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Paisley And "British Government"

The London *Times* advised Ulster Unionists a few weeks ago not to rock the Sinn Fein boat too hard. The Establishment of the British state wants peace in Limbo. It doesn't want old sores scratched or new sores inflicted. Northern Ireland has been cobbled together again, and all concerned must put on their best parlour manners to make sure that the cobbling holds.

It is not a democratic state, but it is a condition of the 1998 Agreement that it should be pretended that it is a democratic state. But the pretence must be restrained.

The modern democracy is a party system of government in which there is all-out conflict between the party in Office and the party in Opposition. This system of conflict does not wreck the state because usually there is hardly anything at issue between the conflicting parties except the mere holding of Office. The parties occupy substantially the same ground and therefore they can do each other down without restraint without destroying the state. If there were fundamental matters at issue between them, so that a change of government caused a change of social system, what we call democracy would not work.

Northern Ireland is neither a democracy nor a state.

It is a variant of the British state, excluded by Britain from the political system of the state.

Within this Northern Ireland system the ground of party division is not of a kind with the party division in the rest of the state. It is a communal division signified by religion, not a policy division relating to the government of the state.

In the old Stormont system, where the democratic principle of majority rule applied, the Protestant community had to return a Unionist majority at every 6 County election in order to remain under the British state. A 'swing' towards the Nationalist Party which gave it a majority at Stormont would have led to a transference of the region from the UK to the Republic. A subsequent reverse swing would have taken it back to the UK.

It was no more possible to have the 6 Counties nipping to and fro between the two states than it was to have the British social system changing to and fro between capitalism and socialism as fundamentally antagonistic Labour and Tory Parties took turns at winning elections.

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A Right Wing Budget

Speech by Mark Langhammer
(Labour Party) on the Northern
Ireland Executive Budget and
Investment Strategy, 2008-11,
20 March 2008

In debate with *Cllr Ian Parsley*
(Alliance Party) and
Mark Bailey (Green Party)

The budget of the Power-Sharing Executive—let's call it the Robinson budget—is a right-wing budget. It has been proudly described as "*right wing... and Unionist driven*" by Iris Robinson MLA and by Edwin Poots, both of the DUP, who also taunted Republicans by adding "*Sinn Fein are pleased to achieve an Equality Impact Assessment of the budget—but we set the budget.*"

Neither Iris Robinson, nor Edwin Poots is wrong.

As with every other Northern Ireland budget, the Robinson Budget is constrained within the limits of the Barnett formula [which determines how much of the UK tax pool goes to NI (and Scotland also)]. It is very much about dividing up the slice of cake given by the Treasury. If the Blair mantra was "*Education, education, education*" we should not forget

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Appreciation

Pádraig Ó Cuanacháin

The news that Pádraig Ó Cuanacháin had died suddenly in Cork on Sunday March 2nd was a great shock to all who knew him. Born on 11th January 1932 he was 76. He had a diploma in commerce and was a certified accountant. He joined CIE for a short time and then worked for Cork Co. Council.

He was a member of Sinn Fein and was interred in the Curragh in 1956. He

was held there for nearly two years. When he was released from the Curragh he found it difficult to get a job. On his release he did not have a proper pair of shoes and they gave him an old pair of army boots. Later that day on the Grand Parade in Cork he met an acquaintance who said "*Paddy that's a great pair of boots, where did you get them?*" He replied "*a present from De Valera*".

He eventually joined Udaras na Gaeilge and served with distinction until he retired at 65 in 1997. He was then seconded to Gael Taca and was responsible for opening many Irish language schools as well as promoting all things Irish. He was also a translator

for Cork Co. Council. At week-ends he gave grinds in commerce and accountancy. He was a brilliant teacher and one of his ex-students told me at his funeral that "*if you had Paddy as your teacher you were sure of success*".

On the Sunday of his death he went to the monument on the Grand Parade to take note of the names on it, went to his nearby office a short distance away, came back out on to the street and collapsed. Some passers by helped him back into his office but he was dead when the ambulances arrived. He died in the office where he had worked for so long promoting the Irish language. It is

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

Woodrow Wilson: *a lost soul in Paris*

Northern Ireland politics is no more based on policy difference today than it was before 1972. But the old system in which, under a semblance of democracy, there was a permanent party of government and permanent party of opposition has been replaced with a system which allows for no opposition but has all parties in the government.

This system was stabilised last year when Sinn Fein and the DUP became the major parties in their respective communities and Paisley agreed to operate the system with Sinn Fein.

The self-proclaimed 'moderate' or 'centre' parties, who had failed to make anything resembling a settlement, then applied themselves to unsettling the Sinn Fein/DUP settlement, and they egged on discontented elements within Paisley's party who wanted to keep on paying off old scores.

The good Lord Fitt used to say that there is no such thing as a good Unionist or a liberal Unionist, only a Unionist. Adjectives don't matter. A Unionist is a Unionist when the matter in question is Irish nationalism. The only difference is one of manner. And, as there is no accounting for taste, there may be some who prefer Trimble's manner to Paisley's.

The campaign against Paisley was fed from two opposite sources—the extreme

extremists in the Unionist movement and the moderate extremists in the other camp. The extremist moderates had made Paisley their bogeyman for 40 years—see the *Irish Times*, any date. Of course it was awful that he should be the Unionist who made a settlement. But what they really resented was that he let in Sinn Fein. Bad though he was, he had a good side—he would die in the last ditch, rather than let Sinn Fein off the hook. And then, as soon as he became the dominant Unionist representative, he let Sinn Fein off the hook.

The logic of the sniping at Paisley from the backwoods of extreme moderation is that intransigent Unionism should confront intransigent anti-Partitionism in a political wasteland. The *Times* did not want a return to that state of affairs. Apparently the *Irish Times* did.

Paisley was interviewed by BBC journalist Andrew Marr. As reported in the *Irish News* of March 10th, he said he had smashed Sinn Fein by driving it into politics: "*I did smash them because I took away their main plank. Their main plank was that they would not recognise the British government. Now they are in part of the British government.*"

Marr did not press the matter. He knows very well that Northern Ireland is a place set apart. If he did not see it for

himself we pressed the information on him in the lobbying of British party conferences in the 1980s and early 1990s. He indicated then that he did not wish to know that, which meant of course that he did know it but did not intend to let the knowledge interfere with his career. BBC journalists are carefully blinkered ideologues with disciplined eyes.

Paisley too knows that Northern Ireland is a place set apart. About 25 years ago he adopted the policy of bringing it into the British system. He was talked out of it by some powerful figures behind the scenes, and reverted from 'integration' to the Protestant/Catholic squabbling, which is the ground of Northern Ireland politics.

Since he once had the daring to propose that the North of Ireland should be integrated with Britain, he knows that Ulster *is not* British but is only *connected with* Britain in certain vital respects.

In 1985, when John Hume gained his first great triumph, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, we responded by launching the CEC (Campaign for Equal Citizenship), which gathered considerable support for a while. Hume got very angry with us, but he reckoned that we would fail because the Unionists would submit to British pressure, would pull away from the campaign to democratise Ulster within the politics of the state, and would withdraw to the enclave that Whitehall put them into in 1921. They backed down in 1921, he said, and agreed to operate a pseudo-state outside British politics, and he predicted that they would once again submit. And he was right. The submission was made publicly by Frank Millar (wee Frankie), Secretary of the Unionist Party, who took a Unionist Party delegation to Downing Street, was told authoritatively by Mrs. Thatcher that Northern Ireland would not be let into the British system of politics and government, gave an angry interview with the press when he came out, and went home and obeyed.

The Protestant community was disabled in its political life by what happened in those few years in the mid-1980s, and the Catholic community was invigorated. We are almost tempted to say that a kind of revolution happened during the past twenty years which transferred Northern Ireland from Limbo to Purgatory.

Ed Moloney has published a book called *Paisley: From Demagogue To Democrat*. It is a bewildering title. Demagoguery is the characteristic mode of democratic discourse. Just listen to Question Time in either Westminster or the Dail.

Lord Bew reviewed it in the *Irish Times* (15 March) under the title *Paisley And The Provos: Inextricably Linked?* Why the coy question mark? Paisley and the

Provos are the current representatives of the Protestant and Catholic communities in the Northern Ireland system in which they were irresponsibly thrown together by the rulers of the British state and deprived of the political medium which would have enabled them to be anything other than intimate antagonists.

The *Irish Times* (Tom Fewer) marked the 90th anniversary of the death of John Redmond during the month (25th March). It told us that "*After Parnell's affair with Katherine O'Shea the Irish Parliamentary Party all but disintegrated because of internal bickering and the influence of the Catholic Church*". In fact it was the English Protestant Nonconformist influence in the Liberal Party that made an issue of the evidence given in the O'Shea divorce case and demanded the resignation of Parnell as a condition of maintaining the Home Rule alliance. The affair with Kitty O'Shea—an English upper class lady—was well known in the Party long before the divorce action, and neither the Party nor the Catholic Bishops made anything of it in the first instance. The split in the Party came about when Gladstone said he would have to drop Home Rule if Parnell continued as leader. William O'Brien suggested that Parnell should stand down as leader in Parliament for the time being, while continuing Party Chairman. Parnell refused to consider any compromise. He demanded blind obedience from the Party, and a breaking of the Home Rule alliance with the Liberals. When he failed to get this he set about breaking the Party in the country, and indulging in revolutionary posturing, with Redmond as his loyal apostle.

Then the *Irish Times* says: "Some credit for the Land act of 1903 must be given to Redmond". In fact that Party under Redmond's leadership tried to persuade the tenant-farmers that the Land Act was a Landlord/Tory swindle to rob them of their savings. This led to a split in the Party. The supporters of the Act, led by William O'Brien (who was also its architect, along with Ulster Protestant tenant righter T.W. Russell), led its implementation against Redmondite opposition, and contested the 1910 Election in opposition to the Redmondites.

Then the *Irish Times* slips us into the Great War, never telling us what it was about, but saying that "*Asquith... and Redmond... were anything but warmongers, but they were shocked by the atrocities committed by the Germans in Belgium*". But of course Asquith declared war, with Redmond's support, before the Germans had any opportunity to commit atrocities.

The Casement 'Black Diaries'

An Overlong Controversy In Outline (Part 3)

You have been kind enough to allow me to answer the various adverse criticisms made in your columns relating to my alleged failure 'to engage meaningfully and fully with the forgery thesis'. But your correspondent is not convinced that 'following all the leads I could in the Noyes-McHugh-Mackey archive' would be a fruitful process, although he does not know what those leads were. Apart from anything else, names, addresses and telephone numbers led me to all sorts of helpful living witnesses and their sources. Obviously I could fill a lengthy volume with all that. I should be grateful if you would allow me to outline in brief just one trail which I followed.

The first step was to approach Richard Crossman who, as British Director of Political Warfare against the Enemy and Satellites or as Assistant Chief of the Psychological Warfare Division of SHAEF might have been expected to know something about the activities of his predecessors in the First World War. He advised me to approach Sefton Delmer, the *Daily Express* correspondent who had been a 'Director of Special Operations' during the Second World War; also Donald McLachlan, who had held various propaganda posts which came loosely under the heading 'Naval Intelligence'.

Sefton Delmer, amidst some useful leads, wrote the following frivolous suggestion:

"If you are mad keen to establish that the diaries were a forgery why not got someone to forge a page or two rather badly—and then say that this was a 'first proof' subsequently rejected for the more perfect article now accepted as genuine. That is what dear Dr Goebbels would have done."

Donald McLachlan's leads, which complemented Delmer's, were very helpful. Thanks to him I was able to get my foot in the Cabinet Office, where I obtained an introduction to a 'professional' forger. I had better not name him but what followed brought home to me that, just as one man's traitor is another man's patriot, a forger can be a genuine hero: that is if his talents are employed to save lives. Forgers of the Second World War spent much of their time producing fake printed matter to enable brave individuals to escape the attentions of the Gestapo. Inevitably the degree of the forger's bravery often depended upon the location in which he had to work.

I won't go on for ever, but I was able to elicit responses from individuals attached to Room 40 (Naval Intelligence), the body which monitored Casement's movements during his collaboration with Germany. One of them commented: "the Intelligence Division was very large, spread over a number of rooms—room 40 came to be used as a sort of Generic title after the war".

That's enough, I hope. My efforts to get my findings aired meant that I had to try ten publishers before anyone was happy to take me on.

Roger Sawyer

Pádraig Ó Cuanacháin

continued

so sad, as he was in great health. It seems he had a massive heart attack.

He was also a great help to the Roger Casement Foundation. Raising funds was his specialty. Whenever the foundation need an injection of cash Paddy rallied to the cause and raised what was necessary.

He attended all of our Symposiums and spoke at many of them.

His latest interest was in Casement's time in Germany. He forged links with local History associations in Zossen and other parts of Germany that had a memory of Casement.

He contributed many articles to a wide range of publications. I particularly liked his occasional Irishman's Diary in the *Irish Times*.

He was a special person and is deeply mourned by his loving wife Noírin and children Deirdre, Colm, Ciarán, Fergus and Brian.

Jack Moylett

Editorial Note:

Any readers who attended launches of the Aubane Historical Society in Cork city will remember Pádraig Ó Cuanacháin, both as Chairman and from radio broadcasts. He will be missed.

Incidentally, the *Irish Times* did not see fit to mark Pádraig's passing. But we are sure that is no surprise to any readers who have followed that paper's curious obituaries policy.

A Right Wing Budget continued

that the Robinson edict will be "*Barnett, Barnett, Barnett*"

The *Budget, Investment Strategy and Programme for Government* (PfG, Programme for Government) was welcomed by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Institute of Directors (IoD), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and by all and sundry in the media. It was agreed unanimously by all 4 parties in the Executive Committee—the DUP and Sinn Fein of course, but also the UUP more grudgingly (on grounds that they did the "heavy lifting" in the last administration). Bizarrely, the SDLP Assembly group opposed the budget on the floor of the Assembly, but assented in Executive!

There is nothing in the budget that could not and would not have been undertaken by New Labour, and nothing in it to worry Gordon Brown or Alastair Darling. It is written firmly within a free market, neo-liberal orthodoxy. It talks of compounded, year on year "*efficiency savings*", talks down the public sector as "*oversized*", sets out 23 Public Service Agreements (PSAs), proposes the sale of significant public assets, and hitches a vast capital expenditure to an aggressive privatisation and marketisation programme.

The difficulty for Northern Ireland in proposing a "*budget for business*" or a budget to "*kickstart the economy*" is that 'our wee province' forms part of a wider UK economy which relies heavily on the performance of the City of London, on housing speculation, on Government borrowing and spending, on vacuous consumerism and vast individual consumer borrowing, on the availability of both easy, regulation-lite credit and on the availability of low-cost consumer goods from around the world.

In today's economy, the United Kingdom as a whole—in the words of many a Chief Constable—lives a lifestyle "*well beyond its visible means*". The UK is, allegedly, the 4th largest economy in the world, yet it is remarkably unproductive. The UK makes very little, manufactures very little; grows very little; and extracts or mines very little. In 2006, there was a £60 billion deficit in visible trade in goods (ie stuff we make). This deficit is, apparently, to made up to a degree from "invisibles"—the result of a vibrant financial services sector! The health of the City of London is of paramount importance to the UK Governments—a financial centre that even the International Monetary Fund has described as a tax haven.

This is all well described in Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson's book, *Fantasy Island* (1) which I would recommend to you. The UK economy is not remotely productive, and Northern Ireland is the least productive

part of it!

To be fair, the leverage and scope for Peter Robinson (even were he minded to do so) to effect movement away from this failed UK economic model is limited.

By way of contrast, it is worth saying that the inflexible, unproductive, 'ossified' economies of "old Europe" are bringing in trade surpluses. The German economy, which Gordon Brown never tires of heaping scorn upon, has the biggest trade surplus in the world! Japan's last year trade surplus was over £50bn. France, the Scandinavian countries, and even Italy returned trade surpluses.

They all live within their means or better.

Public Services: I have argued elsewhere (3) that the mantra that the Public sector is "*crowding out*" the private sector is spurious; and that the 3% Efficiency Savings is a tactic borrowed straight from HM Treasury's Gershon Review. Northern Ireland is heavily reliant on the public sector, but public services are increasingly "marketised", that is, run on private sector lines, with cost minimisation, Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), "best value", VFM (value for money), outsourcing, and efficiency gains—the public sector equivalent of shareholder value. And the tactic of "balkanizing" the public sector into 23 PSAs, all target-driven and micro-managed, is the embodiment of the 'control freakery' endemic in HM Treasury—the same culture, I gather, to be found in Peter Robinson's Castlereagh Council and, by now—I would guess—within the Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) as well. PSA balkanization also represents the opposite of a "*joined up*" public service ethos.

CORPORATION TAX: SILVER BULLET?

Apart from Conor Murphy's useful measure to allow the publicly-owned ports a degree of commercial freedom, the only significant economic proposal from the Executive has been to harmonise Corporation Tax rates with the Republic of Ireland rate of 12.5%. Prompted by economists such as Mike Smyth and finance and banking interests such as Sir George Quigley, this has been the sole "*silver bullet*" economic approach agreed between the parties. The proposal was slapped down by Sir David Varney's review. The naivety of this approach, however, is a shocking reflection on the bankruptcy of communal, Protestant Vs Catholic politics, and wholly misunderstands the position on two counts.

Tax Justice: First, very few of the big corporates (let alone super wealthy individuals) pay a fair tax contribution, with over one third of the "Top 700" companies paying no tax at all! Paying at 12.5% would be a shocking state of affairs for these serial anti-social scroungers. The staggering recent report by tax specialist

Richard Murphy (2) shows that the UK loses some £25-33 billions in tax avoidance by large corporate businesses and super wealthy individuals. Based on the standard anticipated share, under Barnett, this could add between £0.71 billion and £0.94 billion into Northern Ireland's coffers. Neither Peter Robinson, the DUP nor Sinn Fein have anything at all to say about this staggering loss of income to the local Treasury!

Why the silence?

One of the largest companies present in Northern Ireland is Tesco's. We spend an estimated £1 of every £3 in groceries at Tesco's and about £1 in every £8 of total income. Yet Tesco's are fit to boast that it their *duty* to their shareholders to bilk the Treasury to the tune of over £1 billion per annum through a network of complex financial vehicles in offshore havens!

A gigantic fraud has been committed by the financial elite, with the tax burden shifted to PAYE taxpayers. This sort of *slash 'n burn*, Gangster Capitalism is more brazen than anything the UDA were ever responsible for, on a scale unimagined by the Andre Shoukris, the Johnny Adairs, and the Jackie McDonalds. It would be enough to make Harry Enfield's "*loadsamoney*" character blush!

The Celtic Tiger: Second, the "Celtic Tiger" development is about very much more than the "stroke" of low Corporation Tax—and the four Executive parties lack a coherent understanding of this.

Perhaps the best account of the Celtic Tiger is contained within Tim Hastings, Brian Sheehan and Pdraig Yeates account, *Saving The Future* (4). The IoDs, CBIs, FSBs and all the Executive parties need to understand the mix of factors which shaped the Celtic Tiger. These include:

- * 1st, Massive infrastructural investment facilitated by transfers from the EU negotiated by Haughey and landed in the time of Reynolds' Government.
- * 2nd, The negotiation of a series of national partnership agreements—powerful corporatist arrangements borrowed consciously from the German *Mitbestimmung* (co-determination) system—between trades unions, employers and Government. This effectively providing a *de facto* incomes policy and industrial relations stability as the basis of economic policy
- * 3rd, The positive effect of new technology for a geographically peripheral island
- * 4th, Efforts to attract targeted sectors of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) notably in new technology and the bio-medical sector.
- * 5th, An agreed education strategy, with a structured and targeted county system of vocational education and good regional technical colleges

* 6th, Nimble and focused government, not least through the Department of the Taoiseach

If we are honest with ourselves, there was a patriotic aspect to the Celtic Tiger too. I recall the then SIPTU leader, Bill Attley saying that the social partners got together "to save the country"! We in the Labour Party should be big enough to admit that the three core elements making the "Celtic Tiger" roar have been the national development ideology of Fianna Fail, the effects of Catholic social teaching, and the social democratic instinct of a Trade Union movement which saw itself as the industrial wing of the national movement. There was a desire of all three components to "leapfrog" Britain and reconnect fundamentally with Europe. There has been some rowing back from the "leapfrog to Europe" strategy since Haughey. And it is noticeable, too, that the more adversarial instincts of the British-based Trade Unions are at the core of opposition to Partnership within the Trade Union movement.

THE PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY

With 12.5% Corporation Tax binned, and off the agenda, the Robinson budget provides no alternatives to support the development of a manufacturing or productive economy. No Industrial Planning Boards or Tri-partite arrangements are in place to stimulate long-term, strategic planning. There are some supply side measures to support "STEM" subjects within Higher Education—that is Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics—but vocational training is a straightforward 'read across' from England's failed Leitch Report. For instance, the Jobskills programme so badly slated in the PAC (Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons) in 1995 has been repackaged as an "Apprenticeship" system retaining all the previous failed components—and the Apprenticeship system will—as sure as night follows day—end up back at the PAC, charged with high drop-out rates, poor levels of completion, low employer involvement, no tri-partite sectoral planning, and funding-driven processes. It's all so depressingly predictable.

Nothing in the budget tackles vastly over-bureaucratic governance—the ridiculous spectacle of 11 Departments on top of 108 MLAs double and treble jobbing, state funding of up to a thousand political jobs, many filled by political spouses and relatives. Although the 26 Councils will reduce to 11, some 460 Councillors will be retained—a huge over-provision.

It should be noted that Peter Robinson and his family have benefited to the tune of close to half a million pounds in 2006-07 from the public purse from tax funded political salaries and allowances in respect of their Council, Assembly and Westminster roles. And the Finance Minister's family 'take' is set to rise in 2007-08.*

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has more employees than George Bush's White House, and ten times more than Alex Salmond's equivalent Department in Scotland! Nothing tackles the cost of segregation. The "Shared Future" Action Plan was "noted".

No measures have been taken to promote the 'green' economy. The German achievement of vast job creation and investment in low carbon technologies has not been looked at by Mr. Robinson—but is coming within the mainstream of Government thinking in the Republic under the influence of Green Party's Eamon Ryan. Fianna Fail were not behind the door in stealing ideas from the German system of *Mitbestimmung* (co-determination); they won't be shy to steal German ideas on the green economy either. And with over 200,000 Euro investment pledged to energy-related research over the next 5 years, Ireland—from a low base—is now set to seriously promote a low-carbon economy. We'll see incentives to develop low energy transport; we'll see energy-efficient building regulations; we'll see a growing commitment to bio-fuels in public transport and we'll see the promotion of a shift towards energy crops in farming.

But not in Northern Ireland, where even an Environmental Protection Agency has been too much for the DUP.

Instead, the Robinson budget has looked to the Casino Capitalism of the "British Way"—the "funny money" spivery; the "smoke and mirrors" of private finance. The relaxed way in which Peter Robinson has embraced PFI (Private Finance Initiative: under which public services are farmed out to private capital), and the shadowy Strategic Investment Board is instructive. Mr. Robinson has approved the Workforce 2010 initiative—a vast Government estate hand-over to the private sector; these buildings will be leased back over a 25 year period and—here's the sting—at the end of the contract, the private sector will own the buildings. It's like taking out a 25 year mortgage, except that you don't get to own the house you've paid for!

The Balmoral High School escapade is a prime example, where a school built in 2003 on a 25-year contract will close this year. No post-project evaluation has taken place; the taxpayer will pay £400,000 a year until 2026/27 for a school that has long since closed, to a total of £9.2 million; no lessons have been learnt—yet Minister Robinson is set to charge straight ahead with a vast capital programme along private finance lines, led by the nose by the Strategic Investment Board. This shadowy, unaccountable Board is the 'attack dog' of the marketisation agenda. Set up as a company with private sector imperatives, all Permanent Secretaries are legally obliged to "take advice" from the SIB. And this "advice" will, over time, see a step-

change in the marketisation of our public services and a diminution of the public sphere.

PFI consortia and tendering companies remain ever alert for opportunities to rip off the public purse. The recent revelations of the National Audit Office in Great Britain indicate that PFI companies routinely overcharge for 'extras'. Changing a socket or a door handle can cost a king's ransom. This is inevitable in 25- or 30-year long contracts, where the service contractor has the public sector "over a barrel". Only last month, the *Guardian* 'outed' the latest sophisticated off-shore tax avoidance measures of PFI consortia on capital gains (5). And all this following on the spectacle of the Inland Revenue—yes, the Inland Revenue—offloading its buildings estate to a company, Mapeley, registered in the tax haven of Bermuda! Mapeley, it should be noted, was a bidder in the notorious Northern Ireland "family silver" sell off—Workforce 2010. Peter Robinson is entirely relaxed with 'Casino Capitalism'—relaxed about this sort of financial gangsterism and so, it seems, are his partners in Government.

In the final analysis, this Robinson budget is a budget of communal political parties unused to social and political economy. It is the budget of politicians out of their depth, and with no concept of the sort of rip-off merchants, international tax dodgers, and slash and burn thieves swarming to and picking over the bones of the "new Northern Ireland".

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* The breakdown of public funding received by the Robinson family for 2007-08 won't be known for some time, but the figure will be higher than that for 2006-07. Mr Robinson is now a Minister (of Finance), with Mrs Robinson holding a remunerated Stormont Committee Chairmanship (of the Health Committee), and with MLA office running costs have increased by around £20,000 per member. Within their allowances, the Robinsons employ all three of their children, plus a daughter-in-law.

The Labour Party
www.labour.ie/northernireland

A Martian Eye On Russia

Seamus Martin is a decent man and he has decided to behave decently towards those who on a personal level behaved decently towards him during the course of his journalistic career, even to the point of unconvincingly giving them the benefit of the doubt on a number of key issues. For such reasons, these memoirs of the former *Irish Times* correspondent in Moscow may prove disappointing to some readers, already well informed by this journal of a catalogue of exposures of the likes of long-time *Irish Times* Trust Supremo Major Tom McDowell and current Editor Geraldine Kennedy. It is true that Martin does not skimp in presenting the details of any story to which he turns his attention. What can, however, be questioned are some of his conclusions. He does indeed reproduce in full the October 1969 report from UK Ambassador Gilchrist to his masters in London concerning McDowell's offer of his services to the UK Government, but he then follows with McDowell's denial of how he had described the the patriotic Editor Douglas Gageby and his own unconvincing whitewash of the former: "It seems obvious that the term 'white nigger' was Gilchrist's and certainly not McDowell's."

What should, in fact, be obvious is that the very opposite is the case. One has only to read the exact text of Gilchrist's letter to see clearly that this was not how Gilchrist himself had described Gageby, but is his report of how Major McDowell had so categorically described him. Of the current Editor, Martin also writes: "Geraldine Kennedy had been a colleague since the 1980s. She supported me very strongly when I was under pressure in the old *Sunday Tribune* and I welcomed her appointment as the first woman editor of the *Irish Times*." But one is then forced to resort to reading between the lines of his criticism of that paper's return to what Martin, as a disciple of Gageby, describes as the 'Anglosphere' in foreign coverage, to realise that it is Kennedy who must be held responsible.

Seamus Martin's memoir—entitled *Good Times And Bad: From The Coombe To The Kremlin*—was launched this February by his brother, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin. When Seamus had been writing my father's obituary in May 2006, he let me into what was at that stage still a private family story. Some weeks later, however, when encountering his brother at a social function, I could not resist the temptation to mischievously thank a somewhat embarrassed but nonetheless polite Archbishop for his own father's vote! But

Seamus has now made that childhood memory public and tells the story of his father's vote as follows:

"In one particular election, Michael O'Riordan stood as a candidate for the Irish Workers' League, the name under which Irish communists then stood. Canon Troy announced from his pulpit that anyone who voted for 'Red O'Riordan' would go 'straight to hell'. To my ten-year-old mind the admonition was taken literally. If you voted for O'Riordan you would literally go straight to hell and you wouldn't even have to die first. It was a great cause of worry, therefore, when my father told me he was going to vote for O'Riordan. To hear, however, that Dad was going to vote for O'Riordan and therefore would go straight to hell as soon as he marked his ballot paper gave me some sleepless nights. But when the dreaded descent to the abyss did not take place, my belief in the hereafter took a bit of shaking."

As far as subsequent left-wing politics were concerned, Martin himself went on to have a local level involvement in the Workers' Party from 1986 until early 1991:

"I left the party before that split took place and before I became Moscow correspondent of the *Irish Times*. I had no personal animus against anyone in the Workers' Party, but there was a great deal of friction between various individuals and groupings, which made me feel quite uncomfortable. Pat Rabbitte, by the way, gave me an interesting piece of advice. He told me that I should never join the Labour Party, as the internal machinations there would drive me crazy."

"Pat later became the leader of the Labour Party and resigned after the 2007 general election. His advice in retrospect seems ironic, but I took it."

But Martin continued to be harassed by one particular erstwhile WP Muscovite zealot who would attempt to get the then Editor, Conor Brady, to silence him. One can therefore understand Martin's pleasure in filing a report for the *Irish Times* on 16th December 1992 in which he revealed a letter dated 1st July 1986 from the Workers' Party to the Secretary of the Central Committee, International Department, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, stating, *inter alia*:

"As part of this struggle some members of the Workers' Party recently formed Iskra Productions ... an independent film company based in Dublin ... Iskra Productions is a Marxist film-making enterprise which commands this party's full support... We hope you can fraternally assist this undertaking by entering discussions with representatives of our Party and Iskra Productions and the

relevant CPSU representative on matters of mutual interest in the area of mass communications media ... Iskra does have a very talented team behind it. Gerry Gregg, the principle (sic) mover behind the project, is a Senior Producer/Director with Irish television's most influential programme 'Today Tonight' ... Eoghan Harris is a veteran television producer. He has won many awards for his strident films ..."

'Iskra' Harris had particularly taken exception to a Moscow report from Martin that had been published on 26th July 1991. As Martin relates:

"Then there was a plenum of the Communist Party to draw up a new programme. There was a number of drafts, but one of them appeared to move the party in a social-democratic direction and this was given prominence in the Western media. I took issue with this, in the knowledge that the Leningrad party boss, Leonid Gidasov, an extreme hardliner, had stated he supported a draft that was likely to be successful. My article drew the ire of the Irish commentator Eoghan Harris, who launched a virulent attack on my journalism on radio. The Communist Party was now social democratic, he said, and that was that. Harris had been in social-democratic mode at the time, but he soon got over that. He also sent a long rambling missive to Conor Brady, suggesting that I change my name to Seamus *Martian*, as I was not living on this planet. I asked Conor to run the missive unchanged and to allow me to reply by saying that Harris should now change his name to Eoghan *Harass*. In the end, Conor felt it better not to run the letter and in any event I felt completely justified very soon afterwards when Harris's 'social democrats' launched a botched *coup d'etat* in an attempt to bring the USSR back to its old Stalinist ways."

Among Martin's Moscow anecdotes is also the following:

"Pyotr Nilovich Guverov's father was Neil Goold Verschoyle, an Anglo-Irishman from County Donegal who had lived and worked in Russia before returning to Ireland. Pyotr's name was a concoction that attempted to represent his father's name in phonetic Russian. Neil became Nil, thus the patronymic Nilovich, the first two syllables of Goold and Verschoyle were joined together as Gu and Ver, and the Russian suffix Ov was added to make up the surname Guverov. He was a gentle soul but totally devoted to Communist Party work, which took up a great deal of his time. No one was more surprised than I when he jumped from the Communist Party to a party run by the famous eye surgeon Vyacheslav Fyodorov. This political grouping espoused strong neo-liberal economic views and was similar to the Progressive Democrats in Ireland. It was the sort of political leap that even Eoghan Harris might find daunting."

While giving credit to Boris Yeltsin for

standing up to the attempted *coup* of August 1991, Martin is, however, also at pains to differentiate himself from the prevailing Western media perspective:

"It should be stated here that there had been a group of reporters which had become little more than a clique of cheerleaders for Boris Yeltsin. Some of them had even fallen for the idea that stories of Yeltsin's fondness for alcohol were an invention of the KGB ... But Gorbachev had returned to a very different Moscow from the one he had left. The power base had shifted from him and the liberals within the Communist Party to Yeltsin and his supporters. This was dramatically demonstrated some days later when Yeltsin publicly humiliated Gorbachev in front of the parliament and the entire Soviet Union via the TV networks. This was a different Yeltsin from the one we had seen up to now. His body language as well as his words were those of a bully. His swagger on the tank on the first day of the coup had become the swagger of a browbeater."

Martin goes on to describe the demise of the Soviet Union as follows:

"The red flag came down and the old Tsarist tricolour was raised over the Kremlin at midnight on New Year's Eve, and 1992 appeared to offer hope of dramatic change for the better. It was, however, to be one of the most difficult years Russia was to undergo since the end of the Second World War... The year began under the direction of Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, who promised an instant free market that would sweep away the old system and usher in a period of prosperity for all. It didn't work out that way. The first move was to free prices... The result was increased prices all round, and by the end of the year inflation had hit 2,500 percent. It was quite an experience living under such conditions, but of course as a foreign resident life was much easier than it was for ordinary Russians. I use the word 'ordinary' here, for there were other Russians who did not feel the pinch when inflation bit into the wages and pensions of the masses. Those immune from inflation's worst effects included Prime Minister Gaidar and the most of the other 'reformers', led by Anatoly Chubais..."

"Almost instantly the elderly women of Moscow and other cities took to the streets. They didn't organise protest marches or anything as radical as that. Instead, they lined up in the pedestrian underpasses to sell their belongings to passers-by. The space outside the children's department store Detsky Mir suddenly turned into something resembling an oriental bazaar, where thousands gathered daily to buy and sell. Money was scarce and dwindling in value. In order to survive, the great mass of the people was forced to sell its belongings on the street. Historians have described similar scenes from the early days of the Soviet Union, when 'bag men' travelled from place to place by train to sell goods that were reasonably plentiful in one city to the inhabitants of another town where the goods were scarce. New words began to enter the vocabulary. The new-age bag

man became a *chelnok*, a shuttle. *Krysha*, the Russian word for 'roof', took on a new meaning to become the name for your local mafia boss, who might get things done for you at a price. Many words were copied almost directly from English. A businessman became a *biznesmyen* and a businesswoman a *biznesmyenka*, and in some cases the words *biznesmyen* and *Krysha* were interchangeable. Living with hyperinflation led to disaster for many Russians, but only to adjustments in lifestyle for us foreigners..."

"Some citizens, however were very much out of the ordinary. These men included Boris Abramovich Berezovsky, Mikhail Borisovich Khodorkovsky and Roman Arkadyevich Abramovich. Each man made his billions in a different way and fate was kind to some and cruel to others. Berezovsky now lives in a mansion in Surrey, Abramovich owns Chelsea Football Club and Khodorkovsky inhabits a small cold cell in prison. Berezovsky started out on the road to immense wealth by opening a chain of car dealerships. Acquisition followed acquisition and included the Avtovaz automobile plant, which produced three-quarters of a million cars a year; Channel 1 television; the Aeroflot airline; the newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*; and some other valuable bits and pieces. His wealth brought him into the company of those in political power and he became a strong influence on Yeltsin's administration, largely through his links with Yeltsin's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko..."

"In order to raise money for the state, Chubais came up with the 'loans for shares' scheme. By this, the Government raised money from the banks by auctioning off the state's assets—especially the country's vast natural resources in oil, gas and metals—as collateral for loans. The result of the scheme was that a small number of financial operators who were well connected with the government of Boris Yeltsin got their hands on the state's most important resources at ludicrously low prices. In effect Russia gave away its natural wealth and made a group of men who were already rich and powerful, immensely wealthy and powerful beyond their wildest dreams".

Following his departure as the resident Moscow correspondent Martin did, however, revisit in later years:

"On one of my subsequent trips back to Moscow some terrible events took place. Two major apartment blocks were bombed in the middle of the night. The first one at the distant suburb of Pechantniki appeared at first to have been damaged by a gas explosion; but when another block on Kashirskoye Chausee was blown up, thoughts turned to sabotage. As it turned out, An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern was due to visit after the second explosion, so it was a particularly busy time. There was a breakfast briefing that Bertie gave to a group of international journalists in the Metropol Hotel. That it was well attended by representatives of the leading world newspapers and agencies was a tribute to the organisation put in place by the

embassy. But when the Taoiseach said at the beginning of his address that he had learned of a third explosion, this time in an apartment block in a provincial town, a number of journalists got up and left in order to get onto the story as quickly as they could."

"The Taoiseach's visit did, however, give me an advantage over some of my international colleagues: as the only Irish newspaperman in town, I was admitted to the Russian White House where he was meeting the then Russian prime minister, Vladimir Putin. I asked Mr. Putin about the latest developments on the bombings and he replied immediately that there was evidence of Chechen involvement. What struck me most of all was his obvious anger at what had happened. Vladimir Putin was not the sort of man who showed his emotions openly. The one consistent criticism of him that one heard from ordinary Russians was that he appeared to be something of a cold fish. On this occasion, however, he was almost in a rage. He has been accused by enemies in the West—notably those close to the exiled oligarch Boris Berezovsky—of having staged the bombings in order to resume Russia's war against the Chechens. His behaviour on that day was not that of a man who had calmly laid such an evil plan."

Martin had already acquired a contempt for Berezovsky when the latter had been 'cock-o-the-walk' in Yeltsin's entourage. Somewhat tongue-in-cheek he writes:

"Another American, Paul Klebnikov, the editor of the Russian edition of *Forbes* magazine, wrote extremely unfavourable things about Boris Berezovsky and was gunned to death outside his office. Mr. Berezovsky, needless to say, had no hand or part in the killing but took no action to clear his name against such untrue allegations."

Martin sums up his Russian experience as follows:

"And then there was Russia, a country whose people and traditions I have learned to love. I covered Russia for the *Irish Times* for Yeltsin's entire presidency and for a great part of Putin's. I also served as an international observer for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe at the Duma and presidential elections. Russia is returning to its position as a great country. Consequently, the opposition to its leadership has begun to grow more vociferous. If a new cold war is developing it has emanated from the West. Vladimir Putin is no Western-style liberal and has been excoriated by the political establishment, especially in the Anglo-Saxon confines of the United States and the UK."

"I look back to the Yeltsin era as one of destruction. Boris Yeltsin was probably the right man to destroy what remained of the communist system. He was the wrong man to build something in its place. Vladimir Putin inherited a country that was in a shambles and—helped, admittedly, by rising energy prices—he has brought stability and a modicum of

prosperity to Russia. Yeltsin was lionised by Western leaders and Putin excoriated by them for his record on press freedom. Statistics show a different picture. From the time that the Soviet Union came to an end at midnight on 31 December 1991 until the time of writing this book, forty-three journalists have been killed in Russia in the course of their duty. Of these, thirty-one died in seven years of Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's presidency and twelve over the same space of time under the presidency of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin."

It is to Douglas Gageby that Martin gives credit for having radically altered foreign news coverage by the Irish media:

"Foreign coverage had long been an item that distinguished the *Irish Times* from other newspapers in Ireland. For decades after independence, Irish newspapers had relied on British sources for their view of the outside world. Other countries also relied on British sources for their views on Ireland. Attempts had been made to overcome this dependence. The Irish News Agency was set up in the 1950s to provide a view of Ireland through what had become known as the 'paper wall'. Douglas Gageby had worked there with Conor Cruise O'Brien, and when he became editor of the *Irish Times* he attempted to provide a more international view of world affairs. He commissioned the news service of Agence France Presse to counterbalance the British-angled coverage provided by Reuters, and he also appointed Fergus Pyle as the paper's first foreign correspondent."

And for all his kind words whenever mentioning Geraldine Kennedy by name, he is contemptuous of her editorial responsibility for reversing Gageby's approach:

"The decision to save a small amount of money by dropping the service from Agence France Presse (AFP) caused, in my view, a diminution of the paper's foreign coverage. It was Douglas Gageby who bought the AFP service in the first place as a balance against Reuters' concentration on what has become known as the 'Anglosphere'. I don't know who decided to drop AFP, but whoever it was could not have had the breadth of vision nor the journalistic acumen of Gageby, who was perhaps the paper's greatest editor."

Madam's own prissy editorial this March 1 concerning the Russian elections could not have been in greater contrast with Martin's sense of perspective:

"On Sunday the Russian people will participate in the 'democratic' coronation of a new president, Dmitry Medvedev, to succeed Vladimir Putin. Voters in this republic of 140 million, a major nuclear power with the world's largest hydrocarbon reserves, will transfer power for only the second time since the demise of the Soviet Union by formally ratifying Mr Putin's anointed choice after a distinctly one-sided election campaign... On the international stage, however, continuity will be the order of the day. Medvedev has castigated

western countries for recognising Kosovo, and is directly associated with the heavy-handed Gazprom diplomacy in eastern Europe, all reflecting the aggressive even bullying assertion of Russian interests and standing that Putin has come to represent".

Seamus Martin had never been starry-eyed about any aspect of Russian life or history. All the more reason, then, to be grateful that he has not completely hung up his boots but has in fact gone on to directly report from Moscow on those same Russian elections in the columns of the *Irish Examiner*. On March 3rd he reported:

"From the Chukotka Peninsula, just across the Bering Straits from the former Russian colony of Alaska, all the way across to the Kaliningrad enclave on the Baltic Sea, Russians went to the polls to elect a new president yesterday. The new president will be Dmitry Medvedev, the 42-year-old anointed successor of the incumbent Vladimir Putin, who received 69.4% of the vote, according to exit polls... Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (with 17.2%) and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (with 11.4%) of the Liberal Democratic Party - which is not in the slightest measure Liberal or Democratic - trailed in behind him, with the country's leading Freemason Andrei Bogdanov limping in last of the four contenders with a mere 1.8%..."

"At the first polling station I called at yesterday, there was a steady stream of voters going through a metal detector on their way in to vote. The voting procedure in Russia is quite strict compared to that in Ireland. All voters must produce their passports to prove their identity. They then sign against their entry on the register before being given their ballot papers. In Moscow yesterday, voters participated not only in the presidential poll but also in municipal elections... I have attended half a dozen elections in Russia since the adoption of the current constitution in 1993. In general the voting procedures and the counting of votes have been completely above board. The real problem for democracy has been the extreme bias of the media, especially state TV stations, for the Kremlin's candidate. It was like this in the Yeltsin era, with little or no criticism from the west. It continues to be so today under a barrage of censure from the western sources."

On March 4th Martin further reported:

"The Head of the Council of Europe observer mission, Andreas Gross, declared that the Russian presidential election was neither free nor fair, but broadly reflected the will of the people. The Council of Europe was the only western organisation to send a mission to these elections. The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions, the main and most comprehensive western monitoring organisation, refused to send an observation team because of restrictions imposed by the Russian authorities. Vladimir Churov, the flamboyant Head of Central Election Commission (TsIK), responded to calls for greater transparency with the words: 'What should I do? Should I make TsIK members work naked?'"

"With more than 69% of the electorate turning out to vote, and with Medvedev receiving 70.2% of these, amounting to nearly 52 million votes, there can be no question that he is the popular choice of the Russian people. Some, of course, have cried foul—notably two of the losing candidates, Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist Party, who garnered just short of 19% (13 million votes), and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who can only be described as the candidate of the 'raving right'. Both men spoke of 'irregularities' without being any more specific and said they would contest the election results in the courts. With such a massive gap between them and Medvedev it would take more than mere 'irregularities' to persuade the courts that the result should be overturned."

"Perhaps the most vociferous protester against the Putin administration and the election of Dmitri Medvedev has been the former world chess champion Gary Kasparov. Badly treated by the police and security forces, Kasparov had been given a great deal of publicity by western media sources. It should be stressed that his popular support is minimal and had he stood for election he might have finished around the same mark as the fourth candidate, Andrei Bogdanov, who got 1.2% and around 950,000 votes. While he makes valid points strongly and with conviction there were a number of reasons why voters do not support Kasparov. Not least amongst these is that his Drugaya Rossiya (Another Russia) movement has compromised itself in the eyes of moderate voters by its Faustian alliance with the National Bolshevik party of writer Eduard Limonov. These activists, mainly young neo-Nazi skinheads, are no credit to the anti-Putin and anti-Medvedev cause. Even the term National Bolshevik has the ring of National Socialist about it. While there is no evidence of National Bolshevik involvement, up to 16 racist murders have taken place in Russia already this year with skinheads as the main culprits. It should also be remembered that Russians have never had democracy in the sense of that experienced in the west. Human rights infringements, such as the breaking up of protest meetings and the dominance of mass media, are regarded lightly by a people who have suffered far greater abuses in the past."

In the concluding paragraph of his memoir Seamus Martin, with considerable justification, sums up as follows:

"My coverage, particularly that from Russia, was criticised fiercely by both Eoghan Harris and the *Phoenix* editor, Paddy Prenderville, so I feel I must have been doing something right."

And, to borrow from both the language used by Harris in attempting to have the previous *Irish Times* Editor clamp down on Martin and that used by Martin himself in implicit criticism of the present editor, it can indeed be said that the reportage produced by the *Martian* eye on Russia has proved itself to be streets ahead of anything emerging from the *Anglosphere*.

Manus O'Riordan

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

THE IRISH WOMAN

Irish born Samantha Power was forced to resign her position as unpaid advisor to Barack Obama's presidential campaign because she called Hillary Clinton a "monster" in an interview with the *Scotsman* newspaper.

This must have been a disappointment to *The Irish Times*, which has given her and her recent book extensive coverage. She was also the main speaker at the inaugural Hubert Butler lecture, chaired by Fintan O'Toole, where she took the opportunity to expound on America's imperial role in the world.

THE KENYAN

Curiously, ex *Irish Times* columnist Kevin Myers leapt to Power's defence in his *Irish Independent* column (14.3.08). Myers's position was that Power's description of Clinton was accurate, indeed "veered a little on the side of flattery", but she had also the right to prevent the *Scotsman* journalist from publishing this accurate and flattering view!

How these neo-conservatives hate Hillary Clinton! Even a Black is preferable to Clinton. Of course, only a certain type of Black is acceptable to neo-conservatives. Colin Powell's people were from Jamaica and Obama's father was from Kenya. But Jesse Jackson's ancestors were slaves in the USA.

THE SCOTSMAN

The Editor of the *Scotsman* was invited on RTE radio to explain himself. He denied that Power was speaking off the record. Power agreed to have an on-the-record interview with the newspaper because she was promoting her book. In the course of the interview she said some unpleasant things about Clinton and subsequently stated that those comments were off-the-record.

But that does not qualify as "off-the-record". If it did, interviewees would be granted editorial control of everything that was published about them.

THE NEPALESE BOY

Perhaps Cathal O'Searcaigh wishes that he had editorial control of the *Fairytale of Kathmandu* documentary.

It is unclear whether O'Searcaigh broke any Irish or Nepalese laws. In normal circumstances what O'Searcaigh did would therefore be a private matter. But it ceased to be such when he consented to have a

film made about his lifestyle.

Like Kevin Myers with Samantha Power, the defenders were unable to decide whether to denounce the film for revealing what it did or to defend what was revealed. Eoghan Harris at first appeared to see nothing wrong with O'Searcaigh's sexual relationships with young poor Nepalese men. He compared it to Socrates's relationships. (It was only in an interview on *Morning Ireland* (12.3.08) that Harris admitted after repeated questioning that what O'Searcaigh did was wrong).

In the following week's *Sunday Independent* (16.3.08) he denounced the programme-makers for not blanking out the faces of the Nepalese youths, which implies that something more shameful than Greek philosophy had occurred. The expression on the faces of the Nepalese youths just after they left O'Searcaigh's abode was the most powerful aspect of the documentary. When the poet's defenders are reduced to broadcasting technicalities it is obvious which side has lost the argument.

The defenders had raised the white flag early on when they accused those who criticised O'Searcaigh's exploitative behaviour of being homophobic. But belonging to a minority group does not exempt a person from criticism. And Quentin Fotherell an *Irish Times* journalist, who happens to be gay, was most indignant at Harris's attempt to enlist the Gay community in support of O'Searcaigh (see *Morning Ireland*, 12.3.08).

Harris's failure to mobilise the Gay community to support O'Searcaigh was reminiscent of his failure to enlist the Protestant community to support his anti-national agenda.

THE AMERICAN

The business of sex as a commodity is, of course, distasteful. The payment by New York Governor Elliot Spitzer of \$4,300 to a prostitute in a Washington hotel room was not his finest hour. But unlike O'Searcaigh he did not invite the media to examine his lifestyle. Nor did he pretend that what he was doing was virtuous. And it is difficult to think of the prostitute as an innocent victim. By all accounts she is likely to become a very wealthy woman out of this affair.

It is very unusual for the clients of prostitutes to be named, never mind charged. One might agree or disagree with that policy, but the question arises why was Spitzer named in this case.

Spitzer was a supporter of much greater regulation of financial institutions in order to prevent irresponsible lending and other sharp practices such as "securitisation" or the selling on of worthless loans around the world. This was in conflict with Bush's "regulators" who are actually trying to prevent States such as New York from implementing consumer protection

legislation.

It was no accident that Spitzer was named and shamed. Specific private interests were served by it . . . speaking of which . . .

THE IRISH MAHON

When did the Mahon Tribunal begin? Was it with (the) Flood or before then?

The English historian Edward Gibbon described it in the fourth century AD:

"In the practice of the Bar these men considered reason as the instrument of dispute; they interpreted the laws according to the dictates of private interest; and the same pernicious habits might still adhere to their characters in the public administration of the state. The honour of a liberal profession has indeed been vindicated by ancient and modern advocates, who have filled the most important stations with pure integrity and consummate wisdom; but in the decline of Roman jurisprudence the ordinary promotion of lawyers was pregnant with mischief and disgrace... The splendid and popular class was filled with the advocates who filled the Forum with the sound of their turgid and loquacious rhetoric. Careless of fame and of justice, they are described for the most part as ignorant and rapacious guides who conducted their clients through a maze of expense, of delay, and of disappointment, from whence, after a tedious series of years, they were at length dismissed when their patience and fortune were almost exhausted" (*The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*).

In the 21st century Grainne Carruth, a secretary on £66 a week in 1994, was bullied for two days by millionaire barristers. Des O'Neill threatened her with a €300,000 fine and jail of up to two years if she "wilfully" told an "untruth". When she insisted that she did not recall making any sterling lodgements on behalf of Ahern, O'Neill asked this extraordinary question:

"Why is it that you did not contact Mr Ahern in the interim in relation to these matters, which are of crucial importance to you and to your family?" (*The Irish Times*, 21.3.08).

So Ms Carruth is not only obliged to remember the details of transactions of 14 years ago, but must question the Taoiseach about them! And this is not only important for herself, but also her family.

Miriam Lord of *The Irish Times* suggested that Ahern should come forward and confess his crimes in order to save Carruth from her ordeal. In other words the Tribunal is perfectly entitled to hold Carruth hostage in order to bring a guilty verdict against the Taoiseach of the country?!

The lawyers have lost the run of themselves. If Ahern does not close the Tribunals down at the earliest opportunity, he will have deserved his fate. ■

Fianna Fail and Social Partnership —Defending a Great Achievement

Social Partnership is the bedrock of the real modern Ireland. It made our prosperity possible by replacing the British model of confrontational social relations with a uniquely Irish version of problem solving, conflict resolution and forward planning in the interests of Irish society. It was developed on the basis of Scandinavian, German and other successful European models of social cooperation and industrial democracy. Its initiator was Charles J. Haughey, and it was greatly deepened under the political leadership of Bertie Ahern. It is one of the finest products of the Fianna Fail and Irish trade union traditions. The Partnership Agreements—which are often toughly negotiated—are regularly endorsed by large majorities of ordinary trade union members, not to mention companies and small firms, farmers and the community sector.

It is now under attack, with Richard Bruton saying it has "lost its way", that the Dail has been "emasculated" by it, that "changes made by the present Taoiseach have spawned Byzantine institutional complexity" and that the whole thing now needs to be replaced by a mass of consumerist interest group representation. Back to the future!

There is no doubt that, if the Irish Times succeeds in its attempt to emasculate the position of the present Taoiseach, the assaults on this unique achievement of Fianna Fail and the unions will become more concerted and ambitious. Fianna Fail politicians have a duty to defend one of their party's greatest historic achievements.

For a review of the history of social partnership in Ireland in all its aspects, including the key vital ingredient of courageous and independent political leadership, see my article, *Lifting the Boats: Partnership and Progress in 'Tiger' Ireland*, in the most recent issue (Winter 2007-08) of free online journal *Dublin Review of Books*, at www.dr.b.ie

Philip O'Connor

Social Partnership And Fine Gael

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Examiner* of 3rd March

Diarmaid Ferriter has drawn attention to the argument advanced by Niamh Puirseil, historian of the Labour Party, that "social partnership could have become a reality much earlier if Fine Gael had not been so hostile to trade unions when in government in the 1980s" (February 21).

Whether or not such social partnership can continue to meet the future needs of Irish workers—in respect of both the quantity and quality of job creation and the required improvement in living standards—is, of course, an issue yet to be determined through the democratic structures and procedures of the trade union movement. But it is doubtful if national debate has been advanced by the statement on February 11 from the Deputy Leader of Fine Gael, Richard Bruton TD, where he snipes at our movement by describing social partnership as "a process dominated by producer interests" and "a cosy arrangement among insiders".

There is indeed a disappointing sense of *deja vu* to all of this. For it was John Bruton, in his Leader's address to the Fine Gael Ard-Fheis in May 1994, who had long ago used similar language to denounce social partnership as "this cosy consensus" with "insider-type policies, of the kind favoured by Fianna Fáil and Labour".

A contrasting evaluation was, however, to be offered by a subsequent Taoiseach in the following statement:

"National agreements have been key social institutions in creating Ireland's outstanding performance. The State has

adapted successfully to the challenge of the European Single Market, in large part due to social partnership."

That same Taoiseach had previously pronounced that "social partnership is patriotism", adding that "it has worked for everyone, for competitiveness of the economy, for both short-term needs of people and for the long-term needs of the economy".

No, these were not the words of a Fianna Fáil Taoiseach, but of a Fine Gael one. It was none other than that self-same John Bruton who was to articulate such a considered judgement when addressing both the IMPACT Conference in May 1996 and, beforehand, the ICTU Conference in July 1995. John Bruton also went on to praise the outgoing ICTU President, Phil Flynn, in the following terms: "His commitment to making the social partnership work was more than could reasonably be expected of any human being—a demonstration of practical patriotism."

Padraig Yeates, co-author of "Saving the Future: How Social Partnership Shaped Ireland's Economic Success", recorded how, at that 1995 Conference, "the Taoiseach, Mr. Bruton, admitted to being a late convert to the concept of social partnership. He paid tribute to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions for its contribution to making it work, despite some criticism in his own ranks". It was John Bruton himself who drew attention to the following fact: "My experience of social partnership started out as one of scepticism". So it was that ICTU Conference delegates, including myself, heard that last Fine Gael Taoiseach go on to candidly admit to us all, in three very simple words: "I was wrong!"

Israel flouts UN resolutions

The following letter appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph*, 14th March 2008

Five years ago the US/UK invaded Iraq, ostensibly because of its failure to give up its 'weapons of mass destruction' as demanded by UN Security Council resolutions.

For over a decade prior to that, Iraq had been subject to severe economic sanctions to enforce these resolutions. In fact, Iraq

had no 'weapons of mass destruction'.

In recent days, Israel has announced its intention to build a further 530 settlements on the West Bank, with a further 200 to follow. This action is in violation of UN Security Council resolutions 446, 452 and 465. The US/UK is not threatening economic or military sanctions against Israel.

Why is Israel being treated differently?

David Morrison, Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Belfast

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Report of Speeches

Commemorating 1916

Millstreet

Jack Lane welcomed the opportunity to address the Easter Rising commemoration in Millstreet.

All nations have events to commemorate the founding of their states and some do it with great pride and gusto such as the French and the Americans. The Easter Rising deserves to be commemorated likewise.

It was successful initially in the way it hindered recruiting for WWI and saved thousands of lives.

It helped expose the propaganda lie about 'the freedom of small nations' of that War. It brought the case for Irish independence to the forefront of affairs.

It was overwhelmingly sanctioned by the electorate in 1918 and subsequently. It helped found an independent state that has had an unbroken democratic tradition, avoiding dictatorship of the left, right or centre. It has also avoided war and people are clearly not happy with efforts to get the state participating in aggressive wars against other countries.

It led to the independence that has enabled the country to be redirected from being simply a supplier of cheap goods and cheap labour to other markets.

The more independence we have had, the better off we have become.

Despite these causes for celebration, the Easter Rising commemorations are muted affairs. In fact in recent years the Rising is more criticised than lauded as is the War of Independence that followed it.

This is most peculiar. It was initiated in sections of academia and if it remained confined to that world, it would be of no great concern. But negative attitudes towards these events now pervade the media as well as academia and large sections of the political class.

It was personified by the Peter Hart approach as applied to the war in West Cork where he used every technique imaginable—including interviewing the dead—to discredit the Volunteers and their achievements. RTE has followed suit as was shown in the programme on Coolacree last October.

Currently the President, Taoiseach and other politicians discredit the Rising by comparing it with the Somme and giving the impression that the Irish people who fought in both were fighting for the same purpose. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Rising was for national liberation—the Somme was for imperial aggression; the Rising was not a bloodbath—the Somme was; the Somme was based on lies—the Rising was not.

A new war on independence is being fought—without guns—a war of independence of ideas and stating the plain facts of the Rising and original War of Independence. The facts are on the side of those who applaud the Rising and the war. Let's aim to ensure that, by the time of the 100th anniversary, the virtues of the 1916 will be fully and enthusiastically commemorated by all.

[Irish Political Review reporter]

Elsewhere In Cork

Tom Meaney, a former Fianna Fáil TD and Minister of State, said "There is not a nation in the world that does not celebrate its independence day, the anniversaries of great victories and great events in their history, and that is what we are doing here today".

Mr. Meaney, speaking at a FF-organised commemoration beside the Republican Plot in Gouldshill Cemetery, said people should be proud of the men and women of 1916. Michael Meade, chairman of Thomas Davis FF Cumann, placed a wreath on the plot.

Sinn Féin commemorated the Rising with wreath-laying ceremonies at Mallow Bridge and at the Republican Plot in Gouldshill Cemetery where Thomas Davis Pipe Band members also rendered honours.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern was urged—by Cllr Frank O'Flynn, FF National Executive at a FF commemoration at the Republican Plot in Kilcumper Cemetery, Fermoy—to ensure the remains of the executed patriot Thomas Kent be removed from their burial place within the ground of Cork Prison and re-interred in consecrated ground in accordance with the wishes of his family.

[Irish Examiner, 25.3.08]

Tibet

The following was submitted on 21st March to the Irish Times. It has not appeared, the paper preferring to feature anti-China letters

Recent events in Tibet have been portrayed in your editorial and letters column as a conflict between Tibetan protesters seeking independence or autonomy and the Chinese authorities. You and many of your readers fail to comment on the fact that the protests took the form of attacks on Chinese people and businesses. A case could be made for intimidating what are perceived as planters into leaving Tibet, but that case has not been made. I assume that, with Northern Ireland and Israel in mind, such a case will not be made. It is therefore unreasonable to condemn the Chinese authorities for clamping down on the protesters and protecting the Chinese civilians.

The role of the Dalai Lama is despicable.

He encourages anti-Chinese feelings and actions. But when things start to get out of hand, he washes his hands of those responsible. Further, neither he or you or anyone else has chosen to explain the Tibetan attacks on Muslims in neighbouring provinces.

Conor Lynch

Report

Why History?

I think it was on Sunday January 13th last I was laid up in bed with a bad cold and as a result listened to Newstalk FM's history programme *Talking History*. It goes out on Sunday nights at 7.00pm. It was January 13th and the subject of the show was "*Ireland and the First World War*". The regular presenters are Patrick Geoghegan and Lindsey Eamer-Byrne.

There were a number of guests. One character, I think it was Dermot Meleady, who sometimes writes letters to the *Irish Times*. He said a striking thing. This man claimed that the Church very much supported the war effort at the start because the Germans were "*raping Nuns in Belgium*". This nonsense was let go by the presenter and the other guests as if it were as incontestable a fact as that the title of the Russian head of state in those times was "the Czar".

The show tended to be pro-Redmondite though not wildly so. There was no explanation of the links between WWI and the Rising or what the deeper motives of the rebels were.

A smart-alecky character rang in to challenge why people took an interest in history at all. The presenter answered to the effect that otherwise the programme would not be broadcast and he would have nothing to do. It looked like he had no real idea why people should take a serious interest in history himself.

T. O'Sullivan 7th March 2008

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Review: *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916-1923* by Michael Laffan, Cambridge University Press, 1999

The Elections Of 1918, 1920 And 1921

Michael Laffan is a revisionist academic historian in University College, Dublin. The title of his book is a reference to *The Resurrection Of Hungary*, written by Sinn Féin's founder Arthur Griffith in 1904. His study of the Sinn Féin party began as an MA thesis under the supervision of T. Desmond Williams.

Laffan's view of the 1916-23 period is that a "revolution" was accomplished in Ireland by extremists, but a degree of continuity with the past was maintained by "moderates" within the Sinn Féin party who re-asserted themselves against the violent militarists who, by a freak combination of circumstances, had dominated events and had driven forward their "revolution ... which was reined in, at least in part, by an organized expression of mass civilian opinion. ... The party helped win over and marginalize the radicals, the 'real' (and unrepresentative) revolutionaries". Laffan makes great play of the 1922 Election results, as providing the evidence that Irish democracy (the Irish Parliamentary Party traditionals, in combination with moderates in Sinn Féin and other parties) reined in violent, revolutionary Republicanism.

Laffan seems quite blind to the world-scale revolutionary upheaval, destruction and slaughter in which Ireland was implicated by the militarism of the Imperial Government, causing total alienation of mainstream Irish opinion which, like the independence movement as a whole, was democratically-inclined, reform-minded in a 'conservative' way, and largely non-revolutionary'.

Laffan includes useful accounts of the 1918 General Election, the Local Elections of 1920, and the 1921 General Elections to the Dáil, Stormont and the Parliament of Southern Ireland. The latter two parliaments had been set up by the 1920 British Partition Act. The Dáil was set up by the majority Sinn Féin elected representatives following the 1918 Election. Laffan does not even attempt to reconcile his theory with these expressions of "mass civilian opinion".

THE 1918 ELECTION

The 1918 Sinn Féin election manifesto was for the creation of an Irish Republic, withdrawal from participation in the Westminster Parliament, and the establishment of an Irish constituent assembly or Dáil. According to Laffan the manifesto committed the party to using "any and every means available to render impotent the power of England to hold Ireland in subjection by military force or otherwise".

Laffan describes how the British authorities used force against the Sinn Féin election campaign—breaking up election meetings, imprisonment of party activists, seizure of election material, and so on. The electorate was 75 per cent of the adult population, where previously it had been 31 per cent. In a breach with the practice of the Nationalist Party of John Redmond, the only unionist constituencies left uncontested by Sinn Féin were North Down and Trinity College. Sinn Féin nominated three women as candidates—Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington turned down the nomination, while Countess Markievicz was elected. The party insisted that candidates in Irish-speaking areas would themselves be Irish speakers. Almost all its candidates had been in jail.

Many of the Nationalist MPs had obtained their seats without electoral contest, and withdrew in the face of the electoral challenge by Sinn Féin. The Labour Party had been founded in 1912 and had contributed to the Rising in the form of Connolly and the Citizen Army. Electorally, it had contested only one by-election, according to Laffan. He also says that in 1918 it was torn between its northern unionist members and its nationalist members. Sinn Féin members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union were able to bring their influence to bear to prevent Labour from running candidates.

The 1918 Election was contested by 187 candidates—77 Sinn Féin, 56 Nationalist, 35 Unionist, 6 independent nationalist, 4 independent unionist, 8 Ulster Labour, and 1 independent.

Sinn Féin won 73 seats, the Unionists won 26 seats, and the Nationalists 6. Sinn Féin fought 37 straight fights with the Nationalists and won 35 of them. The Unionists won two seats in the south—Trinity College and Rathmines. The Nationalists clocked up only two victories in direct contests with Sinn Féin—Joe Devlin in Belfast (Falls), and Willie Redmond in a narrow victory in the Nationalist stronghold of Waterford city. The latter was one of only two Nationalist seats won in the twenty-six counties. The other was Donegal East.

It can be reasonably argued that Partition was an accomplished fact on the ground after the successful armed revolt of the Unionists against the British Government in 1912, in resistance to the implementation of the policy of John Redmond's Nationalist Party. From that

point of view, the constituencies in which the Sinn Féin success should be primarily assessed are those within the borders of the twenty six counties of the present-day Irish Republic.

The result in that case is:

Sinn Féin 69, Nationalists 2, Unionists 2 (Trinity College and Dublin Rathmines). One of the two Nationalist victories was in East Donegal, where Cardinal Logue had negotiated an agreed anti-Unionist candidate, so it was effectively uncontested by Sinn Féin. The other Nationalist victory was in the Redmondite stronghold of Waterford City, where Captain Willie Redmond won by a relatively narrow margin of 4915 votes against Sinn Féin's 4431. So on the Irish side of the future border, Sinn Féin had practically a clean sweep.

And in the North: Unionists 24, Sinn Féin 4, Nationalists 4.

The Dáil met thirteen times from January until September 1919 when it was outlawed. After that, until the Elections of May 1921, it convened eight times. In such circumstances, rather than legislation, its work consisted of supervision of the Government Departments. The Cabinet and Government Departments worked out of various offices and hideouts around Dublin, and like the Dáil, operated under constant threat of capture. The Cabinet met 102 times between April 1919 and July 1921.

THE 1920 LOCAL ELECTIONS

Local Government had been under the control of the Nationalist Party for twenty years. By 1920 no local elections had been held for six years, and they were overdue. The outcome was vital to both the Irish Government and the British power.

Proportional Representation was introduced by the British Government to replace the first-past-the-post system, in the hope of reducing the impact of Sinn Féin. The Sinn Féin election programme for the Local Elections included a demand for efficient and honest administration, appointments based on merit, open competitive examinations for all clerical posts, improvements in health services and in the provision of housing, and a policy of spending the rates within Ireland on goods produced under Trade Union conditions. The Sinn Féin party was outlawed at this stage.

The elections were in two phases: City and Town Council Elections were held in January, county or rural council Elections were in June. In January Sinn Féin won 550 seats, Labour 394, Unionists 355, Nationalists 238, independents 161, and municipal reformers 108.

43 women were elected, 28 of whom were Sinn Féin. In Belfast City Council, the Unionists won 35 sets (a loss of 15), Labour 12, Sinn Féin 5, Nationalists 5.

Derry city elected 19 unionists, 10 Sinn Féin, 10 nationalist, and 1 independent nationalist, and got its first Catholic mayor. In Dublin Corporation Sinn Féin won 42 out of 80 seats, in Cork 30 out of 56, in Limerick 26 out of 40, in Waterford 19 out of 40, in Galway 10 out of 24.

Proportional Representation reduced the numbers of Sinn Féin representatives elected. But outside the four north-eastern counties (in which the unionist councils seceded from the all-Ireland General Council of County Councils), the newly-elected councils recognized the authority of Dáil Éireann and implemented its policies, even though, in doing so, they lost 15 per cent of their revenue.

Laffan says there is little surviving evidence of the conduct of the County and Rural Council and Boards of Guardians Elections in June, even though the electorate was three times larger than for the January elections. Many candidates were returned without a contest, the main party was banned, and censorship was strict. Of the 263 County Council seats in Munster and Connacht, Sinn Féin won 258 and its Labour ally 5; in Leinster Sinn Féin won 192, Labour 37 and others 24; in Ulster the Unionists won 81, Sinn Féin 79, Nationalists 26, and Labour and independents 2 each.

THE 1921 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Britain's Government of Ireland Act of 1920 envisaged parliaments of Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland, and General Elections were called to elect these.

The pressure on Sinn Féin from the British authorities was fierce. The Southern Irish Parliament of the Partition Act was to have 128 seats, which was more than the number of Irish non-Unionists elected in the Westminster Election of 1918.

Sinn Féin participated in the elections in order to elect members, not to the Parliaments of Northern and Southern Ireland, but to the Dáil assembly created by the Sinn Féin representatives from the 1918 Elections to Westminster. So the second Dáil would be considerably bigger than the first.

In the twenty six counties to be represented in the Parliament of Southern Ireland—now the territory of the Republic—every constituency was uncontested. The Sinn Féin nominees (47 of whom were in jail and 52 on the run) won 124 seats, and 4 independent unionists were returned for Trinity College.

It was easier this time round for Sinn Féin and the Nationalist Party to agree an electoral strategy in the Northern six counties, since, under Proportional Representation, an election pact only required transfers of preferences. Both parties agreed on a policy of self-determination for Ireland.

The 52 seats for the Northern Ireland parliament were contested by 77 candidates—40 Unionists, 20 Sinn Féin, 12 Nationalists, 4 independent Labour, and 1 independent. Eight of the 20 SF candidates were in jail, and 4 on the run. The turnout was 89 per cent. All 40 of the Unionists were elected, and the Nationalists and Sinn Féin won 6 seats each.

Three of the Sinn Féin victories were in Fermanagh and Tyrone where the anti-Unionist vote was 54.7 per cent. In Belfast the Nationalists and Sinn Féin won 23 per cent of the vote and got 6 per cent of the seats. Overall, Sinn Féin won 20.4 per cent of the first preferences to the Nationalists 11.9 per cent.

LAFFAN ON REPUBLICANISM

Laffan's thesis is that violent Republican extremism prevailed until a democratic tendency subdued it in the 1922 Treaty Election. But his argument does not stand up to scrutiny.

Prior to its party convention of October 1917, Sinn Féin was nominally a monarchist party with an interest in the Austria-Hungary relationship, and in economic and cultural self-sufficiency. Hungary had been subordinated to Austria. After a Hungarian language revival movement followed by a failed military rising in 1848, Austria tried successively, but without success, policies of repression and conciliation. In 1867 Hungary obtained, without any further armed action or rebellion, a sovereign parliament within what became known, in consequence, as Austria-Hungary. This development was the model aspired to by Sinn Féin initially.

A second example was to hand. Norway's ally Denmark was crippled in the Napoleonic Wars when Copenhagen was shelled by Britain and its fleet destroyed. So in January 1814, Norway became subject to Sweden. The Norwegians became increasingly dissatisfied and, after a plebiscite of the voters of Norway on October 26 1903, Norwegian sovereignty was accepted and acknowledged by Sweden.

Here was another European model for national self-determination by peaceful means. Also, questions of national self-determination in Europe were to be addressed and resolved in a post-Great War international conference in which an adjudication of the British-Irish question could be sought. This was not an unrealistic scenario in view of the ideology promoted during the Great War and of President Wilson's 14 Points. How was Irish nationalism to know that these were empty promises? It was only through testing the waters by sending representatives to Versailles that this was established. Even John Redmond's nephew was enthusiastic about the appeal to the Peace Conference and wrote a pamphlet setting out arguments to be put to the conference. (See *Irish*

Case For The League of Nations in Six Days Of The Irish Republic, by L.G. Redmond-Howard, Aubane Historical Society 2006).

Laffan argues that the independence movement was driven by an unrepresentative, extremist faction.

On the one hand, it is true that there was massive interference with the electoral process—disruption of meetings, debate and free speech, and violence against candidates: that is, by the Imperial authorities.

Against that there was an almost pacifist movement of antipathy and opposition to the overwhelming slide into violence and death on an unprecedented scale which engulfed Ireland. This was the campaign of passive resistance organized by Sinn Féin against the British efforts to shovel Irish people in their tens of thousands into the Western Front butchery for nefarious imperial purposes.

And when the November 1918 Elections were held the British Government stepped up its censorship, imprisonment of candidates, and violent interference in the electoral process.

But this is not how revisionists such as Laffan see it. For example, here is the Wikipedia entry:

"The correct interpretation of the results of the 1918 general election has been the subject of some controversy. This is because Sinn Féin treated the result as a unilateral mandate from the Irish people, to immediately set about establishing an independent, all-Ireland state, and to initiate an undeclared war of separation from Great Britain while totally ignoring the unresolved Ulster and Unionist situation. However, the party's Democratic Programme did not promise the electorate a war, just a 32-county Irish Republic. Further, its election Manifesto sought a place for Ireland at the peace conference, which could not be expected on launching a new war." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_general_election%2C_1918)

The Sinn Féin election manifesto undertook to seek independence by whatever means were necessary. The Democratic Programme was produced by the Dáil when it convened after the elections. The post-Rising Sinn Féin party was produced from Griffith's Dual Monarchy party—which itself had no electoral successes; from the All-for-Ireland League, which espoused a policy of conciliation towards Unionists and had a string of electoral successes against the Redmond Home Rulers; from the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which had organized the Rising; and from the Gaelic League.

1918 VERDICT ON THE RISING

The British Imperial authorities weren't much interested in promoting democracy

in the 1918 Election. Most of the Sinn Féin candidates in 1918 were veterans of the Rising, most were ex-prisoners, and many were in jail when elected.

To appreciate the result, suppose that a party of H-Block prisoners and ex-prisoners had contested every constituency in the Twenty-Six Counties in 1981, proudly displaying their insignia of the Dirty Protest and the Hunger Strikes and celebrating the Volunteers who died in the Armed Struggle and then won an overwhelming majority.

The 1918 result was not just a mandate for independence. The Rising was just over two years earlier and the candidates were barely out of jail and boasted of their involvement in the Rising. The electorate could have punished these people for what they did, or at least put them on very short leash, with a warning against any similar adventures in future. It was not that the electorate was unaware of the outlook and purpose of the Sinn Féin candidates. The result shows that, in addition to a mandate for independence, the electorate gave a massive electoral endorsement to the Rising itself.

As to the Ulster question, negotiations in good faith between the British Government and the Irish elected representatives could have produced either of two reasonable outcomes different from what the British Government put in place there—Ulster to be part of the Irish state with the British Government given a right of oversight of the Protestant interest; or to be part of the British state with the Irish Government having a corresponding right of oversight of the Ulster Catholic interest.

But Britain was not interested in negotiating with the elected representatives; the eventual Treaty was not granted in good faith but dictated under threat of immediate and terrible war; and the second of the two settlements was only eventually arrived at after eighty years and much unnecessary turmoil and death.

The Local Elections of 1920, held under the Proportional Representation system, produced proportionately fewer Sinn Féin representatives. But the independence mandate was strengthened rather than weakened, because the new and more heterogeneous local assemblies transferred their allegiance from the British Government to the Dáil.

LAFFAN ON THE 1922 ELECTIONS

Laffan maintains that 1922 was when the moderate majority reined in electorally the unrepresentative Republican extremists.

But this argument is not tenable either. The Treaty was dictated under the plausible threat of immediate and terrible war, and was accepted by a small majority of the Second Dáil—but not because a moderate majority preferred the status of British Dominion over independent republic. After several years of Black and Tan terror,

the British connection had NOT become more attractive than it had been in the Elections of 1918, 1920 and 1921.

The character of British power, and resistance to it, was described by John Redmond in the Mansion House, 4th September 1907:

"We demand this self-government as a right. For us the Act of Union has no binding or moral force. . . . Resistance to the Act of Union will always remain for us, as long as that Act lasts, a sacred duty; and the methods of resistance will remain for us merely a question of expediency. There are men today, perfectly honourable and honest men, for whose convictions I have the utmost respect, who think that the method we ought to adopt is force of arms. Such resistance I say here, as I have said more than once on the floor of the House of Commons, would be perfectly justifiable if it were possible. But it is not, under present circumstances, possible, and I thank God there are other means at our hands." (Quoted in Six Days of the Irish Republic, by L.G. Redmond-Howard, Aubane Historical Society, 2006.)

Redmond was saying this before his 1910 Election victory. So it could be argued that those elections provided a mandate for armed resistance to the British power if and when this was feasible, and when the Redmondite policy had failed—as it had by 1914.

In early 1922, Michael Collins declared plausibly, and perhaps realistically, that the British were prepared to use the overwhelming military force at their disposal if the Irish did not submit to the Treaty.

So the 1922 Elections were not a free and fair opportunity for people to vote to choose an independent republic or British Dominion status. The vote was at gunpoint. There was a believable threat that Britain would wage a war similar to the war against the Boers—but with the addition of the new and well-tried armaments of planes, tanks and poison gas.

Furthermore, up to a few days before the Elections of June 1922, the pro- and anti-Treaty factions of Sinn Féin had agreed to contest the Elections as a single party, but with a small majority of pro-Treaty Sinn Féin candidates, corresponding to the Treaty vote in the Second Dáil. Under a British ultimatum, Collins broke this agreement at the last moment. So the issues to be decided by the vote were confused. As was the status of the assembly to be elected.

The new assembly was, in British and in Treaty terms, the Parliament of Southern Ireland legislated for by Britain in the 1920 Government of Ireland Act; and, in Irish terms, the Third Dáil—successor to the assembly established out of the 1918 Election. The election results were Sinn Féin 94 (pro-Treaty 58, anti-Treaty 36),

Labour 17, Farmers 7, Independents 10. So pro-Treaty Sinn Féin was a minority (45 per cent) of the new assembly.

It cannot be assumed that the outlook of those voters who elected the 27 per cent of representatives who were not in either wing of Sinn Féin can be identified with pro-Treaty Sinn Féin. Many people could not bring themselves to take sides in the split, and opted out of the Sinn Féin camp. In the years following, various combinations emerged, and the combination which emerged from pro-Treaty Sinn Féin lost power and influence, while the anti-Treatyites became the dominant party.

Pat Muldowney

Does
it

Stack

up?

Boy Soldiers In a former article, I brought reader's attention to the fact of a play being made called *Boy Soldier* by playwright Ben Hennessy. What struck me at the time was the fact that the whole cast had gone out and spent *three days* in Flanders and immediately I wondered who paid for that trip and what on earth they were doing there? Now 'Red Kettle Theatre Company' has issued a handsome flyer with a sepia-pictured young actor posing as the dead 14 year old John Condon who had been massacred in the battle of Ypres on 24th May 1915. How in the middle of such battles they were able to say when he died is quite a feat don't you think? But there was more—apparently—the heel of his boot with his tag number was sent back to his family as a memento of his death. Anyone even vaguely familiar with this industrial type slaughter would know that other soldiers picked up boots. (It was even shown in a scene in the recent English propaganda film *Atonement* because the basic equipment was so bad that young lads scavenged what they needed from the dead, horrible as it is to acknowledge it.) And tags on boots in WW1: now that is a first for me! What Sir Basil Thompson called "*the Kaiser's war*" was mud, gore and death. As a writer wrote in to the *Irish Mail* on 12th October, 2006:

"Messines Ridge was World War I's Hiroshima. Ten thousand Germans were carbonised when the British detonated more than 600 tonnes of explosives under their trenches. If any ceremony is to be held there, it should be a peace ceremony".

Boy Soldier was underwritten by Fas, Waterford City Council, Arts Council of Ireland, and a local Hire firm called Clem Jacob. It toured extensively all over Ireland and it glorified the lad's fate and was as propagandistic a work as any Britain could

hope to make. And then we have American films such as *Blood Diamond* (five Academy Award Nominations) showing us the brutality of boy soldiers at work in today's conflict zones in the most exploited poorer parts of Africa. Is this what we have as a nation become?

Leaseholds The GPO story and Bertie Ahern seemed too preposterous at first to take any notice of and then it seemed to really take off. It is about the most sacred Irish national monument, the GPO, being turned into a huge development, shopping mall, apartments and the usual building fripperies of celtic tiger Ireland. This of course would be too disastrous to imagine—but for property speculators there is nothing they wouldn't touch. Apparently architects Foster & Partners of London have been retained to apply for planning permission. But Bertie is in a bit of a pickle as the State has been paying ground rent all these years and therefore our position could be legally challenged. It seems that we have not taken ownership of this great national asset but there are lots of cases of the 100 year ground rent English ownership scheme coming out of the woodwork. One only had to think for example of the Jephsons in Mallow and their pursuit of their *legal rights* which could end up costing the State millions. One of the Jephsons was Personal Equerry to Princess Diana for seven years till she sacked him. And the Duke of Devonshire is claiming his rights to the *ground under the sea* at Youghal Bay therefore stopping development of a marina and other necessary resort amenities. It can be argued that it is high time that the State buy out the freehold leases of the GPO and other claims but we are being held at ransom by these English landlords.

David Irving It is that time again to have that debate. Only of course it is *never* a debate and everyone just goes through the initial motions and then gives in to the rancid calls for censorship. Except now Ireland is joining in the sport. UCC's Philosoph Society recently invited him, as reported in the *Irish Examiner*, 10th March 2008 under the headlines *Holocaust Denier* and "*controversial historian David Irving, jailed for denying the Holocaust*". The title to be debated was "*That this house believes free speech should be free from restraint*".

Given that in 1999, Irving was also invited to do the same but the college cancelled at the last minute due to the large number of protesters—some six hundred in all—who started scuffling with the gardai. The thugs dictated who should speak and they won. Now UCC has distinguished itself by calling the whole thing off a second time at the last minute. And the Irish media seemed to have agreed that this was the best thing to do except for

a very bracing article in the *Daily Irish Mail*, 10th March 2008, in which that most conservative of commentators Dr. Mark Dooley headlined his article this "*David Irving is a buffoon but banning him is what Stalin would have done*". And he accepted in his opening statement: "*In saying what follows, I know I risk alienating my Jewish friends. But say it I must: it is disgraceful that the historian David Irving has been prevented from participating in a debate on free speech at University College Cork tonight*". He then went on to make the usual disclaimers that he is "*one of the Irish media's most outspoken supporters of Israel*". But still he thought it a bad day for Irish democracy when "*a mischievous ragbag of hypocrites*" could pull a "*stunning victory for our homegrown fascists, defined as those who notice the splinter in their neighbours eye, and who then bash him over the head with the beam in their own*".

And in an Oxford Union *debate*, November 26th, 2007, Irving gives his own account of the way he was treated by the '*hostiles*' and how he considered "*the word chaotic, reject it for shambolic the way the function was allowed by the scum to dictate events to that degree*" (Documents on the International Campaign for Real History). But look at the back of, say, Irving's *The War Path, Hitler's Germany 1933-1939* (Papermac. London. 1983) and note the blurbs of praise from such notable English historians as A.J.P. Taylor, Michael Ratcliffe, Professor Donald Watt, and the *Guardian*.

University Funding So the University Presidents, Dr. Hugh Brady, UCD, and Dr. John Hegarty, TCD, want more funding from our Government. It is the fact according to the *Irish Times*, 18th March 2008, that all "seven universities in the State now operate with a substantial budget deficit, totalling more than €25 million this year". Scotland and Denmark are being getting "between two and three times those available here and that student/staff ratio are now four times better than Ireland".

But what really have the universities done for us? All the major entrepreneurs, from P.J. MacManus, John Magnier, Dermot Desmond, and Denis O'Brien on, have never entered the halls of a university and they lead our society in their own fields and have (however much this is decried in the media) brought astonishing wealth to this country. To take one small example, going through Kildare recently, I was astonished at the many old crafts like blacksmiths, farriers, saddlers etc—all doing fine business and when I asked them who was keeping them employed, they all said Coolmine Stud, the home of *international horse breeding*. The universities on the other hand, operate in an old-boys/girls club; they offer no

transparency and are full to the brim of nepotism. Just find an university wife/partner who is not working in the library/administration while their other halves are in the statutory lecturing departments.

They are still without an outside body who can be called to arbitrate on exam results. Everyone knows that, while it is in the Statute of the universities that only statutory lecturers mark exam papers, in fact lecturers who in some cases have yet to complete their own Ph.D mark the student's papers. How dare they?

History has become an international joke. The professors publish (meaning the tax-funded university press) books with such titles as: *Ireland The Lost Decade in the 1950's*, I mean who are they kidding? Certainly not the people anymore and the politicians know this. While university staff eat in their subsidised restaurants, their children will not even have to pay fees. How fair is that to the likes of Finglas, or the awful other estates that breed young who can only assess structure in their lives by going to prison. No wonder these children give the one fingered salute when they are being taken off by the gardai.

Environmental Terrorism On the 4th March, 2008 on the RTE Six o'Clock News, there was a farmer, a very poor West Coast farmer and his sheep were lambing. The weather was atrocious, but he had to stay up all the night out on the hill-side because, as he explained, a young lamb could be dead within an hour of its birth if he wasn't there, because of the eagles. It was an awful look at days that many thought had gone forever. The next item in the news that night had this writer practically screaming. Two eagles were found dead in Kerry. Now these eagles had been absent from Ireland for 100 years and had been bought back to this country for €10,000 from Denmark—10 of them and now this was the third one found dead. The Green Party politicians, Mr. Gormley (who never roughed it for a night's lambing up on a hill) called their deaths "*environmental terrorism*" and warned the public that there was a fine of €6,000 and a term of imprisonment.

The only environmental terrorism was bringing these long extinct eagles back to this country. The picture that was unfortunately used for our benefit was one of the eagle launching down and catching with ease a fine salmon (rural people are not allowed catch them anymore) and it looked very baletic. But these salmon were spawning and were putting their eggs on the river-bed gravel and therefore they were easy kills. This will have drastic impact on our fishing industry that is already reeling due to—wait for it—lack of stocks. Then a ranger—9-5pm—told us that, if a lamb was killed by an eagle,

continued on page 16, column 1

The Talibans Of The North?

Simon Jenkins is a regular columnist in *The Guardian*. He normally writes scathing (and intelligent) columns against New Labour's foreign adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq and aspects of its domestic policy.

But on 7th March he had a column on Northern Ireland, entitled *Bigotry And Violence Made Paisley And Adams The Taliban Of Europe*. In it, he heaped abuse on Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams in a manner that has gone out of fashion in recent years. For example, he wrote of Paisley:

"The man was a monster, a fanatic, a hangover from the middle ages. I remember wondering how on earth Britain had allowed Ulster's constitution so to fester as to have this man roaming the woods and hills of Ulster. One thing Britain does not do well is postcolonial partition. It creates a fertile breeding ground for the likes of Paisley, and his antagonist, Adams."

I offered the following letter to *The Guardian* in response:-

Simon Jenkins' column "Bigotry and violence made Paisley and Adams the Taliban of Europe: (March 7) doesn't throw much light on what has made Northern Ireland politics what it has been since 1920.

Then, Britain imposed a perverse political system on Northern Ireland, which has made the development of non-sectarian politics, based on socio-economic interest, next to impossible. First, a devolved parliament was imposed on Northern Ireland, which condemned the Catholic minority to being ruled by the Protestant majority for the foreseeable future. Second, Northern Ireland people were excluded from the party political system of the UK, through which socio-economic policy was determined for the UK as a whole, including Northern Ireland - I spent about 15 years from 1977 onwards trying (unsuccessfully) to get the Labour Party to organise and contest elections in Northern Ireland.

In the light of this, it is hardly surprising that the sectarian character of Northern Ireland politics persisted and elections at all levels were primarily about counting Catholic and Protestant heads—and the

Stack concluded

the farmer would be compensated with €300. And tell me how could one prove that one's lamb had been killed by the bloody eagle? Think of the bureaucracy? And think of that poor hill farmer up there on the hills all night and he wouldn't be the only one and for €300? Who is joking who here? Tell that to the university Presidents.

Michael Stack

most productive political activity that people here could engage in was breeding (which was recommended to me as a Young Unionist growing up in Co Fermanagh in the 50s by Harry West, a future leader of the Ulster Unionist Party).

I suggest that, had Glasgow or Liverpool been subjected to the perverse arrangements imposed upon Northern Ireland in 1920, sectarian politics may have persisted there too.

The Good Friday Agreement has done nothing to undermine sectarian politics here. On the contrary, it has reinforced sectarian politics by insisting that political parties designate themselves as Unionist

or Nationalist and building into the system of government checks and balances based on these designations. We now have a system of government in which seats on the executive are shared out amongst the sectarian parties by a mathematical formula (and there is no opposition).

This system may be unusual, but it has one significant advantage over the system imposed by Britain on Northern Ireland in 1920—the Catholic minority is no longer condemned to being ruled by the Protestant majority in perpetuity.

David Morrison

Irish Political Review, 25 March 2008

Reactions To Paisley's Departure

Part One

THE ENGLISH AND THE UNIONISTS

On March 4th, Ian Paisley announced that he was to step down as First Minister in Stormont in May, earlier than expected though not that much earlier. The *Irish News*, the next day stated: "Mr Paisley's announcement comes just days after his son Ian jnr was forced to resign as a junior minister following criticism over his links to property developer Seymour Sweeney." In other words following at least the whiff of corruption.

It's a pity in a way that the investigations into Ian Og's affairs did not continue and were not more extensive. He was lobbying on behalf of no end of businessmen and other individuals in Antrim. But there has been no evidence, though there have been many a hint and innuendo, that young Ian was on the take. In other words he was a good constituency representative. If he was in the British Labour Party he could have been making millions and there would have been no comeback.

What likes to portray itself as the moderate element in Ulster politics, the Ulster Unionist Party, the SDLP and the *Irish News* have given full vent to their hatred of Paisley. Paisley, the anti-Fenian bigot, has been given a new outing. The process of demonisation was taken even further across the water in the liberal imperialist *Guardian*. But, as so often these days, terminology has been turned on its head. The real sectarians are in the UUP, the SDLP and among the writers on the *Irish News* and *The Guardian*.

In the past *The Guardian* writers have portrayed all Irish as congenitally violent and fractious and Simon Hoggart has as good as admitted this. One of its regular cartoonists portrays Irish people as idiot faces in a manner that would make a nineteenth century editor of *Punch* blush.

The headline over Simon Jenkins' article in *The Guardian* (7.3.08) stated: *Bigotry And Violence Made Paisley And Adams The Taliban Of Europe*. The sub-heading

says: "They say they brought peace to Northern Ireland—but delayed it so long that the peace is fragile and the land traumatised. Jenkins isn't any old hack. He has been the voice of liberal England for many years. He continues: "Why do rats float while good men sink? Readers may have exploded over the headline on this page yesterday. I read 'A fascinating, gracious man', and crowned a eulogy on Northern Ireland's retiring first minister, Ian Paisley, written by his one-time bitterest foe, Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein/IRA."

Referring to a Paisley meeting at Stormont many years ago Jenkins says:

"It was like watching a mad Celtic druid blessing the Brythonic hordes before confronting the Roman army... The man was a monster, a fanatic, a hangover from the middle ages... Unionist leaders from Terence O'Neill through Brian Faulkner to David Trimble struggled—some harder than others—to reform Ulster's unequal society... Adams and his collaborator, Martin McGuinness, destroyed Hume's SDLP, and Paisley's histrionic fundamentalism destroyed Trimble's unionism... These men eventually eliminated moderate leaders so that they could claim moderation for themselves. They smashed power-sharing so they could share power between themselves".

And on he goes. His version of history is essentially the version of history of the English establishment. Given that, it is as well for politicians in Northern Ireland to be on their guard against destabilisation by the agents of the British State. What happened was not what was supposed to happen, and that can spell trouble.

Jenkins' moderates came out in force to denounce Paisley. His sins were poured over. We were reminded that he had objected to the display of a tricolour in the window of a Sinn Fein shop in 1964—leading to two brutal attacks by the RUC and to the Cromac Square riots.

That Paisley was a trouble maker there can be no denying. But the man who sent in the police was the saintly Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill. O'Neill was also the Prime Minister who turned his uniformed thugs against the Civil Rights marchers on October 5th 1968, and among the many who were beaten up was John Hume.

Brian Faulkner did make an effort at power-sharing (which O'Neill did not). The Sunningdale Agreement led to a Power-Sharing executive at Stormont with the SDLP. (He had previously offered them Committee Chairmanships but they walked out of the Parliament, or whatever it was called.) Paisley the trouble-maker organised protests and virtually no one turned up. The arrangement broke down after the Irish Government in a Court case re-asserted the claim of the North which it had apparently set aside during negotiations with Brian Faulkner, and then the SDLP and the Free State Government refused to either postpone/abandon the Council of Ireland element in the Agreement or delete the articles of the Constitution which claimed sovereignty over the North.

The result was the very disciplined Ulster Workers' Council strike. Gerry Fitt wanted to continue governing regardless by means of the British Army. Faulkner, being a fairly reasonable man, decided to collapse the Arrangements with Fitt still wanting to govern without him. In the South the inflexible Government was led by another Saint, Garret Fitzgerald, and the Minister responsible for dealings with the North was Conor Cruise O'Brien—quoted favourably by Jenkins in his article.

And now to that paragon of virtue, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, David Trimble. Here he is in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 13th March:

"It was obvious at the last General Election that the DUP were not being, shall we say, transparent in their canvass... I told people on the doorstep that Ian Paisley was about to do a deal with Sinn Fein—a deal that would be the identical twin of the Good Friday Agreement... Tony Blair made promises that he never kept, that Paisley and DUP would be sidelined... It has to be said that Ian Paisley has had quite an influence on Northern Ireland politics over the past four decades—from the 'O'Neill Must Go' phase to the 'Trimble Out' era. Most of it, however, has been negative, and when he was called upon to be positive, he failed to measure up. I lasted four years as First Minister. He lasted one. And I would ask a final question—would Terence O'Neill have shared power with the IRA while he was Prime Minister of Northern Ireland? I leave that one hanging in the air."

This confused gibberish may be excused or explained by sour grapes. But it could

only be expressed publicly in the knowledge that no one in the media was likely to be brazen enough to question it. Paisley governed competently and with a good deal of flair for one year. He leaves behind him a functioning set up—whether one likes it or not. Trimble did not govern at all, competently or otherwise. He opposed the Good Friday Agreement until Tony Blair told him that decommissioning of weapons was part of the deal—and even then he blocked its implementation at every turn. He is no doubt right that Blair lied to him about the DUP. He lied to him also about weapons—though with the plaudits that were to follow from the Agreement, it also suited Trimble's purpose to believe Blair's lies.

The Good Friday Agreement laid down that the parties to it should do all they could to get the IRA and the Protestant Groups to get rid of weapons. Only Sinn Fein did this and did it successfully. The Ulster Unionists did not lift a finger to get such as the UVF and the UDA to disarm. And they are still armed.

(Blair always lied, with or without reason. He seems to think that lying is very clever.)

Trimble's wander down memory lane to illustrate Paisley's negativity is straying into dangerous territory. It is only a few years ago that he danced his jig with Paisley at Drumcree, when they secured the right of Orangemen to march through Catholic areas and annoy the Fenians. The Orange Order has gone to hell in a handcart and the Drumcree men are about the worst of them. Their hero was Billy Wright, leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, a group which, alongside British soldiers, killed more non-combatant Catholics than anyone else, including the Shankill Butchers. And while we are delving into the past with Mr. Trimble, it should be remembered that he was deputy to Reg Empey when the latter was Chairman of the fascist Vanguard Party.

Mr. Empey is now the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party. On 6th March this former acolyte of Bill Craig gave his Party members in Derry the benefit of his views on Paisley. These were reprinted next day in the *Belfast News Letter*:

"Don't be surprised by my unwillingness to heap too much praise on either Ian Paisley or the DUP. After 37 years of putting the boot into us at every opportunity, the DUP has, in effect, come full circle and returned to our territory and our policies. They split unionism down the middle. They did irreparable damage to the image of unionism at our greatest moments of crisis. They left us to carry the burdens and take the risks alone. And for what? For nothing more than the trappings of office and because they didn't have a clue what else to do! When all is said and done, they didn't even have the courage of their own convictions."

The fact is that Paisley secured the support of the unionist population and delivered a functioning Executive. The UUP could not do this. At the recent Dromore By-election (see March *Irish Political Review*) the slogan of Empey's Party was *No Surrender*. As for splitting unionism, Paisley's groups were pretty marginal when the unionists were already busy tearing themselves apart through, among others, the Vanguard Party. Since it lost its monopoly of power in 1970 the Unionist Party has had no idea what to do with itself—with the possible exception of a brief period under Brian Faulkner—and much good it did anyone who dared follow Faulkner.

Briefly, following the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, a number of unionists, including MPs, seemed to favour getting rid of the Party altogether and encouraging the British parties to extend themselves to the North. These people were threatened with denouncement as traitors to the Unionist Family and most of them backed down. In other words they were not so much unionists when it came down to it as sectarian Protestants. And that has been the Ulster Unionist Party ever since.

Paisley has claimed that his greatest achievement has been to tie the Provos into the political fabric of a Northern Ireland separate from the South. He is no doubt right—at least for the foreseeable future. The great achievement of the Provos is that they have smashed the Unionist establishment to bits and forever. The combined Ulster Unionist Party, Ulster Unionist Council and the Orange Order have lost power and will never regain it. It seems that this is OK with Paisley. He was never part of the Unionist power structure anyway and never showed any inclination to be part of it. The likes of Trimble and Empey are very cross about this. They can hardly blame the IRA—that would give the Republicans too much credit. So they are taking it out on Paisley—for all the good that will do them.

Next month I will deal with the nationalist reaction to the departure of Ian Paisley, as well as looking at what it is that he has represented all these years. (Since Roy Garland publishes in the *Irish News*, though a member of the UUP, his views will also be considered then.)

Conor Lynch

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Lord Professor Bew And The Forging Of A Shared Past

Lord Bew concludes his account of Irish history with a statement by Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern, "*we can no longer have two histories, separate and in conflict*"; and with a comment that "*the Taoiseach was right to say that 'without a shared past' we cannot have a shared future*" (*Ireland: The Politics Of Enmity 1789-2006*, Oxford University Press 2007, p581).

The practical meaning of this is that false history must be forged for a political purpose. Actual history is the history of conflict between three distinct social groups. If it must be written as something else, then it becomes something else and ceases to be history. Many attempts have been made to devise false histories and impose them on the populace for a benevolent purpose—the purpose of establishing perpetual peace on sentimental foundations. Intellectuals (operatives in the Ideological State apparatus) can make some headway in that direction if supported by the authoritarian power of the state. It was the nightmare of the United States in the 1950s that Bolshevism, or Maoism, was skilled at doing this, so it set out elaborating that skill for its own purposes. Pavlov claimed that he laid bare the human soul in the laboratory in the form of the conditional reflex. The United States in the Cold War had a big Pavlovian operation going. But the human factor that proved most effective against Soviet culture was raw Catholic fundamentalism in Poland, Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan, and Solzhenitsyn's revival of Orthodoxy within the Soviet elite. These things made no sense in terms of the conditioned reflex.

I once read a 19th century account of Jewish history which said that the Jews were the product of a monotheist development within the Egyptian ruling class which could not be consolidated within the Egyptian state. The Egyptian monotheist tendency therefore led a population of slaves in the desert where they were indoctrinated for 40 years with a set of principles consolidated by means of books of invented history, before being launched on the conquest of Palestine. I don't know what truth, if any, there is in that account. But that, and Pavlov's conditioned reflex, are what spring to mind whenever I hear talk of re-writing history for a benevolent purpose.

The three conflicting communities of which Ireland consisted since the Plantations and Conquests of the 17th

century had some blurred edges in their relations with each other. In life there are always blurred edges. The conflict might be 'nuanced' by focussing on the blurred edges. By concentrating hard on the blurred edges, and writing extensively and obscurely about them, one can dismiss from the mind the substance of which they are the edges. The nuance then becomes the substance for the carefully-directed mind. And then of course the nuance can be nuanced.

Meanwhile, down the road from the University—less than five minutes' walk at a leisurely pace—life went merrily on as if the word *nuance* had never been thought of.

I think it was from Conor Cruise O'Brien that I first heard the word *nuance* used in criticism of my crudely substantial ideas about the North. I never met him, but people in Dublin gave him some of my 'two nations' pamphlets around 1970, thinking that they fitted in with things he was beginning to say. He found my ideas insufficiently nuanced: they did not take account of interesting interconnections. Therefore he would have nothing to do with them. But it came to my notice recently that, when a French intellectual wrote to him asking him to recommend something that would help to make sense of the bewildering Irish situation, what he recommended was my crude two-nations pamphlets, with not a nuance in sight.

Of course O'Brien himself was an interesting interconnection, as a Catholic anti-Partitionist propagandist who married a well-connected Ulster Protestant. And his friend FitzGerald was another—his mother being an Ulster Presbyterian. But these interesting interconnections—these blurred edges—exercised no discernible influence on the conflict of the substances to which they were edges, either intellectually or by their physical presence. And when I published my crude two nations analysis in *The Economics Of Partition*, what O'Brien had in print was a description of the Ulster Protestants as *colons*. The word was in general use at the time as the name of the French settlers in Algeria who had rebelled against Algerian independence, had been broken by De Gaulle, and were destined to return home. As compared with "*colon*", my description of the Ulster Protestants as a distinct Irish nationality was an excessively nuanced idea of them. O'Brien's *colon* was much more in accordance with public feeling in Catholic Ireland then, and for many years after.

I assume that O'Brien, under the shock of events in 1969, of which the eruption of the two-nations theory was one, hastily revised his ideas and discarded the *colon* view, but refused to associate himself with the two nations view because he was intent on making a political career. There was also the consideration that he was the originating creative mind of the progressive middle class and could not be seen to be moving onto ground laid out by peasants, which Jack Lane and myself indisputably were. (The word is inaccurate but I use it as it is used.)

I next heard the criticism of insufficient *nuance* from Lord Bew and his colleague Professor Patterson. They were both very much associated with Athol St. from 1970 to 1972. A little magazine called *The Two Nations* was set up and it was given to them to edit. After a while they began to complain that the two nations idea was not sufficiently nuanced. We said to them: So nuance it! For my part, I would have been glad to be shot of Belfast politics, leaving these up-and-coming academics to take over these ideas that I had started, giving them whatever subtle development it was felt they needed. But it turned out that what they wanted was that the subtlety should be produced for them and presented to them ready made. That was something I either couldn't or wouldn't do. As to which it was I can say nothing. The relationship of *couldn't* and *wouldn't* in a matter like this is authentically subtle and interconnected. The limits of possibility sometimes influence the will in a way that erases the differences between *couldn't* and *wouldn't*.

Anyhow it was left up to the future Professor and the future Lord Professor to nuance the two nations in the *Two Nations* magazine. And they either couldn't or wouldn't do it. So the magazine lapsed.

The bare recognition of national difference, however subtly expressed, could have little effect of itself on easing the antagonism. Displacing the antagonism from the centre-ground of politics in 'the Northern Ireland state' required something else, and I went on to that.

At the same time Professor and the Lord Professor told me that my notion of Marxism-Leninism was also insufficiently nuanced. As I took no account of Althusser, I really was not with it. So I looked at Althusser, and decided to have done with Marxism-Leninism. If it could not live in a medium of Kant's philosophy, then I could not live with it.

At the time, the present duo of Professor and Lord Professor was a trio. The third was an English New Left academic called

Peter Gibbon. To save time and space I referred to them as *Patgibew*. Gibbon seems to have fallen away, so the entity is now *Bewpat*.

Bewpat ceased to recognise me in 1973, I think. That is, they were unable to see me in the street. I took the hint and made it easy for them.

In the mid-1970s I arranged for a number of meetings to be held at the Students' Union of the University to discuss the shipyard expulsions of 1920 in the context of the war being fought in the country, rather than merely as a unilateral expression of Protestant bigotry. I thought Bewpat might turn up but they didn't.

Then the trio published a book about Northern Ireland and were invited to a meeting of the Campaign for Labour Representation to explain their view of things and say what they thought of the CLR view. The duo came along and spent most of the time condemning BICO for falling away from itself. They seemed to see themselves as the true BICO. At the time they were, I think, the second true BICO. Many others were to follow. Unfortunately that run of letters meant nothing to most of those present.

Some time after that I happened to see a run of letters that made no sense to me, *MOPE*. I think it was in a Workers' Party publication. The author was Bew (solo). The letters meant *Most Oppressed People Ever*. I gathered that one academic tendency held that either the Irish, or the Northern Catholics, were the Most Oppressed People Ever. Bew disagreed. I had never thought about it, and have not done so since, but on the spur of the moment it seemed to me that if there is such a title the Irish must at least be a contender for it.

I read Pattgibew's very Leninist book on Northern Ireland, learned from it why my approach was wrong, and found that they thought Lenin and Bukharin had the same idea of what Imperialism was.

The next time I noticed Bew was when he turned film reviewer for the purpose of condemning the Michael Collins film. I learned then from a newspaper review that he had become an "*ex-Marxist*". I looked around to see if he had put the "*theory of the production of theory*" into operation for the purpose of ceasing to be a Marxist, but as I could find nothing of the kind I concluded that all that happened was that the Soviet Union had collapsed.

It seems that when he put Athol St. at a

distance he joined the Stickies, under whatever name they had at the time, and that he remained a Stickie until—when? Until now, as far as I can tell.

The Stickies were an Irish agency of the Soviet Communist Party. But Moscow hedged its bets and recognised the Irish Communist Party on equal terms with the Stickies. The two were in sharp conflict with each other. Both looked to Moscow, but there seems to have been more sense and more independence of outlook in the CP than in the Stickies. I debated the North with Eoghan Harris and Eoin O Murchu in the early 1970s in Limerick. Both were Stickies at the time. O Murchu later joined the CP. He comments intelligibly about the realities of Irish affairs, while Harris emits stream of consciousness. So does Bew. They Bewgle.

Harris elects Presidents and Taoiseachs, and he masterminded the invasion of Iraq with Chalabi—at least he was there for these rides. When Marjorie Mowlem was given the Northern Ireland job she announced that she was reading Bew in preparation for it. Some years later, when nominating Churchill as the greatest man of the Millennium she bewgled that he had to put the Black & Tans into Ireland to save democracy.

And now these two party comrades of—whatever it is—levitate together: one to the House of Lords and the other to the Senate.

I forgot to mention that about 20 years after Bew could no longer bear the uncouthness of my ideas he took to running into me again at every opportunity. I tolerated him but could not take him seriously. On one of these occasions he said it was inconvenient for him that I had not kept certain pamphlets from the early 1970s in print as it made it necessary for him to photocopy them for his students. *The Road To Partition* was one of them. I forget the name of the other. I don't think I ever re-read them, but I just knew after a couple of years that they wouldn't do. There are unbearable degrees of uncouthness even for me. I intended to re-make them but never got around to it. Then they were superseded by the *Parliamentary Sovereignty* series. But it seemed that Bew matured into a real appreciation of them.

And I now learn that his party colleague, Harris, was really in agreement with me even though he denounced me in a way that I could only describe with Cardinal Newman's response to the Rev.

Kingsley—"poisoning the wells":

"I [Harris] was an ideologue doing my best to wrap revisionism in an acceptable economic package. I didn't have Clifford's luxury of writing down what I really thought. I wrote what I thought I could get away with. The most I got away with is set out in the Irish Industrial Revolution. It is not what I believed, it is about 85% of what I believe. I would have liked to have gone further and repudiated more republican dogma" (Harris Letter to Sean Swan, given in Sean Swan's *Official Irish Republicanism 1962-1972*, p396).

(On one of the occasions when Bew buttonholed in the 1990s—it was in the newspaper library in Royal Avenue (Belfast) and he bought me a coffee in a little coffee shop in a small department store nearby which no longer exists—I said something which made it click with him that I was not engaged in forging history for any political purpose. He was shocked, and said something to the effect that it was bizarre that I should be the last defender of 1916. In reply I said something about what the Empire was doing in 1916 in the other war—a thing which is not even mentioned in his new book. What I could not understand was that he—who obviously read Athol St. publications more thoroughly than I did—should ever have thought I was in the business of forging history in the service of policy.

Brendan Clifford

PS: The Lord Professor gives the party line on a recent dispute in his Oxford University Press *magnum opus*:

"On 30 June 1921 a band of thirty armed men shot the two eldest sons of the Pearson household at Coolacree, Cadamstown, Co. Offaly. Even as the murders were perpetrated, the IRA volunteers made assurances that this was not happening because the Pearsons were Protestants—but could not actually give a reason as to why it was happening. The British tended to believe that this increase in attacks on loyalists—relatively soft targets—was the IRA's means of sustaining military pressure in a contest whose overall military logic was going against the IRA" (p416).

But after all these years he can still not feel sure that he has got it right when he disagrees with Athol Street, so he inserts a footnote which mentions "Pat Muldooney's" [sic] refutation of the Stickie story of the Coolacree incident in *Church & State*, Spring 2006, *I Met Humbug On The Way*, which shows that the "murders" were executions carried out on the authority of the elected government for military action by the Pearsons in support of the unelected Imperial Power.

Spies and Lies—Cui Bono?

Part Two

"Neutrality"

by Louis MacNeice

The neutral island facing the Atlantic,
The neutral island is the heart of man,
Are bitterly soft reminders of the beginnings
That ended before the end began.

Look into your heart, you will find a County Sligo,
A Knocknarea with for navel a cairn of stones,
You will find the shadow and sheen of a moleskin mountain
And a litter of chronicles and bones.

Look into your heart, you will find fermenting rivers,
Intricacies of gloom and glint,
You will find such ducats of dream and great doubloons of ceremony
As nobody today would mint.

But then look eastwards from your heart, there bulks
A continent, close, dark, as archetypal sin,
While to the west off your own shores the mackerel
Are fat—on the flesh of your kin."

(Louis MacNeice, *Selected Poems*, Ed. By W.H. Auden, Faber, London.

"We have said good-bye for ever", de Valera, declared at Ennis, "to the day in which this country was a grazing ranch for feeding other people, a dumping-ground for the manufactures of other people, and a country in which our own people were brought up for export like cattle"

A speech by President Eamon de Valera in Ennis, Co. Clare, 1932.

FINEST HOUR?

The fierceness of MacNeice's political attack on Ireland's position during the war is at complete odds with certain facts. Before going on to MacNeice himself, it is important to state historically that the British, and of course that old war-horse Churchill, bore huge responsibility for the deaths of sailors who died in the War. The British navy during World War 2 suffered 45, 000 deaths at sea, of which two in every three, that is about 30,000 died from needless exposure. The high rate of death was **not caused** by the lack of Irish ports but by the criminal behaviour of neglect meted out to British servicemen by their own Government, which our historians have yet to expose (though I wouldn't hold my breath there). It is not without issue that before each of the two World Wars there was severe and growing dissatisfaction by the working class of Great Britain and it was being exhibited more and more by riots and protests. While Churchill, Elizabeth Bowen and MacNeice wrote about their "good wars" it was on the backs of those who fought and died (many of them Irish) but that is the way of economics. In a fine study of war, Tom Wintringham wrote that:

"Some rather absurd things are being done about shotguns at the moment when this is written. In some country areas they have been collected from the farmers and country people for the L.D.V. Then they have been taken to the nearest market town and locked up in the police station or some other centre. Frankly, this looks more like disarming

the people than arming them. It is the sort of thing that happens when the local gentry and the chief constable are far more afraid of ordinary Englishmen than they are of Germans. A government that represents propertied classes is always terrified by the fear of revolution... Clearing up the past before any war is an essential preliminary."

And Wintringham was not squeamish about telling the truth because he stated that soldiering is a job and therefore it follows that: "Killing is, after all, only work" (*New Ways Of War* by Tom Wintringham, Penguin Books, London, 1940).

And creating the *right sentiment for war* is indeed necessary, so pumping out propaganda and anti-alien sentiment is one of the first tricks of the trade. As Raphael Samuel recounts:

"It was very much a force in 1940, England's 'finest hour', and not least of the elements in the national mobilisation of the time. One of its more curious by-products was the mass internment of Jews, on the grounds that they might prove Fifth Columnists for the Nazis. The blitz, too, seems to have fuelled hostility to the Jews, who were accused of hogging the shelters in the underground stations. Even George Orwell, who had put his life on the line to fight fascism, and in later years was a notable philosemite, seems to have succumbed to it."

And Samuels uses extracts from Orwell's diary to show the evidence. And of course Orwell wasn't the only one. "On

the right, there was the very generalised belief that the Bolshevik Revolution was the result of a Jewish conspiracy—Sir Basil Thompson, head of CID, (that cold killer of Roger Casement, both the man and his reputation and he boasted about it!) and Sir Winston Churchill were amongst those who subscribed to it." (*Patriotism: The Making And Unmaking Of British National Identity*, ed. by Raphael Samuel, Vol. 2, Routledge, London, 1989).

But Brendan Behan, at the age of sixteen, who was certainly not going to enlist in the army of the old enemy, instead chose to try some IRA activity in Britain. But he was caught as soon as he landed in Liverpool—well forty-eight hours later and was punched and beaten by the police. It wasn't much better in Borstal and then prison where the other prisoners beat him, not for neutrality, but for his republicanism which he admitted was "with reason". What is odd about his gaol account is the absence of any mention of the War except for one comment. And that had to do "with overcrowding because of the numbers of Jewish Polish refugees". He was deported to Ireland in December 1941, where he was arrested the following year for the attempted murder of two detectives and was sentenced by the Special Criminal Court to fourteen years imprisonment. First he was sent to Mountjoy gaol and in 1943 to Arbour Hill Military Prison and then finally he was interned in the Curragh Military internment camp in June 1944 until he was released in 1946 "in the general amnesty for republican prisoners" (*That Neutral Island* by Clair Wills, Faber & Faber, London, 2007).

NAVAL MATTERS

But the huge death rate of British sailors—in comparison to their American counterparts was caused by the widespread use of Carley Rafts on naval vessels. These were cheap to make and easy to stow—usually in the form of seats on deck. They had proven to be *lethal* at life-saving at sea and this fact was well-known at the Admiralty. But the latter kept using them instead of proper lifeboats. When a ship sank, the Carley Rafts floated off and the crew clung on to the hand-ropes of the Rafts. An illusion of security that was particularly depraved. One by one the crew succumbed to the sleep of hypothermia and left go their hold on the ropes and sank beneath the waves. Some were saved out of the sea by the poor Irish coastal communities and those dead that floated in were all given proper burials. At one stage the Irish Government asked for wood for the coffins from the British Government, as the coastal counties most affected in Donegal and Mayo had precious little, and were told "no" in no uncertain terms. (There were burials of Germans, Dutch and others as well.) But reading MacNeice one would think that the Irish

caused their deaths and of course this was handy propaganda. That scoundrel of Naval propaganda, the writer Nicholas Monsarrat, especially in his novel *The Cruel Sea*, wrote, as Robert Fisk noted: "in so savage and damaging a manner after the war" such lies as to make even today any British Naval person fizzle with anger and reproach (which this writer gave back in one explosive episode that left them red-faced and without say) and here is just a *taste* of Monsarrat's tale:

"But it was difficult to withhold one's contempt from a country such as Ireland, whose battle this was and whose chances of freedom and independence in the event of a German victory were nil. The fact that Ireland was standing aside from the conflict at this moment posed, from the naval angle, special problems which affected, sometimes mortally, all sailors engaged in the Atlantic, and earned their particular loathing" (*In Time Of War*, by Robert Fisk, *Ireland, Ulster and the price of neutrality 1939-45*, Uni. of Pennsylvania Press, USA, 1983).

Yet Rear Admiral John Godfrey, CB, in the infamous "Room 39 where staff was fought for, promotions arranged, expenditure justified, conduct defended"—and where the Director of Naval Intelligence, Godfrey would direct the Fleet at sea with two men who were pivotal to its success. The first of these was Personal Assistant and former Reuter man, Ian Fleming (creator of the James Bond franchise) and the other was Private Secretary Ted Merrett. Central role again, following on from World War 1, was given to Godfrey's "famous predecessor Sir Basil Thompson" whom Godfrey praised for—

"To no one am I more indebted than Reggie Hall, the DNI (Director of Naval Intelligence) during the Kaiser's war. He came to see me on 27th March 1939 and offered me full access to his great store of knowledge and judgement on this strange commodity, Intelligence, he realised that I needed contacts and these he produced in large quantities. It was through him that I met Sir Montague Norman, the Governor of Barings, Olaf Hambro, Chairman of Hambro's Bank and the two Rothschild's, all of whom helped me in a variety of fruitful ways... The Hall touch showed itself again when Godfrey assisted by Fleming, entertained to dinner at the Savoy, [the] Chairman and representatives of Hambros Bank, ICI, Lloyds Bank, Shell, Rhokana Corp., John Brown, Unilever, Samuels and Glyn Mills and Southern Railways with the object of creating a distinguished panel of patrons for the contact work. It worked!"

These men initiated the Contact Registrar:

"Why send a spy to get the facts we need if someone in this country has them already?... Contacts included not only individuals but also numerous shipping companies, chambers of

commerce, tourist agencies, banks and academic bodies, libraries and missionary societies, the British War Graves Commission, the oil and plantation companies of the Far East, crane manufactures and dredging firms".

Then there were the Royal Patriotic Schools,

"where all refugees from occupied Europe and other enemy countries were screened by the Security Services and then questioned for intelligence purposes."

This was work that inspired those who undertook to set it up:

"To find the substitute for the spy, indeed someone informed in far greater detail than most spies could be, was in itself a satisfying experience; to know that each carefully questioned and recorded contact was leading to others, that the network was approaching completeness, gave at least the feeling of power and purpose organised by the counter-offensives after 1942... Most remarkable of all was the way that secrecy, loyalty and trust were shown by thousands who felt they were doing their bit towards winning the war."

And Godfrey assessed Ireland's neutrality with a skullduggery action that involved a chartered trawler "to poke around the western ports of Ireland to report enemy activities. This was before it became clear early in the war that the Germans would respect Irish neutrality". The skipper and his crew were immediately arrested by the Irish and "courteously released through the British representative in Dublin" (*Room 39 A study In Naval Intelligence* by Donald McLachlan, Atheneum, New York, 1968). One other little nugget of information that this writer would like to add is that Ian Fleming was another Dublin Ansbacher Bank name, in order to avoid paying tax in his native Britain.

MACNEICE

Louis MacNeice, Ulster poet and son of a Bishop (whose published sermons were the nightly reading for none other than twice Editor of the *Irish Times*, Douglas Gageby) was actually in Galway and then Dublin during 1939-40. MacNeice took some time off from his hated teaching job in Bedford College and went to see his little six year old son Dan (who was very neglected in the parental split—his mother having decamped three years earlier to the US with a graduate student) in Cootehill in Co. Cavan. MacNeice wanted to make sure his son was safe and so he thought neutral Ireland was ideal for that reason. He had thought originally of sending him to Bowen's Court but Elizabeth Bowen herself warned him "of strong pro-Axis sympathies in the Bowen's Court area", so Dan ended up staying with his cousins, the Clements. (It would have been very interesting for the

Trevor/Bowen Summer School, August 2007, if any of the locals had been aware of this information and could have enlightened us as to its accuracy.) Colonel Clements had a 400 acre estate and his step-cousins Catherine and Marcus were very kind to the boy in Cootehill.

Then MacNeice went to Dublin and saw his fellow writers at the famed Palace Bar of *Irish Times* Editor Smyllie legend. He was looked after well and even told of a possible job offer at Trinity College (by his friend Walter Starkie, Professor of Romance languages there; later on in the War, in 1940, Starkie was head of the British Council in Franco's Madrid which should give pause to the *London Review of Books'* recent attack on "fascist dictators" and those who worked with them!). MacNeice immediately applied for the it and so he whiled away the time until news came in January '40 that he hadn't got the post. Now he was "tormented by the ethical problems of war". While "many of his friends in England took the view that it was just power politics", after Poland fell, MacNeice felt he was faced with a "choice of evils" and he took Britain's side. Now the city (which had been so generous to him) became a target:

"Dublin was hardly worried by the war; her old preoccupations were still her preoccupations. The intelligentsia continued their parties; their mutual malice was as effervescent as ever. There was still a pot of flowers in front of Matt Talbot's shrine. The potboy priests and the birds of prey were still the dominant caste; the petty bureaucracy continued powerful and petty."

But the dislike wasn't all one way and MacNeice was "ridiculed by the Palace Bar crowd", with the probably apocryphal story of a row between the latter and the former which was immortalised by Patrick Kavanagh with this lovely couplet:

"Let him go back and labour
For Faber and Faber" (Claire Wills).

But first MacNeice went to America, that other neutral place, and met with his fellow poets, Auden and Isherwood whom many felt had turned their backs on their home country at a time of peril. When he came back to London he searched for work. And what war-work did our hero engage in? Well, with his contacts, he was soon established at the BBC. He wrote a letter to the Director General (as one does) and was called in for an interview and who should it be but his old friend, E.A. (Archie) Harding, an Oxford intellectual with strong left-wing sympathies, and they took to each other at once. Harding believed passionately in the power of the radio "to entertain, instruct, and persuade". He would seem to have persuaded MacNeice to reconsider his views on patriotism and propaganda. By the end of the interview, the poet had agreed to try

his freelance hand and produce initial scripts that would contribute to the national morale. The BBC, evidently pleased with these, now offered him a staff position, "subject to satisfactory references and 'positive vetting' by MI5" (which still remains the case today). After his three month trial, MacNeice was offered his appointment (on a salary of £620 a year) and "he worked there for the next twenty years." During this time "there were a number of other writers recruited for the BBC", among who were William Empson and George Orwell. They all had to attend a six-week crash course on how to be a propagandist. They called it 'The Liar's School', though MacNeice's biographer said there is no evidence of his subject attending there.

It is necessary to just look at the BBC itself and see it for what it was—and still remains, as the Dr. Kelly affair tragically shows:

"The BBC Charter was a careful compromise among major parties designed to keep radio out of politics. It guaranteed that while the BBC would not become the mouthpiece of a particular government, it would remain the creature, albeit thinly insulated, of government. To be sure, an independent Board of Governors made day-to-day policy and hired a director to carry it out. But as was typical of all mass media in Britain, those in charge were so close to the Establishment that direct censorship was rarely necessary: they censored themselves.... The type of free-wheeling political coverage practised by the American networks was impossible in Britain."

It, as Tom Nairn exposes, *always acts in the interest of the State*. (Just compare the difference with RTE, funded totally by the tax-payer *but* which acts *against* the State's own interests and yet gets away with what it does unless it affects one of the elites' own, as a recent example has demonstrated.)

But whether he had training or not, he proved to be a great propagandist. "Mac Neice's love for America—eclipsed by 'a sudden revulsion' in autumn 1941—re-emerged with her entry into the war and shines through his radio scripts of summer and winter of 1942: 'Britain to America'... 'Salute to the US Army'..." (*Louis MacNeice* by John Stallworthy, W.W. Norton & Co, New York, 1995.) Actually there were a few other writers who were looking for jobs and it seems they really didn't care as to who was their employer as long as they got paid.

(There is an interesting footnote here, as reported in the *Sunday Business Post*, 14th July, 2002. MacNeice's second wife and widow (though they had been estranged as he had taken up with an actress called Mary Wimbrush) Hedli MacNeice, was named as having an

Ansbacher account; she had personal loans from Guinness & Mahon secured on a deposit of funds from Guinness Mahon Cayman Trust. She also withdrew funds from GMCT's account in Guinness & Mahon. She had had to give up living in England and she spiritedly (as it became very difficult to get funds from the now alcoholic MacNeice who died in '63 when he was only fifty-six) went to live in Kinsale and opened the Spinnaker Restaurant and lived there till 1978. She died in France in 1990.)

SAMANTHA, HUBERT AND DULANTY

Those of us who were present for the Hubert Butler Conference in Kilkenny (reported in the *Irish Political Review*, December 2000), which had been co-funded by the *Irish Times* and the British Council, will remember the line up of *literati/academics* who were there to *sanctify their "own saint and liberal icon"*, as Caroline Walsh, Literary Editor of the *Irish Times* put it. That famous "revisionist retreat", as she called it, which was opened by Roy Foster, had us all agog during a Q and A session when Jack Lane and Brendan Clifford proposed to the panel, well-known ideas that were central to Butler's ideology. After much silence and faffing, Professor Terence Brown, TCD finally yielded and accepted, with qualifications, their thesis. But a general bad air fell upon the room and it seemed that the lads had intruded into a very private ritual, though in fact it had been touted as "open to the public" by the *Irish Times*.

The *Irish Political Review* (July 2003) carried a review of the book of the conference (which was flagged in the *Irish Times*, under the heading 'Cultural icon and secular saint'). The book *Unfinished Ireland: Essays On Hubert Butler* edited by Chris Agee was noted by the present writer as being censored as it excluded the very lively exchanges of the Q and A session—especially the fine interventions of Lane and Clifford. Time went on and then in 2007 during the Kilkenny Arts Festival the *Irish Times* went big on the fact that the Pulitzer Price-winning Samantha Power was giving the newly inaugural Hubert Butler lecture.

Not many of us knew who Power was then but since her debut in Ireland, she made an explosive foray into the present US Presidential Democratic race on Barack Obama's side: calling Hilary Clinton "a monster" (which had to be apologised for by the Obama people, *we were told here*). She was on every Irish News channel and as she was plugging her book, she certainly made capital of the whole episode. But here is something strange—while all the Irish news media were focussed on Power, I put through a call to an in-the-know political guy in Washington and he had never heard of her. And another thing that had suspicious tones to it was the oft-repeated claim that,

if Obama won, she would be in his "cabinet". That too alerted me as anyone knows that an American President has "an administration" not the "cabinet" of our democracies. Anyone familiar with political electioneering would know too that no one takes time out during the most important part of it—in this case the primaries—to go off to publicise a book. (It has been decided by the editor of the *Irish Political Review* that a Profile of this woman will be done in a future issue so enough about her till then.)

But Hubert Butler—now that's another story. At the conference we were told by his family that he left war-torn Paris and came back to live with his wife Peggy, who was the sister of Tyrone Guthrie, at her family home—which is now the Anacarrig Writer's Centre in County Tyrone. One would have expected him to have gone to his old home Maidenhall, Kilkenny, but his father still lived there and there is more than a faint suggestion that the marriage may not have been to the old man's liking. It was only on the latter's death in 1941, that Hubert and his wife came to Maidenhall where they lived for the rest of their lives. Now that is the version we were given both at the Conference and in the book. Was it true? Was it . . . ? as the builder said to the accountant leaving the Mahon Tribunal.

Clair Wills claims that Butler *was in England in 1939 and in leafy Hampstead at that!* From there he wrote to the Irish High Commissioner in London, Mr. John Dulanty, and explained to him:

"I am a citizen of Eire. My home is in Kilkenny. I want to offer my services for war work and should value your advice." He then gives his CV which included being a "member of the Irish Co-ordinating Committee and was responsible for the bringing of the first refugees from Vienna and the initiation of the work in Ireland. I speak well German and French, with a little practice would become good in Russian, less good in Serbo-Croatian.... I have a very wide experience of European countries and people. I have written to Mr. N. E. Cooper at the Home Office and to someone at the War Office but I should naturally prefer greatly to work under my own government if there is any opening for someone of my qualifications."

So it is puzzling that the War Office would not have wanted such a gem. He had worked with the Kagan Gruppe, a Quaker organisation who were bringing out Christian Jews—though it did not limit its work to Christian Jews—his wife remained at home in Tyrone. With no offers, Butler then tried getting a job "with the British censorship". Even Clair Wills finds this hard to understand but concludes pragmatically that "he simply needed employment". Indeed. But where now "our liberal icon and secular saint"? No wonder he and Brian Inglis had such an

intemperate correspondence when the latter took on highly risky RAF work and the other became a "market gardener" with a preference for writing articles that appeared only very seldom in publications.

INGLIS AND WILLIAMS

But Inglis who returned to his *Irish Times* column after the war heard about a British Government Forces Grant scheme and though at first turned down, he received it once he mentioned his difficulties to Reggie Ross Williamson, the man who had replaced John Betjeman as 'Press Officer' in the British legation office. So he did his post-graduate degree in Trinity on "the history of the press in Ireland", with T.W. Moody agreeing to be his supervisor.

In the thriving Dublin of that time, Inglis met up with various people but one whom he really admired was Desmond Williams, Professor of Modern History at UCD. In 1944, Williams made a decision to "return to history as a postgraduate student at Peterhouse, Cambridge", where Herbert Butterfield, a Fellow of the College and Professor of Modern History at the University, described him as one "of the ablest and most promising students he had personally encountered".

Williams got to know Michael Oakeshott who worked for MI6 and was one of the founders of the CIA-backed magazine, *Encounter* (a link which, when it became public, disturbed a lot of its writers/contributors). Inglis goes on to state that Williams "in his youth had been a fervent admirer of Hitler; secondment from Peterhouse to the Allied Commission, set up at the end of the war to edit the German Foreign Ministry's documents, had changed his views about Nazism but not about socialism. He was adept, though, at concealing his own opinions", though he worked unstintingly with Michael Oakeshott and others to "instil a maverick brand of Toryism" which later became identified with the "Peterhouse Mafia" and which was embedded into journalism by the likes of Colin Welch, George Gale, and Peregrine Worsthorne.

Inglis became quite friendly with Williams and spent Saturday evenings with him and his friend Patrick Lynch, a civil servant in the Department of the Taoiseach, and later to become Professor of Economics and Chairman of Aer Lingus, at the Unicorn restaurant. Inglis then became involved with the Labour Party and Conor Cruise O'Brien had his thesis published in *Irish Historical Studies* which had negotiated a contract with Faber & Faber. It turned out to become *The Story of Ireland* and, as he confessed, it became his "launching pad" (*Downstart: The autobiography of Brian Inglis*, Chatto & Windus Ltd, London, 1990).

JOSEPH WALSHE

A newly-issued biography, *Joseph Walshe, Irish Foreign Policy 1922-1946* by Aengus Nolan (Mercier Press, 2008), couldn't come at a more opportune time as it intersected with my period of study. While Dr. Nolan seemed at first to find it hard to fathom that a civil servant of such high rank could just jump from working for the former Cumann nanGaedheal party to working for de Valera, I cannot find "Walshe's lack of ideological uniformity" difficult to understand. Democracy yields such results and it is *the duty* of the civil servant to understand that and continue working for whomever the people put in power.

But what Nolan and others really mean is that it was not just a change of a political party in government, as the former Cosgraves had begun to think that they were the state and indeed acted as such.

So who was this Joseph Walshe whose career largely co-incided with the pro-Treaty party and whose attire rather repulsed Elizabeth Bowen who wrote untruthfully that "his person is uncouth". Though born to farming people in Co. Tipperary, his life was very cosmopolitan. At seventeen he entered the Jesuit order and two years later he was in Holland

"where he lived with French Jesuits, a number of whom had been forced into exile due to anti-clerical laws. While there, he studied Philosophy and developed his linguistic skills before returning to Ireland in 1910 to take up a teaching post in Clongowes Wood Jesuit college" (Nolan, p13).

He left the Jesuits citing medical reasons. (There is some suspicion that he was something of the hypochondriac.) Anyway he studied Law at UCD and then did a postgraduate degree in French. It was while he was in France, with his friend Seán Murphy on holiday, that by chance in Paris they met Seán T. O'Kelly, who had known Walshe as a student. O'Kelly was in Paris to promote Irish freedom at the Versailles Peace Conference, and he thought Walshe would make a good civil servant. As soon as he got back to Ireland Walshe started work and it became quite the vocation for him. Sinn Fein had won the 1918 General Election and there was much to do. The Department that he worked for was Foreign Affairs: de Valera understood its importance immediately and asked Under-Secretary Robert Brennan for weekly briefings. Dev issued the following instructions and they bear witness to what he was already focused on:

"Your duties will be to establish a general secretariat, and to maintain regular correspondence with our representatives and with our friends in foreign countries, and to supply them with pamphlets and statistics as a foundation for informative articles upon Ireland. These should be, as I pointed out, of a permanent rather than an ephemeral character".

The British Council couldn't have formulated it better as John Betjeman was in the future to find out.

Walshe doesn't seem to have been caught up in the Rising—which would seem to indicate a rather unrevolutionary nature—but that didn't stop Bowen from commenting to her superiors that he had "an (apparently) sinister past". Her quotation marks around the word "apparently" would seem to suggest that she knew she was repeating some gossip that she was not entirely sure of, but the remark still calls her judgement into question, in my opinion. In a close assessment of her work, I have found far too many examples of her personal prejudices clouding her evaluations. Eunan O'Halpin, the academic and Professor of Modern History at Trinity, has written two books on spying (and according to *Books Ireland* March 2008, a third is due out in April), with one having an introduction by no less a personage than Sir Christopher Andrew, who is writing the official in-house history of MI6, with all that that implies.

O'Halpin has given me hours of interesting reading. What I love about him is the way he sources the most important tit-bits of genuine information by just referring to "Private communication" or even "Private information" while also sourcing *very exactly* most of his other sources. This is simply inexcusable, if only because it could lead to various abuses. How sure can one be of using what he has written if it comes with these self-styled power strokes? One only has to think of *poor dear Peter Hart* whom I can't help devilishly advising, that he should have done likewise and thus avoided sourcing the dead for his interviews. Ah but such is academia today in Ireland. So when O'Halpin attributes a powerful war-time role to Elizabeth Bowen, one has to be very cautious about such information. In this case though, he cites the Liddell history, which text carries excisions and blanked out words and names. O'Halpin writes:

"Most importantly, the name of the head of SIS's wartime Irish section is blanked out, although the accompanying pronoun discloses the interesting fact that this was a woman working within Section V, the division of SIS responsible for counterintelligence. Who was this dark lady of the in-house histories?"

He goes on to dramatically exclaim,

"One plausible candidate is the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen, whose known Irish work for the British Ministry of Information could also have provided cover for more secret activities. Whoever she was, her main Irish role is not clear: counter intelligence against Axis agents and sympathies was undoubtedly the principal function of the SIS organisation established in Dublin in June 1940, but that tedious on the ground work was done

under the supervision of the British passport control officer Captain Collinson" (*Ireland And The Second World War: Politics, Society And Remembrance*, edited by Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000).

Frankly, my researches have found this to be totally unfounded. But Bowen was certainly active in Ireland and I will argue in the next article that she had to have a handler who was a well connected Anglo-Irish woman, who left Ireland once her career was over, and spent her retirement in the England she so loved, as did of course Elizabeth Bowen. But far above Bowen was John Betjeman and of course the professional spooks like the Liddell brothers Guy and Cecil.

Julianne Herlihy

Editorial Digest

The Royal Irish Regiment was reported on by Radio Eireann's *Good Morning Ireland* programme on 14th March 2008. This was in the context of the Saint Patrick's Day holidays. The Regiment will celebrate the Saint's day and then go off to Afghanistan for six months. A Corporal and a Lieutenant from the South were asked about the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen and more or less dismissed it as of no significance. The Captain, a Catholic from North Antrim, talked about his family history in the British Army, his father in World War Two and his grandfather in the Great War. He joined the military in the 70s but had to keep quiet about it until recently. The Lieutenant-Colonel, a plummy Englishman, claimed his family came from Ireland, and politics and religion were left at the gate. He tried to give the impression that the RIR was some kind of Band of Brothers apart from politics. There were no Ulster Protestants interviewed, though they make up the bulk of the unit. Emphasis was on the harp and shamrock insignia—Colonel Tim Collins (George Bush's favourite soldier) was its commander in the invasion of Iraq. It is a very new regiment, formed in 1992, mostly from the Ulster Defence Regiment, formerly the B-Specials, formerly (and to a great extent latterly) the Ulster Volunteer Force. Among its battle honours was the massacre of the Miami Showband near Newry in 1975.

Saint Patrick's Day in Belfast was a dramatic example of how much things have changed. There was a short official Council parade with lots of shamrocks and other green things. Also were groups from various communities—especially the Chinese. But it was the sight and the atmosphere of the whole of the city centre that impressed. It was a sea of green white and orange. Not a

swaggering or aggressive thing. Just children and teenagers enjoying themselves. It looked just natural. Not long ago it would have been illegal. About twenty years or more ago the BBC was interviewing people in East Belfast about their feelings of nationality. They asked one Chinese man if he felt mostly Chinese or Irish. "*I'm British*", he responded. Well, on March 17th there were a lot of Chinese families walking around town with tricolours attached to prams and pushchairs.

Saint Patrick's Day in Dingle was a more reflective affair. The parade commemorated the tradition of defiance from the days when Irish People were forbidden to assemble during the hours of darkness. So the people rose before dawn and held their parade in the dark.

Would you wear an Easter Lily? This was the front page headline in the *Wicklow Times* (19.3.08). Local politicians were asked the question and gave a variety of answers. This followed a campaign by the historian Joe McGowan, Chairman of the Markievicz Committee, who said: "*The British people wear the poppy to honour their fallen heroes and it is right that they should. We Irish have a similar emblem. It is called the Easter Lily*". Liz Mc Manus was asked if she would wear the Lily "even if it was a stick on one". She said *no* and continued in her very Lady Wicklow way: "*I have a nice silver brooch depicting a lily; I'll wear that over the Easter*". One cannot help wondering how many Easter Lilies—sticky or otherwise—were sold (never mind how many years men spent in jail) to raise the funds which got Liz Mc Manus and her colleagues where they are today.

Prisoner releases. In the course of his *Guardian* rant against Paisley and Adams (see article elsewhere in this *Irish Political Review*), Simon Jenkins says: "*Blair's prisoner release turned more terrorists and gangsters on to the streets of Britain than anything in modern history*". 450 people were released—254 Republicans and 196 Loyalists. 159 had been serving life sentences. A total of 12 have had their licences revoked and these include people like Michael Stone who appear happier in jail. (*Irish News* 22.3.08)

Israel & Settlers The media in Ireland has reported that the Israeli Government decided to build 700 or more homes for settlers in East Jerusalem as revenge for the killing of six religious students. This is not how the matter is being reported in Israel. Olmert is saying that this is part of a long-standing plan.

Arrest warrants have been issued for family members of the man who carried

out the killings.

The Simon Community is a housing charity with hostels supplying 270 single beds and 49 family rooms across 20 sites in Northern Ireland. It has refused employment as hostel wardens, after checking with the PSNI, to two men because they are ex-IRA prisoners. Sean McConkey from Lenadon in Belfast had already been selected and was later rejected. Jervis Marks from Forkhill, Co. Armagh had his application rejected. The Court of Appeal in Belfast refused further leave to appeal. But the men, through their lawyer, Karen Quinlivan, are going ahead with a petition to the House of Lords. (*Irish News*. 13.3.08)

Outsourcing has taken on a whole new meaning in the North—particularly where public funds are being directed towards the private sector or where privatisation is on the agenda. The *Irish News* (10.3.08) gives details of where the people "running" the public services, and being paid handsomely for their jobs, actually live. Sean Campbell, Chairman of Construction Industry Training lives in Switzerland. Tony Watson, Chairman of the Strategic Investment Board, lives in London. Veronica Palmer, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Transport and Holding Company, responsible for the trains and buses, lives in England. Also living in England is Chris Mellor, former head of the private Anglian Water, and Chairman of Northern Ireland Water. He won't be lonely though. Half of the Board of Northern Ireland Water also lives there. Sir Roy McNulty who lives in the English West Midlands is Chairman of Ilex, responsible for regeneration in Derry. He is also Deputy Chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority and of the Civil Aviation Authority. Of the eight members of the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulations, only two live in the North. And on it goes. The talking may have been devolved, but hardly the government. Who said "Brits Out"?

Nice Little Earners. Westminster MPs can claim expenses for household goods (on the grounds that their homes were completely bare before they were elected ???). The amounts are based on prices at John Lewis. Examples are: bed £1,000, telly £750, food mixer £200, carpet £35 per square metre... Top of the list, in joint first place, from 647 MPs, are Nigel Dodds of the DUP and Alasdair McDonnell of the SDLP, both claiming £22,110. Mind you, most of the others are not far behind. Towards the bottom of the list are Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein (478th) on £16,500, Sammy Wilson of the DUP (505th) on £15,159, and the relatively frugal Eddie McGrady of the SDLP (542nd) on £11,709. ■

and everything to which they had been accustomed; they often lived isolated lives in distant places of the world. They mobilized opinion for imperialistic ends. Conservatives or Liberals, the empire was their passion. It was to be served, strengthened, carried on. Where the empire was in question they were impervious to facts, blind to obvious evils, untouched by argument. As administrators they were intelligent and kindly—conceded nothing to self-government, nothing to the aspiration of other people for liberty. England and the empire were one; British citizenship a distinction, like the Roman citizenship; to question the empire was to question centuries of sacrifice, the renown of England's most distinguished men. This extraordinarily efficient organisation knew everything except the suppressed wants of subject peoples; granted everything to subject peoples except political liberty. It was not willing to dignify by discussion the questionings of others as to the sanctity of England's imperial trust" (p297).

"As I talked with these young men, I reflected on the nature of English gentlemen and Oxford scholars—their unwillingness, perfected by long practice into inability, to recognise issues that touched their economic interests. India, Egypt, Africa, Mesopotamia provided careers for the younger sons of the aristocracy; England was crowded, trade undesirable, the service of the state was their opportunity. To end imperialism was to end jobs, opportunities for preferment. It was like suggesting abolishing the church to the clergy, the army to the military caste, the navy to marines. Men receive unwillingly ideas that destroy a livelihood; and vocal England is a unit in the protection of its privileged sons—they would be left to starve if the colonial service were ended, they would have to compromise their dignity in trade or emigrate as workers" (p298).

THE LABOUR PARTY

"Even the Labour Party had a confused veneration for the empire, a veneration springing from tradition. Oxford young men wanted our dough-boys to do their policing, to help protect economic interests that they dignified as sacred. That was the objective of the Armenian drive; America's duty was always being held before my eyes" (p298).

BAGHDAD AND SUEZ

"Allied opinion about the Baghdad Railway, which I had visualized as a great international highway to open up a rich storehouse of lands, was that it should be left to rust. It had done enough damage already; completed, it would disturb the balance of power. What would happen to British shipping interests if the freight of Europe

travelled by rail? What would happen to the Suez Canal, the majority of whose shares were held by the British?" (p300).

"But America's gesture to the Syrians had no influence on the Peace Conference. As elsewhere, lands and peoples had been disposed of while the war was in progress. The Sykes-Picot Treaty had partitioned the Near East. In the partition the Arabs got nothing." (p302).

"France took Syria, England Mesopotamia. Palestine went to the Jews. The Arabs had driven back the Turks and had perhaps saved the British Empire. Their sacrifices were ignored; agreements were thrown to the winds and betraying friends took possession of their ancient towns and countryside. The Arabs rebelled; their rebellion was crushed by the same friends with aeroplanes and machine-guns."

LENIN AND WILSON

"Lionel Steffens was interested in Russia; President Wilson had spoken generously of Russia's right to have revolutions if she saw fit. Lenin talked Wilson's language as to self-determination and ending imperialism. The Prinkipo Conference was organized as a friendly overture to Russia. It failed. One day Steffens and I were with William Bullitt, a liaison official, whose business it was to keep the American mission informed as to what was going on. Bullitt had an engaging personality. He knew Europe, had been connected with the State Department during the war. Steffens suggested a mission to Russia, a mission that understood the Bolshevik point of view, that could talk its language. Bullitt liked the idea and dictated a memorandum about it to Colonel House. Two days later Bullitt asked Steffens if he would go to Russia with him; if so, could he be ready immediately? The plan had been approved by Colonel House; it was only necessary to get the sanction of Lloyd George. The next day that had been secured" (p303).

"I saw Bullitt and Steffens off. They went to London; from London by British aid they reached Russia. They were sympathetically received by Lenin, and returned to Paris to make their report. The mission had been successful. The Russians had acceded to the allied memorandum; a rapprochement seemed established; Russia was to come back into the family of nations. Bullitt and Steffens were elated. A great advance had been made toward international amity. For some reason or another they could not see the President. Lloyd George received Bullitt and the report, but later denied that he knew of the mission or had given his consent to it. No explanation for his change of front was ever offered. That Lloyd George had approved of the mission was obvious to all. It could not have left France, could not have landed in England, could not have secured conveyance to Russia but for British aid and approval" (p303).

"But economic forces moved the conference, like players about a chess-board. Boundary-lines were shifted to include harbors, copper, oil, mineral resources. Races were split, natural demarcations ignored. The imperialist interests that had kept the world on edge for thirty years before the war were making a killing; they would end the old controversies; would sanction their loot by treaty agreements; perhaps rivet them by the League of Nations. The British Admiralty wanted oil; it had talked oil for years. British maritime prescience saw that oil was the fuel of to-morrow. The French steel trust wanted a grip on coal and iron ore, to gain command of the Continent and strip Germany of her war-making power. Munition-makers were busy. They were getting ready for the next war.

"One evening at dinner a friend of President Wilson's, a man thoroughly conversant with the conference, said despondently:

'It is impossible to tell yet whether the peace is being drafted by the international bankers or the munition-makers. It is not being drafted by America.'

"America had no business at Paris. That was the outstanding thing about which we almost all agreed. President Wilson should have stayed at home. We were amateurs, amateurs seeking to right the world by moralistic appeals; we had fought as religious crusaders, and, like Joshua, had expected the old world to fall at a trumpet-blast. Our emotions were honest, the sacrifice genuine, whole-hearted, but Europe only smiled at our naivete" (*The Confessions of a Reformer*, Frederic C. Howe, 1925, p305).

So what can we say about Woodrow Wilson: that on practically every question with which he was faced during his career, he adopted the right attitude and the wrong methods.

There is no doubt that his Fourteen Points were a definite influence in breaking down the resistance of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire), who looked to Wilson, as it turned out, in vain, to enforce what he had propounded.

At Paris in March, 1919, he entirely betrayed the trust which the defeated nations had placed in him. Had he kept to himself, he might have used the weight of his authority on certain issues to ensure the adoption of broad principles of justice, instead he dived into a maelstrom of committees, and was lost. Even his own American colleagues openly ridiculed him, by almost all he was regarded as a bloody nuisance.

Pat Maloney

NOTE: All underlining by Editor, Labour Comment.

friends and with each other. The documents show that England and France had pleaded with the King of the Hedjas to throw the Arab forces in with the allied cause, and drive the Turks from Arabia.

"The Arabs were promised their freedom in exchange; England would get out of Mesopotamia, France would get out of Syria; the whole of Arabia was to be divided into three parts, to be ruled by the three sons of the King of the Hedjas—one of whom, Emir Feisal, was in Paris. Dignified, meditative, richly turbaned, he was there to see that the compact was lived up to. But France and England were unwilling to give up this rich territory. Scarcely was the ink dry on their compact with the Arabs when they negotiated with each other the secret Sykes-Picot Treaty, under whose terms England was to retain Mesopotamia, France was to keep Syria, and Russia take Armenia. Then the Jews asked for Palestine, and Balfour, the gentleman-statesman, agreed on behalf of England that they should have it, although Palestine had already been promised to the Arabs and given to the French. And England, I soon found, was reluctant to hand over Syria to France" (p292).

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

"The two most picturesque personalities in Paris were Prince Emir Feisal and Colonel Thomas Lawrence. Feisal was one of three sons of the King of Hedjas.

"Feisal was accompanied by Colonel Thomas Lawrence. He too provided copy for the press, such copy as it was possible to extract from this reticent friend and protector of the Sherif of Mecca. Colonial Lawrence seemed but a handsome boy. He inspired spontaneous affection from every one who came in contact with him. I have seen Mr. Arthur Balfour approach him at the Hotel Majestic as a father might approach a son" (p293).

"Lawrence was an Oxford man. After graduation he disappeared in the Arabian desert, where he lived with the Bedouin tribes, learned their language, acquired their culture and understood their wants. He was termed 'The Uncrowned King of the Arabs'."

A little like Iveagh House and the MI6 contemporary, Michael Semple *"The Uncrowned King of the Afghans"*, well almost!

"When things were going badly with the British in Arabia, Lawrence was sought for by General Allenby, and found in the library in Alexandria. He was made a colonel in the British army, he aided in organizing the Arabian forces, and commanded a machine-gun battalion against the Turks in the desert fighting from Egypt up along the Palestine coast" (p293).

"It helped one to understand British imperialism to talk with Colonel Lawrence... was Lawrence guarding Arabia for the British? Was he one of the thousands of young men in the British foreign office who forget themselves to forward Britain's empire and protect her outposts from German or Russian penetration? Lawrence gave no hint. Neglectful of honors, indifferent to everything suggestive of personal aggrandizement, he seemed as detached from the Occidental world as Feisal himself. He spoke frankly about Britain as he did about the French. The Arabs had a culture of their own. They intended to keep it. He knew the Occident, knew its unworthiness, knew that he would have to fight for the things that had been promised his Arab friends by the Allies to bring them into the war. He and Feisal gave one a sense of the Near East, of its age, its sense of security, its apartness.

"Arabia had been Arabia for thousands of years. Empires had come and gone, conquerors had fought in turn for its possession. It had been the battle ground of millions; it had known almost every ambitious conqueror from Darius to the Kaiser. Yet Arabia remained Arabia; her customs, her culture, her habits were as they had been thousands of years ago" (p294).

"To Feisal, and in a sense to Lawrence as well, the Paris Peace Conference was but a moment in a history that went back to the very origin of man.

"Colonel Lawrence seemed to share my opinion of allied treachery. He even admitted my suggestion that England coveted Syria or wanted America to take it as a mandate. French occupation of Syria meant control of the entrance to Mesopotamia. Syria menaced the Island of Cyprus and British control of the Suez Canal. England did not want France in Syria. She wanted it herself" (p294).

"LORD MILNER'S MEN"

"One evening a number of young Englishmen visited me at the Hotel Chatham [in Paris]. They were Oxford and Cambridge men, brilliant, friendly, amiable. A few days later I was invited to breakfast with them. Arriving, I found that I was at the house of Lloyd George; that Philip Kerr, my host, was Lloyd George's secretary. He and his associates, Lionel Curtis, Arnold Toynbee, and others, were known as "Lord Milner's men".

"They were editors of the periodical known as *"The Round Table"*, and had organized an imperial conference in each of the British colonies. We talked about the Near East. They, too, were interested in the subject. I took it for granted that they were interested in self-determination for peoples; that they understood, as a matter of course, the crimes committed by imperialistic adventurers in Egypt, Persia, Africa. I talked about my discoveries of conflicting treaties, about the activities

of British oil interests in Mesopotamia and Persia. I warmed to the theme of financial imperialism and the necessity of being rid of imperialistic exploiters in order to have permanent peace. I felt that they would help in solving the Near Eastern problem" (p295).

"WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

"It astounded me to find that they scarcely knew the meaning of the words "economic imperialism". Imperialism was not economic, it was a white man's burden. A sacred trust, undertaken for the well-being of peoples unfitted for self-government. The war was in no way related to the conflict of financial interests. Unfortunate things were done sometimes by business bounders—true—but they did not influence the Foreign Office. They flag followed the investor, perhaps, but only because the investor was a British citizen who was sacred wherever he ventured. This imperialism, which was not imperialism, must be carried to the end. It must be carried by Anglo-Saxons, and England was not longer able to carry it alone. She had lost much of her best blood in the trenches; Oxford and Cambridge, which recruited the Foreign Office, had been depleted of a generation of talent. The only country which could be trusted to share the white man's burden was America; America must help. She must carry it in Armenia. There was the crux of that sociable morning talk, as of others. America should take the mandate over Armenia. Propaganda to that end should take root in my mind and be carried back to the President" (p296).

"But", I parried, "Armenia is a danger-spot. It is a buffer between Europe and Asia. The power that holds Armenia may have to defend the British Empire in Mesopotamia, Persia, and India—defend it against Turkey, central Europe, certainly against revolutionary Russia. If we should take Armenia we would need a huge military and naval force; we might be embroiled with every power in Europe; certainly we would be embroiled with the Turks and Arabs".

"It looks to me", I ended, "as if America is to be asked to carry the bag; to police Europe and remove from England and France the burden of protecting imperialistic ventures. You are asking us to assume the biggest, most dangerous, and costliest job of all" (p296).

"The young men admitted the danger. They felt, as all Englishmen whom I met seemed to feel, that America owed a debt to England, much as did Canada, Australia, and other colonies. We ought to be proud to pay our debt to the empire. That America was a colonial dependence, not yet a sovereign nation, seemed to be their fixed idea" (p296).

"Before the war these men, especially the Lord Milner group, had gone to Canada, Australia, and South Africa. They gave up home, companionship,

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if they were his allies, wrote the points down on a page of the world's history—and there they stood from one to fourteen—but when it came to the Peace Conference they moved the decimal point to the left, and his fourteen point were not worth the paper on which they were written. Ireland was one of the small nations; she asked nothing that was outside the fourteen points. Whoever else had forgotten the fourteen points, Ireland had not" (Archbishop Mannix, *The Advocate* Melbourne, 29.7.1920).

DID CAPITALIST AMERICA HAVE A CHOICE?

"On 28 November, 1916, the Federal Reserve Board, the nearest agency the United States had to a central bank, had published a warning to its member banks, advising against the purchase of foreign treasury bills. By this stage of the war Britain was spending about \$250 million per month in the United States, both on its own behalf and on that of its allies. Much of it was devoted to supporting the sterling-dollar exchange rate, in order to control the price of American goods. It reflected a dependence on American industry and on the American stock market which in German minds both justified the submarine campaign and undermined the United State's claim to be neutral. Britain and France had calculated on spending \$1,500 million in the United States in the six-month period between October 1916 and April 1917, and they anticipated funding five-sixths of it by borrowing in New York—in other words by selling treasury bills. On 28 November the Federal Reserve Board had been swayed by the views of one of its members in particular, Paul Warburg, a German by birth, who argued that the average American investor was too deeply dependent on an Entente [Britain, France and Russia] victory. Warburg believed that this over-exposure should be wound down. What followed was better described as a crash: \$1,000 million was wiped off the stock market in a week. By 1 April, 1917, Britain had an overdraft in the United States of \$358 million and was spending \$75 million a week. The American entry to the war save the Entente—and possibly some American speculators—from bankruptcy" (*The First World War—A New History*, Hew Strachan, Simon & Schuster, 2004).

Hew Strachan boasts of "*Turning received wisdom about the war completely on its head, he pays tribute to the men who planned and executed the war, seeing it not as a shocking waste of human life, but as a necessary conflict that utterly transformed the twentieth century.*"

Eight and a half million humans were killed in World War I, the greatest holocaust in human history—21 million

were wounded, it is estimated that 7.5 million Prisoners of War disappeared and the total casualties came to 37 million and this Oxford boffin reckons it was not a shocking waste of human life and this view is endorsed by Max Hastings, John Keegan and Paul Johnson.

And you can bet there is no fear of any of these gentlemen being barred from addressing the students of University College, Cork!

WILSON IN PARIS: THE OBSERVATIONS OF FREDERIC C. HOWE

"Early in the war I wrote to the President about the Near East. I was intensely interested in that part of the world which began with Constantinople and ended with Persia, including Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the control of the Mediterranean. I felt that here was the origin of the war, here was danger to the British Empire, to France, and to the allied cause. If Germany could split the Allies as she planned to do in the Near East, the British Empire would be destroyed. My Anglo-Saxon instincts were strong enough to revolt at this. I did not believe the war propaganda, did not accept the singleness of German guilt. Still something within me was aroused at the thought of German ascendancy in the world" (*The Confessions of a Reformer*, Frederic C. Howe, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925, p284).

"In Paris, negotiating with French munition interests, I heard similar discussions. The Baghdad Railway was in the diplomatic mind of Europe. France and England were endeavouring to control it, or frustrate its completion. It was an acute international problem for twenty years prior to the war.

"In correspondence with the President I urged on him my conviction of the economic causes of the war; that it was not the Kaiser, nor the Czar, but imperialistic adventurers who had driven their countries into conflict. Secret diplomacy, the conflict of bankers, cessionaires in the Mediterranean, in Morocco, in south and central Africa, had brought on the cataclysm; glacial-like aggregations of capital and credit were responsible for the war. His vision [President Wilson] of peace was only possible with imperialism ended and the world freed from the struggle over the control of backward countries, embroiling now one country, now another. Permanent peace meant that Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and the Dardanelles should be internationalized; the Baghdad Railway completed by an international consortium, so that Asiatic Turkey might again become as in ancient days a great granary and storehouse of wheat and cotton. I pictured the territory of the old Roman Empire freed from imperialism and developed by international arrangement, with Constantinople a free port and great cosmopolis, serving as the distributing centre of

three continents.

"When the armistice was signed I felt that the international millennium was at hand. The President's idealism had carried the world; his Fourteen Points had been accepted; armies were to be disbanded, armaments scrapped, imperialism ended. Self-determination was to be extended to all peoples, hates were to be assuaged, and peace to reign.

"I was ready to embrace a league of nations, even a league to enforce peace. Any international arrangement that would prevent war was worth while. I believed that the negotiators at Paris wanted peace and were willing to make any sacrifices for it; that war was going to be forever ended on earth.

"Such facts as did not fit in with my enthusiastic visitation, I suppressed. I found an explanation for wrongs that had been done at home in the end to be attained. America had almost lost her own liberties—that was part of our sacrifice. Surely the President covenanted for his ideals in exchange for what we had lost. His suppression of liberalism still raised unsatisfied questioning, but of a new dispensation for the world I did not permit myself to doubt. The men in Europe would be of one mind with him; war had all but destroyed civilization, war should not happen again. I was captivated by the President's eloquence and thoroughly believed in his programme. I wanted to have a part in it; a share in the settlement of the Near Eastern problems. I wanted to be around when the hand of the Western world should be lifted from the peoples of the Near East, the glories of whose ancient civilization I dreamed of seeing restored." (p288).

"George Creel urged on the President an unofficial appointment that would enable me to go to the Peace Conference. One day he said to me: 'The President wants you to go to Paris.' There was something more about passport, funds, an assignment to be made when I should arrive. It was not very clear, but it meant definitely to me an opportunity to press my ideas about the Mediterranean. That was what I wanted." (p290).

SYRIA

President Wilson appointed Howe on a Syrian mission—

"to ascertain the wishes of the Syrians themselves in regard to a mandatory" (p291).

"The secret treaties were placed at my disposal by Colonel House and the English authorities, who seemingly approved of the mission. There was no help to be had from the French, who did not want the inquiry made. These secret treaties, like others, had been kept from President Wilson: it was claimed he knew nothing about them until his arrival. They furnished astounding revelations. Our allies, like Germany, scrapped treaties—not with traditional enemies, but solemn agreements with

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Woodrow Wilson:

A Lost Soul In Paris

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

"Hence it was felt that if the German nation could be ringed round with armed foes upon its every frontier until the British fleet could strike at its ocean-going commerce, then German competition would be crushed and the supremacy of England in commerce ensured for another generation." (James Connolly, *Irish Worker*, 29th August 1914).

AUSTRALIA:

THE CONSCRIPTION REFERENDUMS 1916 AND 1917

If Connolly's voice went unheeded in 1914, in a little more than two years his objective analysis became the focus of a major political battle in Australia at a time when the Entente (Britain, France and Russia), least anticipated or required it! It was led by Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne and late son of Rath Luirc (Charleville), North County Cork.

"They had heard much about the causes of the war, and about the fight for the small nations. It was fortunate for them that they were fighting on the side of small nations. But, when all was said, and all concessions made, this was like most wars—just an ordinary trade war. As long as they could remember, Germany was capturing more of the world's trade than other nations thought to be her due. The other nations, or some of them, had equal opportunities, but they could not or they did not, achieve the same success.

"Even now, people were arranging how the vanquished nations—when they were vanquished—were to be crippled in their future trade. They told us that the victory would be a barren

victory, and all the bloodshed vain, if the enemy were to retain after the war a chance of again beating in trade the rivals whom they failed to beat in war." (Archbishop Daniel Mannix, Melbourne, 1917).

Mannix created consternation amongst the Empire press in Australia, *The Argus*, a Melbourne daily, in a leader stated: "*It would be vain to attempt to argue with one who outrages decency by his monstrous perversions as Dr. Mannix does, with apparent enjoyment of the pain he inflicts*" (31.1.1917).

Yet, only months before, the Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes was lauded in the same press for stating: "*The British people recognise amongst the chief causes of this war the desire of Germany to wrest from Britain her industrial and commercial supremacy. We must kill the hope that still buoys Germany up*" (21.3.1916).

"At the back of the war was the struggle for the economic domination of the world." (31.5.1916).

Months later, when Archbishop Mannix ventured to say the same thing, it was a

"*most wicked and mischievous statement*", a "*monstrous perversion*", which "*outraged decency*" and "*pained the loyalists*".

However, the Melbourne daily, *The Age*, goes to the heart of the truth about World War I:

"A Fact that stands out in flaming prominence before all eyes is that the present unprecedented military horrors are not . . . for the vindication of any great human rights, but for class maintenance and the lust of human conquest" (*The Age* leader, 4.3.1916).

The Age itself supported these aims.

Archbishop Mannix could never be forgiven for his role in the defeat of two Australian Conscription Referendums, October, 1916; December, 1917. Despite non-conscription, 330,000 troops were sent from Australia during World War I out of a population of under Five Million.

MANNIX IN

SAN FRANCISCO, 1920

"The people of the United States, he said, did not go into war for trade; they did not go into the war for territory; they did not go into the war for annexations. They went into the war because they were convinced, or allowed themselves to be convinced, that war was to be the end of all wars; that the world was to be made free for democracy, that every little nation and great nation was to be set upon its feet, free to work out its own destiny and to walk its own way without the menace of aggression from more powerful neighbours.

"Their purpose in going into the war was well expressed by one to whom at the time the whole world listened, but whose name did not seem to be in the same honour in that assemblage that night. He referred to President Wilson. They remembered how gladly the fourteen points were accepted at that critical time by those with whom he led the nation into alliance. They accepted his fourteen points; they would have accepted 144 at the time. But his allies,

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