

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Vote No For Gaza

The Lisbon Treaty is a Constitution or is not a Constitution, it can be played either way. It is indefinite in its provisions. If you vote for it, you do not know what you are voting for, except that you are giving a vote of confidence in the conduct of EU affairs in recent years. Is such a vote of confidence warranted?

There is at present a world food shortage which affects Europe. A basic object of the Common Market was to make Europe self-sufficient in food. When Britain was admitted to membership it set about eroding that object. It had two reasons for doing so. Its economic policy for a century and a half has been to get itself supplied with cheap food by the world market and that policy was incompatible with the measures taken to bring about European self-sufficiency. And its historic balance-of-power strategy towards Europe, which revived at the end of the Cold War, was obstructed by the self-sufficiency measures through which France, Germany and Italy constituted themselves into a political bloc. It has been outstandingly successful in eroding European agricultural policy and in dissipating the sense of European political cohesion that existed for two generations after 1950.

The "food mountains", of which there were loud complaints only a few years ago, have gone; and the sense of Europe as a coherent political entity with a number of component states whose national sovereignty was not endangered has gone as well.

For two decades the Common Market was a defensive body which made Western Europe viable in the Cold War world situation resulting from the Communist defeat of Nazi Germany in the World War launched by Britain. It functioned across state boundaries by means of a common political culture against which British propaganda could gain no leverage—Christian Democracy. Christian Democracy was seriously damaged, possibly beyond repair, by means of contrived 'corruption' scandals of the kind which it was hoped would also destroy Fianna Fail.

Today Europe has neither a common medium of political culture, nor definite boundaries, nor even a regional sense of itself as a component part of a world which has many other components. It is open-ended, aggressively expansionist, and unlimited in

*continued on page 2*

## Laffin Girl

In a programme broadcast repeatedly (as these things are) on BBC's Parliament Channel, Brigid Laffin of UCD gave two main reasons why Ireland should vote YES to the Lisbon (Not A) Treaty. The first was that Ireland is a small nation which no one in the world takes account of. If it is to play a role in world affairs this can only be as part of a great alliance which other nations (small to middling of course, not the really big boys) will fear. She did not of course use that word, the f word. She spoke about respect.

But oddly enough respect is what Ireland will gain by standing up for itself

and voting NO. And it is respect that Ireland will lose if it caves in to the likes of Laffin and votes YES. Nor did our laughing girl explain just why Ireland should wish to play a role in world affairs. And why indeed should it? Is this *The White Man's Burden* again?

The laughing girl from UCD then explained that Ireland should vote YES because the people who are urging a YES vote are the responsible people who will have to administer the consequences of the referendum. The people who are urging a NO vote are irresponsible people who will not have to govern after the referendum. Only people who will not have to face the other Governments of

## Palestine: Has Cowen's new Fianna Fáil the bottle to act?

In 1948, following the UN partition of the previous year, the Jewish colonisation of Palestine escalated into an all out campaign of ethnic cleansing. Within the year over 700,000 of the native population had been driven from their lands. This occurred in a climate of terror and panic, precipitated by selectively organised massacres, such as that engineered by Menachim Begin's *Irgun* unit at Deir Yassin. The process also involved the levelling of 500 villages, much brutality and some rape, against a weak and fragmented Arab resistance. The Israeli slogan at the time was "a land without people for a people without land."

During this process the State of Israel allowed for in the UN Partition was established, but over a territory far greater than set out in the partition. In fact, the borders of the 1947 UN Partition are the only borders of Israel ever sanctioned under "International Law".

Since 1967 the land of the West Bank too has been brazenly colonised. Nearly 350,000 settlers have been landed there—often poor Russian immigrants given little choice. To speak of "illegal settlements" is to descend to Orwell-speak, as all these settlements are "illegal" under "inter-

*continued on page 4*

Europe after a NO vote could possibly consider voting NO. For if Ireland votes NO its responsible politicians will be scorned in the corridors of European power. They will not be invited to parties. Or taken to the warm and life-enhancing heart of Sarkozy, Brown and Merkel's cosy cabal and subsidised!

Vote YES to spare our politicians the embarrassment of having to excuse our folly. Poor things, haven't they trouble enough what with having to be so responsible and all? Vote YES responsibly to pick up *The White Man's Burden* and carry it further into Africa.

Vote YES to keep our Laughing girl Laffin.  
**Conor Lynch**

## CONTENTS

<b>Vote No For Gaza.</b> Editorial	1
<b>Palestine:</b> <i>Has Cowen's New Fianna Fail The Bottle To Act?</i> Philip O'Connor	1
<b>Laffin Girl.</b> Conor Lynch	1
<b>Readers' Letters: The National Oppression Of Tibet.</b> John Minahane	3
<b>Editorial Digest</b> (Dr. Ian Spellar; John Major; Dublin & Monaghan Bombings; Ian Paisley At Bearnageeha; Parades & Marches; Tourist Attacks?; Community Policing; Donegal Celtic; Myself Alone; "Anti-Terror" Laws; The Brisih Link)	7
<b>Raymond McCord.</b> Mark Langhammer (Book launch)	9
<b>Palestine: More Balance Needed (Trade Union Friends Of Palestine,</b> letter by Michael Robinson)	9
<b>Shorts from the Long Fellow</b> (The End Of Early Houses?; End Of An Era?; End Of Nuala O Faolain; End Of Globalisation; Mansergh On <i>Irish Times</i> )	10
<b>Coolcrease: Seven Complaints Rejected.</b> Pat Muldowney	11
<b>Holding The Irish Times To Account.</b> Philip O'Connor, Conor Lenihan (Book launch speeches, part 2)	12
<b>Myths Of Second World War.</b> Conor Lynch	14
<b>Letter From Australia.</b> Patrick O'Beirne	17
<b>Professor Bew &amp; The Forging Of A Shared Past.</b> Brendan Clifford (Part 3)	18
<b>Does It Stack Up?</b> Michael Stack (An Taisce & Fintan O'Toole; The English Queen And Her Subjects; China & Chad; Nuala O'Faolain & Death; Lisbon Treaty; English Honours & Peace Group; Lest We Forget)	21

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

**"Unity Of Labour Is The Hope Of The World": Trade Unions And Lisbon Treaty  
Cobh Apology To James Connolly  
by Pat Maloney**

its globalist aims. It is an active force of disruption in the world. When the Soviet system collapsed, and the defensive function of the EU went with it, the EU responded by becoming an aggressive force with global ambitions. Instead of making space for the new European regimes to develop their own democracy, it set about plundering them on the way to plunder Russia. It acted in conjunction with the United States, but at the same time in potential rivalry with it in a contest for capitalist dominance of the globe. That is what we were often told in the late 1990s: that it was the destiny of the EU to be the globalist rival to the US.

Any country can become what we call democratic by overthrowing some 'evil' regime which alone prevents it from being so. And any democratic country can have a rate of commodity consumption per capita equal to that of the United States and Western Europe. These are axioms of present-day European political culture. Axioms are self-evident truths—or beliefs in this instance. There must not be doubt lest the faith by which we are now obliged to live should fall apart on us.

But if we do doubt we find that four or five other planets the size of the Earth would be needed to enable a globalised capitalist earth to consume at the rate of

the United States and Western Europe. So the thing just is not possible. But we owe it to ourselves to keep on increasing our own rate of commodity consumption, at the expense of other parts (peoples) of the Earth, justifying ourselves with the axiomatic belief that these other peoples whom we are now exploiting could be living just like us if they would only behave right.

The world runs on oil. The oil lodged in the ground is in short supply and so food is being turned into oil and is therefore unavailable for eating.

When the Germans were caught in an encirclement in the war of 1914-1919, and their foreign trade was stopped by the Royal Navy, they invented ways of making food into oil.

There is still plenty of oil in the ground. Of course a time will come when it will be all used up. The world we have made is a short term world. But the oil has not run out yet. And we are not deprived of it by an enemy force, as we deprived the Germans. A major short-term cause of the oil difficulty is the way we—the masters of the world—have dealt with the Middle East, where most of the oil is.

When we conquered the Middle East (and as Redmondites we did take part in that conquest) we set up puppet regimes there (as Treatyite Free Staters we became

British again), so that the Middle East would do our bidding in the matter of supplying us with cheap oil.

But we built an irritant into the Middle East, which may have served our exploitative interest in the short term, but may well be the cause of our undoing in the end. We decided to establish a Jewish state there, even though there were not enough Jews there to sustain a state. The construction of the Jewish State required that large numbers of Jews should be funnelled into a territory that was already inhabited by others, and that those others should be brushed aside to make way for them.

The British Government of 1945, having emerged as a victor in the war against Nazi Germany, had second thoughts about carrying through a project that appeared so similar to the Nazi project in Eastern Europe—brushing aside the inhabitants of a country in order to colonise it with another people. The new Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, stalled the project, and was promptly maligned as an anti-Semite. A Jewish "war of independence" was launched against Britain by the Jewish minority in Palestine. Britain yielded to terrorism and handed the problem it had created to the United Nations, which voted for partition of Palestine but did not enforce or police the division it recommended.

The UN motion authorising the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was forced through the General Assembly by Stalin and client states, Truman and his client states, and Europeans fresh from the business of helping Nazi Germany to exterminate Jews. In breach of the regional principle, strictly observed in other regions, it was carried against the opposition of every state in the Middle East.

Jewish nationalism took that resolution to be a victory and set about taking more than the territory allocated to it by the United Nations, and driving out Arab communities where it could. But for a limited outside military intervention, it is probable that Israel would have taken more. But it finished the job it set out to do in November 1947 twenty years later, by taking the whole of Palestine.

The 60th Anniversary of the establishment of a Jewish State is being celebrated this year—but not all Jews feel able to join the rejoicing. Johann Hari writes in the *Independent*:

"I would love to be able to crash the birthday party with words of reassurance. Israel has given us great novelists like Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, great filmmakers like Joseph Cedar, great scientific research into Alzheimer's, and great dissident journalists like Amira Hass, Tom Segev and Gideon Levy to expose her own crimes.

"She has provided the one lonely spot in the Middle East where gay people

are not hounded and hanged, and where women can approach equality.

"But I can't do it. Whenever I try to mouth these words, a remembered smell fills my nostrils. It is the smell of shit. Across the occupied West Bank, raw untreated sewage is pumped every day out of the Jewish settlements, along large metal pipes, straight onto Palestinian land. From there, it can enter the groundwater and the reservoirs, and become a poison.

"Standing near one of these long, stinking brown-and-yellow rivers of waste recently, the local chief medical officer, Dr Bassam Said Nadi, explained to me: "Recently there were very heavy rains, and the shit started to flow into the reservoir that provides water for this whole area. I knew that if we didn't act, people would die. We had to alert everyone not to drink the water for over a week, and distribute bottles. We were lucky it was spotted. Next time..." He shook his head in fear. This is no freak: a 2004 report by Friends of the Earth found that only six per cent of Israeli settlements adequately treat their sewage.

"Meanwhile, in order to punish the population of Gaza for voting "the wrong way", the Israeli army are not allowing past the checkpoints any replacements for the pipes and cement needed to keep the sewage system working. The result? Vast stagnant pools of waste are being held within fragile dykes across the strip, and rotting. Last March, one of them burst, drowning a nine-month-old baby and his elderly grandmother in a tsunami of human waste. The Centre on Housing Rights warns that one heavy rainfall could send 1.5m cubic metres of faeces flowing all over Gaza, causing "a humanitarian and environmental disaster of epic proportions". <<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/johann-hari/johann-hari-israel-is-suppressing-a-secret-it-must-face-816661.html>> You can write to Mr. Hari at: [j.hari@independent.co.uk](mailto:j.hari@independent.co.uk)

But what has all that got to do with Ireland, the European Union and the forthcoming referendum?

When Palestinians exercised their democratic right at their last General Election, they elected a Hamas Government. That Party put together a national unity Government—which was vetoed by the Americans. Since then the Palestinians have been punished by the West for the way they voted. The European Union has withheld badly-needed aid, and it has cooperated with Israel in closing the Rafah crossing into Egypt—of which it is the external guarantor. In *The Mass Break-Out From Gaza* David Morrison has pointed out that in this instance the EU—

"is a proxy for Israel, making sure that the PA [Palestinian Authority] does what Israel wants... It has a force of around 70 EU monitors, mostly policemen, on hand to do the job

continued on page 4

## The National Oppression Of Tibet

In your April issue you published a letter from Conor Lynch on Tibet, with editorial comments which indicate that you agree with his views. While focusing on the hypocrisy of the *Irish Times*, you are failing to treat the Tibetan issue on its own merits.

I hope you will agree that the oppression of small nations should be opposed not only when Britain, America and their allies are responsible, but even when the oppressor is another great state which is Anglo-America's rival. There is no special consideration—the threat of world war, or whatever—which could justify departing from the principle in this case. The Tibetans at present are in tactical alliance with Britain and America, but fundamentally this is irrelevant.

Over the past 60 years Tibet has been incorporated into China by military occupation, mass slaughters, mass imprisonment and torture, and a whole range of means of social disorganisation, including plantation. The violence of the recent Tibetan rebellion is a mosquito-bite, a pinprick, by comparison.

If we are determined to find a plus side in this story of national oppression, of course we will manage to do so. For example, in destroying Tibetan social relationships the Chinese destroyed some elements of oppression in those relationships. Or alternatively, statistics can be produced to show that the Tibetans now have more televisions, etc., which proves that by losing their national freedom they have bettered their living standards. Doesn't any of this ring bells?

Conor says: "It is unreasonable to condemn the Chinese authorities for clamping down on the protesters and protecting the Chinese civilians." In any colonial rebellion that you care to mention the colonial authorities could and did claim, and usually there was some truth in the claim, that the lives and property of loyal subjects were in jeopardy. This is not a good basis for judging who to support and who to condemn in Tibet. The form the Tibetan rebellion took was undesirable, but I don't see what else could be expected, since China is the world's most powerful dictatorship and its repressive activity is so thoroughgoing. The Tibetan opposition is too intensely repressed to be able to develop institutional social power and the discipline that goes with it. So how can we expect them to be as discriminate as, say, Sinn Féin/IRA?

As for the Dalai Lama, his position is as reasonable and as respectful of Chinese imperial sensitivities as it could possibly be. He has been calling for the kind of relationship which would have been possible with the old, tolerant Chinese Empire. In this relationship China could have Tibet as part of its national territory, it could keep army bases there and patrol the borders, etc., but the Tibetans would have an autonomous government to run their own affairs.

I cannot see why it would not be possible for the Chinese Communist Party to accept this proposal, and leave these strange people on top of the world to their eccentricities, without disturbing the basis of its rule in the rest of China. Evidently the CPC leaders think otherwise. They refuse to talk to the Dalai Lama unless he humiliates himself publicly by parroting their dictated formulas.

And yet, in spite of all they can do, the Dalai Lama makes an impression wherever he goes. And he doesn't owe any of this to his powerful friends—to the mild extent that they're friends. He impresses people as a representative of an old, rich culture in a world of arid progress. When Bush, Rice etc. offer their very limited tactical support, of course he accepts it tactically. But even if this support was less meagre than it is, I couldn't imagine it corrupting him. He's not going the way of Vaclav Havel. He still insists on making his complex Buddhist statements even about the Tibetan-Chinese relationship. I have read articles by pro-American ideologues venting their exasperation at this, and saying that it's time the West found a more amenable Tibetan instrument.

Conor says: "The role of the Dalai Lama is despicable. He encourages anti-Chinese feelings and actions. But when things start to get out of hand, he washes his hands of those responsible." He isn't washing his hands, because in any fair-minded view of things he has no part of the responsibility. You are not responsible for the actions of people who do what you have repeatedly and clearly told them not to. You are then entitled to dissociate yourself from them, while maintaining your own position. The Dalai Lama's advocacy of non-violence has been consistent, reasoned and convincing, and he's been at it so long that there can't be many who still haven't heard.

Perhaps by opening his mouth in protest against injustice he is making the situation more charged, and in a charged situation hot-headed people may do terrible things. But if he is despicable for this, we will have to despise a long line of the great campaigners and reformers. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Daniel O'Connell—they would all be too despicable for words.

I think this word "*despicable*" might be better applied to the CPC bullies, who use

continued on page 4, column 2

(grandly titled the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point, or EU BAM Rafah)...

"When Israel decides that the Rafah crossing shouldn't open, it doesn't open. It doesn't open because, in those circumstances, the EU monitors do not take up their post at the crossing, and... without their presence the crossing isn't allowed to open.

"I have been unable to find an official EU reason for this refusal to allow its monitors to take up their post, when Israel doesn't want the crossing open..." (*Irish Political Review*, February 2008).

Keeping that crossing closed strangles Gaza. The West Bank too is being strangled by multiple control crossings and other means. Israel is intent on making the lives of Palestinians brutish and short.

The European Union is making itself complicit in Israel's slow genocide of Palestinian Arabs. Rather than using its power to curb excesses and force compliance with international law and humanitarian norms, it rewards Israel by giving it tariff preferences and preferential status.

If the will to do otherwise was there, the EU could treat the Palestinians with some justice—and without compromising the security of Israel. It could engage in direct trade with Gaza and the occupied territories by sea or air. Would Israel dare attack European transports?

Europe could open the Rafah crossing and perform its agreed role of monitoring the goods passing to and fro from Gaza and Egypt. It could allow in UN food aid through Egypt when Israel holds it back to starve the people of Gaza. It could let those sewage pipes into Gaza.

Instead it—and that means Ireland too—helps to strangle infant Palestinian industries. And it goes further and allows goods vital to the bare physical survival of the people of Gaza to be withheld.

There can be no doubt that the people of Europe abhor the way the European Union is acting. But these policies will continue until a clear signal is sent to the institutions of Europe that the democracy will no longer tolerate this power-play.

Europe has been good for Ireland in the past, and this magazine certainly does not advocate withdrawal from the Union. But the EU has come under the sway of Blairite Britain and it has lost its way. It no longer knows where it begins or ends and is heading for confrontation with Russia.

The Irish are one of the few free peoples in Europe at this point in time, with the option to vote on the future direction of Europe in a referendum. A Yes vote would make Ireland complicit in further disruption of Eastern Europe and in European backing for American/Israeli policy towards Palestine.

Vote No for Gaza and against further Expansion. ■

## Palestine: Has Cowen's new *Fianna Fáil* the bottle to act?

CONTINUED

*national law*". Roads, and now railways, criss-cross the occupied territories, and from every spot the visitor sees monstrous concrete settlements tower over them. To cross these "*Israeli only roads*"—a perverse reminder of German-only parks and suchlike in the 1930s—Palestinians queue for hours, facing ritual humiliation and the likelihood, if young and male, of being refused "*permission*" to proceed to their places of work. There are no longer the makings of a "*Palestinian State*" in the parcels of land still occupied by Palestinians, but only a necklace of Bantustans, and every Palestinian knows it. Including the three million who now live in exile. Ireland was probably something like this in the 1650s, or the 1700s.

Creating "*facts on the ground*"—in a context of unashamed US/UK support and EU paralysis caused by German guilt—continues to this day as the primary tactic of Jewish nationalists in the colonisation of Palestine. The State of Israel actually founded in 1948 is inseparable from the targeted campaign of ethnic cleansing that accompanied it, and that continues to accompany its relentless expansion. The full scale of those events has become more widely known, not least since the appearance last year of a book no

one can contest or has contested—*The ethnic cleansing of Palestine* by renowned Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé.

In Ireland the activists of the "Irish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign" (IPSC) have worked hard and admirably to bring the story of the Palestinian "*Nakba*" ("*Catastrophe*") to public awareness, linking it in with the Irish historical memory the revisionists have yet to fully eradicate. Working closely with the Palestinian exile population in Ireland, IPSC organised a *Nakba* memorial march in April, addressed by a range of politicians such as Michael D. Higgins (Labour), Mary Lou MacDonald (Sinn Féin), Joe Higgins (Socialist Party), Jim Higgins (Fine Gael MEP), Senator David Norris and others. Norris spoke of his close ties with Israel and how he had been a strong supporter of it in the past. But he now believed its rampant colonisation of Palestine and destruction of its people had to be halted and reversed. The future of the Jewish people in Palestine was with their Palestinian neighbours, preferably in a single state, not least given that the international wellspring of settlers for Israel had been exhausted and—with the rise of China—the days of US world hegemony were numbered.

The growing impact of the IPSC became clear that day when a message hurriedly telephoned through to IPSC chairperson Marie Crawley just before the march announced that pop singer Bono, who is something of a world icon on "*development issues*", had finally rejected an invitation

## National Oppression Of Tibet

continued

gangster language to refer to the Dalai Lama, and who will talk to him only if he makes dictated statements which are not only humiliating but politically and morally crippling. Because if Tibet is an integral part of China, and if anything that happens in China is exclusively the internal affair of China, and if this means, as it actually does mean, that what happens in China is nobody's business but the CPC Politburo's—then the only reason the Dalai Lama might want to be talked to is to learn just how little he could say or do, if he actually returned to Tibet, before finding himself in some other integral part of China one or two thousand miles away, in a high-security prison.

"*Looking around this assembly, and looking at my own delegation, I think how many benches would be empty in this hall if it had always been agreed that when a small nation or a small people fell in the grip of a major power no one could ever raise their voice here; that once there was a subject nation, then it must always remain a subject nation*", Frank Aiken said, during the 1959 debate on Tibet at the United Nations. "*Tibet has fallen into the hands of the Chinese People's Republic for the last few years. For thousands of years, or for a couple of thousand years at any rate, it was as free and as fully in control of its own affairs as any nation in this Assembly, and a thousand times more free to look after its own affairs than many of the nations here.*"

One could quibble, I suppose, with Aiken's formulations. But Tibet for a very long time has been something distinctive: he was right about that much. Even now it remains a centre of distinctive, old, humanly rich, unprogressive culture. (Ireland used to be another.)

"*The sympathy of the Irish people going to the victims of imperialism is nothing new*", Aiken said. "*It goes out to the people of Tibet in their present suffering, as it did in the past.*" The *Irish Political Review* should return to this traditional Irish position.

John Minahane (8th April 2008)

to attend a conference in Israel celebrating the foundation of the state.

The IPSC also appealed to other 'notables' approached to attend Israeli celebration events. These include novelist Niall Williams, who became famous about ten years ago for his internationally acclaimed novel, *Four Letters of Love*, but has since faded somewhat. He was invited to address an "International Writers Festival" coinciding with the Israeli anniversary celebrations. He wrestled with his conscience, and won. Others, however, turned down the invitations, and *Aosdána*, the Irish state-sponsored body for artists created by Charles Haughey, adopted a motion encouraging artists "to reflect deeply before engaging in co-operation...with state-sponsored Israeli cultural events and institutions".

The IPSC has held numerous demonstrations, photographic exhibitions and other events throughout urban and rural Ireland highlighting the *Nakba* and the continued campaign to destroy the Palestinian nation. This has included not least the showing of the films "*Occupation 101*" and "*The Wall*" in work places and community halls throughout Ireland. You read little of this in the Irish media, needless to add. If young militants in Ireland today have a 'cause', it is the Palestinian cause.

Hundreds of people have been brought on trips to the West Bank to see conditions for themselves and meet with all shades of social and political opinion. This is largely the work of one indomitable but unprepossessing woman, Elaine Daly, a clerical worker in the INTO. In addition, as reported previously in *Irish Political*

*Review*, last year the Irish Congress of Trade Unions passed a lengthy and detailed motion by overwhelming majority in support of the Palestinian cause. This stance is unique in international Trade Unionism, and sparked a major PR campaign in Ireland by the Israeli lobby. The ICTU followed up its initiative by sending a high level Trade Union delegation to Palestine and Israel, accompanied by some activists from "Trade Union Friends of Palestine" (TUFPP). The report of that delegation still remains to be published and appears to have become bogged down in backroom political intrigue.

On 7th May at the Ballsbridge Court Hotel (formerly the Berkley Court) in Dublin the Israeli Embassy hosted a "Celebration" of the foundation of the Israeli State. It was attended by various dignitaries, business people and some of the cream of Dublin middle class society. It was notable by the absence of politicians, however, though this can be partly explained by the fact that that evening the Dáil was meeting to elect Brian Cowen as Taoiseach. In a dignified protest outside, about 100 demonstrators from IPSC held placards denouncing this "celebration of ethnic cleansing" and the "destruction of a nation" (see placards).

There is a deep sense of unease in Fianna Fáil circles at Irish complicity via EU "foreign policy" in the colonisation of Palestine and the destruction of its people. This has obvious historical roots, and parallels. Though de Valera and many others were sympathetic to Jewish nationalism, for many years Ireland held back from recognising the actual state created in Israel, and diplomatic relations with Israel were only finally established by Foreign Minister Garret Fitzgerald—a political devotee of Churchill—under the Coalition Government of the 1970s.

Unease aside, Irish policy on Palestine and Israel is today merely a subset of EU policy. In line with this, then Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern, speaking in the Dáil on 11th March 2008, denounced the barbarous Israeli military onslaught and economic strangulation of Gaza as "collective punishment illegal under international humanitarian law" (in fact under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention) but also stated the Irish Government's categoric opposition to any sanctions against Israel for this breach. In this stance, Ahern himself was in breach of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement which is contingent (Article 2) on Israel honouring human rights law, and also of his own *Programme for Government*, which more or less reduces Irish foreign policy to the implementation of UN resolutions. As pointed out by David Morrison in the last issue of *Irish Political Review* there are over 30 UN Resolutions



of which Israel is currently in flagrant breach. By its refusal to act under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention in a war situation over which Ireland has some say, Ireland is in fact arguably in breach of it, and hence guilty of a war crime.

This writer took part a little over a year ago in a meeting in Iveagh House with senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs, some time after returning from one of Elaine Daly's trips to Palestine. The meeting only finally took place after the then *Irish Times* columnist Eddie Holt revealed duplicitous behaviour by the Department in its treatment of a member of the delegation, Declan McKenna. Declan had brought back video footage of brutal treatment by Israeli guards and soldiers of Palestinian pilgrims seeking to go through an approved turnstile in the Apartheid Wall to the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The footage showed stun grenades and rifle butts being rained down on a terrified crowd—which, much like an Irish crowd at Knock included many old men, women and children—by grinning Israeli border guards.

At the meeting with the Department, the senior official from the "Middle East Desk" (sic.) stated that Irish policy on Palestine was integral with EU policy, the framework in which we operated. It was pointed out that Ireland was not legally obliged to knuckle under to EU foreign policies with which it disagreed (this was the pre-Lisbon situation). It was also stated that EU policy on Palestine-Israel was crippled by the heritage of German guilt and that Israeli treatment of the ghettoised Palestinian population was anyway in breach of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement. This EU Agreement grants Israel preferential trading rights with the EU but, in its Article



2, also makes those trading benefits conditional on Israel upholding human rights law, which it blatantly doesn't. His supine response to this was that Ireland was already regarded in EU foreign affairs circles as the strongest supporter of "the Palestinians" and consistently went as far as it could, including arguing that the EU should treat with the duly elected leaders of the Palestinians, i.e. Hamas. He nonsensicalised the idea that the Government could have any role in seeking the divestment of Cement Roadstone Holdings (CRH) from subsidiaries involved in the construction of the ghetto wall, though that wall had been condemned by the International Criminal Court. We heard afterwards that—contrary to Department practice—no note of this meeting was circulated in Iveagh House.

The EU boycott of Hamas at the behest of Israel continues. In the absence of a strong France, German foreign policy is a dangerous thing (as German fans of the EU would be the first to argue). The destruction of Yugoslavia, for example, followed from Germany's insistence on its dismemberment into national statelets along wholly unrealistic boundaries. These boundaries—which left a third of the Serbian population outside the proposed Serbian State—had been imposed by Tito to keep Serbia from dominating the Federation. This German foreign policy initiative—its first following the formal end of its own military occupation by the World War Two Allies in 1991—led to the worst war in Europe in the last 45 years. Germany is now throwing its weight around on Israel—and in the process is disabling EU policy towards Palestine-Israel. On her election as Chancellor, one of Angela Merkel's first public statements was to the effect that Germany would not tolerate criticism of Israel and that this would be a fundamental principle of German foreign policy under her Government.

In a speech to the Knesset last month Angela Merkel stated that historic responsibility for the security of Israel was part of Germany's "raison d'être as a state" and therefore for her, "as German Chancellor, non-negotiable". In an interview with the influential German liberal weekly, *Die Zeit* (15th May 2008), Israeli Foreign Minister Zipi Livni stated that there was a "clash of ideologies" in the Middle East, with Israel seeing itself as part of the West. Israel and Europe "shared the same values after all" she said. The response of *Die Zeit*? "They are like us—60 years after the foundation of Israel, the country belongs with Europe". It was time to start the process "of the accession of the Jewish State to membership of the EU". And without illusions: "Close ties with Israel, or even its embedding in the EU, would demand



*more robust attitudes and means. Europe would be exposed to immensely greater risks." It would mean that the "dividing line between the EU and the Arab world, including a Palestinian State, would run exactly along the line of the definitive borders of Israel..."*

The IPSC is now challenging Irish politics with these and related facts. And it seems an opportune moment. So what is Ireland? The key dividing line in Irish politics is not between Right and Left. It is between forces (of right and left) promoting social development through a process of national formation on the one hand, and forces (again of right and left) seeking to abort that process in favour of dissolution into a provincial West Britainism on the other. There are even pro- and anti-EU positions represented within the logic of the two sides.

Minister Conor Lenihan last year

memorably described Fianna Fáil's history in shaping the Irish nation state since the 1930s as a constant process of negotiation with the British interest in Ireland, south and north. And there can be no doubt that since the collapse of 1970, when the state paralysed itself in failing to confront the Northern crisis, and then, in its treatment of the acquitted defendants of the Arms Trial, denied itself, Fianna Fáil has occupied an embattled minority position, even if still capable of winning elections. It has been making something of a comeback, if a very defensive one, since Charles Haughey's Governments of the late 1980s. Labour's disastrous capitulation to an obscure campaign of destabilisation in 1994 not only ended a highly popular Government, but also it seems the useful history of the Labour Party. This was followed by a brief and exotic Coalition Government headed by John Bruton, who now declares Irish

Independence to have been a mistake. Resuming in 1997, a few re-stabilising Fianna Fáil regimes under Bertie Ahern followed, and these seem now to have given way to a possibly more self-assertive and robust era of Fianna Fáil recovery, if Brian Cowen's first speeches, and his appointment of his first Cabinet, are anything to go by.

A litmus test of Fianna Fáil's recovery will be the direction it takes (or fails to take) in foreign policy matters. This is because the fundamental divide in Irish politics also runs through approaches to foreign policy. The choice is to follow the "liberal" lead of Blairite Britain on all matters, or to strike out in new directions. These opposing tendencies will be reflected in the development of the Irish position on what is probably the key foreign policy issue of importance in the world today: Palestine-Israel, on which the entire Middle Eastern "crisis" hinges. An independent foreign policy—the hallmark of a free nation—will be tested on how Irish policy develops in this case.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is an inheritance from the break-up of the British Empire, or rather from a time when it was breaking up but thought it was expanding. Our current Government, in its *Programme for Government*, declares Irish foreign policy to be securely anchored in the UN and all its works. The UN creates "International Law" which is then binding on every state except the five Permanent Members of the Security Council, who are absolved from any obligations under it. It also does not apply to any other state which the Five Members—or more precisely US-UK, depending on the other three not thinking a fight on their latest whim worthwhile—decide will be exempt. In other words, in the present case, Israel. The current Irish position on the nature of the UN is an easy fiction. While make-believe and fudge sometimes have a useful role to play in human affairs, hiding behind the fiction of UN "international law" in current times is only debilitating.

De Valera understood these things. In the 1930s he sought to break out of the effective blockade of Ireland by the British Empire by various means, including by adherence to and active participation in the League of Nations. In particular he advocated rigorous implementation of its ideal of "Collective Security". When he sought sanctions by the League to counter the Italian imperialist invasion of Abyssinia, the British threatened a veto. Britain was at the time—for anti-communist reasons—in pro-Dictator mode, and supported Italian imperialism in Africa, even though Italy was taking more than the British had 'granted' it under the Treaty of London (1915) to induce it to join their war on Germany. De Valera was

many things, but not a dupe. Realising he could not save Ethiopia, he immediately declared the "collective security" of the League a lame duck and returned to Ireland to prepare his own country's survival in the looming imperialist war through a robust policy of neutrality.

Will the apparent assertiveness of the new Cowen Government also be reflected in a move to carve out a foreign policy more in Ireland's interests? Will it be reflected in an Irish-led initiative at EU level towards Palestine? Or will the Cowen Government fail to have the bottle of de Valera? We will hold our breath. As for the Palestinians themselves, well they are desperate but by no means crushed. Like other previous colonisations in what is now termed the "Anglosphere", the natives of Palestine were meant to go away into the desert and disappear through a process of self-destruction on the American Indian model. They have yet to oblige.

Philip O'Connor

## Editorial Digest

**Dr. Ian Spellar** is teaching a course on military matters at Maynooth University's Department of Modern History. He was interviewed on Radio Eireann's *Today With Pat Kenny* on 14th May. He spoke about mistakes made in Iraq and successes and failures in countering guerrilla warfare. (He included Mao's campaign in China and the war in Vietnam as guerrilla wars. The revolutionary war in China can hardly be so described and the Vietnam War had ceased to be a guerrilla war shortly after the Tet Offensive of 1968.) Spellar clearly meant wars against the enemies of Britain (and America). And he was clear that this was the context of his course. It is open to school leavers, adults, and members of the Defence Forces.

Spellar's expertise is in naval warfare, but that is not what he will be teaching at Maynooth. He also teaches at Irish Defence Force Command and Staff School. Unsurprisingly, he previously taught at King's College London and the UK Joint Services Command and Staff College. There does not seem to have been much of a take-up, as the RTE programme was very much in the form of an advertising exercise and applications were to be in by 31st May.

**John Major** is to be made a Freeman of the City of Cork, along with Albert Reynolds, for their part in the Northern "Peace Process". Both the Labour Party and Sinn Féin opposed the honour. (Irish Times 14th May)

Labour's Michael O'Connell said: "My argument is that we must put into context

*what John Major's overall contribution was to the peace process. I would prefer it if history judged his performance, rather than Cork City Council awarding him the city's highest honour, which I feel he doesn't deserve."* Jonathan O'Brien of Sinn Féin added: "I don't think Major was as willing to get involved in the peace process as people think today. This is a guy who wouldn't even sign the George Mitchell Principles of Non-Violence—it was actually Tony Blair who signed them."

Indeed we remember that Mr. Major said it would make him "sick to the stomach" to deal with "terrorists". It was this attitude that led to the breakdown of the first IRA ceasefire and a situation which produced one of the most vicious assassinations of Catholics by British undercover forces in the whole of the war.

**Dublin & Monaghan Bombings.** The civil case into the Omagh bombings going on at the moment is being given daily coverage in the British and Irish media. But no one is demonstrating that the Real IRA, which claimed responsibility, intended the civilian deaths on that day. It is regularly described as the largest loss of life in "the troubles". It wasn't. The largest loss of life was caused by the car bombs exploded in Dublin and Monaghan on the 17th May 1974. And there is no doubt that this bombing was meant to kill as many people as possible.

The responsible party, the British Government, has certainly not admitted responsibility. On the 34th anniversary, the relatives of those killed have again called on the Irish Government to press the British for the information they are concealing. They have also called for an international inquiry. The bombs were designed, successfully, to intimidate the Irish Parliament. There was a special powers Bill going through the Oireachtas with every chance of it failing. The bombs ensured that it succeeded.

**Ian Paisley** visited St. Patrick's Bearnagee school on May 16th. It was here that the late Eamon O'Kane, a contributor to this magazine, taught. He went on to become General Secretary of the National Union of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers. The notion of Mr. Paisley visiting and taking questions from the pupils makes the mind boggle. Asked about abortion, he denied that he agreed with the position of the Catholic Church. "They agree with me", he said. (Irish News 17.5.08)

**Parades and Marches.** It is proposed that the powers of the Parades Commission, which adjudicates on political parade routes, should be transferred back to the Local Authorities. Republicans understandably oppose the idea that, for example, solidly Unionist Portadown

Council should determine whether Orangemen should be allowed to march down Catholic Garvaghy Road. There is a public fiction that the Parades Commission applies its rule to "all sides". But everyone knows that the only problem is the Orange Order and it was always the only problem. Republicans don't ever march near Protestant areas. And no one cares where anyone else marches. The Orange Order was at its most benign during the War under Martin Smyth. It seems that it then reverted to its normal bigoted self. It is there to annoy Catholics, and neither gimmicks nor grants have yet managed to change that.

**Tourist Attacks?** Some time ago we reported that open-top tourist busses were attacked in West Belfast. This followed Rangers supporters using one of them to throw bottles at the IRA War Memorial on the Falls Road. Now the *Irish News*, 15th April, reports further attacks on tourist buses. This time it is on minibuses. These are painted green with the word Paddywagon painted orange on the sides. They are an open invitation for any spirited person, Catholic or Protestant, to throw something at them.

**Community Policing.** The above is not to say that there is no problem with hooliganism. This has been a particular problem in the Lower Falls with drunken or drug-crazed louts assaulting people, breaking into their neighbours' homes, and littering the area with broken bottles. Two men have been killed in their homes. The Northern Ireland Office has funded a new body called the *West Belfast Community Safety Forum*. According to the *Irish News* on May 13th (and in other issues) Gerry Adams said the scheme had "the potential to make a real difference to people's lives". Opening the scheme, NIO minister Paul Goggins said: "My proposal aims to build a strong partnership between public agencies, voluntary groups, and the people who live in the area". PSNI Chief Superintendent, Gary White, stated: "The challenge is to take what is a very positive approach and ensure we deliver what people would expect".

Presumably the scheme might do some good. Adams warned against "penny pinching" in its funding. So it's going to be another one of those things. It is difficult to see any substantial difference happening without the regular presence on the ground of dedicated and motivated people. A policeman occasionally cycles quickly around the place and there is the odd police landrover—usually after an event. But then there is usually little or no police presence anywhere in Belfast and still some areas are peaceful and some are not. The assumption that the PSNI are terribly interested needs to be challenged. They are interested in not

being victims themselves and so they rarely are. But why should they care if areas like the Lower Falls disintegrate? Many in the police would be only too glad to see this happen. Thankfully, there are some concerned, and certainly unpaid, people who are trying to keep some kind of order, without being too heavy-handed. The area has improved over the recent period.

There is still the regular interface battle at weekends in Ardoyne. At its heart is territory. Catholic Ardoyne is bursting at the seams while the neighbouring Protestant areas are being deserted. Mostly this has been local, but now the Protestant side is being reinforced by groups from Woodvale. The Official IRA seems to have been involved in punishment beatings in Derry. It is to be hoped that they do not extend this to their stronghold in the Lower Falls. They can be relied upon to get things drastically wrong.

**Donegal Celtic** is the only Catholic-based soccer team in Belfast (though Catholics tend also, for reasons few can explain, to support Cliftonville). It was formed in Lenadoon in 1970. In 2002, along with Lurgan Celtic, it was refused entry into the [Northern] Irish League. This was reversed after the clubs took the Irish League to court and the matter was settled out of court. This year Donegal Celtic came 13th out of 16 in the Premier League. But the League has been reduced to 12 teams and so Celtic have been relegated. This may all be down to the petty-minded bureaucrats that run the League. But the memory is fresh of Derry City being kept out of the League in the past for blatantly sectarian reasons. It is now possible that Donegal Celtic will follow Derry into the [Southern] League of Ireland. The club is so called because many of the streets in the area are called after places in Co. Donegal.

**Myself Alone.** Catriona Ruane, Sinn Fein's Education Minister at Stormont, is attacked daily in the press over her plans, or lack of them, to abolish the 11-plus examination for selection to secondary schools. She and her DUP opponent, Sammy Wilson are no chuckle sibs! Her main problem has been that no one can quite work out what she is proposing. Her latest plan seems to be to phase out the 11-plus over three years and introduce a selecting exam at fourteen. But there seems to be nothing to stop Grammar Schools from opting out of the system and many have threatened to do so. The pro-selection stance of Unionists is difficult to understand since Catholics do better than Protestants. The *Belfast News Letter* recently had a full front page picture of Ruane with the headline *Myself Alone*. There is now speculation that she may be replaced by her deputy, John

O'Dowd, whose public performances are impressive. However, she is Sinn Fein's hope to take the Westminster seat of South Down from the SDLP when Eddie McGrady retires. Her opponent there will be Margaret Ritchie. Ruane is from Galway and it would be considered a good thing in nationalist circles to have a Southerner in the Stormont Government. But she is also seen as a protege of the late and unlamented Denis Donaldson.

**"Anti-Terror" Laws.** In April the House of Commons passed the Second Reading of the *Counter Terrorism Bill*. This, according to the *Irish News*, 12th May, will allow the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to exclude juries and coroners from inquests "if it is judged to be in the public interest, against state security or would damage relationships with another country". British Government officials have given verbal and private assurances the the Act will not be extended to Northern Ireland. This, going on past experience, is not believed. Leader of the SDLP, Mark Durkin, said: "There is a completely new provision in this legislation. It's not confined to terrorist cases, whereby the Secretary of State will be able to appoint a special coroner to hold a secret inquest in relation to any death where they think that's in the public interest. If they get it through in this Bill, they will very quickly then extend it to Northern Ireland. That has huge implications for the outstanding cases in which there have never been inquests held."

Sinn Fein's Alan Maskey said: "It has been shown time and time again that the British Government will use anything in its powers to block public inquiries and inquests from getting at the truth. I have no doubt that the British Government will try to use this draconian legislation to help cover up the collusion that has gone on in the North for the last 40 years." This is borne out by the rushing through of emergency legislation in London in 2005 to allow the British Government to withhold information from inquiries into the deaths of Pat Finucane, Robert Hamill and Billy Wright.

**The British Link.** On March 27th, the *Irish News* had an interesting editorial on the link with Britain:

"Gordon Brown's latest pointed attempt to define the UK as comprising nothing more than England, Scotland and Wales may have caused some upset among Unionists in Northern Ireland but they should not really have been surprised... Back in January of 2006 he raised eyebrows by proposing the introduction of a special day to promote a sense of British identity and even encouraged every householder to fly

*continued on page 9, column 1*



## Raymond McCord

I am pleased and proud to be here this evening to help Raymond with the launch of his book, *Justice For Raymond*. I was an Independent Labour councillor in Newtownabbey at the time of young Raymond's murder; and as a member of the Labour Party's National Executive, I had a role in introducing Raymond to our then Party Leader, Pat Rabbitte TD—who, under privilege in Dail Eireann—read out the names of those involved in Raymond's murder. So my role in assisting Raymond was small. And I know that Raymond was disappointed that the type of intervention that Pat made could not have been done earlier, by others, within the jurisdiction and in Westminster.

I have known Raymond and his family for a long time. His cousin Billy has the same affliction as myself—we're both Crusaders fanatics—suffering the same torture on the Seaview terraces week on week. Many years ago, I used to weight train with Raymond's cousin, Rab. And as a volunteer youth worker in Rathcoole, I also got to know young Raymond.

Staff at Rathcoole Youth Centre needed a thick skin, or a sense of humour—preferably both. Raymond Jnr was a striking young man, very engaging and outwardly confident. He was also noticeably polite and well mannered—which I'm taking to be Vivien's influence. He was a popular lad and mixed easily. I wasn't at all surprised that he joined the RAF, which held out the prospect for a good career.

### Editorial Digest

concluded

the Union flag in their garden. As the *Irish News* noted at the time, it was abundantly clear, despite half-hearted denials, that Mr. Brown had no intention of extending his initiative to cover the divided community in Northern Ireland... Well placed reports from London earlier this week confirmed that legislation authorising this move would not be applied to Northern Ireland... The effective message from Mr. Brown and Mr. Cameron is that the concerns of Northern Ireland unionists were fully addressed by the Good Friday Agreement and the final set of negotiations at St. Andrews... The relationship between northern nationalists and the main parties in Dublin is considerably more complex and may yet take further twists. However, the days when Margaret Thatcher could confidently declare as UK prime minister that Northern Ireland was as British as Finchley would appear to be gone forever."

Unfortunately, he did get caught up in some minor transgressions—Raymond is open about this in the book. We should remember that in any other society, these would be put down to youthful experimentation and barely worthy of a formal caution. Relative to the disorder and mayhem around him, young Raymond was a well adjusted kid.

Unfortunately, 'wider agendas' engulfed him.

The 'wider agenda' was a police service driven by a "*force within a force*". The Branch, and Military Intelligence for that matter, had deeply penetrated Loyalist paramilitarism. Given their lack of political purpose, it would not be unreasonable to view Loyalist paramilitarism as 'chattels' to the security services. At minimum it allowed for the "*calibration*" of Loyalist murder . . . at maximum, well, who knows.

As an ordinary local councillor, largely pre-occupied with local affairs, it was very obvious to me that policing in areas like Rathcoole were effectively 'sub contracted' to paramilitarism. What the police call "*intelligence led*" policing (what I called "*blind eye*" policing) was, in fact, the biggest factor in subverting '*work-a-day*' law and order. The degree to which a blind eye was turned was in the hands of the law enforcement agencies.

Should a blind eye be turned to selling 'knock off' cigarettes or vodka for paramilitary gain? Or extortion? Or intimidation? Or drug dealing? Or murder itself?

The charge is that the sectarian gangsters who murdered young Raymond McCord did so with the full and prior knowledge of their minds. The O'Loan report indicates that the Mount Vernon-based Haddock gang murdered the care worker Sharon McKenna in 1993—another constituent of mine—with the prior knowledge of Branch officers. Indeed that murder was tolerated as a sort of 'test' to embed Haddock's paramilitary reputation. **In short, the State was tacitly engaged in murdering its own citizens.** And, in this case, we know that the efforts to head off Raymond's campaign were and are really efforts to head off a wider understanding of how high, within the UVF, the state control went.

People in my constituency had a range of views of Raymond's campaign. Some thought him foolhardy—that he had a 'death wish'. Others, particularly in the paramilitary world, put it about that Raymond was addicted to publicity—or that he was a "*spacer*". Others, the majority, quietly wished him well. People deal with bereavement in different ways—but most thought that, as a father, Raymond was entitled to seek out the truth and call his son's murderers to account.

Raymond has needed great forbearance and inner strength. He has not been without help and assistance from within the police—particularly from within ordinary officers within the CID. And the Police Ombudsman's report confirmed to all with an open mind the veracity of what Raymond McCord has been saying.

This book is a testament to the fortitude and courage of Raymond McCord and his family, and a fine testimony to young Raymond.

I would urge you to buy it. Or, if you can't afford it—order it from your Library. Most of all, read it.

And remember, Raymond McCord's campaign will not be over until it's over.

Trade Union Friends Of Palestine Letter  
published in *Belfast Telegraph*, 9 April 2008

### Palestine:

#### More Balance Please, Lindy

Lindy McDowell's column 'Are all the trade unions really so anti-Israel?' (*Belfast Telegraph*, April 5) was both offensive and absurd.

Offensive, because she sought to brand opposition to Israel as arising from 'a view that Israel is the Great Satan'. No Palestinian spokesperson has ever used this formulation and, being an atheist, nor have I.

It appears Lindy simply regards Arabs as an undifferentiated mass, to be held jointly to account for statements made anywhere in the Arab world and caricatured accordingly.

Absurd, in that she asserts that Israel is the whipping boy of the 'trendy Left'. In the leaflet Trade Union Friends of Palestine circulated at the NUJ conference in Belfast, we quoted from the introduction to a recent report, *The Gaza Strip: A Humanitarian Implosion*, co-authored by Oxfam, Cafod, Trocaire, Christian Aid and Save the Children, Amnesty, Care and Medicins du Monde UK. It states: 'The situation for 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is worse now than it has ever been since the start of the Israeli military occupation in 1967.'

Not much evidence of "trendy Leftism" in that group. Nor in the American Presbyterian Church, one of the first to call for a boycott of Israeli goods, the Anglican Church which produced its own damning report, or in His Holiness the Pope, who has also been critical. And then there is the UN.

[In a report in January 2007 ([www.ohchr.org/english/countires/ps/index.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/countires/ps/index.htm)), the UN's Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), John Dugard, a South African Professor of Law, commented –

*continued on page 10, column 1*

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## THE END OF EARLY HOUSES?

Not content with banning smoking in pubs and restaurants, the Intoxicating Liquor/Public Order Bill (2008) will ban "early houses" (*The Irish Times*, 26.4.08). These pubs with early morning opening hours have a long tradition of catering for dockers and fishermen. The argument of the Government's *Alcohol advisory group* is that these categories of people no longer exist. But as the proprietor of the *Windjammer* pub in Dublin's Townsend Street points out in Fiona McCann's *Irish Times* report, there have never been more people working on night shifts.

These pubs seem to be a haven of civilisation in a world gone mad. In the case of the *Windjammer* there is a strict door policy. A few years ago students from the Trinity ball were banned. As one customer said: "only the working class" are let in. What could be more reasonable than that!

## Palestine Letter

continued

"The International Community has identified three regimes as inimical to human rights – colonialism, apartheid and foreign occupation." He held Israel to be guilty of all three.

He declared the siege of Gaza to be – "a form of collective punishment in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949." Furthermore he declared – "The 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid appears to be violated by many practices."

In the Conclusion he notes – "The Occupied Palestinian Territory is of special importance to the future of human rights in the world." After the collapse of Apartheid South Africa in 1994 – "Palestine became the only developing country in the world under the subjugation of a western-affiliated regime." The OPT "has become a test for the West, a test by which its commitment to human rights is to be judged."]

Lindy has demanded 'balance' in this affair. But with Israel in breach of dozens of UN resolutions condemning it for such conduct, it is hard to imagine the balance she seeks lies exactly in the middle.

**Michael Robinson**  
Trade Union Friends of Palestine,  
Belfast

So what have the puritans on the *Alcohol advisory group* to say for themselves? The Chairman of the group Dr. Gordon Holmes admitted that there was no element of public disorder about these pubs, but claimed: "they are very sordid".

## THE END OF AN ERA?

And so when his political career ended Ahern was buried with flowers. His most bitter critics were the most fulsome in their praise. And *The Irish Times* editorial of 7th May 2008 praised him in order to finally bury him. It concluded that his departure marked "the end of the Haughey era".

The previous day's Fintan O'Toole column also expounded on this theme. O'Toole saw Ahern's departure as an opportunity for Cowen to break with the corrupt past in which three Taoisigh had been forced to resign. In O'Toole's words:

"Charles Haughey fell amid mounting suspicions that he was at the centre of a golden circle, Albert Reynolds because of tensions caused by the beef tribunal report, and Bertie Ahern because of his inability to explain large donations flowing into his private coffers".

This is hardly indicative of corruption even if it were true. But Haughey and Reynolds didn't resign for the above mentioned reasons. The stated reasons at the time had even less substance.

Haughey resigned following some comments on a light entertainment programme by a discredited ex-Justice Minister on the phone tapping of two journalists (Geraldine Kennedy and Bruce Arnold) ten years earlier. It was not suggested that Haughey initiated the tapping, only that he was made aware of it and did nothing about it. And even this allegation is disputed.

Reynolds resigned following some hysterical *Irish Times* editorials concerning a long-forgotten case of a paedophile priest. Reynolds was alleged to have withheld from the Dail details of this case when even his own Attorney General was unsure of its significance.

It is very curious that the O'Toole has so little grasp of the details, particularly given the role that his Editor played in these events. And yet the new Taoiseach is required by O'Toole to make a break with the past comparable "to a de Klerk with apartheid, a Gorbachev with the Soviet Communist Party".

But it is noticeable that when O'Toole descends from his high flown rhetoric he finds himself on shaky ground. The first thing he thinks Cowen should do is:

"...start by refusing the planned rise in his own pay, thus signalling that the connection between greed and public office is broken".

Is O'Toole suggesting that the Taoiseach should be paid less than the Editor of *The*

*Irish Times*? Certainly there is an argument for different pay scales!

Cowen is the head of a Government which is accountable to the people in a State whose President is directly elected by the people. Geraldine Kennedy, on the other hand, is accountable to an oath-bound directorate in a newspaper whose President is a former employee of MI5.

## THE END OF NUALA O'FAOLAIN

Death is always sad. It remains for those who have been left behind to make sense of the life that has passed. But what sense can be made of Nuala O'Faolain's life? Her final interview has been lauded for its honesty. And yet she declared herself a non-believer and was buried within the arms of the Catholic Church. This was not dishonesty on O'Faolain's part. It was just that she never knew who she was.

The liberal struggles of the 1970s and 1980s passed her by. Her only connection with them was through her subsequent relationship with Nell McCafferty.

Many people were touched by O'Faolain's autobiography, which was followed by a very mediocre novel. But of the two people, Nell McCafferty's contribution to Irish society was more substantial. Her series of court reports in the early 1970s for *The Irish Times* was a landmark in Irish journalism. And her autobiography showed a level of engagement with Irish society, which was completely absent from O'Faolain's.

## THE END OF GLOBALISATION?

Globalisation is not at an end. Karl Marx predicted its rise in his nineteenth century work *Das Kapital* and nothing that has happened since then has invalidated his detailed analysis. But its progress with be punctuated by crises.

A friend who imports white goods from China has found prices have increased and supply has been unreliable in recent times. A factory manufacturing fridges closed down for the Chinese New Year and the workers returned to their villages. But only one third of them returned after the holidays. The price of agricultural products has increased and the villagers found that there was more money to be made on the land.

According to Marx, industrialisation in Britain was preceded by the expulsion of small landholders and agricultural workers from the land—making them available for exploitation by industrial capital. But in China the new industrial proletariat has not broken its links with the land. Ownership of land has not been organised along capitalist lines (or collectivist lines as in the Soviet Union) which would have led to greater productivity. Chinese agriculture does not appear to have generated a surplus to feed its urban population, necessitating the import of food at high prices and the return of industrial workers

to the land.

It will be interesting to see how China overcomes these contradictions. The era of cheap Chinese exports to the West may be coming to an end.

#### MANSERGH ON *THE IRISH TIMES*

Martin Mansergh had a review in *Village* (May 2008) of a book on *The Irish Times* by Dermot James. James's book appears to be the authorised version of the newspaper. The "white nigger" letter is not even mentioned.

The review has some interesting comments on the book. (Apparently James thinks that Asquith was a Conservative Prime Minister!) Mansergh has also some interesting things to say about the newspaper itself. When he began writing for it one of its journalists told him that he had joined the "real establishment".

Having been at the centre of power as an advisor to the Haughey and Reynolds

Governments, Mansergh is all too aware of the anti-Fianna Fail bias of *The Irish Times*. And yet he leapt to the paper's defence when the "white nigger" letter was revealed by the *Irish Political Review*. However, in his article in the *Village* he is far less dismissive of the letter than previously. Here is what he says:

"I agree with Seamus Martin that the Major may have been unfairly pilloried over jaunty racist language more probably a paraphrase by British Ambassador Gilchrist in a 1969 diplomatic report, but McDowell's expressed misgivings about the paper's strongly pro-civil rights stance behind the back of Douglas Gageby are still deeply shocking."

The Major has been "unfairly pilloried" (by who I wonder) and yet what he did was "deeply shocking". The newly appointed junior minister wants it both ways.

Perhaps his difficulty is not with the evidence itself, but with who revealed it!

response included the statement that UCD history academic Dr. Paul Rouse was Consultant Historian. But when he was asked about this, Dr. Rouse said that his correct designation was as stated in the programme credits. In other words, he was correctly described as Researcher. His job was to provide information to the programme, but not to exercise control or influence over the quality of the programme as history.

The BCC was informed of this. Then, in a further response, the programme Director/Producer Niamh Sammon acknowledged that her programme did not have a Consultant Historian. And in its ruling, the BCC declared that the programme was under no obligation to have a Consultant Historian.

*In other words, RTÉ told a straight lie. The BCC was informed of the lie, and it ruled that the historical content of programmes like this could be decided by amateurs and propagandists.*

This does not bode well for RTÉ's role as the national broadcaster, the holder and producer of a significant part of the country's historical archive.

A further point in the complaints was the allegation that the Pearsons were murdered in pursuance of a land grab, and that the murderers benefited personally by being awarded portions of the Pearson farm by the Land Commission in 1923.

This produced the most brazen of RTÉ's lies. RTÉ said:

*"The theory that the Pearson killings were the result of a land grab was also examined by the programme makers. Documentation from the Land registry office and the Land Commission was made available to Dr. Terence Dooley, a highly respected historian and author of 'The Land for the People'. Dr. Dooley used the contents of these files as the basis for his comments."*

The programme Producer/Director Niamh Sammon said:

*"The production team was given access to these original [Land Commission] files."*

But the Archivist of the Land Commission files wrote in a letter that:

*"I can find no record that RTÉ has had access to the former Irish Land Commission documents, stored in the Records Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, relating to the townland of Coolacrease (Pearson Farm)."*

It is apparent that RTÉ is in the business of producing junk history; and when it is challenged it bluffs, blusters and lies; and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission's role is to cover up this disgraceful, incompetent and unprofessional shambles.

The question is, what is the Government going to do to clean up this mess?

**Pat Muldowney**

#### The Killings at Coolacrease

## Broadcasting Complaints Commission Rejects Seven Complaints

### *RTÉ Lies Exposed*

The Hidden History programme, *The Killings at Coolacrease*, was broadcast on RTÉ television on 23rd October 2007, with a repeat broadcast on 13th May 2008 after it collected a Hugo Award in Chicago. The programme was about the 1921 executions by the IRA of two Protestant farmers in Co. Offaly.

Seven formal complaints about the programme were submitted to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC) in November 2007. The complaints were against breaches of the Broadcasting Act 2001 (section 24 (2) (a)) on grounds of lack of fairness, objectivity and impartiality.

The complaints, and the responses to them can be read at: [http://www.bcc.ie/decisions/feb\\_08\\_decisions.html](http://www.bcc.ie/decisions/feb_08_decisions.html) and in more detail at: <http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Main/CoolaCrease>

A significant part of the complaints was that the programme omitted crucial evidence. The BCC response was that the Producer/Director Niamh Sammon had full editorial control and independence, and if she decided to exclude certain information, that was a matter for her judgement and the BCC had no criticism of that.

In other words, it was OK to produce propaganda, and it was OK for RTÉ to broadcast it. All that is fine by the BCC. The BCC said it could only comment on what was broadcast, not what was excluded. So when RTÉ broadcast spurious speculation, but concealed solid evidence disproving the speculation, the BCC finds that what

was concealed is irrelevant to its deliberations.

The BCC said, reasonably enough, that it could not make any judgement on what happened in 1921. Yet the first paragraph of the BCC response said: "*The Commission has considered the broadcast, the submissions made by the complainant, the broadcaster and the independent producer. The broadcast in question is Hidden History: The Killings at Coolacrease, which explored the murder of two brothers in Coolacrease during the War of Independence in 1921.*" (Emphasis added.)

In other words, not only did the BCC make a judgement (murder) on the execution of enemy combatants, it **pre-judged** the issue of what happened in 1921.

Farrel Corcoran, Chairman of the RTÉ Authority from 1995 to 2000, reported in his 2004 book, *RTÉ And The Globalisation Of Irish Television*, that the Authority agreed at a meeting in January 1998 that in history documentaries the Consultant Historian should not hold the additional role of participant in the documentary itself.

This implies that a Consultant Historian was then a requirement in such productions, so that, with an independent expert in charge, a degree of quality control could be ensured. In other words, a Consultant Historian could prevent the broadcasting of junk history.

One of the broadcasting complaints to the BCC noted that the programme credits listed no Consultant Historian. RTÉ's

# Holding *The Irish Times* To Account

Launch of *The Irish Times' Past And Present*

On 18th April 2008' at Liberty Hall

## Speech Of Chairman Philip O'Connor

I have worked with John on some projects in the past and hopefully will work with him on more in the future. I was delighted when he asked me to take on the role of chair tonight at this meeting, as I've a few things I would like to say.

It is a particular pleasure to welcome here Minister Conor Lenihan. The last time I saw Conor here in Liberty Hall it was at the launch last year of Des Geraghty's fine book on the diversity of Dublin and Dubliners—*Forty Shades of Green*. Conor, who I have also met in various contexts through my own work with Dublin Employment Pact, has never hidden from controversy. He has taken to his political work in the difficult but cutting edge task of Minister for Integration, and makes no apology for seeking to steer this country towards an "Irish solution" to the challenges of integrating immigrant communities, aping neither the cultural chaos of multiculturalism as experienced in Britain or the uniformity of French assimilationism which would simply not be practical here. I for one certainly wish him every success in his work, as I'm sure everyone else here will too.

I think his willingness to come along here to launch John's book demonstrates that courage, which is a bit of hallmark of his family, a family Fianna Fáil to the core, which has contributed much to the development of Ireland since Independence. Currently there are no fewer than four of the family in Dáil Éireann.

Just when I thought I knew it all, up hops another Lenihan. In a review of his own book—a new phenomenon indeed!—Eunon O'Halpin in last Saturday's *Irish Times* told the story of an uncle of Conor's, Joseph Lenihan, an active Republican parachuted into Ireland in the Second World War by the Germans. But he had so disliked what he had seen of the Nazis that he promptly joined the British war effort, though explicitly without ever compromising his republicanism or his support for Dev's policy of neutrality for Ireland.

I am particularly thrilled that this event is taking place here in this great historical location Liberty Hall. We are here in a propitious place at a propitious time. I see Manus O'Riordan down there, a good friend of mine. Many of you will have seen Manus on the TV news last Monday setting out a few bottom lines as regards the Siptu position going into the new

wage round under the partnership agreement T2016. Make no mistake about it, for Siptu there is no conflict between militantly representing its members' interests and taking its place at the top table in this country to help shape the destiny of the country through Social Partnership, and shape it as far as possible in the interests of the working people of Ireland

This proud building resonates with history and hope. Remember the banner "*we serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland*" which adorned the front of the predecessor Liberty Hall in cocky defiance of the pious Redmondite Home Rulers recruiting on behalf of Britain for its murderous imperial war—which was to leave over 50,000 of them dead. That old Liberty Hall was shattered in the British terror bombing that reduced the city centre to rubble in Easter Week 1916, and caused most of the civilian dead and injured in that noble event.

Because, with Conor Lenihan here, and on the eve of a new negotiating process under Social Partnership, I would like to salute the social partnership process itself, a process initiated by the genius of Charlie Haughey, but in fact deeply rooted as a way of doing things in two great traditions which were at the heart of building the successful independent Ireland—Fianna Fáil and the Trade Unions.

I know something about those intertwined traditions, with a family that has always made its modest contribution to the progressive movement in Ireland—brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, have passed through here over the years as shop stewards, members of strike committees etc. Back to my grandfather in fact, an old republican born in Cavan in the 1880s, sacked by his Dublin boss in 1915 for refusing to join Redmond's bloody crusade on the Somme. He was later the man who unionised Johnson, Mooney & O'Brien's. Throughout those years in the 1930s and 40s, as my mother was growing up, there were always two pictures over the fireplace of that house in Ringsend—Larkin and de Valera! This is something your clever leftist of today simply cannot comprehend—that Catholic-Communist wing of the Fianna Fáil movement which was so strong in its day and has left its legacy on Fianna Fáil Trade Union relations today.

The Minister's own family is keenly aware of this. I remember Conor's father, Brian Lenihan, then also a Minister, speaking at a meeting in Trinity College in the late 1970s, who when challenged

about the alleged "right wing" nature of Fianna Fáil, responded without hesitation that Fianna Fáil had been the only real Bolshevik Party in Ireland, driving national development from the 1930s through an industrial state sector. And reading Todd Andrew's memoirs who could argue with that?

But the fashionably liberal mind doesn't see these things. There is this endless attempt to construct a fundamental gulf between republicanism and liberalism, with the inference that the former represents the darkest of ages while the latter represents the blue skies of enlightenment. It bears no resemblance to the actual world I have lived in in Ireland. It was none other than Brian Lenihan himself who at a stroke "unbanned" over 10,000 works of literature as Justice Minister in the 1960s. I remember another of the Lenihan relations, Mary O'Rourke, in more recent times, and the role she played opening the education system to the multi-denominational school movement in the 1980s, ensuring it would develop within the bosom of the national education system rather than as some kind of privileged elitist ghetto. This was pragmatic and progressive liberalism at its best.

Finally, I was at another book event last autumn in Buswell's Hotel, coincidentally the launch of Eoin Neeson's fine book *Myths Of 1916* by another of the Lenihans, Brian Lenihan, Minister for Justice. Concluding proceedings the chair—Manus O'Riordan—gave a rousing rendition of all verses of that fabulous ballad on the Redmondite betrayal of WW1 years *The Foggy Dew*. I will not be singing this evening, not because I don't like singing, but more as I am not sure what would be appropriate at a launch of a history of *The Irish Times*!!

John has asked me to chair things this evening, and my main job I suppose is to ensure a air of decorum about proceedings, which I am glad to attempt to do.

## Speech of Conor Lenihan Minister for Integration (Fianna Fail)

John Martin and I met some time ago out of a mutual interest in our own history in Ireland and fell to talking about how that was reflected in various Irish media and we found ourselves both in agreement that what was in the media was somehow a lot different to what was in the hearts and minds of the Irish people and how this was

particularly reflected in the media coverage of the last General election.

Basically' the media got it wrong in concentrating on the controversy over Bertie Ahern's finances because' in my personal opinion' the issue in the public mind was less about Bertie's finances and more about the quality of the Opposition.

The Irish media gave unrivalled coverage to the Fine Gael/Labour opposition' well before the election' from October 2006' and treated them with kid gloves' failing to analyse the policies of Mr. Rabbitte and Mr. Kenny and I believe we won the election in that period when the public failed to be convinced of the quality of the alternative when they saw for the first time on television how weak their arguments were.

So' it was very interesting then' afterwards' to pick up the *Irish Political Review* and see the quality of the analysis that is sometimes' not always—I'd have to be fair about it—missing from many of the mainstream media newspapers and it seems to me that the *Political Review*' and John Martin' in producing this book on the *Irish Times* is particularly putting the *Irish Times* under the microscope. I think it's well time such an exercise was undertaken.

All of us' including Fianna Fail' the banking sector and the Religious institutions in this state' have all been the subject of enormous critiques over the past 30 years. Irish life has modernised enormously in that time. I was born in 1963. I grew up and was socialised in the 1980s. I wouldn't recognise the country we have here today. If you told me about this in the 1980s' I would have said you were a nutcase to say that this could be Ireland . . . the fourth richest country in the world on a per capita basis . . . enormous social and economic change. . . and as I say, I was personally lucky enough as a Minister to oversee a huge overseas aid programme . . . we're the 6th largest overseas donor nation in the world and 12% of our population are newcomers to this country.

I suppose some people will dismiss John's book as the work of a conspiracy theory, but it is not at all in fact. He is putting under the microscope the corporate structures of the *Irish Times*. This book follows the money. It looks at the financial arrangements put in place by the *Irish Times* to secure itself at different points in its history. I don't want to talk about Major McDowell because I don't know the man and I understand he is still alive, but all I'll say is that the few times I came across him as a journalist he always struck me as a unique character on the Dublin landscape, with his large pinstripe suit and very definite officer class manner. The stories in journalistic circles were legion about

him. He was certainly very colourful.

I'm not so sure if he was an intelligence officer or not. I know he probably was in the 2nd World War period, but afterwards I don't know. There are certain documents mined in this book which point you in a certain direction. John has made that very explicit. It's not unknown for people who worked in intelligence during the war to continue to keep contact with their former employers afterwards, but I wouldn't necessarily conclude that from the book. Everybody deserves due process. Due process demands that the jury is out with regards to Major McDowell, notwithstanding material from the public archives and from the published autobiography of Cecil King. The reference in King's book is convincing precisely it is so casual, making it clear that in London clubland it was accepted he had some background in intelligence. However, due process demands that we don't jump to conclusions. People like that go in and out of that particular activity.

Major McDowell comes out of this book as quite an interesting man. I would encourage John to write a biography of the Major if he has the energy. His lifespan has straddled the whole transition of Independent Ireland from a Unionist dispensation to a Catholic Nationalist dispensation. And now we are in a transition again to a new period, with our recent Peace Process: we have another gyration because of the Peace Process and we will probably emerge somewhere between the two polarities which dominate this book.

Hopefully someday we will find our identity. I know that in my current ministry I try to avoid discussions around what is the Irish Identity. I personally think it is rather more hybridised than what we would call advanced Nationalism or Republicanism is stated to be—or indeed—advanced Anglophiles would make it out to be. Ireland is more hybridised in its own identity and that complexity is reflected in the Good Friday Agreement—which is in its essence temporary. The differences that exist in Ireland and particularly in the North of Ireland show that this is a hybridised Ireland where Ireland is clearly Ireland but British as well. Major McDowell's life in Ireland is testimony to that dual identity—the people who didn't want to see the postboxes turn green and who don't still recognise them as having turned green.

We in Fianna Fail have been so criticised by the media in Ireland, yet we have managed to survive that process. It gives you great confidence about the Irish public and their sophistication. The electorate are a sophisticated bunch as the recent episode in October 2006 and also during the General Election illustrate: a very strong point in favour of our democracy

here in Ireland, that we in Fianna Fail have managed to get elected despite the almost universal media hostility, going way back to Mr. Haughey. I think it is unique in the world that a party—any party, not just Fianna Fail—can get elected despite the almost overwhelming consensus of the media against them. It shows great robustness in our democracy that the public can see through the media messages, read between the lines and make up their own democratic choices.

I think that is one of the most profound lessons I have learnt from the recent General Election results of 2007. We managed to win despite the universal media view that we needed a contest. I never personally felt we were going to have a real contest prior to the actual contest. To a certain extent people were trying to create the Mullingar Accord as being a real alternative: I don't believe it was a real alternative and I think in October 2006 the unreal nature of that alternative was exposed. The coverage of Mr Ahern's finances in one sense finally served a purpose. It got the media to at last examine the alternative, which we were demanding they should do. The media sometimes—rightly or wrongly—put themselves in a position of wanting to create a contest in the same fashion as a boxing match, making it seem like the champ has it very difficult knocking down the opponent. There was an element of that in the run-up to the 2007 General Election. The media were promoting what was in effect a dud alternative. We found it quite amusing.

You will have to wait for my own memoirs to see how we fiendishly manipulated events from October 2006 onwards. It was an interesting time in Ireland. We live in very interesting times. Times when we need genuine criticism and analysis of what is going on in politics and Irish society and this book is very much an addition to that analysis. I'm for more of that, not less of it.

[Conor Lenihan's speech has been slightly edited. IPR]

## ***The Irish Times:* Past And Present,** a record of the journal since 1859

by *John Martin*

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## Myths Of The Second World War

A new extended edition of Elizabeth Bowen: "Notes On Eire" (*Espionage Reports To Winston Churchill, 1940-2*) by Jack Lane and Brendan Clifford was launched at the Teachers' Club in Dublin on April 19th. The main body of the first edition was little changed though the new edition mentioned the advice of the *Irish Times* to girls going to Britain to be on the lookout for the dangers posed by black men. I assume that the reader is familiar with either the original edition or with the substance of its contents through the many articles on Bowen here in the *Irish Political Review*.

So I will concentrate on the material added by Brendan Clifford in an 88 page appendix which deals more generally with the Second World War as well as adding my own views. Clifford's chapter takes the form of a critique of *The Emergency—Neutral Ireland 1939-45* by a former comrade of ours, Professor Brian Girvin; and some writings by Dr. G. Roberts, formerly of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Both are now leading revisionists—i.e. purveyors of the slant that the British establishment wishes to put on Irish history as well as its own. Irish history deniers, I suppose, to use the 'in' term.

Clifford says "One cannot take the War at Britain's evaluation of it and hold that Ireland's refusal to take part in it was not an expression of moral delinquency". The trouble is that Britain's evaluation of it, and indeed the evaluation of it by the British people, altered as the War went on, and a kind of settled account was arrived at after it was over.

I am reminded of Iain Duncan Smith's leadership bid for the Tory Party. Though an ex soldier he didn't really come across as a tough guy. So his fighter pilot father's letters were disinterred and "Smithy" Smith's wartime exploits were given an airing. The problem was that the elder Smith saw the whole thing as great fun shooting up the Hun and anything else that moved on the ground if he had any ammo left. He liked killing people. So his brief contribution to his son's campaign was quickly put back in its box.

Girvin describes De Valera's condolences at the German Embassy on the death of Hitler as signalling his distance from democratic Europe. What democratic Europe? Clifford points out that the nature of the political systems in France, Italy, Greece and Germany was being contested and still to be determined. Spain and Portugal were fascist. And their status as such was protected by England and the United States. Ireland, Sweden and

Switzerland were democratic—they were also neutral. There was the beginnings of a settled soviet democracy in Eastern Europe. But it is fair to assume that Brian Girvin wouldn't regard the Soviet Union as any kind of democracy at all. A PS to his resignation from the B&ICO says: "The Russian Revolution should never have happened"—though why he was blaming his comrades for it, God only knows.

The more or less settled British view of the War is that Hitler started it, or that at least his attack on Poland triggered it. After the French lost their bottle, Britain "stood alone" and bit by bit, and admittedly with some help, won the War and defeated the wicked fascist/nazi (and whatever the Japanese were) enemy. The mass murder of Jews is usually thrown in somewhere, though more recently than at the time.

My own view of Dunkirk was that it was one of the most infamous acts of cowardice and treachery in the history of warfare. British officers lost their nerve and told their men that it was every man for himself. The Northern flank of the French Army was left in the lurch and that was what caused the fall of France. Hitler could have destroyed the British on the beaches and chose not to. Hitler saw the British Empire as the bulwark of civilisation and wanted an alliance with the British rather than a war with them.

We were, Clifford points out, back to the old balance of power game—this time with a serious complication. At the end of the Great War France wanted to dismember Germany and so disable it as a future enemy. But that would leave France as the dominant power in Europe. It has always been British policy to ensure that no country is ever in that position. So it favoured a united Germany and encouraged Hitler's development of his power.

There was little mention of the plight of the Jews. They were of no concern to Britain and were later held to be a downright nuisance when many of them wanted to escape to Britain. President McAleese was right in comparing the situation of the Jews in Germany at that stage to that of the Catholics in the North of Ireland over fifty years. And the British didn't give two hoots about the Northern Catholics either until the world saw their abuse on the telly.

Towards the end of the 30s some in Britain, like the fascist admirer and antisemite, Churchill, felt that things had gone too far and urged that Hitler should

be taken down a peg or two. (There were genuine anti-Nazis like Ernest Bevin and Harry Pollitt who had their reasons for wanting to depose Hitler—but they counted for nothing at that point.)

The great complication was the Soviet Union. Destroying the USSR was the common purpose of Churchill, Chamberlain and Hitler.

The British didn't get too worked up when Hitler marched into the Rhineland and so ended the buffer zone between Germany and France. Nor were they greatly bothered by the *Anschluss* with Austria. The Austrians were not all that bothered either. Then Hitler demanded the German-populated Sudeten west of Czechoslovakia. The Czechs were minded to resist and could have done. The West of the Sudetenland was a natural mountainous defence and was fortified. They also had one of the best armaments industries in the world. (They still have—that's where semtex comes from!) The British and the French pressured the Czechs to give in at Munich and soon Germany, Hungary and Poland gobbled up the rest of the place. Yes, Poland!

As Clifford points out, Poland was a fascist state with good relations with Germany. The only bone of contention was the German-populated city of Danzig, now the Germanless city of Gdansk. He says that Danzig was an open city within Polish territory and Germany had a reasonable case for wanting it transferred to German territory. According to the *Irish News* of the time, Hitler agreed to it still remaining a free city apart from the German State. This was a problem with a relatively easy solution until the British appeared to do an about turn on 31st March 1939, offering an Anglo/French military guarantee to Poland, should Germany move to incorporate Danzig. With two of the greatest military powers in the world helping to surround Germany and the greatest navy in the world in a position to starve Germany, the Poles told Hitler to get lost.

All this time the Soviet Union—knowing that Hitler could attack it, and would like to—sought alliances with Poland and Britain. For historical and political reasons, the Poles refused. Their quite considerable military had defeated the USSR and captured territory in 1920. And why would they want the Russians, whom they did not trust, when they already had the British and the French? The British never refused a pact with the Soviet Union, but kept delaying one by postponing meetings and similar tactics. These events were covered extensively by D.N. Pritt in *Light On Moscow* published, I think, in 1940.

Despairing of a pact with Britain, the USSR signed a non-aggression pact with

Germany on 24th August 1939 when it was clear that there would be war. Under the Pact, in the event of war and a collapse of the Polish state in the war, the Soviets would occupy that part of Poland which they lost in the war of 1920. And this is what happened. On September 1st Germany attacked Poland. On 3rd France and Britain declared war on Germany. Britain also declared war on behalf of the Commonwealth and the Empire. (Or as the British like to say—this was the day war 'broke out'.)

The Polish Army fought on the basis that Britain and France would provide air cover and land troops and supplies. They didn't and had no intention of doing so.

There can be little doubt that, insofar as Britain had a plan, or at least a wish, it was to kill two birds with one stone. To have Germany weaken itself by attacking the Soviet Union and to have the USSR destroyed by the combined attacks of Japan and Germany (as soon as the latter got Poland out of the way). Because the Soviet Union was defending itself a Japanese attack in August while Britain was going slow on negotiations with Stalin, causing Stalin to look to an agreement with Germany.

For a year the Japanese had been making probing attacks against Russia. In March 1939 it built up its forces along the Mongolian Border and in April it invaded. This may have been a factor in the British 'change of mind' about Germany. War between Poland and Germany may have begun to seem like a good idea. The Red Army fought alongside the Mongolians and Stalin sent General Zhukov to take command. Later, with the rank of Marshal, Zhukov was the military author of the victories over the Germans.

He was also the first General to use the Blitzkrieg form of warfare—fast moving tanks (the famous T34 was now in service) and motorised infantry supported closely by aircraft. He attacked on 20th August and destroyed the Japanese army at the end of August. By 16th September 1939 a truce was signed. (Later, on 13th April 1941, the USSR and Japan signed a Neutrality Pact which both sides kept until the Russians broke it in 1945, shortly before the Japanese surrender.)

Britain fobbed off Moscow while the Japanese-Russian War was in full swing. And, when the Japanese Army was broken, it was too late.

The poor Poles were certainly on their own. In early September, the day after he broke the Japanese Army, Zhukov was ordered to transfer to the Polish Border. Then in mid-September, with the Polish state in collapse, the Soviet Army occupied Eastern Poland—which the Germans would otherwise have done.

From 3rd September 1939 the Royal

Navy increasingly tightened its grip on sea trade with Germany. Norway was also blockaded. On 5th February 1940 Britain and France agreed a plan to launch an invasion of Norway with 100,000 British and 35,000 French troops if the Finns—then at war with Russia—called for help. Only a small portion of this force was destined for Finland. The rest were to hold a line from Stockholm to Oslo and the area to the North, including Sweden's iron ore deposits. Officially the Western Allies were to request landing rights at Narvik and just a passage of troops to Finland. The right of passage was refused as was a Finnish request for help. Britain decided to go ahead with the plan anyway—but later.

Negotiations between the USSR and Finland for a territory swap to provide a hinterland for Leningrad broke down in November 1939 and on the 30th Finland was attacked. The Soviets did badly and called for a Truce on 29th January 1940. Six days later Britain offered its help to the Finns to prolong the war. Again in March, Britain renewed its offer of troops (this time 50,000). But the Finns had seen what had happened in Poland and signed an agreement with Russia. (Finland declared war on the Soviet Union when Germany attacked the following year. It made peace with the Soviets as the Germans retreated in 1944 and declared war on Germany in March 1945.)

Germany decided to pre-empt a British invasion of Norway and invaded on the night of April 9th/10th, just beating the British invasion further to the North. The British pulled out and the war in Southern Norway (and effectively the whole of that war) ended on the same day, the 2nd May 1940. The King of Norway and much of the navy escaped to England and set up a Government in Exile. The German occupation outside of Trondheim was relatively benign with a social services system replacing the previous rather austere regime. The German garrison was huge—more than one soldier for every ten Norwegians. Many German soldiers with connections got themselves posted to this cushy post to avoid the real wars and didn't want to rock the boat. Quisling was not alone. 15,000 Norwegians volunteered for the German Army

The Germans occupied Denmark on April 9th 1940. By choice Iceland had an arrangement for Denmark to look after its foreign and defence interests. Now it was on its own and on 10th April declared neutrality. A position it maintained against all sides for a year. On the day that Germany launched its attack in the West, 10th May 1940, Britain invaded Iceland. The dates are a coincidence since invasions require a good deal of preparation.

The Icelandic Government declared the invasion "a flagrant violation of Icelandic neutrality". But it also said it should be unopposed. In any case the country had no forces with which to oppose it. Throughout the war Icelanders were disliked by the British forces for their habit of celebrating British reverses. Revenge was taken at the end of the war when British troops ran amok. I've only once had the opportunity to discuss the matter with an Icelandic and he simply said: "I suppose it was better to have the Allies than the Nazis".

In July 1941 the British coerced the Icelandic Government to sign a defence agreement with the United States, and the Americans became the main occupiers. This was two months before Pearl Harbour and America's official entry into the War.

Germany occupied Luxemburg on 10th May 1940 and three days later began the assault on the North of France. Hitler ordered a halt to the German offensive in the North on May 24th. The evacuation from Dunkirk began on the 26th and lasted until the 4th June. 192,000 British and 140,000 French were evacuated, as well as many thousands of others from further West along the North and North East Coasts. Churchill, who became British Prime Minister on the first day of attack, visited Paris for the second time on 11th June. The French asked him to transfer the RAF fighter squadrons to France. He refused, saying he needed them for the defence of Britain. So it would seem that he already had decided the Britain was not going to be defended in France. Two French divisions covered the retreat at Dunkirk and then surrendered.

France fought on alone for another 18 days—including defeating a much larger Italian army which had invaded in the South. But it surrendered on June 22nd and there was a formal peace agreement two days later. Germany would occupy strategic coastal sectors, especially in the North. The rest of the country would be controlled by a French Government based in Vichy. It was the best deal that the French were going to get and they took it. The Vichy Government was no mere puppet. It had power at home and in its Empire. That suited Hitler. If he could get a deal with Britain it is certain that the occupation would be ended altogether with the exception of Alsace and Lorraine. When Hitler was trying to get Franco's Spain into the war, Franco insisted that he be given French Morocco. Hitler refused saying that Vichy was more important to him than Spain.

France's imperial armed forces remained loyal to Vichy and not to De Gaulle's Free French Government. De Gaulle urged the capture of Dakar (now

the Capital of Senegal) on the African West Coast. On 23rd September 1940, the French garrison was urged to join the Allies. It refused and the coast was attacked. In a mostly naval battle the Allies were repulsed after two days fighting. This was the beginning of a rift between the British (and later even more so the Americans) and De Gaulle. It wasn't until long after D-Day that the US, the USSR and Britain recognised the Government of De Gaulle—at a moment when there was every chance of France getting itself a Communist Government. Dakar itself was extremely important as both the French and the Polish Governments had deposited their gold reserves there.

This situation was brought home to me in a scene from the sequel to *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*. As the prisoners are passing through Saigon, the boulevards are full of genteel-looking French ladies sipping coffee outside cafes under their parasols.

And into this mess Brian Girvin thinks that De Valera should have dragged Ireland. Indeed according to the Treaty imposed on Ireland in 1922, and by virtue of our membership of the Commonwealth, we were actually at war with Germany. That is, of course, the English legal position, but it is the English legal position that governs the thinking of revisionist historians in Ireland. So 1916 and what followed were simply murder campaigns by criminals.

De Valera wasn't having any of it and prepared the country militarily and psychologically to defend its neutrality, i.e. to oppose any invasion from Britain. It was also a moment of truth for former Protestant unionists who remained in the South. They joined their Local Defence Forces in large numbers as well as joining the regular army. The future Editor of the *Irish Times*, Douglas Gageby, joined up and made much of his decision later in life. The revisionists are doing all they can, through the Reform Movement, the Orange Order, Academia and the media to stir up Protestant resentments against nationalist Ireland. They may be nearly 70 years too late.

Also the IRA had not gone away. The great military commanders of 1921, like Tom Barry and Sean Moylan were still young enough to shoulder a rifle. It crossed my mind at one time that the internment camp at the Curragh not only contained prisoners, but also a couple of fully trained brigades.

Elizabeth Bowen was sent as a spy to Ireland by Churchill to report on his chances of launching a successful invasion. She is praised for reporting that such an invasion would be very inadvisable because of the mood of the people. But that meant that she was just a good spy

who was not content to simply tell Churchill what he wanted to hear.

Brendan Clifford, in the Bowen book and elsewhere, shows that after Dunkirk Churchill decided to continue the state of war with Germany in the hope that something would turn up, meanwhile trying to spread the war as much as he could. What he most wanted to turn up was Hitler turning East again.

The book *Captain Correlli's Mandolin* (I haven't seen the film) gives an excellent account of the disastrous Italian invasion of Greece. Britain offered help to the Greeks who said, quite accurately, that they didn't need it. So Britain engineered a regime change. This brought the Germans to Greece via Yugoslavia and the British went back to Egypt. But two more countries in the war.

From there they had their to-and-fro war with the Africa Corps, when most of the Italian army reasonably decided that they didn't much care for this war business. In the British mythology the great hero is Monty. And the second battle of El Alamein, between October 23rd and November 5th, is held to be a/the turning point in the war. In fact it was a Pyrrhic victory as a battle. And though Rommel had to retreat and regroup, his army was still intact. But victory it still was and its author was General Auchinleck who prepared massively for it and was only replaced by Montgomery in August. The Africa Corps was defeated by US General Patton in May 1943.

Patton was also responsible for the Allied victory in Sicily in opposition to the plans of Montgomery. Monty's other 'great moment' was the Battle of Arnheim—a complete disaster, and carried out against the opposition of the Americans. As a footnote, Montgomery was stationed in Cork during the War of Independence where he and General Strickland alone were empowered to carry out summary executions. Though that didn't stop every other Rupert and Tommy shooting people out of hand as well.

On 22nd June 1941, Churchill got his heart's desire. Germany, along with Finland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia, and a Spanish Division, invaded the Soviet Union. The Red Army was pushed back to the Volga. Moscow was

threatened but by the 5th of December the German advance there was broken. The Germans then attacked Stalingrad but were not turned back until 19th November 1942. That was a decisive battle in the war. The most important battle came seven months later with the Battle of Kursk. After that it was only a matter of time before Germany was defeated.

It was Churchill's intention to see to it that this 'matter of time' was to be as long as possible. Germany was sure to be beaten. But he wanted Russia as near broken as possible in its victory. America went to war with Japan on 7th December 1941. That is, I think, the best way of putting it. It blockaded Japan and Japan broke the blockade by attacking the US fleet at Pearl Harbour.

As Clifford says, Japan had been minding its own business for centuries until America forced it into the modern world in the middle of the nineteenth century in the name of that great slogan of modern hooliganism—free trade. The blessings of free trade were brought to Japan by the guns of the US navy in 1850s. And Japan learned modernisation in double quick time. (The wars by Britain to force China to buy British opium were less successful—it took the Chinese a lot longer to learn from the masters.)

Japan built up its industry and its armaments. But it lacked raw materials. So it did what it saw its betters doing and attacked someone else to rob them—in this case China. The war in the Pacific was all about the new imperialists Japan and the US, and the old imperialists Britain, France and Holland. The US and Japan fought each other, but neither was going to tolerate the old empires.

After Pearl Harbour, Hitler declared war on America. This is a political mystery in Britain. But it could have been that Hitler was keeping the word he gave to Japan. In any case, the Americans, who had already been leasing/selling supplies to Britain, immediately took the European war theatre seriously and began building up depots, machines of war and military Divisions in Britain for an assault on France.

The Americans wanted to invade in 1942 as they knew that the French coast was lightly defended. Churchill was opposed. Instead he launched what, after

## **Elizabeth Bowen: "Notes On Eire".**

**Espionage Reports To  
Winston Churchill, 1940-42  
With a Review of Irish Neutrality  
in World War 2  
by Jack Lane and Brendan Clifford.**

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the event, become the Dieppe Raid on 19th of August. It was supposed to test the German defences with a possible follow up. I took that at face value until a good many years ago I took the ferry from Folkstone to Dieppe. The beaches were overlooked by high cliffs with a narrow entrance into the port itself. It was clearly an operation that was bound to fail and I could only conclude that it was meant to fail.

It was designed to put the Americans off the idea of invasion for as long as possible. With the result that they concentrated on the war in the Pacific. So the invasion was postponed again in 1943 and probably only took place in June 1944 because the Russians were rampant.

That the situation in France was known is certain. De Gaulle's intelligence service was second to none. It was run by Colonel Andre Dewavrin. When I was about fourteen I read a book called *Ten Thousand Eyes* by Richard Collier. I have reread it a couple of times but now discover that it seems unavailable. It was the best account of the French Resistance I have come across. Not a whiz bang book. It gives an overall picture of the organisation that Dewavrin set up. This had two purposes—the creation of a trained, secret Home Army, to be used in conjunction with a realistic invasion; secondly, and just as important, it was to be a mass intelligence gathering organisation.

Otherwise the book concentrates on the organisation centred on Caen and extending along the Normandy coast where the actual invasion took place. A local painter and decorator, Rene Duchez, got himself a temporary job at the German headquarters in Caen and managed to steal a map of the entire fortification system on the Normandy coast. (He called his group the Deuxieme Bureau, after the French Military Intelligence Service.) But he and his colleagues saw that what was on the map was not on the coast. It was a map of what the Germans intended to be on the coast. Copies of tiny sections of the map were distributed and people along the coast filled them in as defences were constructed, as well as keeping account of German formations and numbers in their areas. The original map was smuggled to London, as were the regularly updated sections. London knew exactly what was going on.

When Churchill got the invasion postponed in 1943 and after the Dieppe "raid", the Germans began to build their "Atlantic Wall" in earnest. This work was accelerated after Rommel took command of the area on 21st November 1943. Brendan Clifford says that this more or less coincided with Albert Speer being given a free hand over German industry and putting the civilian population on a

## Letter From Australia

There are some very good people in the new Labor Government, but they could hardly be described as anything but Liberal. If there are any socialists in the Rudd Government, they are wholly invisible. Still, that's an improvement on the Hawke Keating Government who pretended that they were going to introduce a form of Workers' Control and thereby fooled a great many people at first, but in the end the whole thing turned out to be a hoax. All the workers received was some lousy tax cuts as a reward for suspending working-class struggle. I think that piece of deception eventually lost Labor the 1996 election.

In the BMUC Inc [local labour/community organisation in Hazelbrook, New South Wales] we obtained an influx of union officials from whom we expected great things and we did obtain some benefits by way of support and some leadership. But as soon as Labor won the election the union organisers all withdrew and we are left with our original members to carry on the campaign for Community Unionism. Like the ALP generally the Union Movement are not really interested in tapping into the vast numbers of highly skilled community workers whose daily tasks bring them in to direct contact with ordinary people who live in the community. So its back to the beginning. Once more.

The inability of both the ALP [Australian Labor Party] and most of the union movement to build genuine connections with the community organizations is the measure of their sterile attitude to politics. Both the Unions and the ALP are dependent for support from the local communities, but they do not have a clue how to build links between themselves and the local groups. After the mauling the Liberal-National Coalition received in the last election one would think that the Unions, if not the ALP, would have learned a lesson.

One of the salient aspects of Irish historical revisionists is their apparent devotion to religion. Unlike the Irish Political Review group, the Revisionists of Irish history show a deep-seated pre-occupation with religious sectarianism. The very last thing they want to admit is the possibility that the Irish could ever be motivated by any set of ideas other than Roman Catholicism. In fact to admit that the Irish were motivated by ordinary secular motives would be offensive to their ingrained obsessive Protestantism, a trait they learned from many generations of their British planter progenitors.

It is a fact of history that the initial invasion of Ireland was declared to be motivated by the alleged schismatic nature of the old Irish Christian Church. Later, subsequent invasions were said to be motivated by the reforming zeal of their newly-acquired Protestant religion. Thus in British and Anglo Irish ideology all Irish are automatically deemed to be Catholic and therefore deserving to be punished, or at least dispossessed. Furthermore all 'sophisticated' and 'modernist' Irish, or Anglo Irish, academics must be seen to be anti-catholic, or at worst anti-clerical, preferably "anti-catholic and anti-clerical".

Hence, although De Valera was very successful in defeating the fascist Blue-Shirt rebellion and their supporters in the Cumann na Gael party, those ignorant British ideologues persist in declaring him to be a fascist or a crypto-fascist. There can be little doubt that this distortion of history and reality has its conceptual origins in deep-seated protestant bigotry.

The Irish were mostly Catholics therefore they naturally deserved to be punished because they were evil and anti-democratic. It does not matter that the British have been continuously and systematically waging war against the rest of the world's peoples for close on four hundred years. Attributing similar motives to other people is a most natural practice.

Roy Foster, for all his alleged sophisticated mannerisms, amounts to nothing more than just another twisted protestant bigot. **Patrick O'Beirne**

war footing for the first time. Indeed production reached its peak in 1944 during the Allied mass bombing of cities.

One result of all the delays was that the main American assault, on Omaha Beach, was cut to ribbons. It took them ten days to recover. Sword Beach, on the left of the invasion was taken by Montgomery's British and Canadian troops. His objective that day, June 6th, was the city of Caen. He took it in August! Not took it exactly, but obliterated it and the surrounding towns from the air. They finished rebuilding Caen in 1962.

Throughout the war, resistance groups formed in occupied countries. Britain encouraged constant terrorist activities with appalling consequences for the civilian population. Most groups were like Dewavrin's organisation in France. Preparing, training, collecting intelligence and sheltering people on the run. Terrorist tactics were normally only used when necessary, when connected to some other vital war activity. So the British set up the Special Operations Executive to encourage widespread havoc and damn the consequences.

*continued on page 18*

In some places such as Yugoslavia, Albania, Northern Greece and the Massive Central in France, the guerrillas were able to hold their own and were either left alone or engaged in serious warfare. Matters in the East were entirely different. The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union was a war of extermination and everyone knew that. For every 100 Soviet prisoners captured, 97 were killed. The civilians fared little better. The Partisans became armies in the rear. It was in this context that the mass slaughter of the Jews was able to take place.

On a visit to Berlin I discovered that a Jewish school there was closed early in 1943. So it was after that that things got really nasty. I presume that the slaughter of Russians provided the situation and the personnel for the killing of the Jews. For some reason the Latvians provided more than their share of executioners.

Generally, the Germans treated their Western prisoners according to the Geneva Convention. There was a bad period when the Canadian General at Dieppe was found with written orders to shackle all prisoners (a common practice today) and there was some tit for tat until the Swiss got it sorted. Again Canadians captured at Sword beach were found with orders not to take prisoners and over a hundred of them were shot. The killing of about 150 Americans at Malmedy during the Battle of the Bulge was about as bad as it got. The British also tended to keep to the rules as far as I know and as far as the Germans were concerned.

The Americans were another matter altogether. President Roosevelt said:

"We have got to be tough with the Germans and I mean the German people not just the Nazis. We either have to castrate the German people or you have got to treat them in such a manner so they can't just go on reproducing people who want to continue the way they have in the past."

Eisenhower said "*I really hate the Germans... I say let Germany find out what it means to start a war...*" His deputy, General Lucius Clay said:

"I feel that the Germans should suffer from hunger and from cold as I believe such suffering is necessary to make them realize the consequences of a war which they caused... undoubtedly a large number of refugees have already died of starvation, exposure and disease... The death rate in many places has increased several fold, and infant mortality is approaching 65 per cent in many places. By the spring of 1946, German observers expect that epidemics and malnutrition will claim 2.5 to 3 million victims between the Oder and Elbe."

Americans without German surnames

tended to be less abusive!

The Americans transferred 200,000 prisoners to the Soviet Union where about 36% died; 750,000 to the French; and 76,000 to Belgium and Holland—very few of these survived. By December 1945 2,000 prisoners a month were being killed or maimed clearing mines in France and Benelux.

But the main abuse occurred in the US camps. Eisenhower declared that the prisoners were no longer POWs. They were Disarmed Enemy Forces without the protection of the rules of war. (They are still at that!) Prisoners were forbidden any shelter, any sanitary provisions and soon any medicines or food. 1,700,000 were killed in this way or simply shot for fun. When the huge losses emerged, the US said that the Russians did it. Then they said that it did not happen at all. Chemicals were used to help destroy the buried bodies.

But it is certain that mass graves can still be discovered—especially along the banks of the Rhine.

General Patton, in charge of the Southern area, was revolted by this. He opened all the camps in his area and told the prisoners to go home. He said:

"I am also opposed to sending POWs to work as slaves in foreign lands (in particular, to France) where many will be starved to death... it is amusing to recall that we fought the revolution in defense of the rights of man and the civil war to abolish slavery and have now gone back on both principles." He was dismissed for his troubles.

In the Far East the Americans simply did not take prisoners or killed them shortly after capture. The British not only took Japanese prisoners in Vietnam, but rearmed them, and set them fighting against the Viet Minh!

**Conor Lynch**

## Professor Paul Bew And The Forging Of A Shared Past

Part Three

I never seek out confrontations. I avoid them unless they are thrust at me. The only exception is the People's Democracy. In the Winter of 1969-70 I went to its mass meetings in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast and savaged it, without subtlety or nuance. They were disporting themselves as revolutionary socialists at that juncture and I heckled them and jeered them from a raw working-class viewpoint—from the viewpoint where I was placed in the social system—and told them that they were spoilt playboys and that they should go and play somewhere else. That approach enabled them to understand that something was being said. In a situation like that you might as well stay silent as express yourself with subtlety and nuance.

I don't know if Bew was present at any of those meetings. After he became an important person in the Northern Ireland establishment he said he wished he had stayed in bed instead of going on the Burntollet march of January 1969. (I did stay in bed.) A few years ago I got into conversation with a Continental researcher into the Irish Left. He said he had been told that Bew had taken part in the exciting Burntollet affair but found it hard to believe. I said I had not met him until a year later but I understood he had been a PD activist at the time.

I was acquainted with Bew for two or three years from the Spring of 1970, when he spent much of his time in Athol St. That was when we were trying to persuade nationalist Ireland to face the national

division head-on and to recognise the difference of nationality with a view to initiating some kind of *rapprochement* across it. When that proved a complete failure we tried to bring the North within the democracy of the state, with a view to establishing common political ground for people of both nationalities in the great party conflicts through which state affairs were determined. (There were real things at issue in the party conflict of those times.)

In 1972, or early 1973 at the latest, Bew took himself away from Athol St. One noticed that he wasn't around any more. And then one noticed him taking evasive action to prevent meetings in the street. So I let him be and helped him to avoid running into me. I assumed that he was tending to his career and that his seniors warned him off Athol St. That is a thing that happened, and when Bew became a senior figure himself he gave good advice to others.

Before he took himself away he told me that I really should make myself acquainted with Louis Althusser's development of Marxism as a scientific philosophy. As he described it to me I thought it was something I could do without. Old-fashioned Kantian common-sense was good enough for my purposes.

I think Bew saw me as a kind of *idiot savant*, who could do certain things in a way that was beyond reason, but was severely limited by this inexplicable skill. Nevertheless he did his best with me. He

explained to me that Ptolemaic astronomy kept going for a thousand years by means of ingenious variations which enabled it to handle anomalous facts, but in the end someone had to come along and conceive a new system which made for easier calculation. And Althusser was the Copernicus or Galileo of Marxist philosophy.

I was sceptical. In the late seventies, when Northern politics had fallen into a futile routine awaiting the outcome of the war, I read Althusser to assure myself that my scepticism had been well-founded. It was. And I published a series of articles about Althusser, translating what he said into ordinary language.

By then Althusser had fallen out of fashion, having strangled his wife in what was described as "*altruistic suicide*".

Bew published a rigorously Marxist account of Northern Ireland in 1979 along with Henry Patterson and Peter Gibbon. I read it and was surprised that they described the functions of a state fairly accurately, and yet could write that Northern Ireland was a state. And I was surprised that rigorous Leninists should think that Lenin and Bukharin had the same understanding of Imperialism. (I had given up Marxism after reading Althusser and seeing that he was held in high esteem by all the Marxist tendencies, but I thought the conflict between Lenin and Bukharin had a relevance far beyond the theory of Marxism.)

The next time I saw Bew after 1973 was when he and Patterson accepted an invitation from the Belfast CLR (Campaign for Labour Representation) to come to one of its monthly meetings to talk about their book and/or to say what they thought about the CLR idea that the exclusion of Northern Ireland from the party-politics of the state excluded it from the democratic life of the state and fostered sectarian division.

Unfortunately they spent most of their time refuting—or denouncing—the B&ICO. Although the CLR had been set in motion by the B&ICO, its membership was very much larger than that of the B&ICO and most of them had no interest in it, so Bewpat wasted their breath.

If they had shown that the CLR case was based on a fallacy they would have relieved me of a burden. But what they said on the matter was unintelligible to me, and I was the person there most in tune with them.

I recently came across a note that I made of their speeches at the time, and give it as its stands. (Geoff is Jeffrey Dudgeon, who was a member of the CLR but not of the B&ICO. He had been at public school with Bew.)

#### CLR MEETING, 22ND MARCH 1980. BEW/PATTERSON

**Bew:** They were here only as a personal favour to Geoff. They had spoken to many ridiculous people since the publication of their book, and thought they might as well speak to some more.

They had explained their reasons for breaking with the B&ICO in various papers at the time. The *Irish Communist* keeps on yelping about Althusser, but it is obvious that the B&ICO is nearer to being Althusserian than they are. Hindness and Hirst have had a great influence within the B&ICO.

The B&ICO has been crawling to Unionism and slobbering over it. It justified the UWC [Ulster Workers' Council] strike in 1974. It is torn between whether to worship the British working class or the Protestant working class.

The aim of their book was to subvert both the Unionist and Nationalist ideologies. It succeeded because it was criticised in the *Workers' Weekly* even before it was published. This is quite important. It has been attacked by both Unionist and Nationalist hacks. It set out to prove that Marxism had the concepts to analyse Northern Ireland. These are to be found in the state and not in imperialism. They set out to stimulate debate among social Republican leftists. Their aim was not to provide a political programme, which every sectarian leftist dreams of. They have provoked a debate in both the Irish and British CPs [Communist Parties] and in the SWP [Socialist Workers' Party].

Since 1972 the B&ICO has not had that effect outside its own ranks, excepting Angela Clifford's translations and introductions. The B&ICO is now taken as joke, except among people who are "*engage*" [French]. But the divisions within the SWP matter. The B&ICO is discredited by its associations. It frequently praises Patrick Buckland's book. Until 1972 the B&ICO was not primarily concerned about academic debates. Since then it has done no original work. Patrick Buckland and Desmond Bowen are now central for them. The B&ICO thought Buckland was advocating integration, but he has recently converted to Republicanism.

Speculation about Cardinal Cullen's Ultramontanism underlies a curious form of idealism. This was not related to class analysis but to Catholic spirituality. They are obsessed by the Catholic world view. There is no word about the land question in the 19th century, or about the Whittaker watershed of 1958. This is an incredible academic mode. The Central Bank might as well not exist as far as the B&ICO is concerned. It is pre-occupied with speculations on spirit.

**Patterson:** Changes in B&ICO position. Devolution/Integration.

The failure of class politics is now explained by parochial institutions.

"Stormont for fifty years followed a policy of encouraging reaction in the Protestant working class". Patronage etc. 1972 marked a fundamental change.

We treat the state as incomprehensible except in relation to two class alliances which exist in Ulster. It is a question of two class alliances and not merely institutions. He does not see how the introduction of the British Labour Party could change anything.

The NILP [Northern Ireland Labour Party] has been analysed by the B&ICO, or at least by sections of the B&ICO.

He rejects the idea that the Provos can be dealt with by the British Government making it clear that N. Ireland will remain part of UK so long as it wills. "Your solution is a purely magical one".

The B&ICO has made no substantive analysis of the N. Ireland state. It would have done so if it could. "You cannot do it because of your theoretical position". The only reference to the N. Ireland state by the B&ICO has been a dismissal of Michael Farrell's book as a five pound fantasy. For all its talk of the real world, it could not see that Farrell's book was quite factual.

They have dealt with the oppressive nature of the state, so Republicans cannot dismiss their work as they dismiss the B&ICO.

\*

[LATER:]

**Patterson:** The particular form that the state in N. Ireland took was influenced by the particular situation in N. Ireland and relationships between Britain and Ireland at the time.

The Catholics were not unalterably opposed to the formation of the state.

The hard line Republican position was insubstantial in Belfast before 1920 and the shipyard expulsions. They became opposed to it when it was clear that the new state was to be formed on sectarian paramilitary institutions.

There was a threat to the state, but its effectiveness depended on the way it was represented.

**Bew:** One can make an equally abstract case for integration, or for independence or for any other solution. At the moment neither integration nor independence is on the cards.

"The only basis for solution is struggle against existing forms of triumphalism."

The solution will not come about by a change of institutions.

The defeat of "Troops Out" would have limited progressive effect.

Integration as an abstract scheme equals united Ireland as an abstract scheme. It has no mass support.

## PROGRESSION

I did not read anything of Bew's for many years after that. I noticed that books kept appearing and whenever I saw them offered at bargain prices I bought them. In the early 1990s I chanced to see a review in the *Daily Telegraph* which commended him and Patterson for being "*ex-Marxists*". I do not know by what process of thought they became ex-Altusserians in the first instance, and then ex-Marxists. Last year I looked at the collection of their books that I had picked up over the years and found that they were new editions of the book published in the late seventies, and that they made the transition from rigorous Marxism to ex-Marxism by the simple expedient of cutting out references to Marx, Lenin etc.

In the early 1990s Bew became a film reviewer for the purpose of disparaging the epoch-making film about Michael Collins. That film was epoch-making because it broke the grip of the British Film Censorship over American films on Irish themes. Regarded as history it was not a good film because it treated the War of Independence as a revival of the 1916 Insurrection, cutting out the intervening Election. It bent history in the British interest, but it broke the *de facto* rule that Irish history was not a suitable subject for films. The way that rule had been enforced was that the British Board of Film Censors let Hollywood producers know that they would refuse Certificates to films that had not been cleared by them, and the British market was big enough to give Britain effective control of Hollywood in this matter. (I comment on Bew as a film reviewer in *War, Insurrection And Election In Ireland 1914-21*).

I assume the ban was breached because of the rise of the independent producer. The British Establishment was then reduced to damage limitation. It was when Bew was trundled out, along with Ruth Dudley Edwards and BBC Political Correspondent John Cole, to condemn the making of the film in the London press that I realised that he had made his way into the Establishment.

That was also when I realised that the 1918 Election had been cut out of the sequence of causation in Irish history of the period, so that what happened in 1919-21 could be treated as a mere rebellion.

1916 was being condemned on the ground that it was conducted without a prior electoral mandate. But an electoral mandate for independence was given in 1918. The British Parliament chose to ignore it. The elected Irish leaders set about establishing independent Irish government. The British Government tried to suppress this, and to carry on governing Ireland without even the fig-leaf of representative status provided by

the Home Rule Party attendance at Westminster. The Irish Government persisted with its own democratically-mandated system which the British tried to suppress and it obstructed British rule by whatever means it could.

Professor Patterson has explicitly described the 1919 Dail as illegal, and the Lord Professor obviously concurs. They do not spell things out, but the necessary inference is that, despite all that was said by Britain in its Great War, legitimacy continued to be Imperial rather than democratic.

It is a position that can only be sustained by fudges and evasions and red herrings.

It is said, for example, that the electoral mandate for independence was not a mandate for violence. This has to be said quickly in passing because it does not bear much thinking about.

The best way is to cut out the Election by losing it in a welter of incidentals.

It will take some space to show how the Lord Professor does it. The book is like a magpie nest, cluttered with glittering bits and pieces picked up here and there. There is little in the way of narrative. The effect depends on the suggestiveness of the bits and pieces, each taken by itself, and with self-contradiction amongst them averted by the absence of narrative connection. It would take a fairly long quotation to demonstrate how it is done, and that must remain for a future article. Here I will only note the resurrection of Serjeant Sullivan. It is clear that Bew was impressed by Sullivan's tirade against all that happened in Ireland after 1916, *Old Ireland*, which he published in London in 1927, and one of the glittering bits is a direct quotation from it:

"Dillon charged that a vote for Sinn Fein [in 1918] was a vote for a new insurrection; de Valera rebuked him. One outspoken product of a celebrated parliamentary nationalist family, Serjeant A.M. Sullivan, made the point forcefully: 'Many murderers were elected, but they had not stood as murderers'..." (p392).

I will try to find sense in that sentence in the next article. But who was Serjeant Sullivan?

He was still remembered when I was young. And there was a time when I could have said what a Serjeant was. Here I can only say that it was a kind of superior barrister committed directly to the service of the Crown. And Sullivan was the last of them in Ireland.

The celebrated parliamentary nationalist family that he came from was that of A.M. and T.D. Sullivan, who published *The Nation* after Gavan Duffy emigrated to Australia in the 1850s. They were publishers and journalists with a knack for writing memorable songs. They hated

the Fenians, but when the mode in which the Fenians were put down aroused popular sympathy with them, the Sullivans captured that sympathy in articles and songs and harnessed it to 'Constitutional nationalism'.

If the son had been a chip off the old block he would have tried to do likewise with 1916. It was a thing that might have been done, but Redmond, Dillon and Sullivan jnr. did not have it in them even to attempt it.

Sullivan, the son of agitators, became a barrister by profession, qualified for both the Irish and English Bars, but practised only in Ireland, where he was made up to a Silk in 1908 and a Serjeant in 1912. He was an active recruiter of Irish cannonfodder for the War—the one in which blood sacrifice was openly called for and honoured. In 1916 he was asked to go to London to act as Casement's defence counsel. English barristers—for all that one hears about the "*cab rank principle*" at the Bar—wouldn't touch the case. Sullivan was a junior without hierarchical status at the English Bar, and was hostile to Casement whom he saw as a man consumed by vanity. Furthermore he was committed by contract not to act in cases against the Crown, and in the circumstance of 1916 the only relevant defence of Casement would have struck very hard at the Crown.

He consulted various people in authority about his obligation not to act against the Crown. They assured him that it would be quite alright for him to do it. There was no need to spell it out. The Crown found itself in a slightly embarrassed position with regard to Casement's trial and Sullivan got them out of it. British public opinion was reassured that Casement was getting a fair trial when an eminent Irish fellow-countryman was given special permission to come and defend him. (British opinion is easily reassured by irrelevancies in such things.) And Sullivan could be relied on not to make the case that needed making. So the greatest service he could do the Crown was to act against it in this case.

Facing him on the prosecution side was the old enemy of 'Constitutional nationalism', F.E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead), the Attorney-General. A few years later Smith rewarded Sullivan for the way he defended the traitor by making him a Silk in England.

In 1918 Sullivan was given the job of reviving the recruitment of British cannonfodder in Ireland. After the 1918 Election he became particularly active in the efforts of the Imperial regime to suppress the democracy which had asserted itself in the Election. In 1921 he was shocked by the Truce, which he saw as a surrender to anarchy. Britain did not regain enough ground with the Treaty to conciliate him. In 1922 he shook the dust

of the Free State from his feet and went to England to begin a long and prosperous career there. Thirty years later he published his memoirs, with a Foreword by the Lord Chancellor.

It is logical that revisionism should find its final resting place in a revival of Serjeant Sullivan's understanding of things. *Old Ireland* could do with reprinting, so that we can see where we are heading. Meanwhile, here is a taster.

In 1921 Britain was facing—

"De Valera, a Spanish school teacher; Griffith, a Welsh journalist; Stack, a Kerry solicitor's clerk; Barton, an Anglo-Irish squireen; and Childers, a renegade Englishman, posing as the "representatives" of Ireland... Of these "representatives" the solicitor's clerk, the Anglo-Irishman and the English renegade represented the I.R.A., the Welshman their apologist, and the Spaniard with the characteristic conceit

of his race thought that he represented everybody and everything... A gunman of a later delegation gave an interesting account of the Cabinet Committee that negotiated with him. 'There was only wan rale gintleman, that fellow Chamberlain, *he didn't offer to shake hands with me'...*" (p294).

**Brendan Clifford**

**To be continued**

### **War, Insurrection And Election In Ireland 1914-21.**

A comment on the denunciation of the film, Michael Collins, by Professor Paul Bew and others  
by *Brendan Clifford*.

48pp. ISBN 0 85034 079 9. *Athol Books*, Jan. 1997.  
€5, £4.

**Does  
it**

**Stack**

**up?**

#### **An Taisce and Fintan O'Toole**

The journalist and Assistant Editor of the *Irish Times*, Fintan O'Toole has made a career of lecturing the nation and in particular Fianna Fail. From his high moral and ethical viewpoint he has led the "ashamed to be Irish" brigade for so long now that he has become predictable to the point of absolute boredom. But when things are in *his own interests*, there is a very different attitude about how things should be. Who can forget his support for Roy Foster who left his leafy London home (for a day) to come over and object to a local farmer who wanted to build a home for his son to be near him on the farm. Foster pompously (could he ever do otherwise?) objected because it could take *from* Yeat's hinterland. As a result of his interference, the poor elderly farmer was denied his planning permission. But what happens if the house belongs to someone with a powerful media influence? Say someone like O'Toole himself. And this was not his own residence but his holiday home to boot. O'Toole bought a holiday cottage, the traditional Irish country vested kind, one storey, usually put up by the local council for workers' families. It is situated in the Burren village of Ballyvaughan, an area of outstanding beauty. O'Toole lobbied in his planning to the local County Clare Council to *quadruple the size of his holiday home*. The local Clare Taisce Association

objected labelling the proposal "*criminal*". What happened next is quite amazing. The local Taisce group came under sustained attack "*from supporters of the journalist and from head office in Dublin. It's then Chairman, Gavin Harte unreservedly apologised to Mr. O'Toole and withdrew the objection*". Once An Taisce head-office withdrew its objection, Fintan O'Toole secured his planning permission. The local Taisce people said that they had been thrown to the wolves by Dublin. They also claimed that the: "*Fintan O'Toole situation changed everything and the environment will suffer as a result*". The only media outlet that ran with this interesting article was the *Irish Daily Mail* which has to be congratulated for its constant antenna to what's going on in Ireland. Is the Planning Tribunal interested in this story or the ones only generated by members of Fianna Fail?

#### **The English Queen and her subjects**

On slow news-days, the Visit is brought up and as we are told to write a line under the past and *move on*, amusingly we then have to become acquainted with a very different past and become *enmeshed in it*, all over again. But the 17th May 2008 nuptials of the Queen's grandson, Peter Phillips (son of Anne, Princess Royal and Captain Mark Phillips who divorced and remarried) look also to a past that one would have thought had gone away. The nature of that past is Britain's deeply sectarian and anti-Catholic one, where matters of State and Monarchy are concerned. It had been let known that the Queen had wanted her Prime Minister, Gordon Brown (a Scottish son of the manse) to change the Act of Succession to allow a Catholic to marry into the Royal

Family. After all, Peter Phillips was *eleventh* in line to the throne and in no fear of becoming King. His Canadian-born fiancée Autumn Kelly, a Catholic, are set to marry in St. George's Chapel, Windsor and the reception is to be held in Frogmore which according to Peter: "*Granny and Grandpa have been very kind about as it is a very special place for them*". In an exclusive interview given to *Hello* (No. 1020, 13th May, 2008) the couple when asked about the Act of Succession, Autumn was the one to answer: "*I was actually welcomed into the Church of England quite a while ago. We'll be spending the rest of our lives in this country and our children, if we are blessed with them, will be Church of England. Why would I not want to be in the same religion as my children?*" So it seems that for Autumn, the crucial thing was that her children were going to be brought up in CoE and she had the alternative of toeing the line or not marrying. Not exactly great choices to a girl in love. But the thought of the Visit has brought a rash of welcomes and invitations from the usual sources. The seventh Earl of Rosse, Brendan Rosse of Birr Castle stated about "*hosting the Queen*" that "*We naturally hope to be considered worthy...*" Brendan and his artist wife Alison are soon to be paying a visit to Prince Charles of Wales and his wife the Duchess of Cornwall. Both are trustees of the Tree Register of which Prince Charles is patron. Speaking of the Earl of Rosse, his son Patrick Oxmantown, or Lord Oxmantown as he is known will be "*our man*" (official attaché) in China for the Beijing Olympic Games. The *Irish Mail* informs us that "*he is fully-equipped for any Chinese double-speak, propaganda and stonewalling. Patrick speaks fluent Mandarin and knows what to expect having witnessed at first hand how the repressive Chinese regime works*". One hopes he is more diplomatic than the *Mail* wishes him as we have quite a lot of trade/cultural interests with China, the new World power.

#### **China and Chad**

Remembering the huge hit that Riverdance was in China (indeed there might well be some company out there still such was the rapturous reception the Chinese gave the dance-group) two local Cork writers recently attended the Shanghai International Literary Festival which took place in China's biggest city. Gerry Murphy and Conal Creedon went on the trip which was organised by the Munster Literature Centre, Culture Ireland and the Irish Consulate in Shanghai. During the festival the lads flew the flag for the People's Republic of Cork when they read in downtown Shanghai. Other events lined up included readings by Conal and Gerry at Shanghai University, Fudan University and at the Shanghai Writer's

Committee at the Loudan Library where some of the local writers translated their work. Both Gerry and Conal have recently published new books, *End Of Part One—New And Selected Poems* and the *Second City Trilogy* respectively. Leaving culture and onwards to the world of politics (or propaganda) we were told that Fine Gael MEP Colm Burke, a Cork Solicitor (who took over the job when Simon Coveney became a TD) had intentions to visit Chad and see for himself how bad conditions were out there. Unfortunately—how should one put this—Mr. Burke does not have a high profile or even a medium one so we never found out how he got on over there. But, as he is visibly hanging on every pole and tree around Cork at the moment—rather *his picture* is urging on the local citizenry to vote yes to Lisbon, we take it he came back in one piece. But still Chad or rather the European Union Peacekeeping mission there, EUFOR CHAD/RCA, has his keenest support because the "EU and the international community" have a "responsibility to protect civilians in such dire circumstances and the deployment of EUFOR is an attempt to do just that". Mr. Burke has nothing to say on the scandal that is Palestine which just shows his true commitment to international peace and justice. With Israel celebrating its 60th birthday, we were informed that "there is one area in which they have the edge: David Ben-Gurion International Airport has recently been ranked first in Europe though" as the Irish Daily Mail continued "it's further from Europe than a Ryanair airport is from its advertised destination. If the Israelis can pull that off in the middle of the desert surrounded by implacable enemies, it seems all the stranger that we must still suffer in slow lines in our airports." The paper did not reveal who or what body had made this surreal decision.

### **Nuala O'Faolain and Death**

The media has been at it again. When the writer Nuala O'Faolain announced on air that she was dying of cancer and naturally didn't want to—the whole thing was treated in such a way that it disgraced everyone involved. Media called it the "breaking of the last taboo—death itself". Now if there is one people that definitely knows 'how to do death' it is the Irish. We are famous for our wakes and huge funerals. Only that very week I had been at a three day funeral of a country relative and there was plenty of jollity as the person who died was quite old and had a hard but wonderful life. Rural Ireland still has that kick and know how. What fascinated me about the Dublin media reaction was its massive commodification of the dying writer's fears about death. Immediately there were calls from a former partner (somewhat disaffected I guess)

for euthanasia. O'Faolain was lauded for her courage. Former friends and present ones—at least that is what they claimed—urged the country to face up to certain facts, especially death and suffering. I would never have believed this, if I was out of the country, and had been told about all this craziness and hysteria. The media pack **fed** on it and it was not an edifying spectacle. It could be argued that O'Faolain colluded with the media hype but after all she was dying and deserved her dignity. With friends like hers, who would ever need enemies. But she had the Catholic funeral, burial and eulogies. Marian Finucane, an RTE presenter, gave an oration at the funeral Mass. She told how Nuala had been a good friend when she lost her child, and various other niceties. But in telling us that Nuala had been "kicked out of UCD for behaviour unbecoming and that was good as well and she got her scholarships for two institutions in England that gave her a bigger platform, a bigger space for her intellect", Finucane revealed something unexpected. This RTE public service broadcaster had outed her own prejudices and placed England over Ireland as the only intellectual space that really mattered. UCD she had avowed was not in the reckoning.

### **Lisbon Treaty**

Look hard at the Treaty. It's on the internet—which a majority of voters still have not got. But go to an Internet Café and look at it. It is all legal gobbledegoose which even lawyers cannot understand because it inserts words into, and subtracts words from, all of the treaties which up to now have been working all right. An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen admitted he has not read it. It has, it seems, been made intentionally obtuse so that the ordinary citizen cannot read what is being done to him or her by bureaucrats in Brussels. The EU is not a democratic institution. The elected MEPs meet, not in Brussels, but in Strasbourg where they do not make the laws. The laws are made by the Brussels bureaucracy and are rubberstamped by the Parliament in Strasbourg. Already we have laws such as forbidding the Irish cutting their own turf—even on your own bog for your own fire—from February 2009. The Lisbon Treaty will give the EU power to tax us directly. It will establish an EU Constitution making the Irish Constitution ineffective in all matters of EU law. It will establish the EU as a legal entity—a State made up of sub-states. Ireland would lose its sovereignty and its right to govern itself except under the EU. The Dail would lose the power to initiate and pass laws for Ireland in areas such as Public services, crime, justice, immigration, public health, tourism, culture, energy, transport and more. It is a Treaty to support the arms trade. The European Commission

has made it clear that the European Defence Agency is to expand and increase EU military expenditure. The mutual defence and solidarity clause allows a group of states within the EU to create their own armed force to take part in more demanding missions (not defined). The formation of EU battle groups shows the new militarization of the EU. If you vote 'yes' you are voting in favour of the arms trade which is devastating Third World countries and enriching millionaires in the EU and the USA,. Is that what you want to do?

Just to make sure that arms manufacturers and other millionaires make a fatter profit, the EU is carrying on a sustained attack on wages and working conditions across Europe while pretending to do the opposite. Already the EU is making it illegal for trade unions to enforce pay standards higher than the minimum wages for migrant workers. The pay and working conditions of Irish people are threatened including Irish service and factory workers, local authority workers and civil servants. The EU Supreme Court ruled recently that governments, trade unions or even local laws are powerless to invoke agreements already made for a wage higher than that fixed for migrants. Jim Larkin and James Connolly must be turning in their graves. Voting 'yes' to Lisbon is like a turkey voting for Christmas. No concrete advantages in favour of Lisbon have been advanced by the 'yes' camp. Vague statements such as "Let's be in the centre of the EU" and "delivering opportunities for its citizens in the future, giving it the capacity to respond to tomorrow's challenges..." And the Treaty "will boost the union's capacity to act, and promote greater coherence and continuity when it addresses global issues". Did you ever hear such hokus pokus in all your life? Are we to vote away our sovereignty so that John Bruton will feel more comfortable in Washington, DC? Let's have some commonsense and let's keep our feet on the ground. What the 'yes' people are saying and what the Treaty says just does not stack up in real life.

### **English honours and Peace group**

What does a Peace Group do? Such as the Meath Peace Group, the Irish Peace and Reconciliation Platform, the Glenree Centre for Reconciliation, Co-operation Ireland?

It is a great pity that Lord Mayor of Cork Donal Coughlin did not read Julitta Clancy's letter in the *Irish Times* recently where she stated there is "still so much segregation, distrust, misunderstanding, hurt, pain, bitterness, historic legacies, alienation, sectarianism and even fear" in Northern Ireland and that more work is required for peace—i.e. the "Peace

Process" is still ongoing and is not complete and is still drawing large monies from Irish taxpayers' funds so as to counter the "*xenophobia*" and "*rigidly nationalist mindsets*" of us in Ireland's 26 counties. Julietta has been decorated by the Queen of England for her work among us. She got an MBE. For similar work amongst the Irish natives, Tony Kennedy of Co-op Ireland and Ian White of Glencree Centre got OBE's. Perhaps Donal Counihan (Fianna Fail, Cork South Centre) will be next on the English honour's list for his poppy wearing at the last WW1 event.

### Lest we Forget

Lord Mayor of Cork Donal Counihan has done it again. He wore the plastic poppy to commemorate the British who murdered two Lord Mayors of Cork and two Mayors of Limerick during our War of Independence. And he then lent his presence supposedly representing the people of Cork at the Remembrance ceremonies at the British Legion monument. Now Donal Counihan wants to confer the freedom of Cork city on John Major for "*his contribution to the Northern Peace Process*". To get the resolution passed he combined Albert Reynolds in the resolution and he changed Standing Orders which required a 75% majority. The resolution was passed by 70%. Albert Reynolds deserves the honour and Donal Counihan refused to put their names forward in two separate resolutions to ensure that John Major was passed jointly with Albert Reynolds. John Major's involvement appears to have been negative in the North. He refused to sign the George Mitchell Principles of Non-Violence and also he was a Secretary in the Conservative Government when the shoot-to-kill policy was in place. There is very strong feeling among the people of Cork that Major should not get the Freedom of the City. John Major is a member of the world's biggest arms trading group—the Carlyle Group.

Michael Stack

## UNITY continued

sector, because the right to provide unrestricted services took priority over collective wage agreements.

"Twice in recent times we have found Polish workers at Moneypoint in Co. Clare being grossly exploited by German contractors and paid as little as €5 an hour. In another instance we discovered Serbian electricians being paid as little as \$3.81 an hour. We were only able to ensure proper rates were paid to these workers after strong pressure, including the prospect of industrial action, was exerted on the companies concerned."

The Ruffert judgement raised the spectre of similar abuses of vulnerable migrant workers in future, he said, and would make it "*all but impossible*" for Irish workers and companies to compete for tenders. Mr. Devoy said that "*until EU states were prepared to recognise the right of workers to take industrial action in defence of living standards*", the TEEU would not support "*reforms that only strengthen big business*".

"If the Irish Government and the European Commission want popular support for the Lisbon Treaty they must strengthen the Social Charter and enshrine its provisions in EU law," added Mr. Devoy

However, the Civil, Public and Services Union (CPSU), with more than 13,000 members working in the clerical and administrative grades of all Government departments, has urged their members to vote 'Yes'.

They said the Lisbon Treaty would strengthen Irish workers' rights and give them legal protection through the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

They said a 'Yes' vote was 'in the interest of ordinary workers'.

Ireland is the only country that will hold a referendum on the Treaty on June 12th.

## Cobh Apology to James Connolly

COBH Town Council, County Cork has passed a motion to posthumously apologise to historic Trade Union leader James Connolly who was chased out of Cobh in 1911.

Councillor Kieran McCarthy, Sinn Fein, proposed the motion at the May meeting of Cobh Town Council.

It read:

"In view of the recent act of political maturity and reconciliation which invited the North's First Minister Ian Paisley to our Town Hall, that this council now undertakes to issue a posthumous apology on behalf of the people of Cobh to the late Republican Socialist and Trade Union leader, James Connolly, who was physically chased out of our town in March 1911, by a violent mob in the company of the then town chairman."

Cllr McCarthy explained that this week marked the 92nd anniversary of Connolly's execution. He said newspaper reports from the *Cork Examiner* of the day, and two books, confirm that he was attacked and chased from the town.

Connolly did, however, return to Cobh a few weeks later and delivered a speech to members of the Council, who were later chastised by the Chairman for attending.

Connolly also returned two years later with James Larkin and got a rousing welcome from the people of Cobh on that occasion.

The Council also heard Connolly was a member of the British forces for six years, and during that time he served at Haulbowline Naval Base in Cobh, Co. Cork.

Cllr McCarthy proposed that a scroll of apology be presented to Connolly's family.

Cllr Danny Crowley, Fianna Fail supported the motion and said he carried a photo of Connolly in his wallet at all times. "To me he is the greatest patriot we ever had," he said.

**"Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy"**  
- C.J. O'Donnell, *The Lordship of the World, 1924, p. 145*

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The Irish State was founded around a core foreign policy idea – the right of the Irish nation to have an independent state of its own and through that state to make a distinct mark in the world. The limits of this independence were necessarily first and foremost the ability of the state to develop and act free of British constraints.

Until the 1960s, Irish citizens took for granted that this was what the state was about. People knew the Proclamation of 1916 with its continental European alignment, and there was in general a remarkably high level of knowledge about for-

eign affairs. This knowledge of the world was not derivative of the British liberal media and was informed by commentaries from a uniquely Irish perspective in newspapers such as the *Irish Press*, various journals, and even in early RTE television.

Today such a perspective is difficult to find. The Irish seem no longer to think about such things. Commentary and debate on foreign policy is often little more than a provincial echo of Anglo-American concerns or the fashions of pop culture.



## "Unity of Labour is the Hope of the World"

Two leading figures in the trade Union movement have given their backing to a 'Yes' vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum precipitating a wider Public/Private Trade Union divide on the issue!

At the IMPACT Trade Union Conference in Kilkenny on 15th May 2008, Irish Congress of Trade Unions General Secretary, David Begg and IMPACT General Secretary, Peter McLoone both said the Charter of Fundamental Rights which is such an important part of the reform treaty was too important to be missed out on.

Their backing for Lisbon came days before the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was due to consider its position on the treaty referendum which takes place on Thursday, 12th June 2008 and the position of two such prominent leaders is guaranteed to affect the stance of Congress.

On 5th May 2008, the National Executive of the Technical Engineering and Electrical Union (TEEU) advised their 45,000 members to vote 'No' in the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty which has led to a war of words with other Unions campaigning for a 'Yes' vote.

Mr. Begg said he could understand that many people within the Trade Union movement were disenchanted with the 'European Project'.

"They regard the concept of social Europe as having been put on the back boiler at best or at worst sacrificed on the altar of neoliberalism," he said. "These fears are not irrational for the present Commission is probably the most neo-liberal ever. However, what is most important from a trade Union point of view is the Charter of Fundamental Rights."

"It would be, in my view, a serious error of judgement to miss the opportunity to give legal effect to the Charter."

Mr. McLoone said the Charter was a prize that Trade Unions across Europe had pursued for many, many years and those Unions would be amazed if the Irish

Unions were prepared to risk its rejection when it was finally within their grasp.

### LARGEST CRAFT UNION

The State's largest craft Union, the Technical Engineering and Electrical Union, has urged its 45,000 members to vote "No" in the June Lisbon Treaty referendum.

TEEU General Secretary designate, Eamon Devoy said recent judgements by the European Court of Justice demonstrated that the pendulum had swung against workers' rights and in favour of big business.

In these circumstances, it would be "foolish" to give more power to EU institutions.

"The decision by the TEEU, which represents middle-income workers in manufacturing, construction, energy, engineering and electrical contracting, will come as a serious blow for the "Yes" side in the treaty debate, which is increasingly worried about the breadth of sectional interests showing hostility to the treaty." (*Irish Times*-6.5.2008).

The TEEU is one of the first major

Unions to take a public stance on the referendum; a number of other Unions have said they would like to see concessions from the Government on agency workers in the National Pay talks before pledging their support.

The National Executive of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) will decide on its stance when it meets on May 18th.

The pro-Treaty group, the *Irish Alliance for Europe*, described the TEEU's decision as premature because, it claimed, the issues the Union wanted addressed would be dealt with in the Treaty.

Its Chairman, former Labour Party leader, Ruairí Quinn, TD, said it was "very much" in the interests of ordinary workers that the treaty be passed. "By voting 'Yes' we will be giving unprecedented protection to Irish workers by enshrining the Charter of Fundamental Rights into EU law", he said.

Deputy Quinn predicted other Unions would support the treaty.

### THE TEEU ARGUMENT

Explaining the decision of his Union's National Executive, Mr. Devoy said that while recent European court judgements accepted workers' right to organise in Unions, they negated this by saying industrial action could not be taken where it conflicted with the provision of goods and services, regardless of the social consequences.

He cited the Laval case, where the Court found against Swedish workers who were preventing lower-wage Latvian workers from accessing a building site, and the Viking case, involving a Finnish company which crewed its boats with cheaper Estonian workers.

A third case, known as Ruffert, struck a particular chord with TEEU members, he said. Here, the court found that a Polish subcontractor operating in Germany was entitled to pay workers less than half the agreed minimum wage for the construction

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