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Against The Tide

There is now a semblance of politics in 'the Northern Ireland state'. There is at least what used to be called 'politicking'. Politics in the sense of party rivalry to undertake the governing of the state there can never be, because there is no state of Northern Ireland. Paisley upset all calculations except those of Sinn Fein by making a deal with Sinn Fein. He even upset the calculations of the DUP. Resentment within the DUP over the deal led to Paisley's retirement under pressure from lieutenants who thought they might resort to simple hostility to Sinn Fein, but within the power-sharing structure laid on for them by Paisley, so that they might have it both ways. But they found that they couldn't. They found they had to play the game because Sinn Fein still had the power under the d'Hondt system to ensure that there was no game to be played. Peter Robinson could not take over from Paisley without the consent of Sinn Fein. Such is the logic of the devilish system devised by the Alliance Party and the SDLP, both of which have been marginalised under it.

Sinn Fein eventually agreed that Robinson should take over as First Minister, but is now effectively preventing him from establishing anything like Cabinet government.

The various Ministries are independent of each other under the system. The DUP conducted its Departments independently when Trimble was First Minister, but aimed to bring about Cabinet Government when it became the major party. It has failed to do so. Sinn Fein is at present preventing the Executive from meeting, to ensure that the other parties cannot interfere with its Ministries. The great issue of the moment is the abolition of the 11 Plus, the examination which has determined selection for secondary education in the past, by the Education Minister. Up to now, children who failed the exam were not normally able to get an academic-type education unless it was a private one. The Unionist Parties have opposed the ending of this system.

When he was Education Minister Martin McGuinness announced the abolition of the exam, just three days before the dissolution of the Executive in 2002. The issue was then left in abeyance by the Northern Ireland Office. But it was clear that the issue of the 11+ would immediately be taken up again if Sinn Fein obtained the Education portfolio—

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The Strike

Public Service workers were involved in the first strike action over pay in Northern Ireland for 30 years on the 16th and 17th of July. The industrial action was mainly taken by workers in local Councils, although due to the sectarian nature of society, some of the workers who went on strike were employed in Agencies, such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Library Service (which in a non sectarian state of affairs would be under the control of Local Government.)

All of the Unions had made an opening claim of 6%. The final pay offer made by the management side was a rise of 2.45% on all pay points, effective from the 1st April 2008 for a 12 month period. It has to be added that there was a slight bottom loading of the offer, with the very low paid being offered 3.31%. However the benefit this offered was more apparent than real, in that these pay scales are so low that in most Councils Unions have been able to lift the lowest paid above these grades. A serious attempt to help the lower paid, especially in difficult times, would be a flat money increase of the kind

The Lisbon Vote

An Open Letter To Brian Cowen

Dear Brian,

You are in a pickle. And we all know it could get worse. If, in a few months time, the other Member States have ratified the Lisbon Treaty you will have 26 fingers wagging at you. One would need to have a heart of stone not to have some sympathy with your predicament.

First, an introduction. I and other people associated with this magazine have been pro-Europe since the 1960s, when you were in short pants. Some of us campaigned for it in the UK as well. Though being part of what was referred to as the far left, the European project made perfect sense to us. Our comrades thought we were mad.

It was creating space between the US and the USSR and it was socially progressive. After all, it was Germany which created the essence of the Welfare State well over a century ago. And it was great to be out of Britain's shadow and back in the sun amongst our 'gallant allies in Europe'.

We had no problem with a European Army or a Federal State or a 'superstate'.

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that was implemented in the days of the Social Contract.

The management sides position was that the 2.45% offer was the limit it could afford, without more funding from central government or a rise on the rates. The Union side has argued that this offer did not take into account efficiency savings and the amounts which are spent on agency staff—and in any case that the workers had already accepted a below inflation pay rise in the previous year.

The Unions involved in the strike action were NIPSA, UNITE, SIPTU and Unison. The GMB voted to accept the pay offer.

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Labour Comment, by **Pat Maloney:**
The Tip-Off That Shattered A Cabinet (Arms Crisis)

which the other parties enabled it to have when Ministries were being chosen. However, bringing about change in an orderly way is difficult under the power-division system which operates. Legislation on contentious issues is all but impossible under the double-mandate requirement of the devolved system, but that means there must be extensive administrative autonomy for the various Ministers if there is to be government. Caitriona Ruane took over from Mc Guinness as Education Minister and is feeling her way towards administrative reform of the education system without the use of legislation.

Margaret Ritchie, the SDLP's sole Minister, who holds the Social Development portfolio, has declared herself "outraged" at the Sinn Fein delaying of the Executive holding a meeting (Irish News 23.7.2008). She claims her housing projects are affected (though it is hard to see how). Perhaps more to the point is the fact that she is a rival to Ruane in the Newry Westminster constituency, currently held by the SDLP's Eddie McGrady who is retiring at the next election. Ritchie courted Hibernian popularity when she first took up her post by cutting off funding to Loyalists. She has been stymied there by legal action and is looking around for further ways to do down Sinn Fein (which did not endorse

her action). The *Irish News* helps her all it can. In media terms Ms Ruane is fighting a lone battle, but if she succeeds in carrying through the end of the 11 Plus that will count for little in the long run.

As the parties of the centre-ground operate the system according to its logic, the parties which have been pushed to the extremes are resentful, whinge and dream of bringing the house down. The fringe extremists are now the SDLP, the UUP and the Alliance Party.

David Trimble, who ruined the Unionist Party with the help of Professor Bew, has been put out to grass as Lord Trimble and has been joined by Lord Professor Bew. Both complain that they were undermined by Whitehall which played footsy with Sinn Fein, and Bew has carried this complaint into his Oxford *History Of Ireland*.

But who else was there for Blair to play footsy with if he was to solve the Irish question? Have they forgotten that the solution must relate to the problem? And it was Sinn Fein that constituted the Northern Ireland problem into something could be handled, at least for the time being.

Trimble's successor, Reg Empey, looking for something to do with the wreck of a party that he inherited, has recently

come up with the idea of having the politics of the State in Northern Ireland, with the Unionist Party becoming a region of the Tory Party. And BBC commentators have pointed out that this would give the Northern Ireland electorate an opportunity to engage in politics on real issues.

Twenty years ago, when this was a viable project, it was rejected categorically by both the Unionist Party and the Tory Party, as well as the Labour Party. In the face of outright hostility by both parties we gave up the campaign we had waged for about twenty years. This had some influence on the course of events which decisively took a different turn in the early 1990s. The Catholic community turned increasingly to Sinn Fein/IRA. The more it was told it mustn't by good people like Garret FitzGerald, the more it did so.

Sinn Fein ceased to be the covert expression of the will of the Catholic community and became its overt expression. The Catholic community in its newly-established respectability is now at ease with itself as Sinn Fein, in a way that it never was in the era of tricky, neurotic 'constitutional nationalism'. There is no longer a substantial part of it looking to escape. The Unionist Party has missed the bus. As Bacon said, *There is a tide in the affairs of men...*

Editorial Digest

British troops in Afghanistan were visited in May by the now First Minister, Peter Robinson, and DUP MP, Jeffrey Donaldson. The *Belfast News Letter* is conducting a campaign for public parades by the Northern regiments of the British Army in the province on their return from Iraq and Afghanistan. Mr. Robinson told the *Belfast News*: "*It is right and proper, regardless of any political arguments, that the brave men and women who put their lives on the line in defence of our country should be recognised.*" Nigel Dodds said regarding the practice in America: "*Regardless of political debates or arguments about the causes of the conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan, people rightly recognise the valuable work of the armed forces... That is exactly how it should be in the United Kingdom.*"

The McCartney Not Guilty verdicts were dismissed as best technical reverses by the *Irish News* over four pages on June 28th. Its editorial added: "*Despite the fact that this dreadful killing took place outside a crowded bar, the involvement of republicans ensured witnesses remained silent. There were also allegations that potentially vital forensic evidence was removed from the scene.*" Mr. McCartney's sisters "*have been subjected to unwarranted abuse, vilification and intimidation.*" In fact their Short Strand community was less than happy about the

divisive campaign launched by the family in the course of which they were feted all the way to the White House and back. Their case suited the State's anti-Sinn Fein agenda and was promoted all day, every day. But only while there was an election pending in which Sinn Fein could be damaged. After that the British State and its media lost interest. It was always going to be difficult to prove exactly what happened in the affray in court. The State failed to make a case against the single defendant who was charged with murder, as was obvious to anyone who followed the evidence. Susan McKay wrote an article in the *Irish News* saying that the McCartneys had failed to get Justice (1.7.08). But she should know that Court proceedings are not about justice, but about the law. The IRA made an investigation in 2005 and privately offered the McCartney family to mete out justice but were refused (though the family has recently denied that this was so).

Tom Hartley, Sinn Fein Lord Mayor of Belfast, laid a wreath at the City Hall War Memorial in memory of Irishmen who died at the Battle of the Somme, on 1st July. Former head of the local civil service, and leading light of the great and the good, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, has launched a fund to hire former West Belfast teacher, Derek Smyth, to write a *Book Of Honour*, giving details of Northerners who died in the Great War. The fund is being supported by the *Irish News*. On the nationalist side, the proposition that men should kill Germans and Turks, who never did them any harm, in exchange for Home Rule, has yet to be defended by those who continue to glorify them.

Irish Passports, new and renewed, have been issued to 402,658 people in the North since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (*Irish News*, 2nd July). The SDLP's Patsy McGlone MLA has admitted that Unionists find travelling on an Irish Passport safer. He doesn't tell us why!

The Tricolour is often burned on the top of Orange Bonfires (sic). Nobody dies. Everyone knows that the 11th night provides a field-day for bigots (whilst also being a popular event). The Union Jack shop in Newtownards Road, Belfast, has been enterprising this year and displayed the Irish flags for £5 each, for burning. Some sorry soul has reported the shop for action by the police. Earlier, another offended person got the peelers to start an investigation into Iris Robinson MLA's religious beliefs, insofar as they concern homosexuals. Meanwhile most people are far more offended by weekend brawls in Great Victoria Street and Botanic Avenue, which the police do nothing to stop. Nor do they seem bothered by the fact that traffic signals are often completely ignored in Belfast city centre.

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Coughlan And Brian Keenan

In the July issue of the *Irish Political Review* you reproduce an exchange of letters carried in *An Phoblacht* relating to my political views at the time of the Republican split between Provisionals and Officials in 1970. This arose from an interview by Jim Gibney with the late Brian Keenan in which the latter made some inaccurate comments about me. I corrected these in the letter to *An Phoblacht* which you reproduced.

Although I never met Brian Keenan, may I say for the record that shortly after the *An Phoblacht* interview and my corrections of it I received a letter from him relating to his remarks which is reproduced below. I sent him a friendly reply to this, making the point that I was glad of the opportunity to clarify various facts about my involvement in the 1969-70 events, and he will have received that before his recent untimely death.

Anthony Coughlan

Text of letter from Brian Keenan to Anthony Coughlan relating to interview with Jim Gibney in An Phoblacht:

Monday 7 April 2008

Tony a chara,

I was appalled to find out that my ramblings in an *Phoblacht* had caused you such distress. As you may have gathered, I would not be adept at giving interviews. In fact I think the one with Jim Gibney was my only one. Jim had asked for the interview about a year ago. I somehow was under the impression that it was to be for the archives.

As you rightly point out in your letter, many rumours abounded in those days and it was furthest from my thoughts to denigrate you in any way. Not to be sycophantic, I have long both admired and respected your political positions on most things.

It is a hard lesson for me, I should not give interviews. I am not sure why *An Phoblacht* decided to release the article. I wasn't all that happy about it. Maybe they think I don't have much time left.

Anyway, Tony, no doubt the paper will print the retraction and if there is anything I can say or do in reparation please contact me.

I would appreciate that you protect the security of my address and I wish you well in the coming Lisbon debates.

With respect,
Brian Keenan

Captain Corelli's Mandolin: A travesty Of Greek history

I was surprised that in his otherwise excellent article "Myths of the Second World War", Conor Lynch described Captain Corelli's Mandolin as "an excellent account of the disastrous Italian invasion of Greece". The left in Greece, the heirs to the resistance movement ELAS, do not share that view and the PASOK government in Cephalonia would only allow filming of the book to take place until after significant changes had been accepted. Dionisis Georgatos, the elected governor of Cephalonia, commented that the book's author De Bernieres "used British sources from that time and, of course, they were invaders". A former member of the ELAS youth movement went so far as to say "we are at war with De Bernieres".

A detailed account of the controversy was given by Seumas Milne in the *Guardian Weekend* in July 2000 (<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,,348087,00.html>): put aside any prejudice against Milne or the *Guardian*, its worth reading. De Bernieres's sympathies are with the Italian troops and even with the pre-war dictator of Greece, Metaxas, while totally hostile to the Resistance, who are portrayed as torturers, thieves and rapists. In early editions there was an Author's note which which said "when they were not totally useless, perfidious and parasitic, they were unspeakably barbaric". Strange then that the island is covered with monuments to the ELAS fighters who died in the resistance to the Axis powers, and in the subsequent resistance to the post war British imposed regime.

To digress slightly from Conor's subject, the Second World War, it is worth saying that British post-war policy in Greece has received little attention recently, but it demonstrated that they were willing to use in Europe the same methods as were used in Kenya and Malaya, and of course earlier in the century in Ireland and South Africa.

Tom Doherty

British Buggers. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the British Government broke international conventions by monitoring emails and phone calls between the Republic and Britain & Northern Ireland. The interceptions concerned continued from 1990 to 1997. Sinn Fein TD, Aengus O Snodaigh has demanded that Brian Cowen seeks legally enforceable assurances from Gordon Brown about the ending of this bugging (Irish News, 3rd July).

McGurks bar in North Queen Street, Belfast, was bombed by the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1971 killing 15 people. The British Government and its Army concocted a story that said that the bombers were IRA and were inside the bar at the time. An own goal, as they used to say. Now that the truth about the UVF responsibility has been proven, Paul Goggins, Northern Ireland Security Minister, has apologised in the London House of Commons. He said on July 15th: "*We are deeply sorry, not just for the appalling suffering and loss of life that occurred at McGurk's bar, but also for the extraordinary additional pain caused to both the immediate families and the wider community by the erroneous suggestions made in the immediate aftermath of the explosion as to who was responsible.*" Erroneous?

Gerry Fitt compounded the slur on the IRA after the Bombing at McGurk's bar. He publicly supported the British account of the matter. Until his death, the Baron Fitt regularly "*wondered*" why he felt he had to leave his home. This could have been one of many reasons.

Armed INLA members patrolled the Ardoyne area of Belfast on the 11th Night. Their actions were publicly condemned by local community workers—aka the Provisional IRA.

The Village/Sandy Row area of Belfast is being 'redeveloped' with the help of £100m from the Assembly. Several rows of houses in this loyalist area are to be demolished. Development in such areas has not always been for the better. Here it is expected that the demolished homes will be replaced by flats for the better off, something that is already proposed for the Lower Shankill. The Village is more or less in the city centre and near the University. Already property has been bought up by landlords who want to rent to students. Soon much of the area could become an extension of the middle class Lisburn Road. No promises have been made about the new homes being for local people. Redevelopment already carried out in Sandy Row has brought privately-owned apartments, offices, car parks, and the enormous Days Hotel—probably the most hideous building in Belfast. The Sandy Row area is being

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Famine Figures

The *Irish Times* reported on July 22nd:

"Irish Famine victims to be commemorated

An expert group set up to consider ways to commemorate the Irish Famine will hold its inaugural meeting today. The National Famine Commemoration Committee, established by Community Affairs Minister Eamon O Cuiv, will decide how to mark the official Famine Memorial Day. It will be the first time the forgotten victims of the Irish Famine are to be remembered in an annual official memorial day.

The catastrophic failure of the potato crop in the 1840s led to the death by starvation of one million people while hundreds of thousands emigrated, sparking worldwide Irish diaspora. The devastating natural disaster left a lasting social and political legacy on modern Ireland. Ireland's population, which exceeded eight million in the Census of 1841, was reduced by approximately 1.5 million through death and emigration. Only 10 years later, the 1851 Census recorded a population of only 6.5 million. The Famine resulted in large Irish communities settling in countries like the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and was also blamed for the decline of the Irish language."

Let's hope this Committee sorts out one basic question at long last—how many actually died?

The dead were not counted at the time and this report trots out the usual nonsense on the subject.

The fact is that both the 1841 and 1851 figures were wrong. The 1841 figures were an underestimate of population numbers by up to a third, and there was a very simple reason for this. The Irish people of the time, for very good cause, did not provide reliable information to any Government authority about themselves—and the science of census making was not developed enough to cope with that situation. The real number of the Irish population was probably about 10 million in 1841, taking a conservative estimate. That has been arrived at using other sources (as Cecil Woodham-Smith indicates).

On the other hand, the 1851 figures were an overestimate because, after the catastrophe, people became so desperate that they did the very opposite and over-counted themselves to maximise any assistance that might be available.

But there is another—and far more serious—way in which the *Irish Times* figures mislead. It takes a mechanistic approach and deducts the 1851 total of 6.5 million from the 1841 total of over 8 million and concludes that one and half million were lost.

Does the *Irish Times* think that people stopped breeding in 1841?

Between 1841 and the Famine of 1847 there were six years. That amounts to three-fifths of the span between censuses. There must have been a natural increase in each of these years.

It is well-known that the Irish were producing huge families at a young age under the rack-renting system. The Irish population was growing at a very rapid rate in the 1830-40s, at about 1.7% per annum because of the weakening of social restraints due to the breakdown of the traditional Gaelic society. This meant that by the time the Famine struck fully in 1847 the population had reached about 12 million. With the 1851 figure an overestimate this gives some idea of the real numbers that died. But even taking the 1851 figures as given, we're looking at a loss to Ireland of five and a half million people.

The *Irish Times* says one and a half million were lost, which means that it is 'losing' four million people—around the size of the country today!

On top of the misleading figures, a conceptual confusion is propagated. The *Irish Times* says that the Famine was a "*natural disaster*". But was it? Surely it was the potato blight which was the natural disaster? The Famine was man-made, or more accurately, Government-made. The virtual halving of the Irish population was very convenient to the British authorities: it made the Government's Irish problem manageable.

In a situation where there was abundant food of every description in the country there was no Famine. There was a '*Great Hunger*' as it was correctly described at the time in Gaelic Ireland.

Rather than give a true weight to this catastrophic event, the tactic is to minimise it as far as it is possible to do so and then spread misleading ideas about it—which accords very well with British interests in the matter.

Let's hope that this committee does not keep repeating this type of nonsense and that Minister O Cuiv copies his grandfather who recognised that the best book on the subject was by Cecil Woodham-Smith and that Irish academics then as now were a dead loss (at best) on this subject. Otherwise we will continue to have a famine of real facts about the Famine as indicated by this initial report.

Jack Lane

nibbled away on three sides. Social engineering by Margaret Ritchie's Ministry for Social Development is now to be extended into the Village area, with mixed middle-class housing providing a bonanza for developers.

Radio Eireann provided fascinating on and off listening on July 14th. Every presenter seemed to feel a need to interview one or more French residents in Ireland and listen to their views on Bastille Day. Without exception they spoke with great pride about their Republican history and ethos. One presenter asked a woman at what point in life she learned about the French Revolution. She clearly thought he was mad. She always knew about it. A favourite childhood memory was seeing the famous image of the barefoot peasant carrying the fat priest who was in turn carrying the even fatter nobleman. A presenter, for reasons best known to himself, said he didn't like the Irish National Anthem. This embarrassed his guests. Where does RTE find these sleeveens?

Ian Paisley Jnr (DUP) "has lodged an official complaint against the SDLP's John Dallat over the investigation that led to his resignation earlier this year. Mr Paisley resigned as a junior minister in January after Mr Dallat reported him and his father to the ethics watchdogs at Stormont and Westminster. The Stormont Deputy Speaker had complained about the DUP man's links to a property developer and his appointment as his father's Westminster researcher. He was later cleared of wrongdoing by the House of Commons' Commissioner for Standards and the Northern Ireland Ombudsman. Mr Paisley Jnr is now calling for Mr Dallat to be removed as Deputy Speaker due to a lack of impartiality" (Belfast Telegraph, 3rd July).

John Dallat is the SDLP's loony right when it comes to Zimbabwe. In a Stormont debate on Zimbabwe on May 23rd he said: "Can anyone explain to me why a tyrant in a long line of tyrants has been allowed to commit genocide among his own people while no one cares? Is it because there is no oil in Zimbabwe? More than likely it is but surely Britain has a moral duty to come to the aid of its former colony once called Southern Rhodesia. While it is difficult to say with certainty where Cecil Rhodes' soul is today surely someone in Britain must accept that he as a British citizen laid the foundation stone for what is one of the sorriest stories in this century." Margaret Ritchie, on the other hand, regretted the decision by Morgan Tsvangirai to pull out of elections four days before the poll—a view shared by other leaders of the Movement for Democratic Change.

The Irish News runs a daily column—*It Happened On This Day*. It is written with British preconceptions. For example, on

21st July the report from *This Day* last year was: "*Burdens in Iraq and Afghanistan have left the Army with almost no spare troops to deal with unexpected missions, the head of the Army warned.*"

New Northern Ireland seems to be the latest British description for the Six Counties. The *Irish News*, 21st July, found the term used in four recent statements by the Secretary of State, Shaun Woodward. His Northern Ireland Office said: "*The Secretary of State is very proud of the New Northern Ireland because it is one of New Labour's greatest achievements.*" You couldn't make it up!

France and Ireland have much in common: Republicanism and before that the Jacobite connection; The Wild Geese; the training of Irish priests and hedge school teachers during the Penal Laws. The United Irishmen and Young Ireland looked to France. The list is endless and continues to this day. But all Brian Cowen could come up with in his press conference with President Sarkozy was that Irish troops were serving in Chad, where their main role in practice, though peacekeeping under UN auspices, is to support the French efforts to prop up the Chad Government. No wonder Sarkozy patronised Cowen so much!

President Sarkozy was reported in most papers and TV news programmes as denying that he was meddling in Irish affairs. It is hard to know how that can be sustained. Here is what he actually said: "*Coming to Ireland would be to meddle, not to come would be indifference. What would you prefer, meddling or indifference? To come here shows a spirit of friendship.*"

Barak Obama's press conference, at the end of his visit to Iraq, was noticeable for the absence of the usual nonsense about Democracy. Rather he talked about political processes and the tribal leaders. But, having emphasised that American troops could not stay in Iraq indefinitely, he implied the very opposite as far as Afghanistan was concerned.

Sean Whelan is RTE's Europe Editor, the man who comes on and gives the line. His report on the capture of Radovan Karadzic in Serbia was the usual rehash of US-UK propaganda about the conflicts in Yugoslavia. One would not have known that there had been wars at all, never mind that the US- and German-backed Croatia had won, the Bosnian Muslims had come second, and the Serbs had lost. He made it seem that only the Serbs had committed crimes. His 'analysis' of what happened at Srebrenica was the usual 8,000 massacred. But nothing like this number of bodies has been discovered—about 3,000 at most. Most of these are unidentified and include both Bosnians and Serbs killed in the battles and Bosnian troops killed retreating. Most Bosnian soldiers managed to get to their

own lines but this fact did not suit the Bosnian political leadership and they were added to the total. 'Remembering Srebrenica' is not meant to avoid future slaughter. Its purpose is to give the Western powers the excuse to carry out future massacres in the name of preventing them. And this they have done.

The Srebrenica report on RTE also included pictures from the infamous Market Massacre in Sarajevo—at the time attributed by the BBC to the Serbs. But General Rose, the British Army Commander in Bosnia, told John Simpson live on the BBC that the Serbs were not responsible and that the attack was carried out by the Bosnian Muslim side, possibly by Chechen fighters, to blacken the Serbs. The BBC dropped the allegation—for all of about two weeks. Whelan has spent time in the Balkans and knows all this. But he finds it easier to toe the line. After all he may one day fancy a job with the BBC. Someone at RTE suggested that he is just a weak and lazy individual. That is still no excuse for deceiving the public. A thorough analysis of the Srebrenica affair has been carried out by the American journalist, Diana Johnstone, who works for Counterpunch. This can be read on <http://counterpunch.org/johnstone10122005.html>

Letter To Cowen

continued

When the project made sense all these instruments made perfect sense as well.

The missing link, or the great big hole, in the debate on Europe in Ireland at the moment is that neither side will acknowledge that there has been a fundamental change in the whole European project. But this is the key to understanding the current problem right across Europe. The tendency by both sides is to think that what is proposed now was always inherent in the original project. It was not. We should know.

The world has changed and Europe has changed in response but essentially it changed for the worse. The Christian Democracy that formed the project is no longer the force it was. The original Europe was the social Europe, the post-imperial Europe, the defined Europe, the non-interventionist Europe, the independent minded Europe, the modest Europe that had learned hard lessons from the two world wars that had wrecked European civilisation. That is, European leaders had learned not to be pawns any longer in Britain's balance of power game in Europe. The reverse is now the case: Europe in every sense is bowing to the Anglo-Saxon model—and more so by the day. Brussels needs to be reminded of this.

But most important of all, the original Europe saw that counting heads was not the means of achieving things for this project. In this sense it was not democratic. A new polity had to be created. Democracy operates in a given situation—it does not create original situations. It is a conservative instrument. The Commission was the main instrument, the real mediating and motivating element in the structure. It was not formally democratic but it was the fairest and the most effective way of making progress.

That is, until Pat Cox and other loquacious idiots destroyed its authority. A reputation built up over decades was destroyed on an 'anti-corruption' whim by self-indulgent demagogues. It was a disgrace that Ireland on behalf of all the smaller states in particular did not defend the Commission tooth and nail in its moment of crisis.

Perhaps the Commission's standing could be resurrected though that is going to be very difficult. It's a Humpty Dumpty situation.

The original methodology had recognised that what was in people's heads was what counted and not just the counting of the number of heads. Democracy, in the sense of counting heads, applies within accepted national groupings. It does not apply across them. The nations of Europe are integral moral entities (and within them the working class is the moral entity we mainly relate to). In this fundamental sense all Member States are equal no matter what their size. One is as morally right as 26 or 260 others.

Democracy will fully apply when the 26 or 260 becomes a new moral entity. The challenge in creating this is obvious once it has been stated. When it is created and agreed we can have a Constitution—and have it as long as we like - but having a Constitution now is putting the cart before the horse.

The current elite believes that there is a short cut to building a European personality by concentrating on process, via bits of paper with varying titles that sufficient numbers can be cajoled to agree with by pushing other bits of paper into ballot boxes. Giving this process legal power of enforcement via the European Court of Justice is then seen as the key to success. But neither law nor democracy will work without moral authority—and without an agreed polity there is no moral authority.

That is why Europe is not working. It will be one crisis after another, so it is never too late to cry halt to this methodology and set terms of reference that makes more sense. Point this out to your colleagues.

And please do not ridicule the opposition. Mothers afraid of their sons being

conscripted is given as a typical example of the alleged nonsense that defeated Lisbon. But a reality is that the EU elite is planning to add many more countries as members, some sooner and others later. The result can only be to dilute the original concept of the Union. It is intended to arrange common defence with them. The EU is now looking even beyond its own Continent, to Israel, for example. The consequences of that hardly need to be spelled out. But the essential result will be to set the EU on a collision course with Israel's neighbours. There is no point denying it. If that happens there is a sure guarantee of involvement in permanent war. After all, that state survives on crises and war, and hand-wringing for its victims is the EU response. People put two and two together and they may have got four and a half. But don't tell them the answer should be zero.

In Eastern Europe too the EU seems intent to pursue a collision course with Russia, because it is allowing the US and NATO to determine military strategy.

The unhappy truth now is that the formerly stable European Union—like the old British Empire—has no firm borders. It is constantly seeking expansion which means it will inevitably start to fragment.

Believe it or not, there is actually a precedent of sorts for the situation you are in. After WW II many sought to put Ireland in the doghouse because of its neutrality in that war. The US was to the fore in this. Sean Moylan gave a long talk to a Fianna Fail meeting on relations between Ireland and the US on 12th February 1946. There he reminded the US of the part Ireland played in its history and in its fight for freedom, pointing out that they therefore shared the same values. In that sense the countries were equal. In the relationship between the two countries, the fact they shared the same values was more important than the difference in size. He thereby asserted Ireland's independence and self respect in that situation.

Europe should likewise be reminded of our contributions to Europe in the past. In fact, its civilisation was once saved by Ireland. We may have to do so again. Already some nations have plucked up the courage to express concerns about ratifying Lisbon. The major EU Member States should also be reminded that your, and my, political tradition did its best to save them from their self-destructive paths in the 20th century. If Europe had copied the men of 1916 or listened to Dev in the 1930's we would all have a more advanced Europe today rather than great plans and schemes and rhetoric 'to keep the peace'—after the event. Bolting doors after horses come to mind.

We have nothing whatever to apologise for to Europe and don't offer any apologies for our questioning of the current EU

processes as made clear in the Lisbon Treaty debate. These processes will fail, despite whatever patching up is done if the basic direction does not change.

Europe must change course and change quickly or the whole project will fall apart. And the blueprint is available, because it was in force up to a couple of decades ago. Bigger, stronger and longer-established political set-ups than the EU have collapsed—and even set-ups that had dealt successfully with problems a thousand times more difficult than the EU has ever faced.

Jack Lane

The Strike

continued

The Unions which voted in favour of industrial action did so in a ratio of about 3 to 1. The curious thing about the GMB is that their ballot came out at 4 to 1 against, and being the second largest Union covering Public Service Workers, this made the strike to say the least problematic. Indeed the management side has been quick to point this out—for example see the comments made by Jimmy Spratt who is the employers' representative from Northern Ireland at the pay talks.

On this point It would be my personal view, as a GMB steward employed in Belfast City Council, that the above ballots came out as they did because NIPSA, UNITE, SIPTU and Unison actively campaigned for a rejection of the pay offer whereas the GMB took a more passive role. (It did hold a national conference of public service stewards to take the temperature, which appears to have concluded that the grass roots were angry but not angry enough to engage in industrial action). Following on from this the GMB went through the motions, merely informing members in the ballot information that this was the final offer and anything else would require them to vote for industrial action. When has democracy been passive? At least the leadership could have given a view of the likely consequences of accepting or rejecting. My Branch did take a position to reject the offer and most of our members took that advice and voted accordingly.

The pay negotiations take place in England and are between Local Government Employers (with the management side in the Northern Ireland being represented on the Local Government Employers' side) and the Union side represented by GMB, Unite and Unison. The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, NIPSA, has only an observer role. The all-Ireland Union, SIPTU, has

no status at all. These pay talks apply to Local Government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. (Scotland has separate arrangements emanating from devolution, and pay negotiations there are happening as I write—the outcome will undoubtedly be carefully watched and noted by one and all. This perhaps says something about the status of our wee circus at Stormont when it comes down to economics.)

So what is the big issue that caused a strike over pay for the first time in 30 years? Simply the pay deal in relation to what is happening in the rest of the economy and who feels the pain. The previous year, the deal the Unions agreed to was below inflation. And with this year's final offer being again below inflation, the mood within the membership of the above named Unions was simply—enough is enough.

This year (according to the Labour Research Department) pay claims in the private sector were coming in at a median average of 4% in the three months leading up to May. This must be compared to inflation in the economy running at 3.3% according to the Consumer Price Index (central government's preferred measure, which ignores things like the cost of housing and rates) or 4.3%, according to the alternative Retail Price Index (which includes housing and rates).

Add to the above the greed which caused the so called credit crunch and a growing resentment surrounding the pay awards management award themselves. People may have become conditioned to the type of awards senior managers in the private sector award themselves but public service workers strongly resent managers in the state sector wanting to join in with this practice. The fact is, while the workforce is offered 2.45%, Chief Executives and Directors in Councils are giving themselves a 16% pay rise. The issue was obvious and there was a feeling that they needed to make a point.

On this point it could be said that, if the Trade Unions were the agency which were out of control in the 70s, perhaps it is management which is the agency out of control now—aided and abetted by the political class.

Will our home grown version prove me wrong? The only Council where local politicians turned out to support the strikers was, of all places, Lisburn.

So was the Strike effective? According to the Local Government Association (the employers' side) press release on the 16th July, 300,000 workers were on strike across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the North East and North West of England being the areas where there was the most disruption. By the 17th

July the Association was claiming that the Strike was failing.

In many ways numbers miss the point, in that it is not specifically the number of workers who withdraw their labour but the type of workers who withdraw their labour that counts.

Here in Northern Ireland the effectiveness of the action was patchy, with Belfast and Derry being where the strike was the most effective with most of the key services affected.

In Belfast in particular all of the key services were restricted even though there were significant numbers of people who attended work—not just GMB members I might add.

The reason for the effectiveness in Belfast was simple—enough workers came out of key services and the Trade Unions worked together. For example, the local stewards in the GMB, though not officially involved in the dispute, managed to negotiate an agreement with management that, if any of their members felt they could not cross picket lines as a matter of conscience, they would not be disciplined. This was the only area in Local Government where this was done. The advice that went out from GMB centrally was for the workers who felt threatened to report to the employer if they felt their safety was compromised—solidarity, brothers and sisters!

This did help the action in Belfast to be effective. This dispute overall is unlikely to succeed I fear. Whilst there is the will to act among sections of the workforce, in particular the lower-paid, there were still many workers of all Unions and none who went to work.

When this is set alongside the fact that one of the main Unions is not engaged in the action and New Labour's never ending love affair with all things pro-business and pro-capital, coupled with an antipathy or even embarrassment over wage labour—even with the public support which is there at present—there simply is not the momentum to make anything other than a symbolic stand this year. The case is essentially a deserving one but as the saying goes, *deserve* got nothing to do with it!

I have no idea where they go to from here. There is more industrial action planned but, if commonsense prevails, management will need to find a way of getting itself off the hook, with a view to getting it right next year—next year's pay talks are due soon.

Ultimately the Unions need to get back to basics—they need to forge a meaningful unity between themselves. Without Union unity these actions are always likely to fail—deserving or otherwise. In addition the Unions who have been funding the New Labour project need to seriously ensure they get more bangs for their

bucks—the Warwick Talks begin On July 25th the Unions in Great Britain will be entering talks with New Labour—they need to come away with real commitments which are meaningful to the average worker. In particular there should be a demand for a living wage, not a minimum wage.

Finally, in my view, the Unions need to forget about mass action—rather they need to develop a robust strategy with targeted actions when it comes down to industrial action—bringing out key workers at key times—the current dispute was not a total fiasco because those workers who did come out were in frontline services.

As for the Trade Unionists here in Northern Ireland: fair play to one and all who did come out—taking into account the above and the fact that members here reside in that twilight world which has been eloquently described in this publication over the years.

Bill McClinton

Israel And UN Resolutions

The following letter was submitted to the *Sunday Business Post*, but remains unpublished

Desmond FitzGerald (Letters, 29/06/08) correctly points out that in resolution 194, passed in December 1948, the UN General Assembly resolved that refugees should be allowed to return to their homes. Regrettably, nearly sixty years later, Israel has dismally failed to implement this resolution.

Regrettably also, this is par for the course for Israel, beginning with the partition resolution 181 of November 1947, which prescribed 56% of the land area of mandate Palestine for a Jewish state, but Israel seized 78% by force and expelled around 750,000 Arabs from their homes.

Today, it is in violation of more than 30 Security Council resolutions. For example, resolution 446, passed in March 1979, which ordered Israel to cease settlement building and remove existing settlements from the territories it has occupied since 1967 (including Jerusalem). More than 29 years later, Israel is still building settlements in the Occupied Territories. Another example is resolution 487, passed in June 1981, which ordered Israel to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA supervision. More than 27 years later, Israel's nuclear facilities are still not under IAEA supervision, unlike Iran's.

David Morrison

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

THE GREAT LEADER

The Irish Times (25.6.08) reported that the Great Leader was present at an unveiling of a portrait of himself.

Major Thomas Bleakley McDowell, whose titles include current "President for Life" of *The Irish Times* Group, former Chairman of *The Irish Times Ltd*, former Chief Executive of *The Irish Times Ltd*, former Governor and Chairman of *The Irish Times Trust Ltd* graced the ceremony with his presence.

The small gathering of his acolytes included former Editor Conor Brady (*Editor Emeritus*), current Editor Geraldine Kennedy and current Managing Director Maeve Donovan. There was no "Chief Executive" present because that title, which was more senior than "Managing Director", ceased to exist after the Great One had retired in 1997. Indeed no person has ever held more than one of the titles bestowed on McDowell.

The current Chairman of *The Irish Times Trust*, Professor David McConnell said at the ceremony:

"The Irish Times would not exist today in any recognisable form, if it existed at all, were it not for the contribution of Major Thomas McDowell, who was at the helm of the newspaper for almost 40 years."

THE GREAT HELMSMAN

But what exactly was the contribution that McDowell made "*at the helm of the newspaper*"? What part of the newspaper's success was down to him? Or could there have been someone else who made a contribution?

For most of the 40 years that McDowell was "*at the helm*" there was another senior person that was not even mentioned in *The Irish Times* report. Douglas Gageby was the Editor of the newspaper in 1963 when the newspaper's fortunes began to revive. He had been joint Managing Director with McDowell in the previous year. When Gageby left (or was ousted) in 1974 the upward trajectory of the newspaper was halted and within a few years the newspaper was on the verge of bankruptcy. In any normal organisation McDowell would have been sacked in the mid 1970s, but *The Irish Times* is anything but a normal institution.

The banks insisted that Gageby return as Editor in 1977 and the fortunes of the newspaper duly revived.

Whatever contribution McDowell made it had very little to do with the commercial success of the newspaper.

THE ROLE OF McDOWELL

But ensuring the commercial success of the newspaper was not McDowell's role.

Nevertheless David McConnell paid tribute to McDowell's

"extraordinary record of service to the newspaper and the country".

But what country might that be? Readers of this magazine will be all too aware of what country he was loyal to in 1969.

And what exactly was the service that McDowell provided? It was not until the end of the report that the reader obtains some hint of McDowell's contribution:

"In closing, Major McDowell referred to current problems at the French newspaper *Le Monde*, and to the close links between French newspaper proprietors and the country's political and business elite, noting how President Nicolas Sarkozy once quipped to reporters: 'I know your boss'.

'That is the sort of thing the Irish Times Trust was designed to prevent,' Major McDowell said."

The Trust, which was set up by McDowell with the help of Lord Arnold Goodman—one of the most powerful people in Britain at the time - ensured that *The Irish Times* could influence Irish society but would be impervious to its influence. It also accorded McDowell extraordinary powers, which ensured his dominance well into his seventies.

But in whose interest was the Irish Times Trust set up for? *The Irish Political Review* compiled a list of questions on McDowell's role and high level connections within the British State and Intelligence service. The questions were circulated to the directors and governors of the Trust and the Company. These recipients included McConnell, Kennedy and Donovan.

The Secretary of *The Irish Times Ltd* in his reply stated that they (the Directors and Governors) were "*neither responsible or accountable*" for Major McDowell even though he remains "*President for Life of The Irish Times Group*".

And yet it is abundantly clear that "*they*" are proud of his legacy.

DESMOND FENNEL

There have been some interesting interviews on both radio and television in recent months. In a slightly tetchy conversation Andy O'Mahony discussed some of the themes of Desmond Fennell's recent book (*About Behaving Normally In Abnormal Circumstances*) published by Athol Books (although the publisher was not mentioned). Fennell said that Mussolini coined the word *totalitarianism* to describe a society in which the State was involved in all aspects of life. In Fennell's view the Liberal Democratic State was no less totalitarian than the Communist State, even if the former relies on persuasion while the latter relies more

on repressive powers. O'Mahony insisted that the difference between persuasion and repression was profound and therefore there was no equivalence between the two systems. But Fennell refused to accept this argument.

Is the distinction meaningful? In the Eastern bloc it is said that political dissidents were deprived of their liberties because of what went on their minds. In Liberal Democracies the persuasiveness is such that the State and the Modern Corporation already control the people's minds so depriving them of their political liberties is superfluous.

FREDERICK FORSYTH

The thriller writer Frederick Forsyth knows exactly what Fennell was talking about. In an interview with a slightly obsequious David Norris on *Newstalk 106* he described his very brief career in the BBC. He was forced to resign from that liberal institution because his coverage of the 1967 war in Biafra didn't conform to the "*party line*". He then wrote a book about the subject which sold 30,000 copies within a week. But the Harold Wilson Government arranged that it would not be distributed anymore and it was taken out of the book shops . . . not "*censorship*" mind.

CATHAL O'SHANNON

Tom McGurk in his interview with Cathal O'Shannon was more sympathetic than O'Mahony was to Fennell and less obsequious than Norris. As a result the listener learned more about the subject. McGurk asked why O'Shannon, whose father was involved in the 1916 Rising and was a "*Frongoch graduate*", joined the RAF at 16. After some gentle prodding from McGurk, O'Shannon admitted it was mildly ridiculous, which begs the question why he made an issue of it in the *Ireland's Nazi's Hidden History* documentary.

THE BIRTH OF THE CELTIC TIGER

The only remarkable aspect of the interview on RTE television with Pádraig O'hUiginn was that there have been so few of such interviews. Here was a key player in Social Partnership, the wellspring of the *Celtic Tiger*, reflecting intelligently on this highly significant development in Irish political, economic and social life. He credited Haughey with being the instigator and by implication the person most responsible for the "*Celtic Tiger*". The idea arose from a conversation the latter had with the German Prime Minister Helmut Schmidt. In order to implement it, power was centralised in the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance.

Although Bertie Ahern was involved in the negotiations with the Social Partners O'hUiginn said that he was merely implementing policy set down by Haughey

and Ray McSharry the Minister for Finance.

THE END OF THE CELTIC TIGER

It appears that the economy is heading for a rocky period. The Long Fellow had a conversation with a credit insurance broker who claimed that the percentage of business bad debts to premiums had doubled in the last year. And the situation was even worse in the UK.

But the Government should not make a bad situation worse. If Capital Projects such as the Dublin Metro were good ideas in prosperous times, they don't cease to be worthwhile in more straitened times. Indeed they become more urgent as a means of compensating for retrenchment in the private sector. We have one of the lowest Public Debt to GNP ratios in the EU. Now is not the time to cut back. Also, instead of continuing to allocate money to the Pension Reserve Fund to invest in the world's declining stock markets, such money should be diverted to reinvigorating the domestic economy.

NOT THE END OF THE JUDICIARY

In a recession it might be easier to bring an end to some very bad ideas. Hopefully the monster that the Tribunals have become will eventually be slain. But the judiciary has not gone away, you know.

The Supreme Court has overruled a decision of the High Court on "*risk equalisation*". Our health insurance system may be very flawed but there was at least a 'social' element to it. The private health insurance market obliged insurers to have a "*community rating*" system whereby everyone would pay the same level of premiums for a given level of cover. In effect the young and healthy were subsidising the old and sick thereby making such insurance relatively affordable to most of the population. To preserve this system, new companies entering to the insurance market were obliged to compensate the VHI for the older profile of its customer base. This discouraged the new insurers from "*cherry picking*" their new customers.

About 25 years ago the Labour Minister Barry Desmond had the idea of using the VHI as a means of introducing compulsory social insurance which would have ended our two tier system of health insurance. But now the Supreme Court has ended such a possibility.

Premiums are likely to increase dramatically for the older VHI customers. The fact that these customers had spent years subsidising other VHI customers before they themselves became old will count for nothing.

The Supreme Court has justified its outrageous interference in this policy area by saying that the legislation means that the "*community rating*" principle should only apply within insurance companies

and not to the market as a whole, which is a very odd interpretation of the word "*community*". But this definition of "*community rating*" was not government policy and the new insurance companies knew this before they set up business.

Apparently, the situation can be remedied with new legislation, but in the meantime the likes of the private insurance company BUPA/Quinn will make a massive windfall gain at the expense of the semi-state company (VHI).

Leaflet distributed at Islandbridge on 12th July and at the National Commemoration (Kilmainham Hospital) on the 13th July

What was the Somme? 1916 . . . 2008

THE AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SAYS:

it has no disrespect or quarrel with the legions of dead Irishmen who lost their lives at the Somme. However we feel it is necessary to be clear about the cause then and the context now within which these commemorations are being held.....

so,....

What was the Somme about ...then and now....?

A gruesome battle in the war of the British Empire for world conquest.

Why is it celebrated so piously and ominously, three generations later? Because British Imperialism, having come close to extinction, is undergoing a revival.

Former Prime Minister Blair said in his retirement speech that Britain is "*ablessed country*". Nobody in Britain disagreed. And Britain's moral hegemony has been restored in Ireland to such an extent that no public figure took issue with the statement.

British blessedness historically has meant war—war of conquest, war of extermination, or war of destruction. And Blair reminded Britain when leaving office that he had restored it to its proper status as a war-fighting state.

The British war-fighting state has been busily embroiling Irish people in the Orders of the British Empire in recent times, as OBEs, CBEs, MBEs. The retention of Imperial Orders is not due to forgetfulness to abolish them. A generation ago it was considered setting up a new honours system of a pacific kind, outside the Imperialist framework. Then Mrs. Thatcher took office and scorned the idea that the Churchillian era was dead. Her successors have followed in her footsteps.

Do you think that the Somme was fought for the freedom of Belgium? In 1915-16 Britain violated Greek neutrality, invaded Greece, overthrew its constitutional Government, and set up a revolutionary puppet Government. Why? Because Greece refused to become its militarist ally despite being offered a large piece of Turkey if it did so. When Turkey was defeated a Greek Army invaded, at Britain's instigation, in order to re-establish a Greek colonial Empire in 'Asia Minor' as

part of the new order of Europe. When the Greeks were slaughtered by the Turkish resistance, the British Empire (of which Free State Ireland had become a part) washed its hands of its responsibility and left them to their fate.

That is one of the things the Somme was about. Another is that Italy was lured into the War with British offers of Austrian territory. Italian Fascism began in Mussolini's militarist irredentism of 1915 which Britain encouraged. But, when victory was won, Britain told the Italians they could not have what they had been promised because Britain needed some of it for other purposes.

The involvement of children in war is condemned as reprehensible when it is done in Africa. But it is glorified when it is done in the cause of the British Empire. A monument is being erected to the heroism of a Waterford child who enlisted to kill Germans in the Great War and was killed in doing so. The heroism of child soldiers is now being celebrated in Ireland—provided they did their killing in the service of the British Empire.

But these are just irrelevant details. There is no thought conveyed by these celebrations. Their purpose is to cultivate the feelings that respond to the beat of the drum, and to stifle thought. They sanctify British militarist activity in the world, regardless of its particular object at a particular time.

The British Legion presented an "anti-Fascist" face after the British declaration of war on Germany in 1939. Before that declaration of war it was an admirer of Hitler. In 1938 it offered to police the Czech Sudetenland for him.

Celebrate British militarism if you wish. Restore its hegemony over Irish public life if you can. But spare us the humbug.

Aubane Historical Society
July 2008

Further reading:

- 1 The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920 by Brian P Murphy OSB
- 2 James Connolly Re-Assessed: the Irish and European Dimension by Manus O'Riordan

- 3 Six days of the Irish Republic (1916) and other items
by L. G. Redmond-Howard
- 4 Envoi—taking leave of Roy Foster by Brendan Clifford, David Alvey, Julianne Herlihy, Brian P Murphy
- 5 Was 1916 A Crime: A debate from Village magazine, July 2005–July 2006 by various authors
- 6 What is revisionism? (Leaflet, October 2006)
- 7 The Killings at Coolacrease – the true story by Paddy Heaney and others
- 8 Seán O’Hegarty, O/C 1st Cork Brigade IRA by Kevin Girvin
- 9 Fianna Fáil and the decline of the Free State by Brendan Clifford
- 10 Myths from Easter 1916 by Eoin Neeson
- 11 The Battle of Crossbarry by Eoin Neeson
- 12 Canon Sheehan: a turbulent priest by Brendan Clifford

- 13 Sean Moylan: in his own words. His memoir of the Irish War of Independence
- 14 Elizabeth Bowen: "Notes On Eire". Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill, 1940-42; With a Review of Irish Neutrality in World War, by Jack Lane and Brendan Clifford
- 15 Propaganda as Anti-history: an analysis of Peter Hart's 'The IRA and its Enemies' by Owen Sheridan
- 16 Troubled History: A 10th anniversary critique of Peter Hart's 'The IRA and its Enemies' by Brian P Murphy *osb*, Niall Meehan, Ruan O'Donnell

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We Are All One Now

If there was to be any credible sensitivity or reconciliation at the British Legion's annual commemorations at Islandbridge on the 12th July, then it could have started with an apology. The main West British speaker, the Archdeacon of Ferns, the Venerable Christopher Long, could reasonably have been asked by the Irish Government to apologise for the slaughter of so many Irishmen in British uniform at the Somme and other such battles. But no, instead a muted triumphalism of noble sacrifice . . . the giving of one's life for one's country was the note struck. It seems we are all one now.

This little bit of make-believe didn't stretch as far as the Irish ex-British soldier in his regimental uniform who carried the Irish tricolour at the head of all the massed British regimental flags present. At the march past, when he finished his last arthritic goosetstep, he was slapped on the back by the next ex-soldier in line who congratulated him in consumptive dublinese . . . "AH . . . bejaysus, Jack . . . ye were only bleedin brillo" . . . whereupon Jack collapsed in spasms of pent-up laughter at the mockery of it all now that he had stepped offstage. He clearly didn't believe he was part of the Venerable Long's . . . "we are all one" message. I felt a spasm of anger at the spectacle of the flag being dishonoured in such a way. It does stand for something better than this.

In fact I felt uneasy the moment I arrived and saw the Irish Army acting as stewards at the gate. There's one thing being an invited guest, but do we have to immediately revert to the servant role as if it's our proper place. I didn't see any transience of past enmities here and only a cosmetic attempt by the British

Legion to do so. It was . . . *as you were lads...nothing's changed . . .we all know who's on top.*

The Irish national flag was given first place amongst the British regimental flags present, I was assured by an Irish army officer present. The Legion, he said, accepted our flag as pre-eminent. To my mind even the passive presence of our flag at such an event is plain wrong—but even more so as an active participant in the celebrations. I made my feelings known to the officer. He didn't disagree. He merely said that was a political matter. I should take it up with the Government. He was following orders. It was clear to me that there were tensions within the military over the obvious contradictions of trying to implement the "we are all one" political position of the Government.

I spotted one Fianna Fail TD present, Pat Carey, TD for Finglas and surrounding area . . . a decent man and good energetic representative. I instinctively remonstrated with him for gracing the British Legion's affair, not just as a guest but in the manner described above. I gave him a leaflet. He accepted it in silence. He seemed bothered, maybe at the sensitivity of the surroundings but certainly at the questionable choreography of our armed forces and national flag on the day. Never one to be short of a few words, his mute response and eyes cast down to me spoke of his uncomfortableness at being there. Perhaps it was not his free choice. He is always the one sent out in public to bat a sticky wicket when Defence Minister Willy O'Dea is not available.

Only Fianna Fail, the 'can do' party, could get away with this abject toadying

and misuse of hard-won freedoms. If Fine Gael did it, Fianna Fail would rightly be up in arms at the West Britishness of it all.

The army officer mumbled something to the effect that *it was all part of the peace process*. I met him the next day at the 'real', State war celebrations in Kilmainham, where he seemed much more at ease in the UN context and was quite friendly, enquiring after my safety at the previous day's celebrations.

The only hostility I encountered on sat.was from an Office of Public Works man who charged me with "poor form" for attempting to spoil the party.

The West Brits just didn't get it: that anybody could object. They thought we were handing out some congratulatory epistle of adulation to the memory of the dead. Yes, in a way we were, but not to their dead and the cause they fought for. That is the point. In our 1916 a courageous minority went to considerable trouble so that so that we could go our separate way from activities like happened at the Somme. It was clear to me in Islandbridge on the 12th that, despite the 'no expense spared' efforts of the present Irish State to make it appear that we are all one today, the West Brits are only laughing at the antics of it all.

The other point of note was the absence of any significant media presence other than the *Irish Times*. Also the absence of the general public was notable, if it really is the case that *we are all one now*. Clearly the nervousness of the Government's position is evident. Being overly nice to Prods is leading them to lie down and let the British Legion tickle their collective fur at Islandbridge like the little pussycats they present themselves as. Tigers they ain't. Cute they maybe. Cute Hoors they certainly are. Just like Sinn Fein. Where were they to protest at this cavalier use of national freedoms? Still cowed [or is it Cowened] . . . by Fianna Fail after their mauling in the last election? Surely they haven't lost all their political instincts?

Commemorations, like those on the 12th and 13th July, would come out of the Dept of Arts and Heritage, you would think, if it is the case that *we are all one*. But no, they are part of the Taoiseach's Dept, so decided by Bertie Ahern as part of the peace process. Martin Mansergh is the conductor, attempting to work in the spirit of Parnell's new departure of the 1880's, rather than the SDLP/Sinn Fein-inspired pan-nationalism of the 1980-90s. He has been spectacularly successful. The only trouble is, it is not clear what this latter-day 'new departure' is, except the final confused dismantling of much of what Fianna Fail stood for under its founder, Eamon De Valera.

Malachi Lawless

Haughey And The Nazi Flags

—from historical fiction to fictitious "history"

In the March issue of *Irish Political Review* I referred to the false depiction of Charles Haughey in that failed play, *Hinterland*, written by the otherwise highly successful and accomplished playwright Sebastian Barry. Kevin Myers is a failed novelist whose more prolific 'factual' journalism has been no less false in respect of Haughey, as exposed in my *Myers, Damned Lies* article for the July issue. But what are we to make of Dermot Bolger, another successful literary *confrère* of Barry's, whose 2005 novel is reasonably accurate in its semi-fictitious depiction of Haughey, but whose recent "factual" journalism is something else entirely?

Let us begin with the latter. In Bolger's article for the *Sunday Business Post* this past 4th May, entitled *Ireland's One Shining Light In The Nazi Gloom*. his opening paragraph engages in the following nasty piece of guilt-by-association character assassination:

"Ireland's ambiguous relationship with World War Two is best encapsulated by events in Dublin on the day when the Allies declared victory. When other cities were rejoicing at the collapse of the horrors of Nazism, here future Taoiseach Charlie Haughey was leading a riot of Catholic students (some waving Nazi flags in bravado) against the locked gates of Trinity College, a riot initially caused because Trinity had the gall to fly the flags of the triumphant nations."

In stark contrast, Bolger had adhered to elementary standards of artistic integrity in his brief depiction of Haughey and these same Trinity events for his 2005 novel, *The Family On Paradise Pier*. On 10th April 2005 the *Sunday Independent* carried the following introductory remarks to its publication of an extract:

"Dermot Bolger's new novel ... is a saga that grows into an extraordinary kaleidoscopic portrait of Irish life in the first half of the 20th Century, taking in the War of Independence, the dangerous streets of Thirties Moscow, the Spanish Civil War, the Blitz, gulags and the Curragh Internment camp. Based on a real-life Donegal family, the Goold Verschoyles, this exclusive extract for the *Sunday Independent* focuses on Art, the eldest son [based on Neil Goold—MOR], who rejects his inheritance to become a hard-line communist agitator, working and living in the worst slums in Dublin. **'The Family on Paradise Pier'** is a work of deliberate faction, in which many famous figures of the time play real or imagined parts. This extract places Art Goold [fictitiously—MOR] outside Trinity College during the real-life events

in which a young student, Charles Haughey, controversially first comes to national attention during a riot."

The following excerpts from that extract put its portrayal of Haughey in the appropriate context:

"All evening the mood among much of the crowd had grown more outraged as people stopped in College Green to stare up at the flagpoles above the locked gates of Trinity College ... But an hour ago, when Trinity College students climbed onto the roof to raise the Union Jack on the main flagstaff, higher than the nearby Irish tricolour, this had proved too much for ardent nationalists who tried to storm the main gate and remove the flag. The Trinity students had either been drunk or dangerously high-spirited because, in response to abuse shouted up from the street, one student had lowered the tricolour and tried to set it alight. His companions remonstrated and quickly stamped out the flames, but by now reports had reached every public house nearby, from which angry drinkers were emerging ... During the past hour the crowds in College Green had remained angry and deflated, as if their noses were being rubbed in the dirt by the Trinity students who remained on the roof beside the Union Jack ..."

"There was a stir now among the College Green crowd as a party of students from the nearby National University marched down Grafton Street. Art had noticed them an hour ago for being the most vociferous hecklers of the Trinity students. He climbed onto the college railings to wave the Red Flag, but few people noticed because their attention was focused on this group of students. Two students at the very rear had acquired Nazi swastikas, which they waved defiantly at the Trinity students on the roof. Some people among the crowd roared their approval at this bravado, while others shouted for the swastikas to be torn up ... Art lifted the Red Flag higher and shouted: 'Long live Comrade Stalin. Salute the victorious Red Army.' But nobody turned because a young nationalist student at the front of the group had stopped outside the closed gates to make a speech. He seemed a natural public speaker, conveying his indignation at this affront to Irish sensibilities by Trinity College with an aura of self-possessed mocking braggadocio. 'Good man, Charlie!' a fellow student shouted. 'If there's one man to show the Brits, it's Charlie Haughey.' 'Do it, Haughey, do it!' others urged, and Art watched the young Haughey fellow produce a Union Jack, which he hung from the college gates and proceeded to set alight. A cheer arose ..."

There was nothing unfair in this

portrayal of Haughey. He himself never made any secret of the fact that he had burned a Union Jack outside Trinity College on that day, in response to the deliberate provocation from those who had first raised the Union Jack over the Tricolour and then tried to set the latter alight. The Trinity College authorities formally apologised for the provocation that this had caused, while many other Trinity students, predominantly Southern Protestant in background and affirming their patriotic allegiance to this State, also came out publicly to denounce these actions. It was maintained by some of them that, far from being "anti-fascists", the offending culprits were actually a group of Ulster Orangemen who had safely sat out the War in Dublin as Trinity students.

Bolger the novelist had made no attempt to link Haughey, at the front of the crowd, with the two students at the very back who had waved the Swastika flag and who had been reprimanded by others in the crowd for so doing. But Bolger the 'historical' commentator now increases their number and suggests cause and effect. That is why we are forced to contrast his reasonably factual historical fiction regarding the character of the confrontation with his totally fictitious 'history'. Indeed, so relatively inconspicuous had been the two Swastika-waving students, that the *Irish Times* reports of that day's incidents failed even to notice their presence. Mention of the Swastika only surfaced in subsequent correspondence. And the Southern Protestant TD, Erskine Childers, a Fianna Fáil Junior Minister and future President of Ireland, was in no doubt as to the real cause and effect of the rioting. The *Irish Times* of 18th May 1945 reported Childers as arguing, in a subsequent debate in Trinity College, "*Fianna Fáil had an abhorrence of dictatorship, and the young men who brandished the Swastika in Dublin streets the other day were no more representative of the people as a whole than the young men who caused the provocation*".

In the *Irish Times* on 12th May an anonymous correspondent styling himself "*Cato*" had, however, tried to minimise the outrage caused by that provocation, with a diversionary reference to de Valera's visit to German Minister Hempel: "*Let us not lose all sense of proportion. Weigh an unpremeditated act of bravado by an excited schoolboy who ought to have known better, over that moral horror—a visit of condolence on the death of Nero.*" Notwithstanding his own airs of Anglo-Irish superiority, this letter proved to be the final provocative straw to break the camel's back in the case of a patriotic Protestant Nationalist like Hubert Butler. *The Irish Times* of 21st May saw Butler reply as follows and, in the process, forcefully challenge the Churchillian

myth-making 'history' that was already well under way:

"Your correspondent 'Cato' chose his name oddly ... Both Cato the Censor and his great-grandson would have found much to admire in Mr. de Valera's rather academic and unfashionable consistency. Hitler, Mussolini and, quite recently, Franco, received many compliments in the time of their prosperity from British Ministers, including Mr. Churchill. Shortly before the war, in a broadcast speech, Mr. Churchill referred to 'that great man Adolph Hitler'. Dachau Camp was at that time in existence. Mr de Valera's official condolences, at a time of utter ruin, compared with these tributes, seem in no way remarkable. If the mean and hypocritical Franco should join his two friends, is it likely the British Government will withhold the customary condolences? I hardly think so. The code of diplomatic politeness is a very queer one. His Holiness the Pope sent his congratulations to Hitler on his escape from assassination. Mr. Churchill has not ventured to insult him, as he has insulted Mr. de Valera for his neutrality. I wonder why. It is possible that Mr. de Valera was genuinely sorry for Herr Hempel, about whose undiplomatic activities so many lies have been told. The American Government is now in occupation of the German Legation. It will be able to tell us if scope or accommodation has been found there for those eighty intriguing secretaries, so much advertised in the British press."

"'Cato' wishes us to get the T.C.D. episode into proportion. Let us, therefore, look for its equivalent in some other small

nation with an unassimilated minority. Let us suppose that 'an excited schoolboy, who should have known better', from the Sudetenland, were to hang a swastika in pre-war days from the famous University of the German ascendancy in Prague. It would be a most natural thing to do. Would the Czechs dismiss it with 'Boys will be boys!?' An officer in the National Army, with no liking for the Nazis, made to me this comment on one of the letters you have printed from Trinity students: 'Was it the insult to the flag or the insult to the bystanders he minded? Why does he keep saying 'the Irish flag' instead of 'our flag' or 'the national flag'? Analogous questions are today being asked in every country in Europe..."

Had anybody else other than Hubert Butler dared to equate Swastika-waving and Union Jackery in such a manner, such an 'offender' would have had his or her name dragged in the mud, and be denounced as a crypto-Nazi by all the *literati* from Roy Foster to Dermot Bolger. Bolger's recent attempt to portray Charlie Haughey as such a crypto-Nazi had constituted the opening paragraph of his review of a biography of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, entitled *The Vatican Pimpernel*. This will be the subject of a future article. Readers might be interested in noting that Bolger is currently ensconced (as he enjoys the prestige and privileges of being officially designated as "writer-in-residence"] at the Irish Government's mansion of Farmleigh).

Manus O'Riordan

Paul Bew On Haughey's 'Nazism'

In his *Ireland: The Politics Of Enmity 1789-2006*, Paul Bew writes:

"The son of a Free State army officer from the North, Haughey first achieved some public notice on VE Day in 1945: in celebration of the end of the war in Europe, some Trinity College students flew the Union Jack from the flagpole facing College Green: Haughey, in retaliation, burned another Union Jack, and there was a minor riot... In office, Haughey stopped the Irish army attending the British Legion Remembrance Sunday services in St. Patrick's Cathedral, thus creating a context whereby the Irish army was present at the Glen of Imaal to honour the Nazi dead of the Second World War, but was not present to honour the Irish dead of that conflict" (p527, OUP 2007).

Readers wishing to find further information about the facts on Haughey and the use of the Irish Army in war commemorations are referred to Manus O'Riordan's *Haughey In The Service Of The Nazis? Myers, Damned Lies And Statistics* in last month's magazine

Report of the 'Black Hand' Conference on Fenianism held at Queen's University, Belfast

Fenianism And Irish Exceptionalism

The above was the title of the Keynote Lecture of Professor Vincent Comerford at the Queen's University/University of Ulster Conference, entitled *The Black Hand Of Irish Republicanism: the Fenians and History*, June 20-21 2008.

Comerford was introduced as the leading global authority on the history of Fenianism, a history professor at the National University of Ireland in Maynooth, and the author of various books including a 1979 biography of Charles Kickham who was the Fenian who wrote *Knocknagow: The Homes Of Tipperary*. It was announced that the official response to his lecture would be given by Professor Lord Bew.

COMERFORD

Comerford started by mentioning the annual Historic Houses Conference which had just taken place in Maynooth, in which

the topic of prunes for dessert in Hartford arose. He referred to the origin of the Fenian Brotherhood in an 1856 meeting of James Stephens and Thomas Clarke Luby, and how astonished they would have been that, a hundred and fifty years later, a Conference on Fenianism would be addressed by a non-confessional Maynooth professor, and an anti-establishment member of the House of Lords.

{A comment on this: Lord Bew was political adviser to Unionist leader David Trimble who began his political career in the fascist Vanguard movement and continues it as a Tory member of the House of Lords.}

Comerford said that the categories of Fenians and Fenianism had immense significance. They connoted to some people national resurgence, democracy, and liberation; and to others violence,

menace, terrorism, and conspiracy against decent order. They were represented as a movement of jihad, comparable to Al-Qaeda.

He explained what he meant by *exceptionalism*: that the course of development of certain societies followed an abnormal path—benign or otherwise. Irish exceptionalism took the form of a narrative of conquest, penal laws and Fenian resurrection. He acknowledged that other societies had similar narratives, such as *Magna Carta* and Guy Fawkes in Britain. Germany had the *Sonderweg* ("special path"). Except perhaps in the German case, these exceptionalist narratives are specious, he said.

His purpose was to present the case against Irish exceptionalism.

In his conference lecture, Comerford argued that revisionism is essentially a refutation of Irish exceptionalism. To set out the foundation of his argument, he quoted two nineteenth century broadsheet ballads, one of which bewailed the death of O'Connell, famine, eviction, extermination, and anticipated the overthrow of foreign oppression.

A second ballad included the lines: "A

rotten creed can not be sound/ When lust is its foundation/ .../ Our gracious Queen we recognize/ Because she acted true and wise/ The noble Gladstone to appoint/ To be our Liberator/ ...The prophecy has come to pass/ That every man should go to Mass/ .../ But Gladstone now and Mr Bright/ And all the members are combined/ To take from us what William signed/ When Séamus was defeated." (*A New Song On The Downfall Of Heresy*, c. 1869).

In the Black Hand Conference, Comerford presented his two ballads with ritual sneering at their spelling, punctuation, scansion and rhyme, their millenarianism and simplistic history; to which many members of the audience responded with the expected expressions of mirth at the ignorance and backwardness of the primitive, sectarian Paddies and Biddies. Comerford commented that the ballads represented the grim reality of what the Irish were about, the Fenian physical force doctrine being but a pale and watery expression of this atavistic hatred.

These ballads were contrasted with the ballads of Thomas Davis and the writings of the Fenian Brotherhood. The former reflected the popular mind, while the latter sought to improve the popular mind by preaching modern doctrines of enlightenment, non-sectarianism and liberalism.

The Fenian doctrine was aspirational, but the ballads above were the exceptionalist reality. This distinction constitutes the demystification, historicizing and revision of the category of Fenianism.

Comerford said his two ballads were only a tiny fraction of such stuff, for which there was obviously a flourishing market. The two poems cut across the narrative of the nineteenth century. Fenianism had an ideology. Modern society—post-French Revolution—needed a means by which individuals could identify with a sovereign collectivity. This was necessary for self-realisation, and not just for the realization of the collectivity. {I take this to mean that, in the Irish context, a nationalist doctrine had to be constructed, by which both individuals and society could know and understand themselves, and organize themselves for action in the world.}

This doctrine was inculcated by Daniel O'Connell, and Fenianism subsequently made itself the vehicle for it. In doing so, Fenianism gave itself the power of life and death over individuals, by the assumed authority of the Virtual Republic. But this was a common practice in secret societies of the time.

Irish disgust at the execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, three Fenians executed when a policeman was accidentally killed during a prison escape in Manchester, brought all the constitutional strands of Irish Nationalism into the orbit of the physical-force-republican Fenians. But this was an unintended consequence of a

British crackdown on an outbreak of violence in England which was linked with trade union activity, not with Irish Republicanism. [In other words, Fenianism was not pre-destined to become a dominant force in Irish nationalism. It was merely an accidental result of a transient British policing measure.]

In 1952, P.S. O'Hegarty said that "*The Irish people in all their history have never been moved by material motives*". But this exceptionalist doctrine is refuted by several authors, such as James Connolly in *Labour And Irish History*, and Paul Bew in his work on Irish history since the 1870s.

Fenianism was crucial to the Land War, which was an assault on the privileged classes. But this was not exceptional in the 19th century. Patrick Maume had shown that this was the currency of the age.

Fenianism was associated with anticlericalism. It provided a refuge in a clergy-dominated society. It produced a New Man—one who could look landlord, priest and policeman in the eye without flinching. Its anticlericalism was not like that of France and Italy; but it was a natural reaction. This feature of Fenianism does not support an exceptionalist thesis.

Fenianism provided an "*associational culture*", a freemasonry or benevolent society in which members looked out for each other. Again, a recurring feature of that era. It penetrated other organizations, such as the GAA.

Overseas, in England, Scotland, Canada, USA and Australia, Fenianism was a vehicle for ethnic mobilization and solidarity in hostile environments. The IRB recorded difficulty in maintaining a membership in rural areas whenever it was unable to provide cut-price guns and ammunition. Comerford queried why this might be so, since, in the absence of war, there was only occasional necessity to shoot the odd landlord or landlord's agent. His explanation was that the Fenians were an unregistered gun club supporting the rural pastime of hunting.

Thus the Fenians provided an associational culture in a context where an associational culture would have developed anyway.

The Fenians originated in 1858 when there was a real possibility of Anglo-French war. Thus there was an external motive force for this development in Irish politics. It was not some pre-ordained destiny. Ever since the defeat of Napoleon, there was a question of how weaker nations would relate to the stronger ones. Everyone was aware of this problem, including Daniel O'Connell. For instance, in 1830 Belgium had gained independence as a consequence of British balance of power policy.

This issue continued into the twentieth century. The conventional wisdom about

the 1916 Rising is that the British execution of the leaders tipped the balance in favour of physical force Republicanism. But this misses the point. Half way through the Great War the rules of the game changed. With the USA calling the shots, small nations had their opportunity. Yes, people could be radicalized by the executions, but there were much larger forces and concerns. If the Fenian formula had not existed in 1917, '18 and '19, it would have had to be invented. In other words, external factors were predominant in determining the direction of Irish politics. Not some eternal, providential destiny.

The comparison with Scotland is supposed to provide the ultimate proof of Irish exceptionalism. Unlike Ireland, no separation movement occurred there. But again this comparison has been invalidated by current events. Scotland may be only one election and one referendum away from independence. In the future we may see an English-Scottish connection equivalent to the English-Irish one.

Broader movements operated through the medium of Fenianism. Something significant happened in 1858 (when IRB was founded). Comerford criticized the accounts of P.S. O'Hegarty and Leon Ó Broin, employees of the Department of Posts & Telegraphs, who were not Maynooth professors [- now what is about Maynooth that confers despotic illusions of infallibility?—P.M.], whose methodology was "I know because I was there". The primary task of scholarship is struggle against received categories; to constantly examine, probe and demystify, but not to suppress or deny.

BEW'S LAMENT

Lord Bew gave the formal Response to Comerford. He said that he had learned more about Fenianism from Comerford than from any other human being. He reviewed the main points of the lecture. He remarked that Comerford's two ballads were similar to ballads he'd come across in Oxford, and noted that they contained sophisticated references to British politics. He posed a problem to Comerford: in demystifying Fenianism, he was moving away from dramatic narrative to a more subtle approach; but the problem with all this was that historians had failed to carry through the project launched by *Irish Historical Studies*—to produce mainstream Irish history that Unionists could relate to. Why had they failed?

Comerford's reply was to ask why do we continue to eat all the wrong food despite what we are told by doctors. Historians produce intellectually convincing accounts, but intellect is only a small part of what motivates people. Politicians were more likely to influence people. But they had failed to convince the masses

about the European Union! [On this point, from the reaction to Niall Meehan/Brian Murphy pamphlet about Peter Hart which was distributed at the conference, it seems that the revisionists are a wash-out in intellectual terms!—P.M.]

QUESTIONS

A questioner from the audience asked Comerford whether he had selected the two ballads because they supported his theory. Comerford replied that he was not claiming that they were representative. {Which pretty much flushed his lecture down the toilet, I think! But the IPR can offer a helping hand to Comerford. All he has to do is look up popular early 19th century verse in Irish in order to rescue his theory.} The questioner persisted: "*Did you have the argument in advance of discovery of the ballads?*", to which Comerford answered yes.

Another questioner asked whether an IRB conspiracy was the key to Bertie Ahern's bank accounts.

A further question was whether Fenianism was an intellectually coherent project which achieved independence. Comerford ducked this by saying he had only studied the subject up to 1882.

Somebody asked why the Fenians did not link up with Chartists. Comerford replied that he thought James Stephens would have been interested in a confederation of republics.

SOME OTHER CONFERENCE TALKS

William Murphy gave a talk on Fenian prison memoirs. Murphy was one of the academics who did the bidding of Eoghan Harris in the RTÉ propaganda broadcast *The Killings At Coolacrease*. He subsequently praised the programme in a letter to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, also describing himself as a "rising star" of Irish academic history. His *Black Hand* talk was unremarkable, just some inconsequential stuff mainly on O'Donovan Rossa and Michael Davitt. When quoting political verse of the period he made predictably condescending remarks about the scansion and grammar, in which he seemed to invite the audience to share an in-joke about the ignorance of those illiterate peasants. He made much of the resentment expressed by Fenian political prisoners on being imprisoned with criminals.

Matthew Kelly was presented as a student of Roy Foster. The title of his talk was *A Fenian ideology? The Evidence From The Irish People, 1863-65*. The *Irish People* was a short-lived Fenian newspaper suppressed by the British government. His argument was that the Fenians did not produce much in the way of political policy or programmes; for instance, in regard to land reform. He said that, though James Stephens had been in

the Young Ireland movement, the Fenians were very critical of Young Ireland. My impression of the talk was that, though not tremendously exciting, it was serious and informative.

LORD BEW ON COOLACREASE

Professor Bew visited the Aubane book table and tendered his views on Coolacrease and Peter Hart. Regarding Coolacrease, he said that the executed Pearsons were never put on trial. {Should an army put enemy combatants on trial, or should it let them shoot first?—PM}

It was pointed out to him that RTÉ claimed that its land grab thesis was based on Land Commission documents studied by Dr. Terence Dooley of Maynooth, but that the Land Commission archivist said that the programme never obtained access to these documents. Bew's response was that Dooley was a good historian, and that the Land Commission archivist was probably confused.

Regarding Peter Hart, Bew offered nothing on Kilmichael, but said that reading the Cork newspapers and what the priests had to say, he was certain that the Dunmanway killings were sectarian. His theory was supported by a reported statement by Austin Stack, that Stack would never have allowed such killings in his area. I suppose we must await Lord Bew's publication of these arguments in full, to see whether they amount to anything.

Pat Muldowney

Editorial Note

Part Two of this article will consider Professor Comerford's 'exceptionalist' views.

Mad Dogs Do Belgium

Dr. McDonagh's Patent Remedy, Part III

A Review of In Bruges

Martin McDonagh's reason for setting his self-directed and written film *In Bruges*, in Bruges is not made clear. It may have to do with the fact that a beautiful picture will emerge wherever he points a camera. His cinematographer, Eigil Bryld, serves him well. There is a sort-of explanation about the venue towards the end of the action. Harry (Ralph Fiennes—having a great time playing Michael Caine), an English criminal 'boss' and the only remotely honourable character in the script, wanted 'Ray' (Colin Farrell) to have a pleasant time.

Ray's fellow 'hit man' the more experienced 'Ken' (Brendan Gleeson) is to kill him. Ray made a mess of his first (and last) job. He killed a child, while killing a

(presumably Roman Catholic) priest (a criminally wasted Ciarán Hinds). Why a priest? Why in the confession box, and not his private accommodation? Mr. McDonagh doesn't elucidate. Ray and Ken are Irish (of the genus 'thick Mick') but as a great deal of the dialogue, especially early in the action consists of 'effin' and blindin' it hardly mattered. The audience I was sitting among clearly thought the 'bad language' was hilarious.

The two have odd attitudes. They find an 'overweight' American family comical, and make generalisations to the effect that Americans and America are obnoxious. That is not the standard Irish view. There is no standard Irish view of Belgium, but few regard the place as 'boring'. Both notions are standard in 'Radio 4' middle England.

These notions are, admittedly, expressed by the sulkily immature Ray. The elder Ken is a happy tourist, even culture-vulture. Martin McDonagh is very efficient in his screen-play. It tells a not particularly convincing tale very well, every loose end is tied up at the end. It probably looked well on paper but translated into celluloid action it is a bit thin. Ray and Ken's landlady finds their (over large) guns in a sideboard. She leaves them there. A boring Belgian bourgeoisie would, surely, inform the police, or at least confront the men about such hardware? A rather intellectual, and vaguely racist, American dwarf becomes part of the action. He is appearing in a film within the film. I am not sure if his stature is supposed to be inherently funny, but the above audience thought so, and so does the Ray character.

The film (i. e. Martin McDonagh) takes itself rather seriously. Ken is seen tramping the misty (it is the Christmas period) streets of Bruges accompanied by Fischer-Dieskau (?) singing *Der Leiermann*, the spooky last song in Schubert's *Winterreise* (Winter Journey) cycle. It struck me, in context, as simultaneously pretentious and cheesy. No reason is given for the two men's avocation. There is a vague implication that Ken's wife was shot dead in a pub (Ray calls him a 'culchie') but shooting matches are not a characteristic of Irish country pubs. (Not even in the 'black North'.) And it hardly explains how he became a 'hit man', such jobs are not advertised in the *Irish Times*, or even *Andersonstown News* or the *Shankill Bulletin*. The recruitment of the immature, emotive, Ray is even more mysterious. The action ends with a lot of corpses. The implied 'moral' is that violence mindless. But, in context, it was about acquiring money fast, and relatively, easily.

Dr. McDonagh's patent (quack) remedy is that Irish people should cease to be Irish.

Séan McGouran

Only slegging?

In July's issue of the *Irish Political Review* in your Editorial Digest you comment on President McAleese's remarks describing the Unionists' treatment of Catholics, as being "much the same way that Nazis treated Jews," and observing, "Mind you the President was right—at least to the point where the extermination began."

Although we were spared being told the Jewish extermination did not happen, was the fault of England, international finance or Churchill, and not of Hitler as he didn't order it, we were advised that subsequent Unionist thought-crime on a similar local possibility was equal to the National Socialist exterminatory action—"and even then there were plenty of Unionists who would have been happy to go down that road."

One can take the policy of Jewish extermination as beginning in late 1941 after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, with mass round-ups and slaughter e.g. Babi Yar, and with the January 1942 Wannsee conference. However the Jews of Germany had been subject to exceptional law, not to mention extra-judicial procedures since 1933.

The 1935 Nuremberg laws forbade marriage and sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews, while in a series of accelerating procedural orders from 1933 Jews were banned from working for the state or being employed as lawyers, doctors or journalists. They could not be educated past the age of 14 and were prohibited from using hospitals, while public parks, libraries, and beaches were closed to them. Their identification cards were required to have a large 'J' stamped on them and they were required to adopt a middle name, 'Sara' for women and 'Israel' for men.

After the murder of the German diplomat, von Rath, in Paris in 1938 by the 17-year-old Hershel Grünspan, 200 synagogues were destroyed ('Kristallnacht') and over 20,000 Jews sent to concentration camps. Around 1,000 died there before release, in an indication of what was to come. Jewish newspapers were also banned.

Following the outbreak of war in 1939, new legislative restrictions on Jews remaining in Germany were imposed. They became subject to a strict curfew and were excluded from certain areas of cities. Once food rationing began, they received reduced rations and were

forbidden to buy certain foods. Further restrictions limited the time periods in which Jews could purchase food and other supplies. They had to turn over their radios, electrical appliances, cars and bicycles to the police.

In September 1941, Jews were forbidden to use public transport and all over the age of six were required to wear yellow stars. Residence ordinances forced them into certain areas of German cities, concentrating them in "Jews' buildings". The first deportations of Jews from Germany to Poland took place as early as February 1940. Ultimately, around 170,000 of the approximately 200,000 Jews remaining in Germany were put to death.

So what part of the above is familiar or common to Catholic experience during the first twenty years of Unionist rule in Northern Ireland up to 1941 - or even in the following 30 years until Stormont was prorogued?

That someone could even liken the Unionist treatment of Catholics in those years to the Nazis is especially disturbing, but also revealing, in that the level of Catholic discrimination and oppression here, which in the first half of the 20th century was relatively small beer for a national minority, certainly seems perceived as unbelievably harsh.

And the fact that President McAleese felt she was treated, in Belfast, like a Jew in Berlin, not only explains the radical and extensive nature of the thirty-five year IRA war but makes its return highly likely. Rage maintained cannot be contained.

Victor Klemperer's Dresden diaries (*I Will Bear Witness* (1933 to 1941) and *To The Bitter End* (1942 to 1945)), not to mention the Soviet-era *Lesser Evil* (1945 to 1959), give an unbearable account, as a relatively privileged Jew married to a Christian, of what it was like to experience the torment of the whole 12-year Reich.

Jeffrey Dudgeon
9 July 2008

EDITORIAL REMARKS IN RESPONSE

Mr. Dudgeon is right to take us to task for a slipshod formulation. For the most part non-legislative means were used to curb Catholic life in Northern Ireland. The comparison with the Nuremberg Laws would be more appropriately made with the Penal Laws enacted by the Irish Parliament in the 17th century, maintained

on the authority of the British Parliament for a century, before being gradually dismantled in a process lasting into the mid-19th century. Only a few remnants of the Penal Laws remained formally in place by the 1840s; but the spirit behind them continued to operate in the British administration, and this, combined with their cumulatively destructive effect on the morale of the Irish populace, was what led to the potato blight becoming the Famine.

The Famine was a memorable event for the society that experienced it, and it was remembered. The authoritative view of British, and British/Irish, historians seems to be that it ought to have been forgotten. But it has proved so far to be unforgettable. And the memory of it carries with it the memory of the political system that led to it—which, with regard to Northern Ireland, is summed up as The Plantation of Ulster.

Perhaps it would be remembered less if the conduct of the British State in Ireland had undergone a fundamental alteration after 1850. Unfortunately it didn't. The old landlord system was largely bankrupted by the Famine—there was a decline in the payment of rents—and the response of the State was to sponsor the formation of a new, more capitalistic, landlordism, with a greatly reduced Irish tenantry and, as far as possible, another lot of new tenants from Britain. The new landlordism failed so quickly that by 1880 a kind of disabling legislation was enacted against it and in favour of the Famine survivors who—greatly reduced in numbers at home, and invigorated by the experience they had survived, and urged on by the million and more who went to America—organised themselves into an irresistible tenant-right movement.

Landlordism proved to be unsustainable under the 1880s legislation, and was done away with as a system twenty years later. If that was all that happened, it is probable that much would have been forgotten by now. The Irish have very short memories for things that do not press on them daily. But it was not all that happened. A few years after that watershed Land Act a Bill providing for a very limited degree of Irish domestic self-government was introduced, and was defeated in the Commons. Seven years later a second Home Rule Bill was defeated by the Lords. In 1912-14 a third Home Rule Bill was passed three times by the Commons, thus negating the Lords Veto, but was set aside in the face of an Army raised in Protestant Ulster to prevent its implementation.

Before the 1880 Land Act, and what followed from it, had time to influence things, the old antagonism deriving from the Plantation, the Conquests of Cromwell

and William, the Penal Laws, and the Famine, was reinvigorated by the increasingly hysterical Ulster Protestant response to the Home Rule Bill.

Looking at it dispassionately, with hindsight, from an uninvolved viewpoint, one can only describe the Ulster Protestant response to the limited Irish devolution under Imperial authority and supervision as groundless and irrational. There was certainly less ground for it than there was for the later Catholic view of Northern Ireland which Mr. Dudgeon castigates. Nevertheless the Ulster Protestant view of Home Rule was as actual as the Catholic view of Northern Ireland, and we made allowance for that actuality and its causes in a way that he does not for the Catholic view of Northern Ireland.

Presbyterian Ulster was not component of the historic Protestant Ascendancy which operated the Penal Laws through the Irish Parliament on the authority of the British Parliament. However in 1885 it took on itself the historic burden of that Protestant Ascendancy, at the very moment when the Ascendancy proper was on the way out in the rest of the country.

In 1886 the *Northern Whig* (a radical liberal newspaper founded in the 1820s by a protege of William Drennan, the United Irishman, and wound up in the 1960s) based its resistance to the Home Rule Bill on the superior rights of the superior minority. The inferior majority naturally took note of this attitude towards them. Memory of the Plantation was reinforced as Plantation attitudes were encountered daily in the attitudes of the local majority.

Twenty years ago Mr. Dudgeon took some part in the Campaign for Labour Representation and the Campaign for Equal Citizenship, both of which accounted for the persistence of communal antagonism as a consequence of the exclusion of Northern Ireland from the party-political democracy of the British State, which was a powerful means of overcoming such antagonism.

British democracy is a system of conflict between parties, over issues relative to the governing of the state, conducted in a verbal medium of apocalyptic extravagance. When in response to the formation of the UVF (1912) Home Rule was aborted, and the 6 Counties were cut off from the rest of Ireland and held within the United Kingdom in the form of Northern Ireland, a separate political system disconnected from the governing of the State was set up. The North was required to operate a pseudo-democracy, resembling a real democracy only in that it engaged in extravagant antagonism.

The antagonism of Northern Ireland

politics was based on the pre-existing antagonism of the two communities, which had nothing to do with the business of the governing of the State. It is probable that simple Partition without 'the Northern Ireland state'—would have led to a progressive reduction of Six County communal antagonism as people took up alignments within the party politics of the State. The Northern Ireland system not only preserved the pre-existing communal antagonism, but aggravated it.

Ulster Unionism did not devise this system—it is a British construction—but it agreed to operate it. And, in operating it—which meant little more than policing the Catholic community, which had no democratic political outlet—it kept the Ascendancy mentality alive as a matter of habit in its formal and informal encounters with Catholics.

We went much farther than Mr. Dudgeon in rejecting "*discrimination*" as the cause of the trouble. Twenty years ago we opposed the 'Fair Employment' laws which criminalised employers for engaging in normal employment practices conducive to making a profit. We predicted that as a measure of socio-political engineering it would fail. And it is now clear that it has failed. The Catholic and Protestant communities are now arrayed against each other more systematically and generally than they were before Fair Employment.

But the Catholics—whether discriminated against or not in a meaningful sense—were undoubtedly oppressed. To be excluded from the democracy of the State and placed under the police control of a hostile local community is to be oppressed.

"*Rage maintained cannot be contained*" is a fine phrase. But why was the feeling of rage maintained? Not because the memory of preceding centuries was maintained in circumstances to which it had no relevance, but because the functioning of Northern Ireland kept that memory alive even for those who tried to forget, and confronted them with the past as current reality at every turn. Protestant Ascendancy was not sought out in order to be remembered with a sense of grievance. Presbyterian Ulster, when agreeing to operate the pseudo-state, after a vigorous 3 year political and military campaign against Imperial Home Rule, had exhausted the imagination that had animated it in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and all it knew how to do was to take on Ascendancy attitudes.

We cannot judge whether the Catholic rage, that was eventually unleashed by the Unionist actions of August 1969, was

excessive—whether it was abnormal in the sense of going beyond the norm set by precedent. There is no precedent to judge by. No other democratic state ever did to a part of itself what Britain did to the Six Counties.

The Northern Catholics certainly did not in the early 1940s stand back from themselves and say, 'What is being done to us is relatively small beer for a national minority in these times'. That is not the way of the world. And anyway there was nothing else in the world comparable to Northern Ireland.

The minority question of the inter-war period had no relevance for Northern Ireland. It related to the series of new states formed by Britain and France in Eastern Europe when they decided to destroy the evolving, multi-national, Habsburg state. These new states were declared to be nation-states, but some of them were even further removed from national consensus than the island of Ireland was. And there was even an insertion of national minorities for the purpose of punishing Germans and Hungarians.

These states were overnight Imperialist creations with little in the way of prior political life. The governing of national heterogeneous states is not an art that is acquired overnight. An attempt was made to compensate for this by requiring the Governments of those states to sign Minority Treaties, which only aggravated matters.

The great difficulty in the democratic government of multi-national states is to get parties that the different nationalities can participate in politics through. That was not a difficulty in the UK. The difficulty in the Six Counties was not that Catholics refused to participate in the democratic politics of the State because they were obsessed with memories of a superseded past, but that the democratic politics of the State was closed to them. The Catholics lived therefore in a memory of the centuries that was sustained by the current political reality of the British State in the 6 Counties.

In the early 1940s a liberal Catholic academic in Belfast published an account of the Catholic experience of life in the 'Northern Ireland state': *Orange Terror*, issued under the pseudonym of *Ultach*. (It has been reprinted by the *Belfast Magazine*.) It is an accurate account. And description of the experience led the author to consider that Northern Ireland was a Fascist structure. The least that must be conceded to his view is that it was not democratic, but parodied democracy.

We took some trouble 40 years ago to get some understanding of what Protestant

Ulster was, and why it behaved as it did, and in the face of all-Ireland nationalist outrage we made out a case for it in 1969. Mr. Dudgeon was associated with us, sort of, for much of the 1970s and 1980s, after which he reverted to Unionism. It is clear that he never made a reciprocal effort of understanding. As a consequence he now thinks that a return to war by the Provos is "highly likely". And why not, if what exists in the Catholic community is rage about treatment in bygone centuries that is arbitrarily maintained in defiance of democratic opportunity?

He is disturbed by McAleese's remarks. He would have much more reason to be disturbed by similar remarks by Fr. Alec Reid, who is not an unstable politician on the make. Fr. Reid, a conscientious ameliorator, was provoked into saying "They (Catholics) were not treated like human beings. It was like the Nazis' treatment of the Jews" by persistent Unionist harassment by William Frazer of a Unionist victims group, FAIR (See BBC, NI report of 12th October 2005; Fr. Reid was an independent witness of IRA decommissioning, which Frazer and others denied had happened).

The continuum with the centuries of the Penal Laws—which is legitimately there in the consciousness of the Catholic community under 'the Northern Ireland state'—was triggered by Ascendancy attitudes aggressively asserted in the present.

Also the matter of the Jews is not as simple as Mr. Dudgeon presents it.

A treacherous change in the meaning of Anti-Semitism was enacted in conjunction with the Jewish colonial movement launched by the Balfour Declaration. The way not to be Anti-Semitic before then was to say that the Jews were a religion and nothing but a religion. G.K. Chesterton was branded an anti-Semite because he suggested that in their dispersion amongst the nations the Jews held themselves apart and maintained themselves as a separate nation.

Ernest Bevin, in building up his powerful Union, was a staunch opponent of Anti-Semitism. He maintained that the Jews were Jews, as the Methodists were Methodists and the Catholics Catholics. Then he became Foreign Secretary in 1945 and, holding the Jews to be simply a religious grouping, he refused demands to establish a Jewish State in Palestine at the expense of the existing inhabitants. Because he held to the view that the Jews were a religion, not a nation, he was now an Anti-Semite. The meaning had been reversed.

The establishment of Zionist hegemony over world Jewry began with the Balfour

Declaration, and Anti-Zionist Judaism was quickly marginalised after the colonisation of Palestine began. Britain quickly established the Jewish Agency as a political power. It was invited to the Versailles Conference, while the elected Government of Ireland was locked out.

The Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the Mandate system of the League of Nations. The rationale of the other Mandates was that, following the destruction of the Ottoman State, certain regions of the Middle East which were destined to become nation states were not ready to undertake national government immediately. The people in them needed a period of tutelage in preparation for government, and the victorious Imperialist Powers of the Great War were mandated to teach them. But the Palestine Mandate had one fundamental difference. It was not the actual inhabitants of Palestine who were to be prepared for government. The task of the Mandatory Power (Britain) was to keep down the existing population while a Jewish population was brought in to colonise the region and form its Government when it was big enough.

This flew in the face of the proclaimed principle of self-determination even more blatantly than did the exclusion of the Irish Government from the Versailles Conference.

This aspect of things is scarcely mentioned in post-1945 histories of the inter-war period, but it was well known during that period and cannot but have been an influence on the working out of many things. To put it frankly, the Zionist project sanctified by Versailles had something in common with Hitler's later *Lebensraum* project. And it necessarily involved systematic oppression of the inhabitants of Palestine by Cromwellian methods either by Imperial power itself or by the colony it put in place.

When Bevin hesitated in 1945 to implement the Zionist project, an unrestrained Jewish terrorism was launched against the British Mandate administration. Britain capitulated. It gave up the Mandate, thereby directing Jewish terrorism on the Arabs. Because Britain would not allow the UN Security Council to deal with the matter, it was referred to the General Assembly. The USA and the USSR collaborated to assemble the two-thirds majority for a Resolution to establish a Jewish State, and then let things rip.

Within a couple of years the Soviet Union, without whose active support the Jewish State could not have been established, began to be described in some Jewish propaganda as Anti-Semitic, and that is how it is now usually described.

The reason seems to be that it curbed Zionist activity within the USSR.

Britain, and the League of Nations under its influence, enabled the Zionist Organisation to establish its hegemony over world Jewry. The Jews became a player in world politics, not as money-lenders dealt with on the back stairs, but in the light of day as a participant in the Versailles Conference.

Victor Klemperer, having barely survived as a Jew under the Nazi regime, suddenly in 1945 became a member of the elite under the regime that overthrew Nazism. In his Diary he described the new regime as being of a kind with the old regime. He equated Sovietism and Nazism in its use of language, its means of social mobilisation, its regimentation, but he accepted office in it and became one of its distinguished public intellectuals. Was this because, as a Jew, he saw one significant point of difference which outweighed all the similarities? Not according to his Diary, in which he describes the new regime as Anti-Semitic. But then he remarks that, while the Jewish population of Dresden was reduced from thousands in 1933 to about a hundred in 1945, a very high proportion of that hundred held office in the new regime in Dresden. He names half a dozen of them. So that leaves us with an Anti-Semitic regime run by Jews. And, because of the slippery meaning of Anti-Semitism under the Zionist regime in Jewry, that is not nonsense.

As a functionary of the GDR Klemperer conducted himself on Stalin's birthday as no doubt he would have done earlier on Hitler's birthday, if the Nazis had turned a blind eye to his rather tenuous Jewishness and allowed him to participate. Then in 1956 Stalin is denounced by Khrushchev. Klemperer takes the change from adulation to denunciation in his stride, reflecting only that "*Stalin must have been good for something*".

Around the same time the Israeli attack on Egypt shocks him into reflection on the Jewish State. This leads him into argument with his wife—his second wife, married in the early 1950s when he was a public figure. She was a practising German Catholic—a fact of which he seems to have been scarcely aware at first—and therefore presumably in sympathy with the Christian Democracy. He reflects that the Jews in power as Zionists are proving to be worse than the Nazis. She disagrees and dismisses the mass Palestinian refugee matter as Egyptian propaganda. (German Christian Democracy made amends for German treatment of the Jews by helping the Jews to do unto others as they had been done unto.) But Klemperer was genuinely shocked by the conduct of the Jewish

State, and only concedes that, if it does not merit the deepest pit of hell with the Nazis, its place is alongside them in the second circle.

If we are to consider the behaviour of the Catholic community under Northern Ireland in comparison with the behaviour of the Jews, it is not realistic after 1917 to take the Jews as individuals holding certain religious ideas about the other world which have no bearing on this world. Jewry was constituted into political collectivity by the Zionist Organisation with the assistance of the British Empire, and embarked in the early 1920s on the implementation of a project for which extensive ethnic cleansing (at the mildest) was necessary. There was no effective Jewish resistance to the establishment of Zionist hegemony as the dominant ideology, or to the actual implementation of what was called for by the ideology.

The Zionist leaders were clear in their own minds about what they were engaged in, and they had no scruples about collaborating with the Nazis if it served their purpose. And the Nazi view of the relationship between Jew and gentile is a sort of mirror image of the view stated by the Zionist leader Weissmann before Hitler became an Anti-Semite. And the Zionist Organisation was a force in world politics, playing for high stakes, and willing to take casualties.

Churchill was an enthusiastic supporter of Zionism for Anti-Semitic reasons, and he supported the oppression of the Palestinians to clear the way for the Jewish State. He saw the Zionist project as the means of diverting the Jews of Europe from Bolshevism. And the only effective resistance to Zionism by Jews was that of Jews in the Bolshevik movement. But that resistance was subverted in 1947, when the USSR joined the USA to carry a Zionist Resolution at the General Assembly of the UN, against the opposition of all the Middle East states amongst which the Zionist State was to be constructed.

The Catholic community under Northern Ireland was never a force in world politics. It was an isolated community, subject to routine humiliation by the devolved structure, and cut off from the democratic politics of the State. And what it did when eventually provoked into resistance after two generations—well, small beer would not be a bad description of it. It was never realistic to expect that a perverse mode of government should have no cost.

Brendan Clifford

Book Review

Thoughts On Sean Swan's *Official Republicanism, 1962 to 1972*

This is an interesting book and well worth a read. It is readable in that it is not written in academic language, despite being from a PhD thesis, supervised by Henry Patterson. And it is informative about its subject, bringing in different views on each issue—that are interesting in themselves.

It covers the Official Republicans in the period from the ending of the border campaign to the introduction of Direct Rule—looking at the new departure in the Republican Movement, the relationship with Communists, the participation in the Civil Rights Campaign, August 1969 and after.

The reader will have to read the book themselves to get the detail of it. I intend to just put down some thoughts on things that might be of specific interest to readers of this publication from it and place them on the record.

There are a number of things I never knew. Swan has the iconic picture of Joe McCann on the cover of his book, with rifle in hand, beneath the Starry Plough, while Inglis's bakery burns in the background. But I didn't know the following:

"Pat Walsh lingers long on the fact that Sean South... was a member of the Catholic lay organisation, Maria Duce. The most prominent martyr figure for the Official IRA in the early seventies was Joe McCann, but what a lot of people don't realise is that when Joe McCann was shot he was a lay brother of the Third Order of St. Francis and he was buried in their robe. Some things change, some things stay the same" (p.361).

Later on in the book there is a section on SFWP's reorientation in 1976, the *Irish Industrial Revolution*, penned by Eoghan Harris. In an interview with the author Harris told him:

"I was an ideologue doing my best to wrap up revisionism in an acceptable economic package. I didn't have Brendan Clifford's luxury of writing down what I really thought. I wrote what I thought I would 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 believed. I would have liked to have gone further and repudiated more republican dogma" (p390).

Harris justified his revisionism in attempting to convert Unionists to SFWP. Swan, in commenting on Harris's mission to convert Unionists to republicanism and socialism, points out: "*Harris did not get through to the Unionists, they got through*

to him. The only conversion he was responsible for was his own conversion to unionism" (p395).

The difference between Harris and the B&ICO was that Harris went from being a flamboyant Republican to a flamboyant Unionist whilst the B&ICO were never nationalists or unionists. The B&ICO shed the shibboleths of nationalism in trying to understand what was going on in August 1969 and came up with the two-nations theory to explain it. That theory is as valid today, when various people are calling the B&ICO republican/nationalist, as when the same people were abusing them as loyalist/unionists a few years ago.

If the B&ICO had been a nationalist group it would have not been able to understand the collapse of independent Ireland in recent years and been able to combat it (which even Sinn Fein seem uninterested or incapable of).

Swan quotes from Anthony McIntyre's PhD Thesis, *A Structural Analysis of Modern Irish Republicanism, 1969-73*, on page 23 in which McIntyre says that the Provos were

"thrown up at a particular juncture primarily by conditions within the northern state, rather than because of the mere existence per se of that state, and because the republican tradition was more of an 'enabling surface' factor than a dynamic or primary structural determinant."

This gobbledygook illustrates the disabling effect of academic Marxism on thought. Northern Ireland, for one, is not, and never has been a State. I remember the Redmondite Henry Harrison call it a "*pseudo-state*." And it certainly achieved its objective as a "*pseudo-state*" if it convinced the top brains in the province that it was a state.

If McIntyre saw the Provos as being "*thrown up at a particular juncture primarily by conditions within the northern state, rather than because of the mere existence per se of that state*" then he should have not been surprised that the Provos called a halt to their campaign short of the achievement of their objectives.

On page 18 Swan refers to the "*two-nationalist view of Ireland*" which he says I subscribe to. I would say that the 'two-nations' view would be more correct since the Protestants, whilst their leadership insists in being detached from Britain, still act as if they are British rather than Ulster Nationalist.

Again, on page 18 Swan writes:

"For Walsh republicanism per se is a failed political philosophy because it treats the people of Ireland as 'one nation.' This is in keeping with the B&ICO 'two nations' analysis he uses in this work."

I don't think I ever saw Republicanism as "*a failed political philosophy*". When I wrote *Irish Republicanism And Socialism*, between 1984-87, I would have seen the armed struggle, as it was being waged, as incapable of shifting the British out of Ireland, and I viewed the electoral politics of Sinn Fein as being a substitute for a declining military capability. And the main reason why the book was written was to show that Republicanism would not advance the Socialist struggle in Ireland and that all the talk of it was flirtation.

But Republicanism has been remarkably successful in pushing forward its political objectives, given the objective conditions ranged against it. And it continues to proceed, even without the military side of things, or the threat of those things, to advance those objectives.

Republicanism could not be based on a two-nations view. If it started on that road it would have lost the vigour it required to improve the lot of the Northern Catholics, particularly as a political force. And since that was what it was all about it would have been nonsensical to be anything else.

I think, despite all the nationalist ideology that Northern Catholics had been saturated by, they realised that the Protestants were of a different nation.

Republicanism always had a useful function in the Catholic community as it contained the Hibernian reflexes which were much more substantial historically within it. If these reflexes had been let loose—rather than utilised but controlled— by the Provisionals, we would have had a mirror-image of the Loyalists on the Catholic side and a lot more people dead as a result.

Republican ideology kept the struggle on the right track, but it was always the perverse political entity of Northern Ireland, and the intolerable political conditions it produced, that kept the war going.

On page 20 there is the statement that the—

"B&ICO appear to vacillate between an ethnicist understanding of Northern Ireland and a belief that ethnic antagonisms can be dissolved by the simple expedient of including Northern Ireland in the party-political system of the state."

I would have thought that the existence of the B&ICO was the very negation of racist or ethnicist politics. The very title took in British and Irish people in Britain and Ireland working within an organisation to advance political objectives. As I

understood the B&ICO (and I am sure there is a multitude of understandings of it) the purpose was to override the national division in Northern Ireland to bring about National politics, be it within the U.K., or the Republic of Ireland. The two nations approach was not an ideal, it was a recognition of reality—and a reality that might have to be overcome if the British proved unwilling to establish political structures that produced National politics in Northern Ireland (as has been the case).

Scotland and Wales are (still) part of the National politics of the State. 'Ethnic' divisions are still very much alive there too. I was reminded of this recently when a Scottish football fan phoned a Radio Station to commiserate with the English for not having qualified for Euro 2008. He was disappointed at the prospect of not being able to look forward to England being beaten by the Germans, on penalties, in the quarter finals. It had ruined his whole summer.

In a United Ireland I presume the Ulster Protestants would not cease to be British (in any way less than they are now). They may do, but I wouldn't say it is a requirement of National politics that they start waving tricolours and painting the kerbs green, white and orange.

The Conclusion of the book is the part of it from which I would dissent most. "*Northern Ireland was a unionist construct*

and the total hegemony of the Unionist Party has already been noted" states Swan on page 376. I presume he does not mean the English Unionist Party here, since it was the Coalition under Lloyd George that set up the entity of Northern Ireland. So presumably he means the Ulster Unionists.

Now the Ulster Unionists certainly did not construct the entity of Northern Ireland. They may have accepted partition but they wanted to simply remain part of the Union and not be elevated into a semi-detached "*pseudo-state*". That was all the work of British Statesmen for Imperial purposes.

The last line of the book is probably its least satisfactory I would say: "*Once the constitutional issue has been neutralized then the class politics of the Workers' Party stand a real chance of finding a significant role in Northern Ireland*" (p405).

I doubt very much if it was the intention of those who constructed the set-up in Northern Ireland that the constitutional issue could be neutralized. They left that in their own gift whilst they gave away the carrying of the can. I think that was the whole point of Northern Ireland, if there was any point to it—that the constitutional issue would leave a permanent conduit on the island as a whole for further manipulation. And so it has come to pass.

Pat Walsh

Puzzling Over Northern Ireland

The Re-written History of Ireland arranged by Oxford University includes a couple of short books, presumably intended for popular consumption, by Marc Mulholland. One of these is called *The Longest War: Northern Ireland's Troubled History*, published in 2002. The blurb includes a special recommendation by Lord Professor Bew:

"Mulholland writes with unusual sensitivity and fairness. He understands the problem: in Northern Ireland, neither Nationalist nor Unionist feels that he may rest easy".

It was not intended by the creators of Northern Ireland that it should be a place for people to rest easy in. Its creators were the members of the British War Cabinet which had just won the greatest war in history—a war which is only conceivable as a bid for domination of the world by the British Empire. Churchill in 1920 described Britain as having achieved world domination. Nothing less could justify the War. Britain had gambled everything for that purpose. World Dominion or Downfall would be a fair summary of the

British project of 1914-18. Once the War was launched the only acceptable condition for ending it was unconditional victory. As late as the Summer of 1918 it seemed possible that the result might be Downfall, but that is often the case with great events on which the history of the world turns.

The British War Cabinet which gambled everything in order to win everything was made up of the most experienced statesmen in the world. And those statesmen would have known by the reflex action of the mind, without having to waste a minute in deliberate thought, that in setting up Northern Ireland they were not setting up a place for people to rest easy in.

I heard the Lord Professor on Radio Eireann some time ago say that what was needed in Northern Ireland was a moment of reconciliation. I have been saying for over a third of a century that what is needed is politics. Moments of reconciliation are not politics: and politics, being the business of governing states, is what Northern Ireland was cut off from by being established.

The Scots and the Welsh get along with the English, and the Catholics and Protestants in Glasgow and Liverpool get along with each other, without there ever having been moments of reconciliation between them. At least I have never come across such moments, and I have looked through the history of Britain rather closely. The way they all got on with each other over the centuries was by participation in the political activity of the State—which is not at all the same thing as flying the Union Jack or worshipping the head of the Protestant Church, God bless her! When I first lived in Belfast, The Queen was played at the end of cinema performances—a practice which had become obsolete within the political sphere of the State.

The Lord Professor is—or was—a kind of remnant of the old All-Ireland Protestant Ascendancy, but he has been gravitating towards Ulster Unionist fundamentalism. Marc Mulholland, judging by his name, springs from the Catholic natives of the North, and there is much in his book that indicates it. But I do not know that Oxford has found anybody to cover the crucial middle term for it. The culture of Protestant Ulster does not tend to produce academics of that kind.

When the British Government set up Northern Ireland only one member of it took part in the Belfast sub-government. That was Lord Londonderry, who has been derided or denounced by both British and Irish political commentators over the decades. No doubt, as a Londonderry, he merits derision, but as himself he acted responsibly, and was the only member of the British Government who did so. His cousin, Churchill, thought he was soft-headed because he forfeited a Cabinet seat in Downing Street in order to be a Minister in the absurd Northern Ireland set-up. Although Whitehall had a purpose in setting up Northern Ireland, the Belfast Government—taken by itself—was self-evidently absurd.

Londonderry became Education Minister, and tried to establish a secular education system. One still hears it said that denominational education was the source of the trouble, though Londonderry is not praised for his attempt to abolish it. I doubt that abolishing it would have made much difference, but it was the obvious thing to try and he tried it. And then he returned to the politics of the State and became a Cabinet Minister in London.

He was, as far as I know, the only Cabinet Minister of the State who was also a Minister in Northern Ireland. Did he not understand that the purpose in setting up Northern Ireland was not to bind it into the State but to set it apart?

If others had done as he did, I doubt that things would have worked out in Northern Ireland as they did. But the way things worked out has been of immense value to

Britain with relation to the part of Ireland that broke away from it, and I'm sure that possibility was seen from the start.

In general British politics Londonderry is remembered as an appeaser. In a recent edition of *The Weakest Link* quiz, a young man was asked what was the name given to the 1930s political movement which made concessions to an enemy with the aim of diminishing his enmity. He gave the matter some thought, then said, "*Reform*". Well, Londonderry was a reformer in British foreign policy in the inter-War era. And I would say that the disastrous course of events in Northern Ireland or in Europe is less due to him than to any other leading politician of the time.

Londonderry's extraordinary—eccentric—decision to be a Minister in the Northern Ireland Government when he might have had a seat in the British Cabinet is not mentioned by Marc Mulholland, or by the Lord Professor. If they mentioned the fact and dwelt on its meaning they would not be commissioned to write books for the Oxford University Press. If the British object had been to ensure that the Six Counties should be as well-governed as possible in the United Kingdom, Londonderry's action would have been a precedent setting a norm, instead of a personal eccentricity. And much else would have followed from it.

With crucial political facts ruled out of order, all that is possible for the revisionist who aspires to be a historian is groundless moralising sentimentality:

"Northern Ireland's tragedy is that its people have not been able to agree upon a common identity. Rather than stand by each other, they compete. Being so alike—in language, appearance, and broad culture—they cling tenaciously to that which marks them out. The successful consolidation of either British unionism or Irish nationalism, it is feared, will submerge the other" (Mulholland, p v).

This puts one in mind of the existentialist literature of a bygone era, in which the world was fantasised as beginning afresh at every instant and as requiring only an act of will now for the realisation of beautiful ideas of social relations. But when is "*now*"? The present is here today and gone tomorrow. It is the ephemeral product of the past, being incorporated into the substantial body of the past even in the transitory moment of its distinct existence. The past is always with us, the present hardly ever. The Present Continuous is an illusion, especially in political affairs. The present is usually the Past Continuous, with minuscule variations.

I would have thought that the outcome of the attempt by existentialist philosophers in the early 20th century to

formulate a philosophy in the medium of the phenomena of the mere present had demonstrated sufficiently that the present taken by itself is groundless and cannot itself be a ground. The outcome was Husserl in the mid-1930s trying to reach out from the medium of his Ideas and grasp the actual world that was sloughing off his ideal world, and not knowing how to go about it.

The phenomena that constitute the present do not arise in the present. They are not simple things that can be apprehended directly by minds coming to them fresh. They are complex things, elaborated over long periods of time, and each newcomer is trained in their ways so that the world is made comprehensible to him, and familiar, and manageable.

Bertrand Russell's notion that the world consists of distinct physical things with a distinct noise which is the name for each did not work out, because the British Empire did not achieve the overwhelming world dominance for which it was felt to be destined when Russell had that notion. It was perhaps suitable for a pidgin philosophy accompanying pidgin English in a world arranged to be of service to England. But it was not a philosophy that ever gained much credence in the internal affairs of the would-be masters of the world.

The phenomenon is the thing that appears and is grasped by human understanding. Whether there is another thing behind it which causes it to appear is matter for speculation. What is beyond reasonable doubt is that, in social life, the phenomenon which is apprehended, and the means by which the understanding apprehends it, are interconnected.

The modern state—a thing of which Husserl took little account during the greater part of his life—which is conducted by representative government in a medium of universal electoral franchise—is an infinitely complex arrangement of social life. Its tendency is to dominate all earlier social arrangements (religious, racial and whatever) and make itself the organiser of social life.

And, whereas the social arrangements which it displaces were conducted on a presumption of social harmony, the modern state is postulated on social rupture. Democracy operates in a medium of conflict. Conflict is its ideological essence. Elections are contested by parties which present themselves as being in fundamental conflict with each other. The electors are warned by each party that the consequences of electing the other would be catastrophic for them. The activists of each party conduct themselves during election campaigns as if they believed what they said, but the party that loses then behaves as if it had not believed a word of it.

This strange system of antagonism, which is both highly ritualised and deeply felt, has been in the course of development in Britain for over 250 years. It began in the 1740s when Walpole, following the twenty-plus years of Whig Ascendancy (after the Whig majority in Parliament in 1715 had decided to carry on governing when their time was up, and gave themselves an extra four years in which to shape the electorate to their requirements), lost office and was not impeached for corruption, or treason, or whatever.

All concerned know their parts in this system of conflict. At least they are habituated to it and play their parts in it as if they knew them. Of course it is essential that, in a sense, they should not know that they are playing parts. They would not play them adequately if they knew. They have to play the game in earnest as if it was not a game, and yet in the outcome accept that it is almost entirely a game of Ins and Outs.

All of this must sometimes cross the minds even of Professors of Politics, but they are careful not to say it. In the end they are after all ideologists of the State. But, despite their reticence, and despite the frantic enthusiasm of media journalists at election times, there is widespread scepticism amongst the populace. Voting is becoming such a chore that there is talk of having it done along with the shopping.

The sham fights which promise something like revolution or warn of disaster every few years lose in credibility with the general voter but suffice as an outlet for the energies of the politically ambitious and the politically concerned.

But in Northern Ireland this highly elaborated, highly artificial political system of the democratic state, which subordinates all earlier social/political arrangements to itself, does not operate. The effects it produces are therefore not present. The phenomena of the democratic system of the State are therefore not present. But neither are they entirely absent. It could not be admitted that Northern Ireland was placed outside the functional democracy of the State, and therefore it could not be supplied with political arrangements appropriate to its actual condition. What would have been appropriate was a kind of Crown Government, as in Hong Kong. But there were reasons of state why that could not be done. And these reasons indicated that Northern Ireland must be governed within the United Kingdom but under a simulated democracy of its own.

The phenomena of the functional democracy of the State were absent from Northern Ireland but its epiphenomena were present. I don't know if that word is still in use. It means something like a

continued on page 22

Lisbon Treaty debate

The following letter was written in response to Barry Desmond's letter, which appeared in the *Irish Times* of 4th June. Manus O'Riordan's letter, which is referred to, appeared in last month's magazine

In a word I intend to vote 'No' in the Referendum, and recommend to anyone and everyone who wishes to listen, 'do likewise'.

High-minded advocates of 'Lisbon' advise that we should ignore domestic issues, debates and disputes and simply consider the Treaty on its 'merits'.

Barry Desmond (*Irish Times*, 4 June), an advocate of 'Lisbon', disagrees thoroughly, roots his argument in favour of the treaty comprehensively in his own dispute with Sinn Fein and also in an aside, with the DUP (local argument). Manus O Riordan, another advocate, equally comes to the 'Yes' point from the domestic point of view, he cannot stomach being on the same side as Libertas. Implicitly Manus is critical of the stance adopted by his General President Jack O Connor, (*Irish Times* 5 June) who is effectively being accused (by both) of being a "hurler on the ditch".

Truth is that 'Lisbon' is nothing if not political, whether in the domestic or 'European' dimensions. All life is politics and all politics is local and 'local' is whatever you want it to be—townland, parish, national or 'European'. The idea of there being some disinterested, dispassionate way of weighing up the pros and cons of the draft Constitution, for such it is, separate from national life, local considerations or concepts of Europe is idiotic, and the reasonings of Barry and Manus, both rooted in national and local considerations, are evidence of this—as is the reasoning of Jack O Connor of Siptu and also the IFA.

My own rationale for proposing to vote 'No' and advocating such is that 'Lisbon' is about, is, politics, politics in every dimension—as Barry and Manus and Jack and the IFA clearly show. To suggest, pretend or advise otherwise is deception.

'Europe' is a project, in which I believe—I voted 'No' on the accession issue and soon saw how wrong I was as advances were made, whether in respect of equal pay, farming and rural development, terms and conditions of employment, social progress or the inflow to Ireland of foreign direct investment.

I know what Manus is talking about in relation to life working for the Hall and how difficult it was being a contrarian during a certain General Secretaryship as the fruits of Europe flowed through. There are others—including Des Geraghty, Pat Rabbitte and Eamon Gilmore—who, from their perspectives, could tell similar stories. Those were the days. If everyone else (including Barry and Manus) is wearing their ITGWU badge on their sleeve I might as well declare that I still have my pin—and I do.

'Europe' is a project, but today vastly different from the original, and the project Ireland joined in 1973.

Some of the ground for the present shape and thrust of Europe was laid before we joined, critically the success of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in asserting its superiority (vis a vis domestic superior courts in Member States) in law and interpreting the Treaties and domestic statutes. Senator Eugene Reagan (*Irish Times*, 2 June) for example, has laid out some key elements in that story.

There is though, critically, also lost ground—that lost since the Delors presidencies, possibly never to be recovered, without prompting a (self-induced) crisis, my reason for voting 'No'.

The Delors commissions represented a coalition of forces, critically a social and political balance incorporating both the Social- and Christian-Democratic perspectives, to the general (market-liberal) thrust of the increasingly judicially activist ECJ.

Today we have a commission and ECJ that vie with each other in their professedly liberal-market credentials. The reality is that the Court has intellectual substance (to which on its own I am opposed, without a ballast, and none there is), because the commission and the council are intent on self-aggrandisement and bureaucratic advancement—to which post-enlargement, is unfortunately what 'Europe' has been reduced.

We should have said 'no' to the English Trojan Horse of 'enlargement'—and we in Ireland now have the chance of doing so, belatedly, on behalf of all Europe—although we cannot expel what we have allowed in.

So vote 'No', 'No' to the Libertas agenda, to Mandelson's WTO agenda and to the ECJ's agenda, in the 'Swedish' decision. 'Yes' to Europe but 'No' to this current agenda—as a result of which we might be allowed to have a real debate.

Fergus O Raghallaigh

shadow of the phenomenon.

Northern Ireland lived in the shadow of the democratic system from which it was excluded. That was one of the first things that struck me when I went to live in Belfast. The way I described it was that for the Northern Ireland electorate politics was a spectator sport. It was an observed activity that happened on 'the mainland'. People were vicariously Tory or Labour, and they followed the British election campaigns as keenly as if they were taking part in them. They lived in the shadow of a democracy.

I set out this view of things in a series of pamphlets which had a very wide circulation and sparked off a movement which Cabinet Ministers had to take a hand in stifling. There was only one attempt by an academic to refute the case I made. Professor Brendan O'Leary of the London School of Economics wrote a pamphlet called *Oranges Or Lemons* for the Labour Party's Northern Ireland spokesman, Kevin McNamara. He argued that Northern Ireland was part of the democracy of the State by virtue of "facsimiles" of the British parties which it devised for itself. The Northern Ireland Labour Party was a facsimile of the Labour Party and was as good as the real thing. I replied with a pamphlet called *Facsimile Politics*. It was sold by the Economist Bookshop at LSE for a week or two, until an ultimatum came from the College authorities to remove it, or else.

I got one of my first insights into the nature of politics in Northern Ireland when I visited the Labour Club run by the facsimile NILP in the late 1960s. There were notices up saying that "*Party Songs*" would not be tolerated—in the Club of a political party!

Party Songs, as everybody knew, were Orange and Fenian. Northern Ireland was a sham democracy imposed by the State on the communal conflict of Orange and Fenian that was in full flood at the moment when the country was partitioned. If there had been a simple Partition, with the Six Counties remaining within the democratic system of the State, it is probable that the communal antagonism would have been weakened by extensive Catholic involvement in the Labour Party of the State in the course of the following generation. Exclusion from the political system of the State, and the erection of the sham democracy, could only preserve and aggravate the communal antagonism.

The facsimile Labour Party was a refuge from reality. It was a front parlour where everybody had to be on unnaturally good behaviour. It was a negation of the Party spirit. And it knew that it was.

In 1920-21 it was arranged by the supreme political talent of the world—the British War Coalition—that this is how things should be in the Six Counties. And

now Marc Mulholland suggests that Protestants and Catholics, excluded from the most effective political system in the world and thrown back on their mutual antagonism without any means of political mediation, might have cut themselves off from the histories that produced them and established pleasant relations in a vacuous present.

I suppose that gibberish is as good as any other. If one is banned from describing the establishment of Northern Ireland in terms of the realistic English political philosophy founded by Clarendon and developed by Burke, then all that can be written is gibberish.

Mulholland continues:

"The successful consolidation of either British unionism or Irish nationalism, it is feared, will submerge the other. Other people's identity is secure because it is buttressed by a state. Their shared nationalism is often mere background to the more important pursuit of personal development. In Northern Ireland, that luxury has been lacking. Neither nationalists nor unionists feel they may rest easy. Everyone who feels part of a community, and would defend the privilege of that belonging, can identify with Ulster's plight."

The British State is an absolute state conducted in the mode of representative government. It has superseded community in the conduct of political affairs. It is the most centralised state in Europe. Having established its own dimension for the conduct of politics, and thus having superseded community in political affairs, it lets the residue of community be. One comes across these residues in more or less spirited form all over the place. I once bought a beautiful wartime edition of Burckhardt's *History Of The Renaissance In Italy* for a few pence at a village fete in Surrey and was more surprised by the fact of a village fete than by what I found at it. I had thought that such things existed only in *The Archers*. In parts of Sussex there are delightful enclaves of rural idiots and gentry. In Llangollen there are festivals of epic poetry in Welsh. Somewhere else there is Morris dancing. And, for all I know, there is still caber tossing in Scotland. Britain is bestrewn with local idiosyncracies, and religion is one of them. The Penal Laws reduced Catholicism to idiosyncrasy in England—and Anglicanism and Presbyterianism and Anabaptism along with it. The political stratum is securely established beyond these things and it lets them be. They are of no political consequence. But, in the Northern Ireland region of the State, politics remains strictly communal—not because the voters refuse to participate in the political stratum of the State lest their 'identity' be subverted, but because they are excluded from it by the State.

The British State chose to have a 17th century form in its Northern Ireland region.

Protestant Ulster was in 1921 given the right to keep up a 'connection' with the British State, while being excluded from its political life. The 'connection' was to be maintained by voting Unionist and conducting a Unionist local government. And Unionism was a populist political movement of the Protestant community, with the Orange Order at its core, rather than a political party.

"Identity" was incapable of being at issue in the form of politics that Britain imposed on the Six Counties. Louis Boyle went to a lot of trouble to become a Catholic Unionist but in the end he found it was not a practical possibility. I regarded his project as inherently absurd from the start, but it was useful that he put it to the test. Much later an upper class English type with an RAF moustache became a prominent Catholic Unionist in order to prove that it was possible, and to show the way, but everybody knew very well that it proved nothing of the kind, and it did not show the way.

(I went as far as I thought possible by seconding Britain Faulkner in a debate against John Hume, without pretending to be a Unionist. But in the course of doing so I was overcome by a sense of the absurdity of it, and I did nothing like it again.)

The state in the North was the British State. The "*politics*" of the North was not part of the politics of the State. The State, through the "*reserved matters*", provided the major public services in accordance with the outcome of policy conflicts between the 'mainland' parties. The only function of devolved politics was to keep the region 'connected' with the State by returning the Unionist Party as the governing party at Stormont at every election.

The Unionist Party was the political organisation of the Protestant community, bonded to it by the Orange Order. That is how it was when Northern Ireland was being set up, and there were no grounds for supposing it would become otherwise after Northern Ireland was invented. The British Government invented Northern Ireland in the knowledge that this was the case and it conferred on Northern Ireland no real power of state except the power of policing—and even in what is called a 'police state', the state is not merely a police force.

The 'Northern Ireland state', insofar as it is meaningful to call it a state, was a mere police force. It was a police state within a liberal democracy which laid on all the other public services. And the only sense in devolving police power in those circumstances was to enable the Protestants to whip the Catholics into line.

Twenty-odd years ago I addressed a Tory conference in London on the subject of Northern Ireland, and said more or less what I have said here. I was then asked if I would take part in a debate with Sinn Fein which had been arranged. I said I would, but I hoped they understood that it followed from my analysis of the Northern Ireland problem that I would probably agree with much of what the Sinn Fein speaker would be likely to say. They hadn't understood, and they reconsidered the request.

The case I have made about Northern Ireland is unanswerable, and it is unacceptable. It is I think the only distinctive thing I have written that has never been borrowed, and it has never been answered.

The Act of Union did not work because Ireland was not shaped to the party-political system of the State, which was described by Erskine Mayne, the ultimate authority in these things, as "*the life-blood of the Constitution*". The greatest single influence preventing party-politics from taking root was O'Connell's. The Home Rule movement was constructed in the empty Constitutional space cleared by O'Connell. Its founder, Isaac Butt, was a Tory coming to terms with O'Connell's extremely unconstitutional Constitutional achievement.

In 1919 the part of Ireland on which O'Connell had left his mark declared its independence. In 1921-2 it was let go at the end of a leash. Ten years later the leash was cut.

The part of Ireland that rejected O'Connell was 'connected' with the British State in 1921. It had once been a participant in the British State, but was cast out from participation in 1921.

Belfast is the only city in Ireland that constructed itself out of its surroundings. For a couple of hundred years it had no Constitutional existence, only actual existence. There was a Borough of Belfast, created for Lord Chichester before there was a town. Its two MPs were appointed by Chichester to do his bidding. The town was without representation until the 1832 Reform. From 1832 until the 1880s it took part in the party-politics of the State, as did the surrounding Counties, and I can see no reason *a priori* why they would not have done so again after 1921 if the political system of the State had not excluded them, and insisted that its new creation, Northern Ireland, should occupy itself with 17th century politics—Protestants versus Catholics

Why has no ambitious young academic sought to make his mark by taking this as the subject for investigation in a PhD thesis? Because no supervising authority would authorise such a project—that much I have gathered as a complete outsider.

And because any student who somehow got such a project accepted, would kill his career at birth instead of advancing it. And because securely established academics have adapted themselves so well to the requirements of authority in the course of securing security that they were then hidebound by habit

That, it seems to me, is how matters stand in the close system of politically-directed patronage that goes by the name of academic freedom.

I make an exception of nationalists in this matter. They would not want Northern Ireland to become a mere Six Counties participating in the democracy of the British State. When the movement for British party organisation was going strong in the late 1980s, I could see that John Hume and others were on tenterhooks lest it succeed. I think they were profoundly mistaken in their reckoning, and wondered that they never asked themselves why the British parties were at one with them in opposing the project. But I could understand their instinctive hostility.

But what of our bold revisionists? Why have they banned these striking facts about Northern Ireland as a subject of thought?

I came to the conclusion long ago that Marx got it wrong about the political economists. It was not they who were the hired prizefighters of the ruling class. It was the historians who wrote history to order.

Mulholland wonders—

"Why have divisions dating from the 16th century and the plantations and religious wars of the 17th century persisted through Enlightenment, revolution, famine, Industrial Revolution, and mass democratic politics? Ulster is remarkable for the tenacity of its community divide. Sectarian patterns of conflict have reproduced through time and adapted to circumstances" (p1).

Naive wonder would soon have stumbled across the fact that the structures of "*mass democratic politics*" were withheld from Northern Ireland, and considered whether that might have something to do with the persistence of pre-democratic divisions. But Mulholland's wonder is not naive. It is carefully constructed. It is a mere rhetorical device.

Democracy as an institutional structure being a prohibited subject of thought, the speculation is that the cause might lie in "*negligible migration into Ulster*", the low percentage of cross community marriages, the stable pattern of landholding since the Plantation and the sheltering of Ulster from "*the storms of total war and ethnic centrifuge characteristic of Europe*" between 1914 and 1945.

But it was as part of Britain that Ulster was sheltered from European events, and

I do not know that patterns of landholding have changed any more in Britain than in Ulster, yet pre-democratic divisions have not persisted in British political life—which suggests that democracy—the system of structures as distinct from the vacuum slogan—has something to do with it.

Before the institutions of mass democracy were formed, life in Britain was lived to a considerable degree within religious groupings. The political dimensions of those groupings, and with it their internal rigidity, gradually diminished as the mass institutions of organised political democracy came to dominate public life, and the population as a whole was gradually absorbed into public life—at least in principle—through those organised mass institutions.

Mulholland slides around the formation of Northern Ireland as a kind of outhouse of the State: "*Partition... was a compromise around which both sides warily circled, well aware of the agonizing delicacy of their position*" (p25). That comment seems to relate to the 1912-14 situation. But then suddenly we have Northern Ireland—vaguely described as "*the northern statelet*", with "*statelet*" remaining undefined—as if it was a simple consequence of allowing the Six Counties to remain in the UK.

In 1918—

"Irish nationalism swung massively... behind Sinn Fein... Catholic Ireland repudiated further parleying with the British political system from within and, in effect, gave up on conciliating Irish unionist opinion" (p28).

It is axiomatic for Oxford "*rewriting of Irish history*" that Redmond was a conciliator of Unionism. It was against Redmond that the UVF was raised.

The electoral victory of Sinn Fein "*was a huge boon to Ulster Unionism*", and in 1920 it led to "*the new state of Northern Ireland*" (p28).

The Six County Catholics who were "*most unwilling to tread the Sinn Fein path*" (p28), found themselves in "*the new state*". Then—

"They were the victims of southern nationalisms exhaustion with compromise, but it is perhaps little surprise that they began to see their own salvation in an extremist repudiation of the new state's legitimacy and a toleration of armed revolt" (p29).

Does this have a meaning? Does it mean that it is not surprising that the Northern Catholics engaged in an extremist repudiation of the democratic options open to them in the state—well, the *new state*. If there were democratic options to them, why is it not surprising that they rejected them? And if there were

not any democratic options available to them, how could it be that they engaged in extremist repudiation of them?

The Oxford University Press was granted perpetual copyright of Clarendon's

History Of The Rebellion, which conveyed political sense to the British ruling class and its intelligentsia for a couple of centuries. It has not been reprinted for three quarters of a century. And it shows.

Brendan Clifford

Press release on pamphlet issued for the Belfast Conference on Fenianism

Troubled History

New evidence in 'Troubled History', by Niall Meehan and Brian P. Murphy, questions revisionist historian Peter Hart's impossible claims.

Newfoundland historian, **Peter Hart**, turned the 1919-21 Irish War of Independence and West Cork's role upside down in a 1998 book. Hart accused the West Cork IRA of involvement in 'ethnic cleansing' of Protestants.

Hart was heavily promoted and praised for many years. Roy Foster gave him the Ewart Biggs prize in 1998. In 1990 the noted controversialist, *Kevin Myers*, praised Hart in *The Irish Times*. In 1995 Myers demanded that Hart's research be published. In May 1998 he called Hart's controversial new book 'a masterpiece'. Myers kick-started a dispute that has been running since, initially for seven months from May to December 1998 in the *Irish Times*.

In his 1998 book, *The IRA and its Enemies*. Hart called IRA commander **Tom Barry**, author of the famous *Guerilla Days in Ireland* (1949), a 'political serial killer'. Hart said Barry's history of the pivotal Kilmichael ambush of November 28, 1920 consisted of '*lies and evasions*'. Barry and others wrote and spoke of a false surrender by British troops, who Barry said then shot dead two of the three IRA casualties. It was Barry's justification for refusing to accept prisoners. The British Auxiliary force suffered 17 dead and one survivor. The false surrender story was a lie, said Hart.

To back up his case, Hart claimed to have interviewed two members of the Kilmichael ambush party, *anonymously*, in 1988 and 1989.

There is a problem.

Hart claimed that he interviewed one Kilmichael veteran he called 'AF' six days after the last surviving participant, **Ned Young**, died on November 13 1989 (first reported by historian Meda Ryan in 2003 in her *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*). The second last surviving Kilmichael participant died in 1986.

In an essay to coincide with the 10th anniversary of publication, **Niall Meehan** re-prints a prominent newspaper report of the death of Ned Young, with the headline *Ned Young – last of the 'Boys of Kilmichael'* (*The Southern Star*, 18 Nov 1989) It appeared one day before Hart's claimed Kilmichael veteran interview with 'AF'.

'This would have been difficult for a genuine researcher to miss', comments Meehan, who continued, *'Hart reported interviewing two Kilmichael veterans when one was alive and one when none was alive'*.

Meehan examined Hart's 1992 PhD thesis of the same name. A Kilmichael interviewee Hart named 'AA' in his book is 'EY' in his PhD thesis. This is [E]dward (or 'Ned' for short) [Y]oung, says Meehan. Hart reported interviewing AA-EY in 1988.

There is another problem.

Meehan publishes for the first time an **affidavit** from Ned Young's son, **John Young**, from Dunmanway, Cork. The sole surviving IRA veteran suffered a stroke affecting his mobility and speech over a year prior to Hart's claimed anonymous interviews, says John Young. John Young says an interview with his father, who was under 24-hour care, was medically impossible.

Meehan also reports a newly discovered problem with Hart's research. In his PhD thesis Hart reported being given a tour of Kilmichael by 'AF', the 19 November 1989 dead man.

'Hart's are impossible, not historical, methods', Meehan said, and continued, *'Hart's claims cannot be taken seriously'*.

Brian Murphy

examines the way in which Peter Hart's research has been used to encourage the mistaken view that Catholic-Protestant antagonisms were a significant feature of the conflict. Murphy disputes this and shows that there was significant Protestant support for Irish Independence and for the War of Independence IRA. Murphy demonstrates

how Hart censored information, even from British sources, that did not support his view. He shows how Hart's research on sectarianism is as flawed as the research on Kilmichael. He questions the use of Hart's research by **Eoghan Harris** to make unjustified claims recently on an RTE television programme about Coolacree, Co Offaly, in 1921.

'Peter Hart has gravely impaired the authenticity of the Irish historical narrative (c.1919-1922) by his selective use of original source material', says Murphy..

Murphy is the author of *The Origin and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920* and, recently, a defence of Ken Loach's *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* against revisionist historian Roy Foster's attack on the film (in *The Impact of the 1916 Rising among the Nations*, 2008, IAP, edited by Ruan O'Donnell).

The 10th anniversary critique is introduced by **Ruan O'Donnell**, Head of the History Department in Limerick University.

'Troubled History - ten years of controversy in Irish history'

Contents:

- Introduction** by Ruan O'Donnell
- Troubles in Irish History - A 10th anniversary critique of 'The IRA and its Enemies'** by Niall Meehan
- Poisoning the Well or Publishing the Truth -From 'The IRA and its Enemies' to RTE's Hidden History film on Coolacree** by Brian P Murphy OSB
- Affidavit by John Young (son of Ned Young)**
- 48 pp (A4)**

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Does

Stack
Up
?

it

KINSALE ARTS WEEK.

Last week they had lots of cultural/sporting events in Cork and its environs. We may have a recession and Lisbon was lost (how does the political and media elite **not** just get the Irish response. After all, "no" is not too hard to understand!) but life goes on! It could be argued that KAW (Kinsale Arts Week) is more than just a mere cultural week, being one of the most socially prestigious events in the year. It is chaired by the formidable Mareta Doyle, wife of Conor Doyle—truly one of the 'Captains and the Kings' of Cork families—who owns most of Cork's Docklands. Both were mentioned in this column as being weekend houseguests of the Duke of Devonshire's son while he was residing in Lismore Castle recently.

One of those publicly funded bodies intriguingly mentioned by Mareta in her opening speech was the OPW [Office of Public Works] for "*facilitating such events*". And Minister of State Martin Mansergh, who oversees the OPW, also made an appearance at the opening and revealed his own connections with Kinsale: "*a 1659 census shows that his ancestor, Captain James Mansergh lived in Friar Street in the town. He described Kinsale as one of the jewels in the crown of Ireland's finest county and said KAW gave a great morale boost to the town.... as well as providing an advertisement for the town all year round.*"

The week of culture was officially opened by Olive Braiden, Chair of the Arts Council, who said KAW deserved its funding and much more besides for its truly dynamic and inspirational programme. Olive Braiden, it has since been revealed, turned down the offer by Minister Cullen of another five years at the helm of the Arts Council, just as money becomes a real issue with grants expectedly to be cut across the board.

ACC CORK WEEK ROYAL CORK YACHT CLUB [rcyc].

Meanwhile for those of a liking for a sailing/drinking/social occasion, ACC's Royal Cork Week (Crosshaven) offered its own snob value. However the sailing was not the greatest, the wind my dears 'died' and the enormous spinnakers

dribbled down to the decks, earning the kind of rigger-bugger language that never ceases to amaze me. But of course it is all in the *accent* and there was plenty of that sort of the Montenotte/Rochestown kind floating across the dead-calm water.

I mentioned drinking: Heineken sponsored all events on land—which was essentially, *well*—drinking and music. The hoi-polois was left in at enormous charges but of course *only members of RCYC* were allowed use the club and the big tent. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Michael Martin—back from praying at the Jewish Wailing Wall with his black skull-cap—was intent on enjoying the night away with his wife Mary. Michael has family connections to the club (a former Admiral is an in-law) and sometimes dines there *en famille*. As far as I know, except for the Covenys and the Barrys—merchant princes all—Martin is the only politician that frequents the place. But this year there was another exception, Michael McGrath, TD and his family including his councillor brother, all fine members of Fianna Fail, were enjoying their time in the sun, so to speak. Another former politician that this column has been tracking for a while was there too and was receiving the best the club offers for that old socialist Dick Spring. He was having a hearty time of it and there were several heavy hitters that joined him for a few words. While Albert Reynolds and John Major were receiving their Freedom of Cork, there was precious little attention in the media to the role Spring played in bringing down a good Government. But karma has a way of coming back to bite one in the bum and if the rumours are true, and I think they are, then the forthcoming memoirs of former Taoiseach Reynolds may well enlighten us on that particular dirty little episode.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL.

I suppose the new British Council book didn't earn the attention of a lot of Irish people. But don't let that fool anyone. Our political/media classes were in on the act and that's all that is necessary really. The fact that the Council was thrown out of Russia recently should alert us that maybe something else is being done under the delightfully easy-going Brit manner. The response of outrageous dismay to the Russian action was to publish a statement. "*The British Council operates as a not-for-profit charity run as a royal charter by the British government in 109 countries, teaching English, providing business contacts and administrating academic tests for students who wish to study in*

Britain."

But the new British Council book, the third of its kind *Britain and Ireland: Lives Entwined 111 A New Dawn?* had all the usual suspects, with a Preface by Neil Kinnock, Chair of the British Council. Kinnock has serious form as a propagandist, and who can forget his infamous "*evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee in 2006*" when, after bad faith was shown by the British (do they ever show any other kind?), the British Council building with its distinctive logo went up in flames in Gaza on the 14th March 2006. Kinnock stated to the FAC that: "*It is a supreme irony, to which I draw the Committee's attention, that on the very same day that our premises in Ramallah and Gaza were destroyed, an independent survey of Palestinian youth was published, which demonstrated that of all the international organisations operational in the Palestinian territories, the British Council was by far the most trusted*". One journalist found this so laughable that he eventually found a web site company called Alpha International who "*conducted a needs assessment survey using both quantitative and qualitative methods for the services provided by the British Council*". Further inquiries revealed this was the report Kinnock referred to. So the report was a "*needs assessment survey for services provided by the British Council*", commissioned by the British Council for the British Council, it might be said that Lord Kinnock was using the words "*independent*" a little freely. Also, describing its timing and its apparently remarkable conclusions as "*supreme irony*" was serving his case rather too well. The Council refused to make the "*report*" available to the public or media and we were advised *never* to take what the British Council say on trust.

THE 'IRISH' BRITISH COUNCIL.

We in Ireland haven't done as advised. Madeline Broughton, formerly of the British Council, has joined the *Culture Ireland* team. The *Irish Times* reported this with little fanfare on 26th July 2008. Yet Culture Ireland is profoundly important for this nation's culture and history and sense of self. The "*agency for promoting Irish arts internationally*" has appointed Broughton as Director of projects and promotions, where she'll manage and promote arts showcases and special projects. Broughton was Arts Manager with the British Council here until it "*reorganised*" itself worldwide and virtually pulled out of its extensive and impressive events here (a big loss!).

She was Events Co-ordinator at last year's Dublin Theatre Festival, and has worked in press and marketing at the Abbey, Draocht, and Project Arts. She is a judge of The Irish Times Theatre Awards and is theatre advisor to the Arts Council. *Culture Ireland* Chief Executive Eugene Downes said: "She brings a wealth of experience and a passionate commitment to international cultural collaboration". Broughton said she was "looking forward to working with the extraordinary range of artists and arts organisations who play such an important role in the promotion of Irish culture and the arts internationally". So much for the "big loss" that the *Irish Times* mourns.

The question is, who will be the new Arts Council chairperson? And is *Culture Ireland* now a stand-alone national institution or (as I fear) is it a guise for the work of the British Council? Because one thing is sure, that organisation—whatever the *Irish Times* means by "reorganised" is still a huge influence in this country—and not for our national good.

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION.

The Doha talks in Geneva are near conclusion but negotiators from developing countries are much tougher than they used to be and are more vigorous in resisting the blandishments and pressures of the wealthier countries. The wealthy-nation manufacturers want access to developing markets while at the same time keeping down the price of food so as to keep down the cost of labour in the factories. The wealthier nations have the fire-power to back up their demands and the wealthier nations are also the manufacturers and suppliers of armaments to the less developed nations. So the negotiating pressure is intense in Geneva. The Brazilian Foreign Minister said rich countries' deception in the trade talks reminded him of Joseph Goebbels' propaganda. The USA chief negotiator Susan Schwab is the daughter of Jewish holocaust survivors and she asked for and got an apology in which the Brazilian Minister "regrets if Susan Schwab or anyone else was upset by his comments on a historical fact".

The World Bank, after the Doha talks began, projected global gains of \$832 billion and it later reduced that to \$96 billion. Who gains and at whose expense? And why are the World Bank's projections differing by \$736 billion? It is a basic law of physics that new matter cannot be created. There is only one "World Economic Cake" to be divided up. The

less powerful countries will probably end up with smaller slices of the cake.

SPRING FAMILY AND LABOUR.

Arthur Spring, nephew of Dick, has the brass neck to declare he wants to "build up the Labour party in Kerry North". He is 31 years old and joined the Labour Party only a few days before he got in his nomination for the Labour convention held on Saturday 26th July to choose the candidate for the EU election. His rival, Senator Alan Kelly, is a long-time party member. Arthur Spring is a capitalist businessman in Tralee where he operates a juice bar business. Uncle Dick is Arthur's Campaign Manager. Arthur's grandfather Dan Spring was a genuine Labour member; he was ITGWU supremo in Tralee. Dick has been raising the Spring profile as we noted recently. He was guest speaker at Cork Chamber annual dinner etc. Martin Ferris of Sinn Fein holds the Kerry North seat previously held by Dick. His daughter Toireasa Ferris may run in Munster for the European elections so, which ever way he runs, Arthur is likely to be up against a Ferris. A formidable task.

LISBON TREATY.

Sarko's recent carry-on has not at all helped the 'yes' side in the Lisbon Treaty's recent defeat in Ireland. It has emerged that he told his own party that Ireland would have to vote again on the Treaty. He caused widespread anger amongst those few who cared, on his recent few hours in Ireland which came across as: "I'm a busy leader, Ireland is peripheral and they'll do as I say anyhow". A poll taken after his visit shows 52% would vote 'no' if there is another referendum and 34% would vote 'yes' and 14% uncertain. Sarkozy insisted during his visit that he would be at the French Embassy in Dublin to meet, for three minutes each, some of the 'yes' and some of the 'no' leaders. Eamon Gilmore has compared him to Asterisk the Gaul. Others have compared him to the French Sun King. He is so important that he was texting someone while he was at an audience with the Pope, which caused a lot of anger in France. A man such as he is will very likely put his foot in it big-time sometime soon. Watch out for it.

The *Irish Examiner* has suggested that if "Sarkozy is to be Asterisk then the Taoiseach Brian Cowen is his Obelix who, though kind-hearted was socially inept and invariably broke any door he gently knocked on".

Michael Stack

Israel's Wall

Letter to Irish Times (not published)

On his recent visit to the Middle East, Micheál Martin raised Ireland's concerns about the impact of Israel's separation barrier on Palestinian economic and social development in the West Bank (Martin voices concerns over Israel's barrier, July 11).

Minister Martin is to be commended for doing so. However, in my opinion, the Minister should have gone much further and insisted that Israel should remove the barrier, which the International Court of Justice declared to be "contrary to international law" in its opinion of 9 July 2004. The Court concluded:

A. The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law;

B. Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated, and to repeal or render ineffective forthwith all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto, in accordance with paragraph 151 of this Opinion;

C. Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem;

Regrettably, for the past four years, Israel has categorically refused to comply with these obligations and has continued to build the wall.

Israel has maintained this recalcitrant stance despite a near unanimous demand by the international community that it comply. In resolution ES-10/15, passed on 2 August 2004, the UN General Assembly demanded that "Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations" as laid down by the Court. This resolution was passed by 150 votes to 6. Ireland, and all other EU states, supported it. Only Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau and the United States opposed.

The Court stated in its opinion:

"The United Nations, and especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and the associated régime."

Israel has ignored the action taken four years ago by the UN General Assembly with the support of Ireland and other EU states. It is now time for the Security Council to take action.

Ireland should seek to persuade the EU to raise this matter at the Security Council, as requested by the Court.

David Morrison

TIP-OFF continued

The others present agreed.

"And Liam went off and rang Jack Lynch's office and established that Jack was still in Leinster House. The Dail had risen and Liam went off for a while and we all sat around wondering what was happening, and he came back and I always remember it, he sort of stood in the door and closed the door behind him and then he looked up and looked at us and said: "It's all true." I will always remember that. And then he called a front-bench meeting for the following morning," said one of the people present that night.

Following Cosgrave's visit Lynch spoke personally to Blaney and phoned Haughey. He asked both men to resign but they refused. He then went home to consult his wife, Mairin, and at 2 a.m. he instructed the head of the Government Information Service, Eoin Neeson, to issue a statement that Haughey and Blaney had been fired.

Lynch took action that night as a direct response to Cosgrave's intervention. The Peter Berry 'diaries', published in *Magill* in 1980, show that the Taoiseach had decided a week earlier to bury the whole incident and even during the Dail exchanges on 5 May, 1970, Lynch does not appear to have grasped that Cosgrave knew of the whole affair. It was only when the Fine Gael leader went to him that night that he was catapulted into action.

Fine Gael's Peter Barry recalls speaking in the Dail that evening on a financial resolution.

"It was about 6.30 or 7 p.m. on a Tuesday evening, the only time a backbencher can get a slot. I was less than a year in the Dail and it was one of my early speeches. The next morning the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, comes in, pushes Johnny Geoghegan aside and starts interrupting me. "How do you justify that? Where did you get that figure?" So it wasn't on his mind at 7 o'clock that he had any problems".

The Dail record for that evening bears out Peter Barry's memory; he was heckled three times by the Taoiseach during his speech shortly before 7 p.m.

When the Dail met at 11.30 a.m. on 6 May, 1970, the sensational news of the dismissal of the two Ministers, Haughey and Blaney, had convulsed the country. A third, Kevin Boland, resigned in protest, along with parliamentary secretary, Paudge Brennan. Lynch proposed to a stunned Dail that the day's sitting be postponed until 10 p.m. that night to give his parliamentary party an opportunity to discuss the issue. Cosgrave reluctantly agreed while making the point that a Fianna Fail party meeting should not take precedence over the business of the

country.

When the Dail met at 10 p.m. on the night of 6 May, 1970, the motion before the house was simply for the appointment of Des O'Malley as Minister for Justice in place of Micheal O Morain but Lynch made it clear he was prepared to debate all the issues involved in the arms crisis . . . he had asked Haughey and Blaney to resign a week earlier . . . They had asked for time to consider their positions and he agreed but had again asked for their resignations the previous evening. When they refused he had terminated their appointments.

"I may say that on the question of suspicion Deputy Cosgrave came to me yesterday evening to say he had some information from an anonymous source connecting the two Ministers with this alleged attempt at unlawful importation."

Cosgrave then rose to speak.

"Last night at approximately 8 p.m. I considered it my duty in the national interest to inform the Taoiseach of information I had received and which indicates a situation of such gravity for the nation that it is without parallel in the country since the foundation of the State. By approximately 10 p.m. two Ministers had been dismissed and a third had resigned . . . Yesterday when I received a copy of a document on official garda notepaper which supported the information already at my disposal and which also included some additional names, I decided to put the facts in my possession before the Taoiseach."

[STEPHEN COLLINS, *The Cosgrave Legacy*, Blackwater Press, 1996]

from "*Tales From the Dail Bar*" p.201-205, Ted Nealon, Gill & Macmillan, 2008

DID LYNCH HIMSELF, GIVE COSGRAVE THE TIP-OFF?

The Magill Book of Irish Politics 1981:

"It has also been disclosed that Mr. Lynch was disposed to drop the matter of the attempted arms importation on the week-end of April 18, 1970, involving two Government ministers, Charles Haughey and Neil Blaney, but that he was forced to dismiss them by the intervention of the then leader of the Opposition, Liam Cosgrave."

But what has Bruce Arnold, Jack Lynch's biographer to say:

"There is a view that the note was passed to Cosgrave as a result, directly or indirectly, of Lynch's actions at the time. The extent to which he anticipated what might happen and indeed intended to happen is open to question. It is probably that Lynch did intend the final pass in the game to come from the leader of the Opposition, thus sealing all uncertainties and allowing his position to become that of a man who was forced to dismiss two powerful government Ministers. The

timing of the first leak coincided with the conspiracy to import arms becoming a reality, albeit one that was aborted. When the first leak produced nothing, there was a second. It would have been consistent with Lynch's way of operating and his shrewd judgement of the difficulties surrounding his own position to act thus."

(*Jack Lynch-Hero in Crisis*-p.130-Merlin Publishing-2001).

"The choice he [Lynch] made was to confront Blaney and Haughey with the evidence against them. Before seeing them on 29th April, 1970, he had a meeting with Berry, [Secretary, Department of Justice] who recorded how troubled Lynch was, walking up and down the room, muttering to himself.

"I heard him say 'What will I do? What will I do? and, thinking that he was addressing me, I said: 'Well, if I were you, I'd sack the pair of them and I would tell the British immediately, making a virtue of necessity, as the British are bound to know, anyway, all that is going on.'" (The Peter Berry Papers-*Magill* (June, 1980, p.63)

"The story is told that, when it came to politics, Jack Lynch finally decided between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, both suitors, with the toss of a coin. It's unlikely now that we'll ever know if this really happened." ("Tales from the Dail Bar"-p.99). Ted Nealon could have been a little more illuminating considering that the man who 'lost the toss' was the late Fine Gael T.D. for Cork City, Stephen Barrett. Lynch was called to the Bar in 1945, Barrett in 1946 after working as a journalist for the *Cork Examiner*. Both men first entered politics in the 1948 General Election : Lynch was elected, Barrett succeeded in winning a by-election in the same constituency in 1954 for Fine Gael and held the seat for 15 years.

Lynch "was invited to stand in the 1946 Cork city by-election but declined. Indirectly approached by Clann na Poblachta to stand on its behalf in 1948 but opted instead for Fianna Fail." (*The Magill Book of Irish Politics*-1981).

The story is that Lynch met Barrett a couple of months before the 1948 General Election in the Munster Arms Hotel in Bandon, both were being courted by the two major parties, there and then, they decided to 'toss for it' and Lynch won the toss.

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EXTRACT: "Tales from the Dail Bar"; Ted Nealon; Gill & Macmillan 2008

The Tip-off that Shattered a Cabinet

*"It was the most important tip-off in modern Irish politics. This wasn't the familiar newspaper leak. It went to the foundations and was handled in the main by Liam Cosgrave, Leader of the Opposition, [Fine Gael] and Jack Lynch, [Fianna Fail] as Taoiseach. Stephen Collins in his book **The Cosgrave Legacy** follows the tip-off from its arrival on Garda notepaper until the government issued a statement that two Ministers, Charles J. Haughey and Neil Blaney, had been fired."* Stephen Collins

When the Dail convened in early May, 1970, the political system was plunged into a crisis which appeared at the time to threaten the foundations of the State. The arms crisis saw the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, firing his two most powerful Ministers, one of them a future Taoiseach, and the resignation of two others because of a plot to import arms into the country.

Liam Cosgrave played a central role in the whole affair. He received two tip-offs about the plot a few days before the news burst on an unsuspecting public. One of the tip-offs came to him on Garda notepaper alleged that two Ministers, Charles Haughey and Neil Blaney, were involved.

Michael Mills, who was then political correspondent of the *Irish Press*, confirms the tip to Cosgrave and the names on the list. The tip-off is believed to have come from Chief Superintendent Phil McMahon, a retired head of the Special Branch, who because of his extensive knowledge and contacts had been retained by the Garda authorities as an advisor on subversion.*

Cosgrave was stunned by the note and he showed it to a journalist and trusted friend, Ned Murphy, political correspondent of the *Sunday Independent*. Murphy made a copy and brought it to the editor of the *Sunday Independent*, Hector Legge. After some consideration, a decision was taken not to run with the story because of the difficulties of confirming the information and because Legge decided it would not be in the

national interest.

When the Dail next met on Tuesday 5 May, 1970, neither Jack Lynch nor the Ministers involved had any idea that Cosgrave was in possession of the crucial information. Lynch took TDs by surprise by announcing to the Chamber at the beginning of the day's business that Micheal O'Morain, the Minister for Justice, who had no connection with the plot, had resigned. Cosgrave was on his feet immediately to ask: "Can the Taoiseach say if this is the only Ministerial resignation we can expect?"

"I do not know what the deputy is referring to," replied Lynch, to which Cosgrave responded: "Is it only the tip of the iceberg?"

Cosgrave went on to make the cryptic comment that the Taoiseach could deal with the situation and he added that smiles were very noticeable by their absence on the Government benches. Most TDs and journalists had no idea what Cosgrave was talking about and Lynch still didn't get the message that Cosgrave knew what was going on. When nothing further had happened that night Cosgrave wasn't sure

what was happening and he began to wonder whether the tip-offs he had received were designed to trap.

He decided to consult a few of his closest colleagues that evening and ask their advice. Those present were Tom O'Higgins, Michael O'Higgins, Mark Clinton, Denis Jones and Jim Dooce.

Cosgrave told his colleagues there was something he wanted to tell them. He said he had received a tip-off about a plot to import arms.

"I want your advice. What should I do? Is this a plant? Is someone trying to plant this on me to make me go over the top?" he asked his colleagues.

"We argued first of all as to whether he could take it as being something he could act on, because he feared the danger of just being hoist on [sic] a petard. And we came to the conclusion that yeh, on balance, we had to act." Having agreed on this Cosgrave said he had a second question about the form of action he should take. "What do I do? Do I bring it up in the Dail? Do I go to the newspapers? Do I go to the Taoiseach?" he asked.

Mark Clinton was the first one who spoke and he said: "I think this is of such national importance the only thing is to go to the Taoiseach and go to him tonight."

* Phillip McMahon was an outstanding Special Branch Officer who became its head and was Chief Superintendent when he retired. He had established a number of high-level informers within the IRA dating back to the campaign in the 1950s but still relevant and valuable sources until 1971. Uniquely in the force, McMahon's service was extended and though further extensions were refused he established a special relationship within the State security after his retirement. He was close to Jack Lynch. Before Jack and Mairin bought their Rathgar home, they had a flat in the house owned by the McMahons. (Bruce Arnold-Jack Lynch: *Hero in Crisis*-Merlin Publishing-2001).

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