressed through the armalite than any ballot box; certainly it was not to be publicly announced.

My quarrel here is not with the clear fact that the war was fought in the first instance to overcome the oppressive sectarian character of the partition arrangements of 1920-21. That conflict had all the full range of material grievance to be called as justified as any sectarian war in history. It was justified. It was successful. It is now long past time to move on from it.

My quarrel is with its not having been moved on from. And it's a political quarrel, not a sectarian one. As far as sectarianism goes my sectarian instincts are with the Hibernians. It's just long past time to move on from such instincts.

Readers are invited to comment on this discussion article

## **What Is To Be Done!** (Also Who, Why, Where And When)

Had the Provo War come to a political conclusion with the Good Friday Agreement it could reasonably have been assessed as a Republican victory over British imperialism in Ireland. There was no prospect of an independent and united Ireland in April 1998. But there was every chance of significant movement towards a reestablishment of the national polity which was shattered by such acquiescence as there was in the Anglo-Irish Articles of Agreement of 1921 (the Irish called it a Treaty, the British called it Articles of Agreement; the British had the sense of the thing).

Three simple acts of completion could have been accomplished in the immediate aftermath of the 1998 Agreement, any of which would have reopened the republican road to unity that was closed off in 1921. Fianna Fáil could have organised as its own self in the North. Or it could have merged with the SDLP. Or Sinn Féin could have established itself in the South as an inevitable member of future coalition governments.

But none of those acts of completion was accomplished. Each and all of them was made to depend on the prior establishment of an Assembly at Stormont, and the British ensured that no stable Assembly was established there until the Hibernian wing of Sinn Féin had ground down the party's Republicanism and taken control.

The last substantial split in Sinn Féin, in 1986 on the issue of abstentionism in the South, saw Sinn Féin for the first time controlled by the Northern IRA, which was an alliance in arms between national Republicanism and provincial Hibernianism. Within that alliance the Hibernians, who were fighting the sectarian war Joe Devlin had bequeathed to them, were always numerically superior.

The Republicans, who were fighting an anti-imperialist war which they were always prepared to take to Britain, were fewer but more articulate and able to state clear political goals. They had no difficulty in declaring for an independent and united Ireland.

Joe Devlin organised Hibernianism to be the moral fibre and backbone of Redmondism. Its obstinate refusal to accept that the Ulster Protestants are a nation because they are so clearly Irish is strikingly counter-balanced by its lack of scruple in making war on them because they so clearly aren't Irish at all. A stout physical proof of the inconvenient fact that there are two nations in Ireland—that's Hibernianism!

The "Two Nations Theory", before being adulterated by Conor Cruise O'Brien and others, merely recognised a fact of life denied in theory by many. It was not an argument against Republicanism as such, but a reality that had to be faced by

Before the first ceasefire was called it was already plain that the sectarian war had been won. The Protestant middle class had withdrawn from politics. Its cannon fodder within the Protestant working class that had actually fought and borne the brunt of the casualties of that side of the war was at best demoralised and at worst declassed, disrupted, redeveloped and disintegrated. The Prods had been defeated and the victorious Taigs were socially economically and politically the dominant force in the six counties.

In the immediate aftermath of the ceasefires Taigery took a back seat to Fenianism. The core of the politics of Sinn Féin at that time was the Republican strategy of reintegrating the national polity by encouraging the national organisation of Irish parties and agitating for a restoration of Northern representation in Dáil Éireann. The driving force behind this strategy was the Sinn Féin party in the Dáil, led by Caoimhean O'Caolain. The Northern leadership made occasional noises in support of the Southern intellectuals but forebore from agitating for their core demands. They were prepared to agitate only for a return of Stormont and for redress of all the grievances arising from the war.

As the immediate aftermath of the ceasefires became the recent and then the distant past, Taigery came to the fore. Republican elements were silenced by the urgent clamour for a Catholic place in the sun, under the blue skies of Ulster. The grey skies of an Irish Republic seemed gloomier by the minute.

Since 1986 Sinn Féin has been led by charismatic figures from the Northern IRA who have been preoccupied with Northern issues, most particularly with their overwhelming need to score points against rivals in the SDLP by doing what the SDLP had failed to do and bringing back a local administration from within which they would establish centres of power for their people (within the six counties, within the Union).

The rumour that Trimble was brow-beaten by Blair into accepting the Good Friday Agreement may well be true. Or he may have been robustly persuaded to a long term strategy for disabling Republicanism that could only end with his and his party's demise. In any event, having accepted the Agreement he worked it to drag Sinn Féin compromise by compromise, year by year, away from a broadly Republican view of the possibilities of the settlement to a narrower Hibernian perspective. In the nature of Sinn Féin opponents of the drift have been pressured to conform or forced out, sidelined or silenced.

What had been a Republican strategy to rebuild the national polity (which is the essential precondition of any moves to national unity) has become, under the guise of reaching out to reassure Protestants of the Provisional movement's good intentions, a return to the Devlinite dream of a Catholic Ireland at the heart of an English empire (with a good Taig on the throne by God, why not?)

I say Devlinite there rather than Redmondite because Joe Devlin's Hibernianism was a simpler thing than the winding, twisting, convoluted thing that was Redmondism.

By June 1916 Redmond himself had seen through his original strategy. In 1914 he had reluctantly agreed with the British that Ulster should be excluded from Home Rule for a total of three years. Three days after that agreement the British unilaterally increased the exclusion period to six years. Redmond swallowed that. After the 1916 Rising a Northern Nationalist Conference was held in St. Mary's Hall in Belfast and voted 475 to 265 in favour of a temporary exclusion of the Six Counties which were to continue to be ruled from, and with continuing representation in, Westminster. Both Redmond and Devlin had to threaten to resign to get that vote and what they got was a split between Antrim and Down which stood with Devlin, and Tyrone Fermanagh and Derry which were all the more ready to move to Sinn Féin.

A month after that Conference, on 22nd July, Lloyd George finally informed Redmond that the six counties would be permanently excluded and would have their own parliament with the scale of Irish representation at Westminster being drastically reduced. Redmond vowed to

oppose that newest revision of the Bill that was supposedly on the Statute Books, allegedly to be implemented at the war's end. His opposition took the form of participation in the Irish Convention which sought to return to the original Redmondite idea of a united Home Rule Ireland within the Empire. But really Redmond knew the game was up. It may even be that when he died Redmond himself was no longer a Redmondite.

In the same period and beyond Joe Devlin remained what he had always been, a Hibernian pledged to Ireland, not merely free but Catholic, not merely Catholic but free. And a partner in the glories of the British Empire.

Devlin's Hibernianism survived to thrive in the six counties because the pre-Treaty leadership of Sinn Féin was determined that it should do so. That leadership deliberately held back the growth of its own party organisation there in order not to find itself bound by a strong Northern section of Sinn Féin to oppose partition. On the heights of the party organisation, to his fellow mountaineers, de Valera made it clear that he (correctly) favoured an independent over a united Ireland. He was determined to carry Sinn Féin with a partitionist settlement that guaranteed independence for the greater part of the national territory, and entirely willing to sacrifice the nationalists of the Fourth Green Field to that end. The most he was prepared to do for them was prepare Joe Devlin's Hibernian movement as a fit repository of their poor lost souls.

So, following a meeting between de Valera and Joe Devlin in February 1921, Sinn Féin and the Hibernians fought the northern elections together, allied on the Sinn Féin programme of self-determination and abstentionism. De Valera did not make attendance at Dáil Éireann for successful candidates a condition of the Pact, and the Hibernians simply stayed at home waiting out their abstentionist pledges.

Though Sinn Féin secured twice the vote of the Devlinites, each party to the Pact won six seats (the Unionists won the remaining 40 of 52). Four of the Sinn Féiners (but none of the Hibernians) were elected on the first count. Those four were de Valera in Down, Collins in Armagh, Griffith in Fermanagh & Tyrone and MacNeill in Derry. The other Shinnners elected were Seán Milroy and John O'Mahony in Fermanagh and Tyrone.

Devlin later (in a letter to James Dillon, 22nd April 1921) stated that, but for the pact with de Valera, his nationalists would not have won a single seat outside Belfast. Which is precisely the outcome de Valera was determined to avoid.

Then in 1925 as its President he split the all-Ireland Sinn Féin party in such a way as to leave him in undisputed control of the 26-county Fianna Fáil, Soldiers of

a Free State Destiny.

The ruthless hypocrisy of de Valera's machinations is disgusting. But at the core of it all his thinking was correct. Ireland could be free of England or it could be united. It couldn't be both. And then to de Valera's mind it couldn't be said that it couldn't be both without giving scandal and outraging the faithful.

Even today, given the advance of revisionism in the South and the failure of all political parties to oppose it, it is still the case that Ireland cannot be both united and free of England. The defeat of British state-sponsored revisionism is a precondition, though not the only one, for any moves towards a form of unity that doesn't involve going once again under the tutelage of Old Mother England.

At all events, such remained de Valera's policy throughout his career. He stated it most clearly on 7th February 1939 when he intervened in a Senate Debate initiated by Senators MacDermot and Alton who were looking for compromises to assuage the Unionists in a hope of reconciling them to a really nice form of unification. Then de Valera said:

"Suppose we were to get unity in the country provided we were to give up the principles that are here in this first Article of the Constitution—the 'sovereign right of the nation to choose its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economic, and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions'—I would not sacrifice that right, because without that right you have not freedom at all. Although freedom for a part of this island is not the freedom we want—the freedom we would like to have, this freedom for a portion of it, freedom to develop and to keep the kernel of the Irish nation is something, and something that I would not sacrifice, if by sacrificing it we were to get a united Ireland and that united Ireland was not free to determine its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other countries, and, amongst other things, to determine, for example, whether it would or would not be involved in war. Our people have the same right as any other people to determine these vital matters for themselves and they ought not to surrender them in advance to anybody or for any consideration. Certainly, as far as this Government is concerned, we are not going to surrender that right—for any consideration, even the consideration of a united Ireland."

The undated minutes of an *"interview between An Taoiseach and a northern Nationalist Deputation"* record de Valera arguing that *"the retention of the 26 county status was considered to be of such value that the loss of it could not be risked in any effort to reintegrate the country..."* (quoted in Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism*, page 389). And such was de Valera's line even

after he had indisputably won his Republic and a Fine Gael-led administration had at last proclaimed it.

To recap, even during the War of Independence the most influential sections of the leadership of Sinn Féin set about undermining their own party in the North. This was because they knew that political independence from England, just the barest possibility of establishing a republic in Ireland, was incompatible with a serious campaign for unity, and they feared that a strong Northern wing of Sinn Féin would make the necessary, but utterly unmentionable, partitionist settlement unachievable. At the end of the 'Treaty' negotiations and debate there was a war between former comrades over the issue of how republican the settlement was or could be made to be. The issue of a United Ireland was scarcely mentioned at all in those life and death struggles.

The losing side in that conflict went on to form its own party with every intention of achieving a thorough-going Republic in the twenty-six counties. It only organized in the twenty-six counties, leaving Northern Nationalism in the Hibernian hands of the Irish Imperialist, Joe Devlin. Former Sinn Féin President and leader of Fianna Fáil, Eamon de Valera, had saved Northern Hibernianism from virtual extinction in 1921 and relied on it ever after to keep Northern nationalists safely oppressed and discontented on the right side of the Black Pig's Dyke. Under the Unionist jackboot and out of his hair.

De Valera used the Northern issue as fuel in the fires he stoked up to achieve the alphabet republic. Further than that he had little or no interest. Serious Republican members of Fianna Fáil were treated as the best of them, Eamon Donnelly, was treated; driven to distraction and an early grave (he fell ill under the strain of trying to complain about the ill-treatment of Republican prisoners in English jails while in Ireland de Valera was using the English hangman on them). Northern Republicans, Fianna Fáil supporters to a man, were, like Cahir Healy, constantly rebuffed and driven to the worst forms of Hibernian defeatism. And so was the Republic built that Costello's Coalition Government belatedly declared in 1948.

There was never any possibility that a Republic established in such a manner could forever evade the consequences of its means.

De Valera was entirely correct that freedom from English politics and English wars was incompatible with the compromises the strong Unionist minority that unity would have saddled him with were sure to demand and win (short of a Stormont-style regime of police oppression, gerrymander and discrimination).

Partition was the essential precondition of a Republic in the greater part of Ireland. De Valera knew that. And de Valera said that, in only slightly coded form, in the smoke-filled rooms of high political life. He never said it publicly. Publicly he always denied it. And publicly he always appeared to be working to undo partition while privately he did his best to shore it up. Tomorrow was no doubt to be another day when all manner of wrongs would be put right. But tomorrow never came. Or rather when tomorrow finally came, in August 1969, de Valera's Republic was not worthy of it. More than 50 years of hypocrisy and dissimulation had taken their toll of the State, the Party and their President.

The Fianna Fáil Government's failure at that time to intervene decisively on behalf of its national minority when the security forces of the United Kingdom in uniform and under orders went berserk to engage in a frenzied attack on them, when the loyal citizens of the United Kingdom among whom they had been living joined in that frenzy of murder and arson; that failure showed up in the starkest of colours the bankruptcy of the Republic's vaunted independence. This freer than the Free State, independent, Republic, for which the ultimate national aspiration had been sacrificed, found itself having to apologise to the aggressor for the belated and inadequate steps it had begun to take to make provision for its people in the North and then, when rebuked by the aggressor, had rushed to abandon. It went so far as to prosecute the ministers it had ordered to manage the attempt to defend its people in the North. Anyone who wants to call that craven behaviour freedom will have great difficulty defining slavery.

The moral collapse of 1969 was an almost inevitable consequence of the immoral means by which the Republic had been built by de Valera's Party. It led to a 25-year war, in the face of which all the institutions of de Valera's Republic wilted. It is now an open question whether the Irish Nation at the end of all this is capable of sustaining an independent form of political life. Here and now the Irish State itself is up for grabs.

The Provo War did not come to a political conclusion with the Good Friday Agreement. It was not a victory over British imperialism in Ireland. It came to a political conclusion with the establishment of communally-allocated ministries at Stormont earlier this year. And that was an Hibernian victory which confirmed the New Labour Imperialists' renewed imperial fervour.

The Provos beat the Prods but only on sectarian Hibernian terms of which the British authorities entirely approve. Indeed

the working out of the parallel Hibernian victory over the earlier Republicanism of the undefeated army has been cheered every step of the way by the revived and refreshed imperial Jingos of Whitehall.

The British Empire never went away you know. It withdrew as it had to from the world it never quite won, leaving conflicts behind and unresolved issues that would give it future cause to intervene.

Its great legacy to Europe was the multinational Yugoslav state. It reaped quite a harvest from its activities around the destruction of all that.

England has been active in the Middle East since destroying the Ottoman Empire in the course of its First War on the World (in the last hundred years). There it laid the ground for the creation of the Jewish State and the oppression of the Palestinians (another loyal little Ulster Churchill called the one, dogs he called the others). Today it has embroiled the United States in its third or fourth Iraq War, and its fifth or sixth invasion of Afghanistan.

It never quite went away and now it's coming back.

Everywhere for which England has plans (which is to say just about everywhere) you will find the British Council. So of course the British Council is present and very very busy in Ireland, North and South. In March this year the Annual Lecture of the British Council was delivered by President Mary McAleese. It was entitled *The Changing Faces Of Ireland—Migration and Multiculturalism*.

Flattering the great and good of areas it has plans for is just part of the British Council's plan of campaign. In Ireland, for which it definitely has plans, the British Council is a major publisher. Two years ago it published the first volume of *Britain & Ireland: Lives Entwined*. This had joint prefaces by Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair which clearly point the way to the Taoiseach's Westminster speech in which he attributed all that is politically healthy in Ireland to English influence and example.

It is becoming plain that England is on the prowl around the crumbling foundations of a national state that has lost touch with its people and whose political establishment has lost interest in it.

It is increasingly the case that the only things the Irish people, North and South, have in common with one another are English things. The English culture of binge drinking. The English obsession with celebrity. English football and English pop.

Soon the Hibernian question will be put. The Irish have so much in common within an English frame of cultural reference, why should the country not be at last united within an English frame of

political reference, within the Commonwealth say, with impartial English bodies in place to see to it that no nasty sectarian divisions emerged to spoil the essential rightness of it all.

What political force exists in Ireland today that could give the proper answer to such a question tomorrow? At this time of writing it is clear that there is none of any substance. Only ourselves and other small groups of eccentrics.

What then actually is to be done?

At a minimum we must continue to combat revisionism each and every time at every place its rears its ugly head. We must seek to re-establish the national polity that de Valera disrupted and was finally fractured by the so-called Treaty of 1921, arguing for all Southern parties to form branches and fight local elections in the North. And oppose, openly and honestly, with none of the shiftiness and hypocrisy of de Valera, all talk of forms of Irish unity that would bring us back under English power.

The English are not looking for power in Ireland as an end in itself. England has plans for the world which are involving it in ever more wars. They want Ireland for its children. They want its children to fight those wars for it.

What is to be done is everything in our power to stop that from ever happening again.

**Joe Keenan**

## Editorial Digest

**Northern Victims** At the "West Belfast Talks Back" forum Senator Eoghan Harris said: *"cultivation of victimhood is not going to bring any peace to this country. The Irish people in the South would likely as not regard you as extremely odd people. You appear to have moral problems with republican victimhood"*. Stormont minister Edwin Poots said: *"if you are going to embed yourself in the past forever you are only going to bring more and more pain upon yourself"*.

**SDLP MLA Declan O'Loan** said that a republican black ribbon campaign to highlight allegations of state collusion in murders during the Troubles was an insult to all victims (News Letter 9.8.07). The thoughts, if any of *Love Ulster's* Willie Frazer are not recorded!

**D'Hondt** Unionist Party leader Sir Reg Empey has called for the scrapping of the d'Hondt system which distributes ministries according party strength on the NI Executive: *"I would be looking forward to the day when governments could be constructed on a different basis, a coalition of the willing with some cross-community element."* He said that at present voters couldn't throw out

inept governments and there was a role for a *"real opposition"* like that seen in the US and other democracies. (Irish News 9.8.07)

**Gay Derry** The Free Derry Wall was painted pink for the Gay Pride festival. Jim Collins, who looks after the wall said the organisers of the annual feile thought the pink wall would be a positive way of showing solidarity. David McCartney of the Rainbow project said: *"This sends out a very solid message to the gay community—we are really welcome here—Derry has changed."* (IN 30.7.07)

**Shankill Welcome** Mark Boyd, an 18 year-old Protestant was knocked down on the Shankill Road and had his legs broken. The motorist stopped for a moment and she drove off. Some young men ran over and Mark handed them his mobile to call an ambulance. As he lay on the road they asked him to sing the Sash and when he couldn't, they proceeded to beat him up. Then they made off with his mobile and his bike. (Belfast Telegraph 7.8.07)

**End of Sectarianism?** Reading the papers or watching TV in the North one would get the impression that sectarianism was almost a thing of the past. The periodic shooting at the police (and missing) by the UDA gets a mention. But virtually every weekend there are attacks on the Crumlin Road from Ardoyne and on Tigers Bay from the New Lodge. These and similar incidents are not reported.

**Carson** Someone has walked off with the bronze plaque marking the house in Dublin's Harcourt Street where unionist and UVF founder Sir Edward Carson was born. Dublin Tourism refused to replace it so the Irish Government has agreed to stump up £1,500 to do so. (IN 10.8.07) But sure wasn't Carson also a United Irlander in his own sort of way?

**Truth about Limerick!** Tourist authorities in Limerick are very upset by the posting of a spoof tourist site on the internet. It opens with mystical music suddenly shattered by gunfire, screaming and sirens. The voice-over invites people to relax in the toxic waters of the Shannon. It continues: *"see piebald ponies in their natural environment, as they crash through housing estate fences and sample the delights of an urban drive-by shooting right on your doorstep... the city's nightlife is second to none and you are sure to dance the night away at the accident and emergency department at Limerick Regional Hospital where the friendly locals are sure to have you in stitches."* It says a five-day break will cost you €240, your wallet, your keys and whatever else you had in your jacket before. *"Limerick: Open your mind, hand over your wallet."* (IN 23.8.07)

## The Indo's Guilt Complex

**Part Two**

Last month I dealt with the 'revelations' about Patrick Pearse by Willie Dillon in the *Irish Independent* (16.06.07). It formed one of several exposures: the title of the piece was *Our Dirty Secrets*.... Unusually for the *Indo* these days it was all in the upper case: *OUR DIRTY SECRETS*..., presumably to emphasise the sheer awfulness of it all.

The continuation of the main headline is *"... that we were ever taught in history classes"*. Let me assure wee Willie that the history of England (inflicted on children in Scotland, Wales and 'Ulster', as well as England) was put forward in a penumbra of holiness. Two chaps called Hengist and Horsa founded the English nation. I first encountered this fact in a 'history class' at the age of eleven. Even for a particularly daft Irish Catholic boy the lack of female involvement was puzzling.

In the article proper the first matter "swept under the carpet" is the fact that there was a huge incidence of venereal disease in Dublin in the 1920s. The Government hushed it up *"on the advice of the Catholic church"*. How come it appeared to be common knowledge in the 1960s, when I read about it? It is claimed that "holy Catholic Dublin" was worse than "sin-soaked London". This fact was taken out of its obvious context of soldiers returning home from the Great War, with the added scourge of the Black & Tan/Auxiliary incubus.

Willie Dillon also cited Professor Kiberd copiously in his piece. Kiberd claims that, when he asked about the 'Civil War' in *"sixth class in the early 1960s"*, the teacher said, *"that's not history son, that's politics"*. Apparently Kiberd commented, *"It was actually a very clever answer and I learned from it, even though I learned nothing"*. This is somewhat gnomish. What did he learn? What didn't he learn? Presumably what the teacher meant, was that people in their teens, twenties and thirties fought the 'Civil War', and many were still alive. And involved in politics from Áras an Uachtarán to local government level. The bitterness of the 'Civil War' had been further complicated by political infighting in the intervening years. This included Blueshirtism and the 'Economic War', the 'Declaration of the Republic' in 1948, and Fianna Fáil passing an Act remarkably like Dr Browne's Mother and Child scheme, after it ousted the Inter-Party Government, and other matters.

We get on to the rôle of women and the War of Independence. Kiberd said: *"over 50 women involved as soldiers in the 1916 Rising, yet they didn't get mentioned..."*. Not even Markievicz? She has been slated as being, essentially, unladylike in Easter Week. Being accused, inaccurately, of having shot at unarmed men in the opposing forces. It has been implied that it was unladylike of her even to have thought of shooting at armed chaps in the opposing forces. Quite how one should conduct a revolution is never made clear by the 'revisionists'. Maybe they think revolting is revolting, or maybe it's just revolting against 'the British' that's revolting.

Apparently *"the rebels"* would have made *"Hannah Skeffington the first female government minister anywhere in the world"*, a year ahead of *"Aleksandra Kollontaj in the Soviet Union"*. Neither Declan Kiberd, nor Willie Dillon appear to grasp the feminist implications of Sheehy-Skeffington. (Sheehy-Skeffington's name was 'Hanna'—short for Johanna, and not the Biblical 'Hannah'). "The 'rebels' might, in that case, have appointed a number of women. Sheehy-Skeffington was an ardent Republican (who went on publicity cum fund-raising tours of the USA, to expose Easter Week atrocities, and later on behalf of Dáil Éireann), and a pacifist like her murdered husband. Markievicz and Kathleen Lynn, who were involved in the Citizen Army (and were Protestants of Ascendancy and middle class origin respectively) would also, surely, have been 'in the frame' for Cabinet posts.

We end with the 'Civil War', Kiberd refers to *"a brilliant scene"* in *The Wind That Shakes The Barley*. A young Volunteer, when asked what side he'll take in the Civil War, *"just walks out and says he will take neither"*. Kiberd claims that *"there were probably thousands of people who took that position..."* [and saw] *"...it was going to be a political, cultural and human disaster..."*. Civil commotions tend to have unpleasant consequences. What Kiberd overlooks is that the neutral position in the Civil War led to no development. Both accepting the British ultimatum and rejecting it were soundly-based positions. Each led to political development. But neutrality was a march which led nowhere.

In what sense was the Irish 'Civil War' a "political, cultural and human disaster"? There were a number of pointless deaths, those of Collins and of some Republican leaders, Liam Lynch, for example, come to mind. Some 'great houses' may have been burned to the ground, but that was not in all conscience a great loss to the general run of Irish people, and a number of them were 'all façade'. Their actual cultural worth was pretty insignificant compared to the way the 'Civil', as much

as the War of Independence, proved a stimulus to the production of literary (and to an extent musical), work, and work in the fields of painting and sculpture. Even the Free State's new coinage was a sign of a vigorous cultural life. In the wider sense of 'culture' it helped to consolidate a multi-party political system, whereby the electorate had considerable leeway in making their feelings about political organisations abundantly clear. The Irish electorate behaved as if they were citizens of a republic, long before the State described itself as such.

Seán McGouran

## Does it up?

## Stack

### EDUCATION?

Education and examinations are in the media spotlight just now. One expert said *"there is no question of failure in the Leaving Certificate examination. All examinees pass. But at different grades"*. Another expert says *"The Leaving Cert does not work properly, as it is merely a test of memory and learning, and not a proper reflection of a student's ability or suitability for university"*. Also there has been an outcry from the experts on the *"dumbing down"* of the degree standards as exemplified by the increase in awarding honours degrees in the Universities.

Isn't the problem that the second-level and third level examinations are being used for purposes for which they were never intended for in the first place? There was a time when a good Primary education was available which by the age of fourteen enabled a student to engage in an adult working life. George Boole, for example, left school at fourteen. He was mostly a self-taught mathematician. His Boolean algebra is the basis of most modern computers and he never got a university degree and he was made a Professor in Queen's College, Cork.

Henry Ford had no engineering degree, nor had the great engineers Telford, Macadam, Dunlop nor I.K. Brunel nor his father. It doesn't stack up and the whole system needs to be re-thought and re-designed.

### SCULPTURE

Prize-winning English artist Antony Gormly has been commissioned to create a modern sculpture for the Dublin Docklands Development for a staggering fee of €1.6 million. It will emerge from the Liffey River and be as tall almost as Liberty Hall. From designs in the papers it looks

hideous. But only Mark Dooley seems to see it as the monstrosity it is.

I was interested in the take by Roslyn Dee who said *"It certainly beats a stodgy old statue of some fallen "hero" or parliamentarian. Let's face it—when you have seen one Daniel O'Connell or Wolfe Tone, you've seen them all"*. Could this innovative approach be adopted for Trafalgar Square?

### GLOBAL WARMING

Global Warming scaremongering received a few kicks recently. One was the discovery by dendrochronologists that Ireland's climate is now as warm as it was at the time of Brian Boru a thousand years ago: i.e. it was as warm 1000 years ago as it is now. This indicates surely that airlines, Co2 emissions and other human interventions may have little or no impact on our weather systems. Another is the report from entomologists that malaria-carrying mosquitoes are spreading northwards because of warm weather—and we did have malaria in Ireland and England previously up to about 1690, when the mossies were killed off by a "Little Ice Age". Oliver Cromwell died of *"the ague"* which was the medieval name for malaria. So what's new? It has all happened before and we as a species continued to survive.

### DOLLARS & GUNS

In Iraq, the US has lost track of 190,000 weapons. So this is a new market for arms manufacturers by friends of the Bush administration who get paid for the arms by the US taxpayer. Very clever. The dollars are taken out of the US economy and most likely transferred abroad to safe havens and the US economy is further weakened. It happens to all empires before the end.

### PHEASANT-SHOOTING

The *Irish Times* property section carried marketing dream about a Big House in Kilkenny recently. Always the "gentry" angle for the newly rich Dublin 4 types. We were also informed that there was a gun in the house and it was used for the shooting of pheasants and the writer assured us that was "with the 'h'". As if we have forgotten!

### ATONEMENT

The media is a wash both here and in the UK (there *still* is a difference—yes?) about the forthcoming film of Ian McEwan's 'Atonement'. *"Dunkirk epic shaping up to be a triumph"* and so forth. But the main thing is and forgive us for remarking on it but what moves everyone is—and this is the killer—*"there's not a hidden American accent to be heard"*. It seems that Spielberg's 'Saving Private Ryan' *still* rankles.

Michael Stack

# Old Irish And The Market

## Part Two

"WHERE is my chief, my master, this bleak night, mavrone?  
O cold, cold, miserably cold is this bleak night for Hugh!  
Its showery, arrowy, speary sleet pierceth one thro' and thro',  
Pierceth one to the very bone.

Rolls real thunder? Or was that red vivid light  
Only a meteor? I scarce know; but through the midnight dim  
The pitiless ice-wind streams. Except the hate that persecutes him,  
Nothing hath crueller venomous might."

I was about fifteen, I think, when I came across that poem. I had read others by Mangan and thought they were good, but this one was awesome. Those long lines with their rushing, galloping, darting, swooping rhythms! And the communication of the sense of cold! I hadn't known that it was possible for a poet to express in words the bone-piercing damp winter cold of Munster. Beyond all that, there was the strange impressiveness of Hugh Maguire, marching through Ireland in the winter of 1601 to support Hugh O'Neill at Kinsale. There was the strangeness of the poet expressing his concern for him: for example, in the last verse the sudden joy of remembering Maguire's most terrible acts. Whatever other poems I forgot, I could never forget O'Hussey's Ode to the Maguire.

Afterwards I read what James Carney had to say about Eochaidh Ó hEodhusa (O'Hussey), and I found he disliked Mangan's version because "*Mangan has MacPhersonised Eochaidh*". And I have to admit that the criticism is just, even though the MacPhersonised Eochaidh could never lose his magic for me. I could imagine other inspired translations of that poem in a quite different vein.

There's a completely different poem of Eochaidh's, where he declares that he's going to start composing simple unsophisticated artless poems, because that's the trend of the times. Anthony Cronin did a version which included these stanzas that I quote from memory:

"My probing hard-edged statements  
I have been forced to abandon  
for a sort of free poetics  
that is vastly more in fashion.

So from now on, whatever the subject,  
I renounce pride, profit, favour,  
if a single one of my verses  
looks difficult to a day-labourer."

I read a review of that book of Cronin's in a British newspaper, where the reviewer quoted these verses as an interesting slant from past centuries on a modern and familiar literary issue. They can be interpreted so. Eochaidh Ó hEodhusa is someone who could be seen from many interesting angles.

James Carney took him as an object of study, hoping to gain some insights into the general problem of relationships between poets and lords. But Eochaidh became so interesting that, as he said, the original goal became secondary. The result was *The Irish*

*Bardic Poet*, a brief but marvellous piece of writing that to my mind is the peak of Irish Celtic scholarship.

Carney mentioned in passing that about 50 poems of Eochaidh's survived; some had been edited, but fully half of them still had to be read in manuscript. That was 40 years ago. Since then, surely, someone has produced a collected edition, so that he can be allowed a fruitful contribution to modern Irish culture and engagement with modern Irish intelligence?

Not so. In fact, there are many important Irish poets whose work has never been collected or in most cases even fully edited, including Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh and Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh from the 13th/14th century period; Fear Flatha Ó Gnínimh, Fearghal Óg Mac an Bháird, Uiliam Óg Mac an Bháird, Tadhg Mac Dáire Mac Bruaidealha, Domhnall Mac Dáire Mac Bruaidealha, Fear Feasa Ón Cháinte, from the 16th/17th centuries, as well as Eochaidh Ó hEodhusa; Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín, Eoghan Ó Caoimh from the 17th/18th centuries... There is no anthology of poetry from the Nine Years' War (1594-1603) there is no anthology of poetry from the Confederate War period (1641-1653)... Other things too are still undone that would be worth doing.

But one must face facts about the present state of this branch of intellectual activity. In 1990 one of the current leading lights, Michelle O' Riordan, produced a book with the grand title *The Gaelic Mind and the Collapse of the Gaelic World*. For me, it became an involuntarily written book about *The Academic Mind and the Collapse of Celtic Studies*. The failure of sympathy and imagination, the naïve assumptions about politics, the relentless finding of stereotypes everywhere and blindness to specificities, the childishness of attempts to deal with the more obvious problems posed for the general theory (e.g. Pádraigín Haicéad): all of this suggested a crisis in that branch of thinking whose greatest ornament was James Carney, who died in the year before this book was published.

In one sense there is no crisis in Celtic Studies: despite recent reverses in UCD, it remains a small industry possibly with slight growth potential, capable of generating employment with good remuneration in the English and German speaking lands. But it seems to have collapsed as an intellectual

discipline where people thought and sought with passion and contributed to the general culture of Ireland. One thing that has certainly collapsed is the work of editing and collection, which was so well sustained for much of the 20th century by people like Dinneen, Lambert McKenna, Risteárd Ó Foghludha and James Carney. (Nicholas Williams, with Carney's encouragement, made some praiseworthy contributions around 1980, but he seems to have been deterred from continuing by the destructive criticism of pedants.)

Instead there are long, stale and laboured works of interpretation. One finds nothing that has the inspired flights, the bubbling intellectual energy of Carney's essay on *The Irish Bardic Poet*. Some of the best things are done by people who come from abroad with open and curious minds. *The Reformations in Ireland*, by the American Samantha Meigs, is not bad as an antidote to *The Gaelic Mind* etc. After making a survey of the evidence, Samantha Meigs concluded that the supposedly apolitical and world-historically bankrupt class of professional poets played an indispensable part in securing Catholicism in Ireland in the late 16th and 17th centuries.

In Irish-language work there has been something of a counter-current. By sheer dogmatic will Breandán Ó Buachalla has brought to the surface the more or less buried continent of Irish Jacobite literature, and much else along with it. In *Aisling Ghéar* he grossly oversimplifies many things, and the literature of the first half of the 17th century worst of all. But he has made himself and his materials hard to overlook, and so, for example, the author of *Making Ireland British* finds it politic to claim that he is giving the so-called 'bardic poetry' equal status with the State Papers (however poorly this claim may be founded in fact!). Ó Buachalla has made a continent of literature, of enormous historical as well as literary value, visible in outline. But something more is needed than an outline visibility, and the elite of Celtic Studies, instead of helping to provide it, is more likely to declare that this is a field suitable for medievalists or scholars of literary stereotypes, and for anyone else it's not worth the effort.

**John Minahane**

TO BE CONTINUED.

John Minahane is working on a translation of Geoffrey O'Donoghue's work.

## Editorial Note:

For years the Aubane Historical Society tried to get people with academic credentials to make translations of the poems of Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin and Piarais Piaras Feiritéar. But they were disabled and intimidated by their academic training in Irish from doing it. In the end it was left to Pat Muldowney, a mathematician, to embark on the project, with no specialist Irish training, but on the basis of Irish learned in National School. He is continuing this work and a second volume of Ó Súilleabháin's writings is due later this year.

## The Professor And The Prince

Emeritus Professor John A. Murphy of UCC fears that Ireland might be moving back to the British Commonwealth. This, after UK Minister for Foreign Affairs Kevin Murphy stated in the House of Commons that "*Irish membership of the Commonwealth would provide a new context*" for British-Irish relations after the recent Northern settlement.

Professor Murphy's piece, *We Have No Need Of The Commonwealth*, in the *Sunday Independent* (5.8.2007), argues that since Unionists have no desire to surrender the Union for the Commonwealth, Sinn Fein have been handily seen off in the South, and a united Ireland is now on the "*very long finger*" there is little point of such talk.

But Professor Murphy also believes that the time of the progressive role of the British Commonwealth in Ireland's independence has gone:

"Though a London-controlled Empire was already evolving into an association of self-governing (white) Dominions by 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of that year imposed a restrictive Commonwealth status on the new Irish Free State (IFS). In the Treaty debate, Michael Collins, having just hastily acquainted himself with Commonwealth development, argued (correctly) that membership would give us Dominion allies in our pur-suit of further autonomy—the 'guarantor' argument.

"However, his republican opponents predicted (again, correctly) that London would never allow the IFS the same constitutional latitude it was forced to concede to Canada, the Dominion on which our new political entity was to be modelled, in theory.

"And so; British govern-ments attempted to thwart Irish efforts to exploit the Treaty's potential for inde-pendence in foreign policy, while the other Commonwealth states, if only out of enlightened self-interest, made common cause with this "reluctant dominion" (the phrase of historian David Harkness) in eventually achieving the independence charter of the Commonwealth, the Statute of Westminster (1931).

"In other words, British thinking on Ireland remained Imperial, but imperialism was modified by Commonwealth influence.

"At different periods, General Jan Smuts of South Africa, Herbert Evatt of Australia, and Mackenzie King of Canada, all played helpful and conciliatory roles in the Anglo-Irish relationship.

"De Valera was able to make his unilateral and radical con-stitutional changes in the 1930s in the assured knowledge that the British would be pressured by the Dominions not to take drastic retaliatory action against the IFS. And it was the Commonwealth countries that advised Britain to retain a special status for Irish citizens (technically alien) in the UK after we declared a republic in 1949.

"So, whatever about future relationships, this State is historically indebted to the Com-

monwealth for its role in our constitutional evolution from Free State to Republic, 1922-1949.

"But there was never any real support in nationalist Ireland for the idea of the British Commonwealth. Though Kevin O'Higgins, Desmond FitzGerald and other Cumann na nGael leaders successfully worked the Commonwealth dimension of the Treaty, they never called themselves a Commonwealth party. There was too much grassroots distrust of top-hatted junketing for that. The fledgling IFS's external policy was skilfully exercised in the League of Nations and other international fora, rather than in the Commonwealth.

:Compulsory Dominion status came too late for Irish nationalist aspirations, it was an alien concept, and it was associated with partition and civil war. The surprising thing is that our membership lasted as long as it did.

"All that didn't stop us in succeeding decades from flying the re-entry kite, in an ineffectual attempt to trade a born-again membership for a united Ireland, at a time of self-delusional anti-partitionism."

Professor Murphy and other revisionists just cannot help themselves when it comes to seeing Irish independence as an evolutionary development.

Murphy, of course, is not one of the radical revisionists who throw all caution to the wind and produce the most extravagant claims about Britain's "gift" of Ireland's independence (which they see as having turned out to be an all too benevolent mistake!). Murphy is too long in the tooth not to take account of the former nationalist parameters of history writing and dismiss them as bunk. He realises that it is not just a story; it contains many facts that are indisputable.

Contained within Murphy's seeming antagonism to the British Commonwealth is the argument that much of Ireland's independence was actually achieved through the help of the Commonwealth.

But where does that argument lead? To the view that the Treatyites were right in their view that an evolutionary process of working within the Empire, in alliance with the other Dominions, would ultimately gain full independence.

### HENRY HARRISON

Henry Harrison, the last Redmondite, wrote a lot about the events Professor Murphy considers, seventy years ago. But Murphy places himself at odds with Henry Harrison in his interpretation. So where does that leave Professor Murphy?

Most will be unaware of Henry Harrison. Henry Harrison, OBE and holder of the Military Cross, was from Holywood, County Down. He went to Westminster School and then on to Balliol College, Oxford around 1889—at the same time as many of Milner's

*Kindergarten* (*The Round Table* group who were the main architects of the British Commonwealth). Harrison was offered a Liberal candidacy at the General Election, but instead, as an admirer of Parnell, left Balliol to become the Nationalist MP for Mid-Tipperary from 1890-92. He joined an Irish regiment of the British Army in 1915. In 1920-1 he was Secretary of the Irish Dominion League and supported the Treaty as the realisation of his objective. From 1924-7 he was Irish correspondent of the *Economist*. He wrote a number of books on Parnell and some interesting works on Ireland and the British Empire in the 1930's including: *The Partition Of Ireland; Ireland And The British Empire, 1937; Ulster And The British Empire, 1939; and The Neutrality Of Ireland*.

Harrison was an English Liberal and an Irish Nationalist. In the mid-1930s, after De Valera had begun to undo the Treaty, Harrison set himself the task of explaining to England why Ireland did not become another South Africa. He attempted to help England sort out the mess it had made of Ireland, so that the Irish could be enlisted in another Imperialist war on Germany in 1939/40, even though he supported Irish neutrality as the only course Ireland could have taken in the circumstances. In 1942 Harrison founded the Commonwealth Irish Association with General Sir Hubert Gough, the Curragh mutineer.

Harrison was a remnant of Imperial Ireland trying to explain to England's ruling class why the Irish substance, once it had taken power, had sloughed off the Empire and why the Irish would not be volunteering in the second World War as they had done in the first British "*war for civilisation*" in 1914.

Harrison's other purpose was a plea to Britain not to make the situation any worse by invading Ireland. But luckily, by the time Churchill had ousted the appeasers his army had been made mincemeat of by the Germans and it was not up to another round with the Irish. As well as this, it became the main priority—in order to get out of the hole Britain had dug itself into—to bring America into the war. And an invasion of Ireland would not have been consistent with the kind of propaganda that was necessary to get United States help.

Harrison argued that Britain in its conduct of the Treaty made a rapprochement with Ireland impossible—a rapprochement that Harrison, being an Imperial Irelander, desperately desired.

The thing that makes Harrison immensely superior to Professor Murphy is that his Hamlet has the Prince. Much of revisionism is Hamlet without the Prince. It describes the Treaty and Ireland's response to its imposition without regard to the major party to the Treaty—England. But the Prince is firmly within Harrison—he has to be, since Harrison is addressing the Prince, in his time of crisis.

Murphy has forgotten the Prince—or forgotten his ways—as opposed to the younger revisionists who have never really known his ways.

#### EVENTS IN BRITAIN

Revisionist historians therefore leave out what happens to England from 1922 to 1938 and treat the Treaty as this thing in itself that facilitates the evolution of Irish independence—as if Britain just goes along with it. But did Britain use the Treaty to slide away from Ireland? Harrison didn't believe so.

When, in the Autumn of 1922 the Conservatives ousted Lloyd George, Churchill and the rest of the Coalition that had signed the Treaty, they had to decide how to use their victory. The new Prime Minister, Bonar Law, had led the Unionist resistance to Home Rule from 1912 and the party that he now took into Government were more or less the same men who had threatened civil war if the paltry Home Rule measure had come into law. Now they had the Treaty, which still had to be ratified and implemented, and Ireland at their mercy.

There must have been a great temptation in October/November 1922 for the die-hard administration. It had got control of Government for the first time, been freed by the limitations imposed upon it by Coalition, and it had the chance to right all the appeasements of Ireland. Ireland could have easily been found to have been in breach of the Treaty it signed up to, especially when Collins was at the helm. Britain had found *cassus belli* in much less favourable circumstances to restart conflicts.

There were few Conservatives who had any enthusiasm about the Treaty. Many had seen it as a surrender and most had gone along with it only as a necessary evil, as the price of Coalition. But now they were free of Lloyd George and free to do what they wished to the Treaty and Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish contingent of the Conservative Party and supporters in Ulster were urging them on to reconquest and the Irish, who had stood in defiance of Britain for four years, were now preoccupied with internal difficulties and greatly weakened. There was also the fear of Bolsheviks around every corner, which the irregular forces in Ulster could have been used to deal with, if the Imperial Government paid the price of reconquest.

And yet these same men, who had promised *"to die in the last ditch"* over Home Rule, balked at Mustapha Kemal (Ataturk) during the Chanak Crisis. That provides a marker for what had happened between 1914 and 1923.

Bonar Law declared in the Commons on 4th December that *"we were not bound by any Treaty which had been made before we came into Office. We were committed to no promise. We had a clear field, and we could take what action we wished."*

But his Government still decided to implement it.

#### TREATY MANOEUVRES

What happened in 1923/4 was a British retreat from the high policy of the Coalition. The Ulster Government and partition were bedded down with illegal financial assistance—replacing the more ambitious scheme of the Coalition to draw Southern Ireland back into the British sphere. And the potential effects of the Treaty settlement with regard to Southern Ireland were minimised through political and judicial means.

The Conservative Governments decided not to dish the Treaty but to ratify it and frustrate it.

After the fall of the Coalition and the ascension of what Churchill called the Baldwin/MacDonald *"Second XIs"* to power, Britain retreated from the positive policy of creating Imperial Ireland that Churchill and the Coalition envisaged and fell back on the Ulster bulwark as a holding operation. It might be said that the reintegration of the rest of the island into the British sphere was placed on the long finger whilst Ulster was kept, to be used as the potential lever.

British legal and judicial pressure was directed against the Free State. This pressure sought to establish that, because the Treaty had been passed by Statute, its interpretation was subject to the British Parliament—which it would not have been if it was an international obligation. Haldane, who had been there when the Empire had a stronger will, urged the Tories to declare war on Ireland, if they had the courage of their convictions and to stop their nonsense if they hadn't. Here is how Henry Harrison saw it:

"Conservative lawyers immediately after the fall of Mr Lloyd George's Coalition, in 1922, set to work with persistent legalistic ingenuity to deprive Ireland of her principal gains in the Treaty of 1921... But the same Conservative lawyers (and the ministers whom they advised,) left unexercised the unquestionable statutory and sovereign powers of the British Government to supervise Northern Ireland affairs when constitutional principle was being violated and the liberty of the subject swept away. That was a glaring contrast. The main assault on Ireland's Treaty rights was both direct and indirect. Direct attack was launched in the Dominion Conference of 1930, and it was repelled, according to Lord Hailsham himself, with unanimous indignation by the Dominions... The direct attack took the form of the economic war of 1932-38... which failed after immense bitterness and after immense economic loss to both sides. The whole legalistic paraphernalia of argumentation to prove that Ireland was not entitled to get what the Anglo-Irish Treaty expressly gave her perished of its own fallacious frailty and the remains were swept away in silence by the Treaty of April 1938." (*Ulster and the British Empire*, 1939, pp. 153-4.)

There were three main ways in which the British administrations of the Second

Eleven conducted policy against the Free State. All three were based on elements of the Treaty that the British architects had built in to give Britain direct leverage on the Free State.

Firstly, there was the defining of Dominion Status. Dominion status did not actually exist when it was granted to Ireland. Or at least it had no legal or constitutional meaning. It had come about in 1917 as a kind of incentive to the white colonies to play a full part in the war effort at the suggestion of General Smuts. Britain was pretty desperate in 1917. It would have lost the war if America had not bailed her out.

The people who set up the Commonwealth—Milner, Lionel Curtis and the *Round Table* group—were the very group who before the war had campaigned for Imperial federation. But Imperial federation was most unlikely after the 'war for small nations' and democracy propaganda. So the Imperial federalists decided to let the colonies on longer leads to retain them.

The first step in turning the British Empire into a Commonwealth was taken in May 1917. The suspension of Party conflict during the Great War and the ascension of Milner to the Cabinet (he was second in importance to Lloyd George) gave the *Round Table* group a greater influence than they ever had before. A banquet was arranged in honour of General Smuts, who had joined the Imperial War Cabinet and had conquered German South West Africa for the Empire in the most conspicuous British success in the war. Smuts, with Milner sitting on his right side, made a speech in which he referred to the *"British Commonwealth of Nations"* rather than the Empire. His speech was printed and given the widest publicity and was disseminated throughout Britain, the Empire, the United States, and the rest of the world.

Britain had no means of forcing the colonies to do more for the war effort at this point so it conceded a kind of independent status that gave them a share in ownership of the war effort whilst committing them to it more closely. In March-April 1917 the Imperial War Cabinet was followed by an Imperial Conference. The white colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were admitted and India—not having reached the required level of civilisation yet—was put on a kind of waiting list.

When Lloyd George put the Articles of Agreement to the Commons on 14th December 1920, he asked rhetorically: *"What does Dominion Status mean?... It is difficult and dangerous to give a definition."* He knew that an expedient was a very dangerous thing to define.

This may have been a reply to a statement made by Collins to the *Times* of 8th December in which he called for the *de facto* status of the Dominions to be recognised *de jure* with acknowledgement

of the implications for sovereignty, allegiance and constitutional independence to be made explicit.

Ireland was actually most unsuited to Dominion Status. Ireland was not a colony composed of British settlers surrounded by restless natives. That had been attempted but it had succeeded in only one part—North East Ulster. So it was really only in North East Ulster that Dominion Status was appropriate. (Along with the Anti-Catholicism of the British state the lack of lesser breeds—lesser breeds than Irish Catholics that is—prevented any fusion of colonist and native in Ireland. And Lord Salisbury confirmed that the Hottentots in Ireland were the Irish themselves.)

The Dominions were British settlements in the lands of native peoples. These Dominions were majority-British colonies. That did not mean that the majority of the people who lived in the territorial areas of these lands were British settlers. But the majority of people who had reached the required level of civilization were. Often there were settlers of other races but these were in the minority. So these minorities acted as a kind of filler for the colony, bolstering its numbers and making it safe for white civilization against the lesser breeds without the law.

Obviously the great exception to this was South Africa. And the application of Dominion Status to Ireland was made possible by what had been accomplished by the British in South Africa.

Why was Ireland given Dominion Status? Because it was not independence. When the Irish wanted Home Rule they were offered a lesser form of devolution, when they wanted Dominion Status they were offered Home Rule within the Union, when they declared and stood firm for a Republic they were offered Dominion Status. Dominion status was judged the price necessary for the dismantling of the Republic and the shattering of the national movement. And the Treaty was always just a scrap of paper anyway. (Britain found itself honour bound by Treaties when it suited policy but it found them to be mere scraps of paper when it suited.)

The British representatives attempted to deprive Ireland of the proposed Statute of Westminster at the Imperial Conference of 1930. They were only prevented from doing so by the disapproval of the other Dominions, looking after their own interest. Up until the Statute of Westminster, the Treaty acted as a bar to the Irish availing of the rights other Dominions had established since 1921.

The Dominion Status which Ireland acquired through the Treaty was limited to what Dominion Status was—and most specifically what Canadian Status was—at the time of the signing of the Treaty. So that no subsequent development of Dominion Status that the other Dominions attained applied to Ireland whose status was frozen

by the Treaty to the statute law relating to this aspect in 1921.

The second means Britain used to frustrate the Treaty was through the view that the Treaty was not really a Treaty and that it was operative and binding on the British solely because it was embodied in an Act of the Imperial Parliament (as was the Constitution). The argument was that *"the assertion of imperial supremacy, made in 1766 as a challenge to the repudiation of that supremacy by the American colonies, was renewed in 1922 in respect of the Irish Free State."* (Professor Berriedale Keith, 1931, *An Introduction to British Constitutional Law*, p164)

The Treaty is often regarded by revisionists as having conferred independence by default on Ireland. But that is not how successive British Governments saw it.

The Truce preceding the Treaty had no legal basis. The British Parliamentary paper describes the Truce as *"the subject of an honourable understanding... not embodied in any formal signed agreement."*

Although a Treaty was supposedly signed in December 1921, what was actually signed were *"Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland, 6th December, 1921."*

The British are very careful with words. Articles 17 and 18 provided for the submission of this Agreement to the Parliaments of the two countries and for ratification by legislation. But ratification in Ireland was to come from the Parliament of Southern Ireland (not Dail Eireann), which was to convene a Provisional Government for the purpose.

Lord Sumner pointed to the political usage the treaty was being put to on 14th December in the Lords. He revealed that what was happening was expediency:

"In calling this document a Treaty, or to be more strict, in calling it 'Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland,' not merely is every constitutional usage violated—that may be a small thing—but a deliberate attempt has been made to convey, as far as the negotiators dared, that Ireland was what the Sinn Féiners have claimed, that Ireland always has been, an independent and separate country which has never bowed the neck to any admitted and voluntary allegiance to the British Crown. Now one asks oneself: 'Why was this done? Why is this called a Treaty? Why is it negotiated as if it was a Treaty?' I can conceive of two reasons and two only. One reason is that it was hoped that it would appease the negotiators, Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins and the rest. The other is that it was foreseen that it would be a very convenient way of introducing it with the Legislature, when it had to be introduced at long last, and would save the Government a world of trouble."

The Treaty was not quite a treaty, as such, since the Crown could not make a treaty with its own subjects. The British dealt with representatives of the Irish

Republic but they never recognised the Irish Republic or Dáil Eireann. If they had it would have been possible for the British government to have concluded a treaty with the Irish Republic as it did with Kemal Ataturk's Turkey at Lausanne. So the dealings with these Irish representatives resulted in mere *"Articles of Agreement for a Treaty"*. It was not until Ireland had returned to being subjects of the King, that Oaths of Allegiance to the Crown had been sworn in the Parliament of Southern Ireland, set up by British Statute, that the Treaty was ratified.

Here is the sequence of events: The Provisional Government assumed authority and power by virtue of the *'Articles of Agreement for a Treaty'* at the insistence of the British Government. The British administration passed the machinery of government into its hands and created a rival for power and authority to the Republican Government and Dáil Éireann. The establishment of the Provisional Government not only created an alternative source of authority—it also had a destabilising effect on the Republic. The Irish Republican Government and Dail Eireann were to come to an end on the completion of the Treaty settlement. Therefore the discipline and organisation of the Republican organs which had been maintained throughout repression, war and Truce now began to fracture. The British imposition thus crushed the Irish Republic making the Treaty possible.

One thing I have not seen pointed out is that the Treaty itself was unimportant to the British. It was the process of implementing it that was all important. The British meticulously made sure that that process involved the dismantling of the Republic and its institutions, the superseding of its legitimacy with the consequent splitting of the national movement that had established it. Without that process the Treaty would have been useless to the Empire.

Not much attention has been paid by Irish historians to the Treaty debates—the Treaty debates of the major party to the Treaty, that is. Harrison, to his credit pays the British debates the required attention. He quotes Lord Birkenhead, a senior architect of the Treaty, and Lord Chancellor as saying on the 8th February 1922:

"We recommended, after elaborate debates, and after taking the whole of our countrymen, represented in Parliament, into our confidence, that this preliminary Agreement should be accepted and endorsed by Parliament. By overwhelming majorities our advice was accepted by both Houses. What happened then, and what is happening now? The matter went for ratification before Dail Eireann. The noble Marquess has said that we must have listened, and that any Englishman must have listened, to some of the expressions which were used in the debates in Dail Eireann with feelings (I think he said) of humiliation.

"I confess that I feel that some allowance must be made for the particular character of the assembly in whose hands lay that decision, to them alike tremendous and desperate. Were they to renounce everything, for which they had declared they would fight as long as they had a drop of blood in their bodies? What was the character of that Assembly? There was hardly a member of it who had not at one time or another been put into gaol by the British Government. It will easily be understood that I am not arguing the merits of those sentences to-day, but am merely analysing the facts, with the resultant consequences upon the constitution of the assembly. There were few of its members who had not lost some relative as a result of the hostilities so recently prevailing. Therefore, it is broadly true to say that you could not have put the ratification of the Treaty before a more bitterly hostile and unfavourable assembly, how-ever you had collected that assembly in Ireland, and while I, like others, was disappointed by the smallness of the majority, I nevertheless counted it, and count it, a great circumstance that the ratification should have been passed by any majority in such an assembly."

Harrison also quotes Churchill moving the Second Reading of the Irish Free State (Agreement) Bill in the House of Commons on 16th February:

"It is my duty to ask the approval of the House for this Bill. It gives effect to the Treaty which both Houses have already approved by such large majorities. It clothes the Provisional Government with lawful power and enables them to hold an election under favourable conditions at the earliest moment."

"A Provisional Government, unsanctified by law, yet recognised by His Majesty's Ministers, is an anomaly, unprecedented in the history of the British Empire. Its Continuance one day longer than is necessary is derogatory to Parliament, to the Nation, and to the Crown. We must legalise and regularise our action. Contempt of law is one of the great evils manifesting themselves in many parts of the world at the present time, and it is disastrous to the Imperial Parliament to connive at or countenance such a situation in Ireland for one day longer than is absolutely necessary."

"Mr. Ronald McNeill: "It is your own creation."

"Mr. Churchill: "Yes, with the full approval of both Houses of Parliament. Moreover, what chance does such a situation give to the Irish Executive who, at the request of the King's representative in Ireland—made, of course, on the advice of His Majesty's Government—has assumed the very great burden and responsibility of directing Irish affairs?"

Churchill was candid about what was happening in Ireland. The movement that established the Irish Republic had been the party which brought the British to the negotiating table. But the British Government did not, and would not, recognise it. Britain, in effect, made peace with the

## How Ireland Reached The End Of History

*Irish Political Review* has invited comments on the article by Desmond Fennell in the July 2007 issue *Why A United Ireland Has Lost Its Significance*.

Fennell refers to "*The Irish nationalism of history having brought us thus far and evaporated*". Iceland is free, united and Icelandic. All that Irish nationalism has ever claimed is for Ireland to be free, united and Irish.

As things are, Ireland is a second-rate nation and widely regarded as such. The tasks of Irish nationalism have not been completed.

Has Irish nationalism evaporated? Has every single, solitary Irish nationalist vanished? Obviously not. Irish nationalism may have lost some mass support but that is not the same thing as evaporated. Mass support can be rebuilt given the right circumstances.

Irish nationalism is an embarrassment to Fennell. He wishes it would go away. So he tells it that it has evaporated. Ireland has reached the end of history.

Subjectively, Irish nationalism continues to exist. But is there any objective basis for Irish nationalism? As long as Ireland is not free, united and Irish, there is an objective basis.

Where, though, is the mass basis as long as over 90% of the Irish population are happy living it up on EU, UK and US money with EU membership and two governments and speaking another country's language? Has Ireland really reached the end of history?

Ireland is only a small place. It cannot reach the end of history on its own. It needs company. Has the majority of the world's population reached the end of history? Obviously not.

Countries with one-sixth of the world's population, including Ireland, enjoy five-sixths of the world's income. Countries with five-sixths of the world's population, including China, subsist on one-sixth of the world's income. They are determined to even things up. They have not reached the end of history.

For example "figures from the National Bureau of Statistics of China point out that the population of China's middle class will expand from 5.04 per cent in 2005 to 45 per cent by 2020" (Beijing Review, May 10th, 2007. Page 18). How will this affect Ireland?

China has a quiet contempt for nations which speak another nation's language instead of their own native languages. How will this affect Ireland?

**Ivor Kenna**

Provisional Government as the nominee of the unrecognised Irish Republic. Hence the British desire for an election in order that a new democratic will of the people might be created—a democratic will that would be more amenable to Britain and would disestablish the Republic in favour of the Crown and Empire:

"The first of these objects is a National decision upon the Treaty by the Irish people. I am asked every day by my hon. Friends below the Gangway questions about the Irish Republican Army. I will explain the view of the Irish Government on that point. It is very important we should understand the different points of view. Whether we agree with them, or sympathise with them, or recognise them, is quite another matter, but it is important we should understand them. This is the view of the Irish Government, the Irish signatories of the Treaty. Their view is that the Irish Republic was set up by the Irish people at the elections which took place during the Conference, and that this Irish Republic can only be converted into an Irish Free State by the decision of the Irish people. That is not our view. We do not recognise the Irish Republic. We have never recognised it, and never will recognise it. I am explaining their view and they say that they were elected by the Irish people on a certain basis, and that only the Irish people can release them. They are determined to stand by the Treaty and to use their utmost influence with the Irish people to procure their adherence to the Treaty, and that will, from the Irish point of view, be the act which will disestablish finally the Republic. Take Mr. Griffith's position. Mr. Griffith has not joined this Government. He has been

chosen as the President of the Dail. He is also, in Irish eyes, the President of the non-recognised Irish Republic, and if the Irish people accept his advice and guidance, and ratify the Treaty and endorse the Treaty which he has signed, he will be able to disestablish the Irish Republic and to lay aside these functions. These matters do not affect us in our procedure in any way; but is it not a desirable thing that upon the authority of the Irish people recorded at an election, the Republican idea should be definitely, finally and completely put aside?

"...The second object of the election is to secure an adequate constituent assembly."

Churchill then indicated the further steps for giving effect to the Treaty:—

"The next thing will be the holding of the Irish election, which I might provisionally fix for March or April. The next thing is that the Irish Free State Parliament should assemble and, acting as a Constituent Assembly, should make the Constitution. Let us hope that that will be in progress in May or June. Then there is the final confirmatory legislation in the Imperial Parliament, which, we may say, will take place in June or July, if the time-table were observed."

In May 1921 Britain held a fresh election to the Parliament of Southern Ireland. The Dail treated it as another election to Dail Eireann. A Parliament was elected in May 1921. It never met as all but a handful of the members of the Parliament of Southern Ireland regarded themselves as elected to the Second Dail. The *Irish Free State (Agreement) Act* passed by the British Parliament received the Royal Assent on 31st March 1922. After the Treaty was negotiated, the Parliament elected in May 1921 was called

to meet—at the insistence of the British Government—and it ratified the Treaty and arranged for the Treaty Election of June 1922.

The object of this election, as Churchill revealed, was to produce a popular mandate for the implementation of the Treaty and a new Constituent Assembly that would produce a constitution amenable to the Treaty and the Empire.

The Provisional Government governed from 16th January 1922 until December 1922. It enacted the Constitution of the Free State which came into operation by Royal Proclamation on 6th December 1922.

That is how the Irish Republic became the Free State and a new 'democracy' established within Ireland—a democracy that was Imperially permissible.

The third means by which Britain tied in the Free State was in insisting that the Dominion Status Ireland acquired under the Treaty was subject to the final say of the British Privy Council. In other words the Privy Council had the sole ultimate authority to decide just what the Treaty did or did not amount to, what the Constitutional status of Dominion was in 1921 that governed Ireland's status as a dominion, and to control all amendments made to the Constitution and everything done under the Constitution. So Britain was always judge in her own case, having appointed and paid judges applying British law and morality

#### POWER POLITICS

Of course, the only way that Britain could make sure that the Free State abided by these interpretations was through war or economic blockade. But it failed to do this when DeValera called its bluff and by 1938 it appeared to throw in the towel.

Revisionists do not ask why Britain did not do the necessary in 1923-4. They take it for granted that a benevolent Britain did not want to do the necessary. But there is not much evidence of benevolence in Britain's behaviour toward Ireland from 1923-37. There is simply a lack of will to pursue what the Treaty had provided the Empire with—to use the means at its disposal. (The benevolence of 1938 was explicable only as a last ditch attempt to clear the slate before the coming of the second great war on the Continent.)

Professor Murphy makes no comment on what sapped the will of the Empire after the fall of the Coalition. Such a thing is apparently outside his parameters of thought. He takes the British decline for granted: *"British thinking on Ireland remained Imperial, but imperialism was modified by Commonwealth influence,"* says Professor Murphy. That's one way of looking at it. But what happened to the Empire between 1922 and 1938 could hardly be described as a mere *"modification"* brought about by a little colonial persuasion. There was a more substantial piece of *"persuasion"* involved in the process. But that is a subject for another day.

Pat Walsh

## N. Ireland continued

are contained within that Agreement. However, the days of Labour *"beating ourselves up"* about the Border are over. We campaigned for consent. Sinn Fein and the DUP merely *thole* it.

### But what if there was a referendum tomorrow?

There isn't. And it's hypothetical. We're Labour! Labour members hold different views on the Border which are compatible with our policy of unity by consent. This is an illustration of how we intend to practise more mature politics than that dictated by crude sectarian division. All that matters is that Labour members put *Labour First!*

A simple question of whether or not we want an United Ireland does not reflect the complexity of the situation. Many people do not see themselves as exclusively British or Irish or do not wish to be obliged to opt into one camp or the other. If there is to be a referendum on these terms it would have the potential to be further exacerbate divisions and reinforce single issue politics. Current reality is that sovereignty is, to a degree, being 'pooled'—thus the need for political structures to reflect the nuances of increased island-wide development. The growth of labour politics here depends on being able to move beyond the traditional, historic divisions and the simplistic either/or options which only serve to perpetuate mistrust, fear and division.

### It's the Party of James Connolly—surely you will just be seen as a Labour Party for the Nationalist community? Will Irish Labour not be a 'put off' to Northern Protestants

The Labour Party will draw strength and unity from its own diverse traditions and will orientate as a "third stand" in Irish politics—neither Unionist, nor Nationalist. We will draw on the historic radical and dissenting traditions, giving these modern expression. The Labour Party has given significant thought to the manner in which it has set itself up. In fact, the model of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has been a template, with an island wide body, with a Northern Ireland element to reflect the needs of different jurisdictions. A great many trade unionists in Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic, are members of British-based unions who are affiliated to the Irish Congress of trade unions. Many of those Unions—such as the GMB, the ATGWU, AEEU/AMICUS, and USDAW—are affiliated to Labour.

### Mark Langhammer Biographical Notes

Mark Langhammer has been the most electorally successful Labour politician in Northern Ireland since David Bleakley in the 1960's (Bleakley, ironically, taught him at

the Methodist College). His mother, a teacher, was brought up in Belfast's Protestant Shankill district. His father, a Catholic from the Czech Sudetenland, was a refugee from Fascism in 1938 following the Chamberlain/Hitler accord—as a consequence of his grandfather's involvement in Social Democrat politics there.

Mark first stood unsuccessfully as a Labour candidate in the 1989 European election, but was elected to Newtownabbey Council. He was elected on the first count on every occasion he stood, topping the poll in 1997 (an unparalleled achievement in a dark era of Labour politics). Mark led the Labour Coalition to election to the Stormont Forum as the last party elected, but—due to work commitments—took no part in the Talks process itself.

For many years until its disbandment in 1993, Mark was a leading member of the Campaign for Labour Representation, campaigning for the British Labour Party—for as long as it intended to govern Northern Ireland—to organize, contest elections and seek a mandate there. He subsequently joined the Irish Labour Party (through the Donegal North East constituency) and played a leading role in first securing the right of people in Northern Ireland to join the Labour Party (through a "Headquarters Branch") and then, in 2004, for a northern branch (the "Labour Forum") to be fully recognized. The Party has now recognized a Northern Ireland Constituency Council. Mark Langhammer is now campaigning for the Labour Party to register with the (UK) Electoral Commission with a view to Labour Party candidates contesting local elections in Northern Ireland.

As a local councillor, Mark Langhammer was Chair of the Newtownabbey Economic Development Partnership, 1995-2001, and inaugural Chair of the Newtownabbey (EU) Peace & Reconciliation Partnership. He served on the National Board of the Citizens Advice Bureaux and was Chair of the Northern Ireland Association of CABx, 1994-98.

His proudest achievement was as Chair of the Rathcoole Regeneration Working Group where he led an effort to regenerate Rathcoole, Northern Ireland's largest housing estate, which resulted in successful bids for Government, European, charitable and other regeneration funds being channeled into improving the housing, environment, play, sporting, recreational, educational and economic development facilities in the estate. The improvements led to the first ever visit by a Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam, to Rathcoole, as well as a Royal visit from Princess Anne.

Mark Langhammer has been an outspoken opponent of paramilitary gangsterism (whose contributions to the regeneration of Rathcoole was limited to attempts to extort money from building contractors), and has publicly backed Raymond McCord's campaign for justice for his murdered son (where the intervention of Labour leader, Pat Rabbitte, in the Dail played a significant part in the "blowing open" the corrosive effects of state collusion with Loyalist paramilitaries).

Mark Langhammer did not contest the 2005 local elections in order to concentrate on the effort to secure Labour Party candidates in Northern Ireland. He was co-opted onto the Labour Party National Executive Committee in July 2005.\*\*\*\*\*

liberating effects of a positive relationship with an independent Irish state. There is no prospect of that happening within the present framework of Northern Ireland, where each community is organized politically against the other, and the southern state and its politics are thought to be identified only with the moderate Catholic nationalist interest. A Labour electoral presence in the north would be the first vital step in the creation of a politics in which Catholics and Protestants could be involved simply as citizens.

We are in your hands, brothers and sisters. The future for the left in Northern Ireland is within a vigorous mainstream, governmental party of the left. **That Party is the Labour Party.** We seek your support to allow us to take the next step—contesting Council seats and giving representation to hard working families on the ground.

### More Information:

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Labour candidates in the North  
—are you sure?

### Questions and Answers.

**What about the SDLP?** Our proposal is a modest one, pitched at contesting **local government elections only**—one which balances the needs of northern Labour Party members to develop and grow the Party, with the wider needs of the Party to keep open the potential for political realignment in the longer term, particularly with regard to the SDLP.

The Labour Party's relationship with the SDLP is understood by Northern Ireland based Labour Party members. It is a conciliatory and moderate party of the Catholic community. It has broadly progressive policies on a range of social matters. At times when the Labour Party had no elected MEP, John Hume's office was generous in providing a gateway.

However, the SDLP has no formal links with the trade union movement. Grassroots community and voluntary sector activists tend to be associated with the Progressive Unionist Party or Sinn Fein, not the SDLP. Although affiliated to the Party of European Socialists [PES], not since the days of Paddy Devlin or Gerry Fitt has there been a recognizably socialist element in the SDLP. Its political character is demonstrated by the members who have left it. Austin Currie had no political disagreement with the SDLP when he left, slotting in easily with Fine Gael!

Labour might be the SDLP's *sister party* in the PES, and regularly sends TDs to help in northern elections. But all Labour members who canvass in Northern Ireland

are fully aware that, as an electoral body, the SDLP's purpose is to get out the Catholic vote. In the Stormont Assembly, the SDLP designates to represent the Catholic community. Equally, the SDLP is remarkably non partisan when it comes to elections in the Republic. Many a struggling Labour candidate would have given his soul for even a token appearance by John Hume in the byways of Donegal, Dublin or Cork. And Mark Durkan made no bones about welcoming a Fianna Fail victory in the recent Dail election. The plain truth is that none of the northern parties, including the SDLP, are recognizably Labour in the normally accepted sense. The "sister party" argument is nowadays simply an excuse for inaction. We don't expect that Labour Party delegates would have the cynicism to use such an excuse.

**We won't win, will we?** We don't win in Donegal, we don't often win in Roscommon. We rarely win in Leitrim. No one thinks Labour candidates will have it easy. It'll be a hard slog. But it is essential to offer Labour people a home, and candidates to vote for. As it happens, we can be confident of some initial success. NEC member Mark Langhammer has been the most successful Labour politician in Northern Ireland since David Bleakley in the early 1960's winning successive elections since 1989, to retain a council seat in the tough Newtownabbey area of North Belfast. Mary McMahan served on Belfast City Council as a Workers' Party representative. Jenny Muir was a councillor in Hackney. Michael McBrien is a stalwart trade unionist and member of the District Policing Partnership. Ciaran McLean (son of well known civil rights activist, Paddy Joe McLean) could be a strong candidate in Tyrone. Likewise, Liam Gallagher, long time chair of the Derry Trades Council. The Labour Party could not wish for better slate of activists or candidates.

**Why now?** These Council elections are the first under the new system. The old 26 districts have been replaced with 7 Councils with increased powers. Labour was the only party to strongly advocate for a mature and powerful local government. We should have the courage of our convictions and contest these seats. If we do not run in the 2009 elections, then the next Council elections would not be until 2013.

### Northern Ireland Politics: Why do we need Labour?

The Northern Ireland problem is, in essence, a simple one. There may be many complications, nuances—but the core problem is simple. Northern Ireland is systematically mis-governed, and has been since its inception. Presently, Northern Ireland is governed by a new Labour Government in Westminster without a

vote to its name. Not a single vote. And Labour governs Northern Ireland in ever deeper consultation with a Fianna Fail Government equally without a vote to its name. It is this undemocratic unacceptable misgovernment that is at the heart of the Northern problem.

Not allowed to settle down within any governmental system—and without the governmental politics of Britain or Ireland—Northern Ireland falls back on the age old communal & sectarian division.

Breaking sectarian politics down will be neither easy nor quick—but it can only be done by offering voters real governmental politics—the politics of "who governs and in whose interests" It is only the gravitational 'pull' of state level politics that will draw people away from sectarian rhythms/patterns. The Greens are running, the British Conservatives are contesting. It's time now for the Labour Party to dip our toes in the water!

### What about the British Labour Party, aren't they organising in Northern Ireland too?

Labour will develop fraternal relationships with all parties within the PES, and the Labour Forum will welcome those who are also members from the British Labour Party to the Forum.

In objective terms, British Labour membership was conceded to Northern Irish people reluctantly, under legal threat, and only as a means of avoiding political organisation. All British Labour spokesperson insist that conceding membership to those resident in Northern Ireland was undertaken for the express reason of stopping political organisation. That is not the case with the Irish Labour Party which has been set up to develop public political positions and to develop political space on the centre left.

### Sure, isn't Northern Ireland "sorted" now with Stormont up and running?

The operation of the devolved government is welcome. It's better than arrogant, unelected, part time, "parachute in" English ministers. But it is also a "devolved" government. Power devolved is power retained. It remains the case that Northern Ireland, though transformed and equality reigns, remains in a long-term political limbo. Even our religious friends have decided that their limbo was not sustainable and no longer exists, as far as I know.

Labour could provide a long-term positive focus as an alternative to the may become political posturing by both sides of the present divide.

### What is Labour's position on a Border Referendum?

Labour holds to the "consent" principle, enshrined within the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Provision for Border polls

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## N. Ireland *continued*

Protestant union. His answer was that "*it had nothing to do with reconciliation*". He explained that the NASUWT became the largest teachers union in Northern Ireland—the largest in South Armagh, and the largest in North Down—because it was represented on the UK Burnham Committee which set wages—whilst INTO and UTU weren't. It was the gravitational pull of power, at the level of state, that drew teachers away from communal, Protestant or Catholic positions. And so it will be with politics. **Politics is influencing and participating in state power or it is nothing.**

The mirage of provincial Labour is now over. **"Soda Farl" socialism is gone.** After the NILP, the United Labour Party, the Labour Party of Northern Ireland, and Labour 87, there will never again be a serious effort to establish a provincial Labour Party. But a serious effort had to be made to prove the point.

I campaigned for many years for the British Labour Party to organize in NI, not because I was sold on the union, but because it was the centre-left party contesting for state power. The question of who governs and in whose interests was paramount. As the party of working people, Labour's gravitational pull had drawn people in Glasgow and Liverpool away from communal religious affiliations. Whether it could have done so in Belfast remains unanswered. It didn't try. For reasons of state, British Labour would not and will not organize in N Ireland. But nature abhors a vacuum.

### **So, why should the Irish Labour Party contest elections in Northern Ireland?**

There are a number of reasons:

First, the Irish state is playing an increasing role in Northern affairs and it is appropriate that the political system should begin to reflect that. The current National Development Plan, for instance, commits significant financial aid to roads and infrastructure within Northern Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund supports a myriad community activity financially, the six Cross Border Implementation Bodies are also directly funded. These trends will continue, notwithstanding the understandable *ennui* amongst the Southern electorate towards "*the North*".

Second, the Labour Party, as a party (unlike any party within Northern Ireland) contends for the exercise of real power in a sovereign state. As a governmental party of *critical mass*, it would provide a centre of gravity which could, over time, begin

to draw people of similar political outlook together, away from communal affiliation, and lend them coherence. **In the recent Dail election leaders debate, the essential shallowness of "community" politics was demonstrably apparent** in the performance of Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams.

Sinn Fein has been the purposeful proponent of the current peace process, but its lack of coherent social values will limit its vision of a new Ireland.

A formally racist party under Arthur Griffith in 1905, Sinn Fein was socialist in the Republican Congress phase in the 1930's; it was in active alliance with Nazi Germany in the 40's; it was Catholic vocationalist in the 50's; it fell under Communist Party influence through Roy Johnson in the 60's, it veered back to corporate Catholicism in the 70's; was swayed by London loony leftism in the 80's and by the late 90's and in the Good Friday phase the prevailing ideological influence on Sinn Fein was Thatcherism—when it implemented with alacrity Private Finance Initiatives—more than any other party in the NI Executive—across its briefs in Education and Health.

There are few signs that Sinn Fein in the current Northern Ireland Executive will do anything other than go along with the Durkan/Trimble Reinvestment & Reform Initiative—with all investment hitched to an aggressive programme of marketisation in health, education and across the public services.

**Social policies for Sinn Fein and the other "community" parties is beside the point. It's what gets you over today, and no more.**

Third and from a self interested Labour Party perspective, after a difficult Dail election, it would demonstrate an imaginative, bold and practical policy direction. We need a distinctive, independent and fresh approach to politics across the island that will connect better with the electorate. The collaboration of grass roots councillors, North and South, will help strengthen and reinvigorate the Party across the island, increase its reputation internationally and provide a firmer platform for the future.

Fourth, a reforming Labour Party of the left and middle ground, capable of attracting Protestants and Catholics, could prevent the leakage of political influence towards the extremes. Labour could provide potential for cross community alliances to those parties which are moderate, but religiously aligned.

Finally, a northern component of labour would fill in the missing part of the jigsaw of Labour Party and Trade Union structures across the island (corresponding to the northern section of the ICTU), recognizing and respecting the practical reality of governance in the two jurisdictions.

**Labour Must Wait?** It is many years since de Valera uttered the edict "*Labour must wait*". For Labour people in Northern Ireland the waiting continues. **Now is a time of choice for Labour.** Do we stand for **tribalism** in Irish politics, furtively rejecting the efforts of people who would try and build bridges across the sectarian divide? Or do we stand for building the **Third Strand**? That's why we are seeking your support for a modest measure—that Labour Party candidates contest the 2009 local Council elections in Northern Ireland.

Our motion asks the Labour Party to give recognition and support to bring about the development of a real **Third Strand** in northern politics.

Northern Ireland politics is currently structured along communal/religious grounds, producing a constant predisposition to sectarian grind and conflict. Our society is changing, with new peoples and increased ethnic and national diversity. There is a large and growing middle ground of people of all religious affiliations who collaborate in work, in trade unions, in the voluntary sector and community groupings many of whom would be concerned to develop a Third Strand in northern politics—given the right vehicle. We believe that the Labour Party, rooted in internationalism, is that vehicle.

Usually, when the issue of Labour contesting elections in the North comes up, there are a number of staple questions. The most frequently asked are

- 1) What about the SDLP—is it not our sister Party in Northern Ireland?
- 2) We won't win, will we?
- 3) Why Now—is the timing right?
- 4) What about the British Labour Party—is it not trying to organize?
- 5) Sure now that Stormont's up and running isn't the North all sorted and boxed away?
- 6) Labour would get caught up in Northern issues—like, what our position on the Border
- 7) We're the Party of Connolly and Larkin—will that not just put off the Protestants?
- 8) Why would we bother, we've just lost an election—it's nothing to do with us.

There are others, but those are the main ones. No doubt we'll get to some of these during the open session.

**New politics** Finally, there is a need for forms of politics which will allow partition to function in a reasonably civilized way for the indefinite future. There is also a need for politics which *could* enable partition to be ended at some stage in a civilized and non coercive way. That means that at least some people of a British, Protestant and Unionist perspective need to be enabled to appreciate the potentially

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## N. Ireland *continued*

and Beaverbrook's who set up the entity of Northern Ireland were geo-politicians on a grand scale. They determined that Northern Ireland was not going to be allowed to settle down within British politics. There were two reasons for this.

First, the 1912-14 Home Rule crisis almost brought Britain towards civil war. After this, a bi-partisan "**arm's length**" approach to Ireland was aimed at ensuring that any Irish political virus was kept in Ireland. When I raised this with Mo Mowlam some years ago, she termed it the "disease" theory. The bi-partisan approach is largely respected to this day by the two main British parties and is a cornerstone of British policy in regard to Northern Ireland.

Second, and perhaps more important, Northern Ireland was to be kept apart, as an **irritant** to the fledgling Irish Free State—an abnormal entity which could give Britain ongoing leverage with the Irish state. At the time of the setting up of Northern Ireland, the loss of the Free State was seen by Britain as an historic mistake. The Redmondite development was the proper course—a course that would have seen Ireland as a junior partner in Empire, robbing and civilizing the world in equal measure.

The conflict in Northern Ireland arose out of the way it has been governed since 1921. It was a predictable consequence of the British decision to keep the Six Counties within the British state but govern them outside the democracy of the state. **Undemocratic government has consequences in the democratic era.** But

Britain has sold the idea that the trouble in the North was caused by Irish nationalism. That idea is what revisionism is all about. It has been used to give Ireland a bad conscience about itself, and about what it had to do to achieve its independence. And it is one of the lessons of the past Dail election for us in the Labour Party. **The Labour Party must reject that view of things and remove the suspicion that it is an anti-national party.**

Since the end of the Cold War, and in particular since 9/11 and Blair's "kaleidoscope" speech, Britain is now fully back in imperial mode. At times this is dressed as "*humanitarian intervention*".

It cannot be said that Britain's leverage on Ireland has not been successful—with Ireland backtracking on the social Europe, joining the globalisers, and genuflecting to Ameranglia in regard to the use of Shannon rendition flights and involvement in the ISAF force in Afghanistan.

A significant British effort has gone into influencing Irish academic life,

publishing, the media and cultural life—a "revisionism" if you like—aimed at drawing Ireland back into the fold. It also tends to explain away rather than explain Irish history and the Labour contribution to Irish history is a victim as much as many other positive aspects of Irish history.

So, Northern Ireland is not a state. It is disconnected from the British state—a bit like the South African Bantustan concept from Apartheid era. Northern Ireland is a generously subsidised Bantustan—but it's a Bantustan nonetheless. When Secretary of State, Peter Brooke, urged by John Hume, said in his City of London speech on 9 November 1990 that Britain had "*no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland*", he was not strictly accurate. Britain has an interest. Britain always has an interest.

Within the confines of the Northern Ireland Bantustan, developing left of centre politics without a framework of state has proved very difficult. The Independent Labour Party tried its damndest (one of our members, Joe Keenan, wrote a magnificent account of the ILP which I would encourage anyone interested to read—it gives the best impression that I've read about how hard people tried in developing a left alternative). (*The Labour Opposition of Northern Ireland*, a complete reprint of the first Labour newspapers in Northern Ireland, 1925-26—1992, ISBN 0 85034 054 3).

After the Second World War, and partly due to the euphoria surrounding the development of a Welfare State, things could have opened up for Labour. In 1949 Jack Beattie was elected on a Labour ticket in West Belfast with a mandate to take the Labour whip at Westminster. He was rebuffed. Had Beattie's effort been taken up it is probable that the Catholic community in particular would have joined in great numbers. For the northern Catholic community, the Labour Party was the only conceivable bridge to the British state.

The Northern Ireland Labour Party too, was a very serious effort at hoisting a red flag. At one stage it elected 4 Stormont MPs (out of 52) and had a sort of Christian socialist ethos with lay preachers such as David Bleakley, Vivian Simpson and Billy Boyd prominent. David Bleakley taught me at the Methodist College and imbued in me a constructive outlook on industrial democracy. The NILP presented itself as the Labour Party against a Conservative-aligned Unionist Party, but in reality it knew that every piece of socialist legislation in Westminster was replicated, word for word, line by line, by Unionist administrations. Harry Midgely, a notable Labour stalwart, understood this and switched to the Unionist Party post war in order to play a part in ensuring the implementation of the Health Service and

Welfare state.

The NILP was a serious effort. As recently as 1970, the NILP got over 100,000 votes—but it was all shadow boxing. In 1969, when the bubble went up in Northern Ireland, Jim Callaghan visited Northern Ireland, received detailed briefings from the NILP and spoke at the Ulster Hall to a packed NILP meeting. He suggested to the NILP that it apply to become part of his party, the Labour Party of state. After the NILP had voted overwhelmingly to do so, this too was rebuffed by the Labour Party. What happened was that **greater interests of state emerged**. In Tony Benn's diaries it was clear that the "arm's length" principle still ran deep. He records that, instead of taking responsibility for the situation, Labour thought it would better to avoid responsibility, with Denis Healey arguing for Unionists "*carrying the can*".

I myself came out of the remnants of the NILP. Labour remained strong in Newtownabbey (to the north of Belfast) as it collapsed elsewhere. This was because it retained some good, long serving, individual councillors. It was in a strong blue collar manufacturing area where Trade Union instincts ran deep. And, for many years, it also retained a bar! Newtownabbey Labour produced quite a few important figures. Kate Hoey, current MP for Vauxhall started there. Inez McCormack, the well-known trade unionist is another. However one who best illustrates the dilemma we have is *Eamon O'Kane*. Eamon was brought up in South Derry, but came to live in Newtownabbey and was active in the Newtownabbey Labour Party. He was also a teacher and a trade unionist, rising to become first President, then General Secretary of the UK-wide National Association of Schoolmasters, Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT). As General Secretary, in the Ernest Bevin tradition, he led British teachers' unions into a Social Partnership deal which survives and thrives as an odd part of the British trade union landscape. Unlike the mainstream European tradition of co-determination, and the social partnership arrangements in Ireland, the British tradition is wedded to a highly adversarial system.

Eamon died back of cancer back in 2005, and his wisdom and perspective is sorely missed within the British Trade Union movement. I remember asking him why the NASUWT had become the biggest teachers' union in Northern Ireland. It was faced with two strong and traditional rivals. On one hand there was the Irish National Teachers' Union, a predominantly Catholic union. On the other hand, the Ulster Teachers' Union, a predominantly

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Mark Langhammer (N.E.C.): Speech to the Tom Johnson Summer School, Galway, 13-15 July 2007

### What next for the Left in Northern Ireland?

First, thank you for the opportunity to address you—it's appreciated. It's particularly appreciated because at this year's Labour Party Conference in Wexford, Northern Ireland based Labour Party members will be asking you to endorse the principle of the Labour Party candidates contesting local government elections in Northern Ireland—starting in 2009.

There are lots of issues that I could talk to you about—issues which affect the interests of working people in Northern Ireland. There's the water privatization issue, the Strategic Investment Board (a "rotten borough" if ever there was one), the Private Finance Initiative, the marketisation of health and education and a range of others. But the central issue, for democratic socialists in Northern Ireland, is developing a political vehicle of scale and size, capable of orientating in today's circumstances.

I'll start with a quotation:

"The continuing conflict of national allegiances has stunted the growth of normal class politics in the south and virtually prevented it in the North. Working class Protestants in Northern Ireland vote for one party whilst working class Catholics vote for another. Both are victims of political discrimination and social injustice. But the party political system does not provide a means by which this inequality can be addressed."

Who said that? Well, that was from the Labour Party in our submission to the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation back in 1994.

Our conference motion will ask that the Labour Party make this real—by registering with the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland with a view to contesting elections there, at local government level.

**Background:** the background to this is that changes to our Labour Party Constitution in 2001 allowed for individuals from Northern Ireland to join the Labour Party as "Headquarters" members. In late 2004 the Labour Party moved to create a formal advisory structure—a Branch (the Northern Ireland Labour Forum) for its Northern Ireland based members. Earlier this year it was agreed to recognize a Northern Ireland Constituency

## Eamon Gilmore

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Independent* of 28th August 2007

I was present when Eamon Gilmore used the Greaves Summer School\* to launch his Labour leadership bid and the abused the Society's facilities by walking out before waiting for the other speakers from Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein to speak, or taking part in the general discussions which are central to these occasions. The mood of the School at the end indicated that he will not be welcome again. A central theme of Mr. Gilmore's speech was that the future of Ireland and the world was determined by scientific and economic forces beyond political control. He said that the role of Labour politics was to be international and local without mentioning any national role or national polity. In this he goes further into the realms of the new right than the Progressive Democrats. By contrast, Mr. Mansergh talked about Fianna Fail not being hidebound by ideological commitment to the "free market" and spoke about Ireland developing inside the European model rather than the Anglo/Thatcherite model.

At least now we know where a Labour Party under the leadership of Eamon Gilmore will stand, and something about the manners of the man wishes to lead the Party of which I am a member. Conor Lynch.

\* The published version incorrectly located the event at the Labour History Summer School, Ed.

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Council—to allow local branches to be set up. Now we are seeking a modest next step—to allow for Labour Party candidates to contest the next local Council elections in Northern Ireland, currently scheduled for 2009.

The Labour Party has long been on record as wanting to develop a **Third Strand** in Irish political life, independent of the ancient communal divisions. With the main paramilitary organizations gradually receding and the political representatives of the two communities engaged in a less antagonistic relationship in Stormont (some would say engaged in a "love in") this is not the time for those committed to reconciliation to hold back. It is a time to consolidate the peace by introducing **real politics**.

**A sad history:** Before looking at why the Labour Party should contest elections in the north, I'd like to pause and consider why the left has failed in the north. The topic is "*What next for the Left in Northern Ireland*" There are lessons for us in the past.

## Letter To Labour Comment

### Union Officials v. Elected Reps

I've just read the May 2007 edition of LC which reprints an article from *Socialist Voice*, and I take objection to a statement within it, i.e.

"Workers' representatives—regardless of whether they are elected by their fellow workers or are appointed by the management—are employees of the undertaking. They cannot act with the same level of independence or freedom as union officials, because they are dependent on the company for their job and pay."

I realize that this statement is made in the context of a discussion of Company Unions, but could be taken as applying to lay representatives in independent Trade Unions who are also dependent on the company for their job and pay.

My experience in such a capacity for fifteen years was that elected representatives were in general more willing to defy management than the full time officials employed by the Union. Whether organizing Industrial Action or defending individuals I certainly didn't feel constrained by being an employee of the company, despite the occasional threat to discipline me.

It may well be that my interpretation was not the intention of the author. Nevertheless I felt the need to offer this correction

Tom Doherty

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Left politics across Europe is usually focused around a socialist or social democrat party contesting for state power. Around this governmental effort is often a myriad of smaller socialist fringe groupings criticizing, seeking to influence—in some cases practicing "entry-ism"—or infiltrating. Some are genuine, some 'barking' mad. In Northern Ireland, however, we're a bit like a doughnut—or a polo mint. We have all these colourful, interesting, irresponsible rainbow of clowns—the Trots, the Commies, all of them—but no solid centre. **There is no governmental party of the left.** And this is down to the strange governmental arrangements dreamt up for Northern Ireland by the British state in 1921.

**Northern Ireland is not a state.** It was set up as an "outhouse" of the United Kingdom for reasons of state. In setting up Northern Ireland, its people were excluded from the political parties of state—notably Labour and Conservative. This was no accident. The Lloyd George's, Churchill's

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## Two Views On When And Why Labour Lost Both Boat And Vote

Interviewed on the RTE radio programme "This Week" on August 27 the failed Labour Party leader Pat Rabbitte tried to foist his own sins of failure on a previous leader by damning him with faint praise. Rabbitte had been asked:

"You were outside the Labour Party when the most effective recent leader Dick Spring was in position. Looking back on all that, what do you make of him as a Party leader?"

To which Rabbitte replied:

"Oh I think Spring was a remarkable leader... and any man who got 6.4 percent of the vote in 1987 and then got 19.2 percent in 1992 demonstrates that."

But then came the sting in the tail of the scorpion:

"I think that he was also a man of his time... You can't repeat those circumstances. We're in a different Ireland now, times have changed. Dick Spring emerged as the kind of nemesis of Charles J Haughey and what he stood for. And in that sense I suppose you have to examine the decision he made when he got 19.2 percent of the vote, which was interpreted to be a vote to get Fianna Fáil out. And, because of the exigencies of the circumstances in the Dáil at the time, he ended up making the fateful decision to put Fianna Fáil back in!... It was a very difficult decision, but it was a decision that halved his seats in the subsequent election in 1997!"

Rabbitte was being too clever by half. The first electoral low point for Dick Spring in 1987 represented the electorate punishing the outgoing Fine Gael-Labour Coalition Government, while his fall from his 1992 grace to hit another low in 1997 represented the electorate punishing the outgoing 'Rainbow' Coalition Government of Bruton as Taoiseach, Spring as Tánaiste and Rabbitte himself as Democratic Left's own Super Stickie Junior Minister. Far from Spring being punished in 1997 for fashioning the successful Fianna Fáil Coalition Government of 1992-94, he was in fact being punished for breaking it up and handing over the reins of power to the man named "John Unionist" by Albert Reynolds.

But there was also more than a loss in national self-respect involved in that 1994 debacle. A very different reading of Irish party politics can be gleaned from the recently published book by Tim Hastings, Brian Sheehan and Padraig Yeates, entitled *Saving the Future: How Social Partnership Shaped Ireland's Economic Success*. Part of the authors' scene setting includes the following observations from SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor:

"Perhaps the Fine Gael-Labour Government (1983-87) also lacked the sort of personalities that the trade unions felt at ease with. SIPTU's Jack O'Connor certainly takes this view. The 1987 Programme for National Recovery 'would not have happened without Haughey. Full stop. He and Bertie Ahern understood the subtlety of Irish politics'... Jack O'Connor, looking back, believes that Haughey and Bertie Ahern understood 'the need to bring people together'..."

In a chapter provocatively but accurately entitled "**LABOUR MISSES OUT**" the authors further relate:

"The Labour Party was also a backer of centralised deals, but was perhaps jealous of the ability of the trade unions

to do deals with Fianna Fáil, particularly Charles Haughey. This testiness between the two wings of the broader labour movement was a peculiarity of the time... The 1980s was a particularly tough time for Labour to be in government, and it was also a time when the trade union movement has to reassess its basic strategies. The dynamic between the two left a lot to be desired, particularly in contrast to the relationship between the trade unions and Fianna Fáil. Relationships between Labour and the unions improved markedly in later years, with Dick Spring and Ruairi Quinn (Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 1993-94 and Finance Minister 1994-97) operating social partnership under the Programme for Competitiveness and Work and negotiating the Partnership 2000 agreement."

"SIPTU's Jack O'Connor, provides an intriguing perspective on the Labour Party, which he believes made 'a disastrous decision' in 1994 not to go back into government with Fianna Fáil under Bertie Ahern. The Taoiseach Albert Reynolds (1992-94) had insisted on appointing the former Attorney General Harry Whelehan as President of the High Court. Whelehan had been attorney general when that office had made a botched effort to extradite a paedophile priest to the North. Reynolds resigned. Bertie Ahern, who succeeded Reynolds as leader of Fianna Fáil in 1994 and looked on the verge of becoming Taoiseach, tried to mend the coalition, but was unsuccessful. Labour decided to form an alternative 'rainbow' coalition with Fine Gael and Democratic Left. For O'Connor, not going into government with Bertie Ahern was a huge missed opportunity: 'I would say it was one of the two worst decisions the Labour Party made in its history.' Many trade union leaders like O'Connor were Labour supporters, but, unlike their colleagues in the UK, they were guided by pragmatism more than ideology. Most of them saw no difficulty in doing business with Fianna Fáil, in fact some preferred it."

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