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Three Down, ? To Go

So the mistress of the Party has had her way again. A third Taoiseach has fallen to the wiles of the failed and resentful party politician chosen by the Oath-bound Directorate of the *Irish Times* to front its campaign against the only functional party of the Republic.

In the moment of its third victory the *Irish Times* felt slightly uneasy. Bertie pre-empted it. Stephen Collins announced that he would be got rid of by being subjected to a process of "*death by a thousand cuts*". But he went while the journalistic knives were still being sharpened for a Summer campaign. And in his going he launched a slight counter-offensive which made Tara Street feel uneasy. In order to confuse the situation it gave momentary prominence on its pages to voices in its extensive stable of journalists which are usually required to be silent. The "*right of due process*" was even mentioned, after due process had been systematically over-ridden—and will be again when an opportunity is found.

"*Due process*" is an empty phrase in Ireland today. It has been shredded by the *Irish Times* and the Flood Tribunal acting together in pursuit of a vendetta. Both were determined to get Ahern. He was harassed fanatically over matters which had nothing to do with the issue for which the Tribunal was set up. And in the end they got him. But what did they get him for? For nothing in particular. It was just that the Judge conducting the Tribunal, outside the judicial process, under ill-defined authority conferred by the Dail, chose to keep on extending the range of the Inquisition, regardless of the initial object for which the Tribunal was set up, because he was intent on getting Ahern.

The procedure he implemented was a bizarre mixture of inquisitorial and adversarial, being one or the other according to his wish, and without the safeguards that would operate if it was definitely either one or the other. The endless bullying of witnesses with regard to small financial transactions a decade ago or more until some usable equivocal

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For An EU Federal State!

In June the Irish people will be asked to vote on the Lisbon Treaty. We urge people to vote "No", to help save the EU project from its enemies.

One could parse and analyse every word of the Treaty for its meaning and then consider its real meaning. And no doubt that will be done as it was done during the French referendum of 2005.

But the forthcoming referendum comes down to one question and it is the same question that was asked of the Irish people in 1972 when we voted to join the EEC. That question is: are you in favour of the European project? From 1972 until the Maastricht Treaty the answer to that question was an unambiguous "yes".

The Irish people experienced the European project as a liberation. Roger Casement, a founding father of this State, believed that one of the most iniquitous aspects of British rule in Ireland was that it cut us off from Continental Europe. Joining the EEC was an opportunity to participate in an international project of cooperation on an equal basis with the

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The *Irish Times* Record On Kosovo And The Men Of The West

It would be easy to begin this article with an *ad hominem* argument against Unionist polemicist Steven King. I could provide lengthy quotations from the vast body of his articles that I detest before proceeding to an exception. But that would be pure self-indulgence. So let me proceed straight away to his *Irish Examiner* column of February 20th, where he raised questions

that the overwhelming majority of western media pundits have been afraid to articulate:

"It is too easily forgotten that no one, not Carson any more than de Valera, Collins or Connolly, wanted to see Ireland carved in two. Even the first Stormont prime minister, James Craig, thought it was probably just a temporary expedient. But as it became clear that the border was

going to become a permanent fixture, anti-partitionism became a central tenet of Irish foreign policy. From India to Vietnam to Korea, dividing countries on ethnic lines was no answer to disputes. All changed, changed utterly this week. The three main Dail parties have not just come to accept partition for the time being—they actively support it... I should point out that I'm not talking about the North. Rather, I refer to the declarations of support for the partition of Serbia, also known as the independence of Kosovo. On Monday, much of the west—led by the US, Britain and France—seized on Kosovo as an opportunity to parade before the world as democracy's champion and

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

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response is elicited could not be carried on in a law court. It is carried on by the Tribunal only because the Judge, freed from the judicial restriction of courtroom law, allows it—wishes it.

The Tribunal simulates a law court. And there is a Judge on the Bench—only it is not a Bench in a law court.

The Tribunal is like the *Times* Commission set up to pin the Phoenix Park murders on Parnell. But there has been nobody of the status of Michael Davitt or William O'Brien to reduce the Judge sitting out of Court to size.

In an adversarial system there would be a barrister acting for the prosecution and a barrister acting for the defence with a Judge to keep the prosecution within the rules. But in the Tribunal the prosecution barrister acts for the Judge, and there are no rules, and therefore he acts without restraint in pursuit of the vendetta.

That's the Tribunal acting adversarially. Acting inquisitorially it induced Ahern to give it information in confidence. That information was leaked to the *Irish Times*, which used it selectively. The Tribunal then took the *Irish Times* to Court—it could hardly have done otherwise and preserved any shred of reputation. The

Irish Times refused to divulge the leaked document so that the leak could be traced. In fact it said it had deliberately destroyed the document in order to be unable to divulge it. The Court ordered that the *Irish Times* should co-operate with the Tribunal in tracing the leak. The *Irish Times* appealed that judgment, and the Tribunal was happy to let it rest. That was about six months ago.

The procedure adopted by the Tribunal for handling information given in confidence was to give it very considerable circulation within its system, virtually ensuring that it would be leaked.

Would it be unfair to say that the most corrupt institution in Ireland today is the *Irish Times*, and the second is the Tribunal investigating planning corruption—which is a gravy train?

The suburban Savanarola, who sees corruption almost everywhere except in his own Oath-bound platform, made the famous statement some years ago that there was no longer any question but that Haughey was corrupt, because he had been given a million pounds by Ben Dunne; the only question was whether he had given anything in return. Since

O'Toole's statement was not ridiculed, we must take it that the meaning of corruption has changed, and it no longer means a public servant doing favours in return for bribes. And that opens it to any meaning one cares to give it.

The clearest case of misuse of public office was when a Fine Gael Minister of Defence, Hugh Coveney, canvassed the Chairman of Bord Gais, Michael Conlon, for consultancy work for his company. When that came to light, Coveney was merely demoted in May 1995 to be Minister of State at the Department of Finance. But that was OK, as his party leader was Garret FitzGerald, and it is axiomatic that Fine Gael is not corrupt. Unfortunately Coveney killed himself some time later, pre-empting further exposures.

And then there was FitzGerald himself who borrowed heavily from the Allied Irish Banks in order to make a speculative investment that went wrong, and then had the loan written off in May 1993. Former Fine Gael Attorney General and European Commissioner Peter Sutherland—appointed to both positions by Dr. FitzGerald—was Chairman of AIB.

And then there's Michael Lowry, the Fine Gael Minister who resigned from the Cabinet in November after it was revealed that Ben Dunne had built a £395,000 extension to his house, and who is still answering questions to a Tribunal on another matter.

He has since contested his seat as an Independent and consistently held it.

The Editor of the *Irish Times* urged her readers to hold their noses against the stench of corruption arising from the Irish people. So the very electorate is corrupt? Or could it be that the electorate is not motivated by an agenda set outside itself, and has a realistic understanding of the functioning of democracy by means of representative government by parties.

The critique of "*corruption*" often seems to imply that legislation and government should be conducted by pure legislators and governors who have no organic connection with the society which they govern. How this might be arranged in a system of representative government is not explained. But that it is the ideal is made clear by the latest Anti-Corruption guru of the *Irish Times*, Elaine Byrne, in an article published on March 27th, entitled *Unwavering Loyalty Admired And Rewarded In Politics*, which says:

"Loyalty is commonly mistaken as a moral virtue. It is not. The four cardinal

virtues, derived from Plato's Republic and the Christian scriptures, are justice, wisdom, courage and temperance. All moral virtues hinge on those four virtues."

Plato's *Republic* is a totalitarian Utopia governed by a self-selecting elite. It was dreamed up as an alternative to the democracy of Athens. And the English Puritans of the 1650s were not mistaken when they envisaged the Scriptural state as a theocracy. Party loyalty has no place in these systems, but the functioning of an earthly democracy is impossible without it.

How can it be that the 'newspaper of reform' in the Irish State applies the ideal of Plato's Republic in its criticism of the democratic system of the state? Because the *Irish Times* exists apart from the earthly democracy of the state. Under its mysteriously-financed Oath-bound Directory it bears some resemblance to Plato's "*men of gold*" who lay down the law for men of inferior metals, and are not subject to their corrupt concerns. And of course the Scriptural ideal sees all earthly concerns as corrupt.

For An EU Federal State!

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other great nations of Europe. It also freed our agricultural products from dependence on the UK market.

And under Edward Heath even Britain appeared finally to have reconciled herself to the end of her empire and to wish to participate in this project along with the Irish.

But the Irish people, along with the French and the Dutch have fallen out of love with this grand project. And it is not the Irish who have been unfaithful; it is the European project that has strayed. An alternative vision has emerged that is at variance with the values of the founding fathers. And it is this alternative vision that has been in the ascendant.

Following Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher became the leader of the British Conservative party and then Prime Minister in 1979. Her mission was to restore imperialist values and deepen the "*special relationship*" it had with the USA whose President was her ideological soul mate Ronald Reagan. Blairism is a continuation of Thatcherism.

Not A Publicity Agent

In the course of an article (March Issue) which refers to my recent book *Myths from Easter 1916* Brendan Clifford writes:—"I have not been predisposed in favour of Eoin Neeson, who was Jack Lynch's publicity agent in 1970".

Brendan Clifford's predispositions, or how he arrives at them, are no concern of mine (though it is clear he is not familiar with some of my other books).

I wish, however, to make it clear that I was never Jack Lynch's—or anyone else's—publicity agent in 1970, or at any other time. **Eoin Neeson**

The debate in Britain about Europe is not about whether she should be pro or anti Europe. That debate was decided long ago. It was decided within the Conservative Party when Thatcher replaced Heath. And if ever there was a pro-European element within the British Labour Party it jumped ship to form the long forgotten SDP.

The debate in Britain about Europe is about how best to disrupt the project—from inside or outside Europe. It is very clear that—among the political class at least—the "insiders" have won. The "insiders" have won in Britain because they have won in Europe. If anyone doubts that the British have won they should read British Foreign Secretary David Miliband's speech of 15/11/07 to the College of Europe in Bruges. Quoting from one of his predecessors, Douglas Hurd, he says this of the European project:

"Certainly there are Continental idealists who bitterly regret that it has faded away, but faded it has, as has been clear since Maastricht."

And why has the European project failed? Miliband gives a hint a few sentences later:

"The truth is that the EU has enlarged, remodelled and opened up. It is not and is not going to be a superstate."

And Miliband wants to prevent any possibility of the EU becoming a superstate by continuing the policy of enlargement:

"The first step would be the accession of neighbouring countries—especially Russia and the Ukraine—to the WTO. Then we must build on this with comprehensive free-trade agreements. The goal must be a multilateral free-trade zone around our periphery—a version of the European Free Trade Association that could gradually bring the countries of the Mahgreb, the Middle-East and Eastern-Europe in line

with the single-market, not as an alternative to membership, but potentially as a step towards it."

Miliband sees the role of Europe as an adjunct to American imperialism:

"We must also overcome the blockages to collaboration with NATO. We welcome the signs of increased willingness on the part of key partners to do so.

But although the EU cannot aspire to being a "*superstate*" or "*superpower*" that should not prevent it from military intervention under the aegis of NATO:

"First, European member states must improve their capabilities. It's embarrassing that when European nations—with almost two million men and women under arms—are only able, at a stretch, to deploy around 100 thousand at any one time. EU countries have around 1,200 transport helicopters, yet only about 35 are deployed in Afghanistan. And EU member states haven't provided any helicopters in Darfur despite the desperate need there."

Miliband wants—in language worthy of an Orwellian nightmare—the EU to "engage in shared activities":

"In Iraq, where we are moving forward together to bolster the forces of economic development and political reconciliation."

This support for imperialist aggression is anathema to the founding principles of the Irish State. If the British vision of Europe has supplanted that of its founding fathers – Monet, Schuman, de Gaspari—the European project should be abandoned before it inflicts any more damage on the world.

However, we are of the opinion that the original EU project is not irretrievable and that the Irish have a key role to play in its renaissance. The first step is to stop the momentum for enlargement and call on

the EU to define the borders of its territory.

A "no" vote in the forthcoming referendum will help bring continental Europe to its senses and urge it to return it to the task of building a stable Federal European State. A continuation of the policy of a free trade area with undefined borders as well as ever closer collaboration with American imperialism is a betrayal of European ideals.

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Irish Times Kosovo

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Muslims' protector. For the US to act without UN sanction might be par for the course; for Ireland to nod it through next week—as Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern has promised—should raise eyebrows. For once, you see, Russia and China, supported by Spain and Greece, have a point. Kosovo's status since 1999 has been governed by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 which envisages only self-government for Kosovo and acknowledges the 'sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'. Inconvenient as it might be for Washington and Brussels, Kosovo's status can't be changed legally without a new UN resolution."

"The status quo might be unsustainable, but it is one entirely of NATO's making. Eager to demonstrate that it still had relevance, NATO pulverised Yugoslavia with cluster bombs, depleted uranium and cruise missiles for 11 weeks. As an adoring media told the story, the US and its allies were knights in shining armour, selflessly killing and destroying in order to rescue the oppressed Kosovo Albanians from the bloodthirsty Serbs. In reality, NATO-led forces marched into Kosovo, stood by passively as more than 250,000 Serbs fled or were driven out of the province, and then cowered in the safety of their barracks in 2004 as the Kosovo Albanians went on a vicious anti-Serb rampage. Eventually, talks did take place under the aegis of Martti Ahtisaari, of IRA decommissioning fame. The negotiations inevitably went nowhere, as they were meant to. Given that key NATO and EU officials had already declared independence was inevitable, the Kosovo Albanians knew they only had to sit tight, reject all other options and prepare to collect their reward. Ahtisaari claimed his proposals would provide 'the foundations for a future independent Kosovo that is viable, sustainable and stable and in which all communities and their members can live a peaceful and dignified existence'. Presumably we are meant to overlook the fact that for Kosovo's Serbs—the few that remain—

living a 'peaceful and dignified existence' means cowering behind barbed wire and needing armed escorts whenever they step outside their enclaves."

"But what is this independence anyway? A flag, yes, but Kosovo will have no say on taxation, on foreign and security policy, on customs, on law enforcement. The only thing independent about Kosovo is its independence from Serbia. Kosovo has never been a state and its parliament isn't deemed worthy to do anything very much beyond collecting rubbish. If Kosovo has the right to secede, why not other nationalities or ethnic groups living as minorities within someone else's state?... The great powers claim the suggestion that Kosovo has any bearing on any other territorial dispute is spurious. Britain's foreign secretary, David Miliband, says Kosovo is unique. Why? Because, with Russian support, the UN was given authority to decide the future of Kosovo. But the UN resolution is clear: the authorisation was merely 'to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'. Yugoslavia is no more, but Serbia is acknowledged by all, including the US and the EU, as the successor state. Dermot Ahern argues that, never mind UN resolutions, Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic forfeited its right to rule. If bad treatment of the local population disqualified a state from exercising sovereignty over part of its territory, then an awful lot of countries would be eligible for enforced amputation, including some which receive vast chunks of American or EU aid."

"Serbia is a legal entity entitled to self-determination; Kosovo is not. If Muslims cannot be expected to live under non-Muslim rule, why does no-one recognise the Turkish Cypriots right to independence? The international community's message to other ethnic groups is clear. First, grab a piece of territory. Then permit unrestricted immigration by its co-nationals from a

neighbouring state. Next, ethnically cleanse the territory of all other groups to create an artificial overwhelming local ethnic majority. Last, demand that these actions be rewarded by the bestowal of independent statehood. Anyone for a Free Derry? Independence for west Cork? More seriously, if the North ever voted for Irish unity, Kosovo would provide an excuse for Ulster loyalists to set up an independent homeland in counties Antrim and Down. The cabinet should think before it acts on Kosovo and not just follow the herd."

In stark contrast with the both sharp and serious questions raised by King, we had the following self-indulgent editorial from the *Irish Times* on February 18th, smugly entitled *Kosovo Takes The Independent Route*:

"Kosovo's declaration of independence yesterday comes at the end of a prolonged struggle against Serbian rule which was continually frustrated, repressed and rejected as Yugoslavia broke up. These successive crises made its independence politically inevitable. Following the vicious campaign mounted by Slobodan Milosevic against Kosovo in 1998-9, and the Nato bombing campaign in retaliation, there has been no let-up in the demands for full sovereignty. Most European Union member-states, including Ireland, have rightly concluded that this should finally be supported, despite the refusal of Serbia and Russia to accept that. Legally this is a regrettable and unsatisfactory state of affairs. It means the United Nations cannot formally endorse Kosovan independence, since Russia demands it be declared null and void. Although Serbia has pledged not to use military force in retaliation, it will be able to mount economic sanctions against the new state, which is highly dependent on it economically. If Serbian leaders systematically follow this course they will reopen all the issues which have delayed their association and accession negotiations with the EU..."

Smug and self-righteous editorialising was followed by cheap sneering. In its *This Week They Said* column on February 23rd the *Irish Times* expected its readers to unquestioningly agree that the following statement was deserving of nothing else but unrestrained ridicule: "***Kosovo is ours! Kosovo is Serbia!***—Serb protesters gathering at the US embassy in Belgrade to protest the independence of Kosovo". The *Irish Times* is indeed quite shameless in covering up its own history. Nothing could justify more the need for John Martin's superb history of the role played by that paper than also taking a look at the historical record of both the *Irish Times* and its British imperialist masters in respect of this very Kosovo question. For the slogan that "***Kosovo is Serbia!***" had been at the very heart of British propaganda during its Imperialist War of 1914–1918.

To further British objectives, its Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey had in fact told France's Clemenceau as far back as 1908

that it was his policy to reinforce Tsarist Russia as a "counterpoise to Germany on land". A strengthened Russia would in turn threaten Germany's ally Austria, and Grey sanctioned Russia's sponsorship of expansionist Serbian nationalism for that purpose, including its designs on both Kosovo and Albania itself. And damn the consequences.

James Joyce, who had lived under the Austrian Empire in Trieste, would, in a post-war letter to Mary Colum, dismiss Britain's anti-Austrian propaganda with the observation: "They called the Austrian Empire a ramshackle empire... I wish to God there were more such empires". The novelist and journalist Joseph Roth, whose book *The Wandering Jews* provides one of the most penetrating accounts of the horrifying predicament facing his fellow-Jews in inter-War Europe, also recalled: "My strongest experience was the War and the destruction of my fatherland, the only one I ever had, the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary". But Britain wanted that Empire broken up, no matter what, and in fact expressed anger that Russia had not reacted more firmly in 1908 against Austria's formal incorporation of the Bosnia it had ruled since the collapse of Ottoman rule in that province in 1878.

Serbia, of course, wished to rule Bosnia as part of a Greater Serbia, irrespective of the fact that the majority of Bosnians were opposed to any such outcome. In 1914 Croats, Muslims, Slovenes, Croatian Serbs—and even a minority of Bosnian Serbs—would all fight in the Austrian Army against Serbia. And the spark that came from that conflict set alight the Inferno that engulfed Europe for the next four years. Following the conclusion of the World War in November 1918, when Serbia had finally conquered Bosnia, Britain's ally went on to celebrate its triumph in the New Year of 1919 with the massacre of 1,000 Muslim men, the burning to death of seventy-six Muslim women and the pillaging of 270 villages.

We are still living today with the consequences of the forces that Britain set out to unleash in Europe a century ago. When the Redmondite M.P. Tom Kettle launched his war propaganda on behalf of Britain with an article entitled *Europe Against The Barbarians* (*Daily News*, 10 August 1914), it was to give Serbia a free hand to do whatever she wanted to do in the Balkans, while Britain got to grips with the bigger picture:

"As for Serbia, it seems probable that nobody will have the time to go to war with her. Her function has been that of the electric button which discharges the great gun of a fortress. And now that the lightnings have been released, what is the stake for which we are playing? It is as simple as it is colossal. It is Europe against the barbarians."

On 23rd February 1916 the British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith was to declare:

"We shall not sheath the sword... until Belgium—and I will add Serbia—recovers in full measure all, and more than all she has sacrificed."

And in June 1916 that Government made sure that what it designated as "*Kosovo Day*" would be celebrated under that name throughout the length and breadth of Britain in explicit honour of total Serb control of that territory.

The British Government already knew perfectly well the character of the forces it was unconditionally supporting. The Balkan Wars had commenced in October 1912, following a revolt against Ottoman rule both in Albania itself and by the Albanian majority in Kosovo. Serbia then attacked in order to annex not only Kosovo but also Northern Albania as additional coastal territory. Austria forced Serbia to withdraw from Albania proper and concede its independence. But Serbia hung on to Kosovo, having massacred anything between 20,000 and 25,000 Albanian civilians by December 1912. These massacres had been recounted at the time in eye-witness reports by Edith Durham in the English-speaking press; by Leon Trotsky in the Russian-speaking press; and by a host of newspaper reports right across Europe. The massacres in Kosovo were also confirmed by a Carnegie Commission Report co-authored by the editor of *The Economist*, H.N. Brailsford. That 1913 Report spoke of—

"houses and whole villages reduced to ashes, unarmed and innocent populations massacred *en masse*, incredible acts of violence, pillage and brutality of every kind—such were the means which were employed and are still being employed by the Serbo-Montenegrin soldiery, with a view to the entire transformation of the ethnic character of regions inhabited exclusively by Albanians."

And so it was that both Kettle and Asquith were made fully aware beforehand as to what was in store for the Balkans when they went on to unequivocally champion Serbia's War in 1914. And the *Irish Times* performed accordingly.

On 12th October 1912 the *Irish Times* carried the following report, headed *Montenegro's Advance—From Our Special Correspondent*:

"The King, I hear, has expressed great pleasure at the messages of sympathy and congratulation received from many lands. The nation hopes that the redemption of Kosovo is at hand. Kosovo is a large province of Turkey, lying to the South of Serbia and was at one time part of the Servian Empire. At the battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Turks broke up the Servian Empire, and the province came under their sway. It was that battle which drove

a large number of Servians out of the province. They formed the State of Montenegro. Ever since that date, more than 500 years ago, Montenegrins and Servians have never relinquished the hope of avenging that defeat, and of rescuing the province of Kosovo from the Turks."

On 29th October 1912, under the heading of *The Victorious Allies*, the *Irish Times* further exulted in Serbia's victories:

"Uskub, the ancient capital of the great Serb Empire, has fallen into the hands of the Servian Crown Prince, without the firing of a shot... The Turkish commander must have known that this avenging of the overthrow of the Serb Empire at Kosovo would be of inestimable moral value to the Servian cause."

Keeping up the same theme three years later, on 10th October 1915, the *Irish Times* once again emphasised:

"Pristina, to which the Serbians are removing from Nish their more important treasures, is the first capital of Old Serbia. It is a place associated with the memories of the battlefield which, in 1389, destroyed the Servian Empire. Kosovo, 'the field of blackbirds', lies within sight of the towers of Pristina."

In that same issue of 10th October 1915 the *Irish Times* unashamedly went on to publish a report extolling Serbia's "Aryanisation" campaigns in Kosovo. Under the heading of *Ideals Of The Southern Slavs*, with a lead paragraph which pointed out that "*the personal message of M. Mestrovic is a profoundly interesting document at a time when Great Britain is so vitally linked with Balkan aspirations*", it quoted as follows an address on "*the message of Serbia and of all her race*" that had been delivered at the University of Leeds by the Serbian sculptor Ivan Mestrovic:

"I desire that Europe should dig out Yugoslavia from her ancient grave—Europe, whose religion and civilisation have been defended by the Serbians, Croats and Slovenes, more than by any other Balkan people, through all their history, whether from the barbarous Osmanlis or from the modern German aggression. I do esteem and love all Balkan peoples as our brothers in history and in the Peninsula; but I believe that chiefly the pure Slavdom of the Balkans, that means Great Serbia, is the moral and creative principle of our Peninsula... The spirit of Europe can fully conquer the Balkans and set free the latent vitality in them through my people. My life will be justified if my conception of the Temple of Kosovo, as well as my real artistic activity, is an expression of the United South Slavdom... It would be my eternal joy if the Temple should be built (in a not very distant future) on the soil of Yugoslavia... May the Anglo-Saxon and Slav races (the two of the principal forces in the world) become faithful and lifelong friends after this war, as they are in it, for

the sake of the unity of Europe and of human civilisation."

Under the sub-heading of *The Temple Of Kosovo* this *Irish Times* report continued:

"M. Mestrovic's message followed an illustrated lecture on Southern Slav art by M. Mitrinovic who said that if anything was to be the base of spiritual union between the Southern Slav and the British people, the sublime work of Mestrovic ought to be that base. Proceeding to deal with the idea of Mestrovic's gigantic creation, the Temple of Kosovo, the lecturer remarked that... the Temple of Mestrovic had both the human and the Divine beauty... It represented an eternal dawn of beauty and of New Aryandom."

One month later, the *Irish Times* of 27th November 1915 carried an editorial entitled *Ireland's War*, which rejoiced in the opportunities provided by the death of the anti-War founder of the British Labour Party, Keir Hardie, resulting in his parliamentary seat being lost to a pro-War candidate:

"The result of the Merthyr-Tydvil by-election will assist the process of German disillusionment ... The seat was vacated by the death of Mr. Keir Hardie, an 'international' Socialist, who denounced the war, and was prepared to accept peace at any price. Before the war Merthyr-Tydvil was a stronghold of Socialism: Mr. Keir Hardie polled 11,507 votes at the General Election of December 1910. Mr. Winstone, the official Labour Candidate at Thursday's election, was supported by the notorious Union of Democratic Control, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald [also anti-War—MOR] pleaded for him with the electors. Mr. Stanton, the independent Labour candidate, contested the seat solely as a protest against the 'peace at any price' views with which some members of the Labour Party in Parliament have chosen to associate themselves. He advocated the vigorous prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion—no terms with Germany until she is beaten to her knees. He has defeated the Elisha of the 'international' Elijah by 4,206 votes ..."

"Merthyr-Tydvil has a moral for the Irish people... There is a considerable number of Irishmen who are definitely hostile to the British cause in the present war... [maintaining] that, as the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick said in his lamentable letter, this is 'not Ireland's war'... Let us point out to these people that, the attitude of a large body of the English working classes was hostile to the British Government... In fact the position of many English trade unionists in those days was the present position of the Irishmen who say: 'We shall never fight for England' and 'This is not Ireland's war'. But the most obstinate of these English and Welsh trade unionists have suffered themselves to be persuaded by the logic of facts. They have read the story of Belgium and Serbia... It is Ireland's

war just as much as it is Belgium's war, because if Germany wins Ireland will share Belgium's fate. Irish nuns will share the fate of Belgian nuns ..."

Why such a vehement *Irish Times* editorial attack on Bishop O'Dwyer of Limerick? In its issue of 13th November 1915, under the pooh-pooh toned heading of *Emigrants And the War—A Remarkable Letter*, it reported on a letter that Bishop O'Dwyer had sent to the *Munster Express*. It is worth quoting that letter in full:

"Sir, The treatment which the poor Irish emigrant lads have received at Liverpool is enough to make any Irishman's blood boil with anger and indignation. What wrong have they done to deserve insults and outrage at the hands of a brutal English mob? They do not want to be forced into the English Army and sent to fight battles in some part of the world. Is not that within their right? They are supposed to be freemen, but they are made to feel that they are prisoners, who may be compelled to lay down their lives for a cause that is not worth 'three rows of pins' to them. It is very probable that these poor Connaught peasants know little or nothing of the meaning of the war. **Their blood is not stirred by the memories of Kosovo and they have no burning desire to die for Serbia** [my emphasis—MOR]. They would much prefer to be allowed to till their own potato gardens in peace in Connemara. Small nationalities, and the wrongs of Belgium and Rheims Cathedral, and all the other cosmopolitan considerations that rouse the enthusiasm of the Irish Party, but do not get enough of recruits in England, are far too high-flying for uneducated peasants, and it seems a cruel wrong to attack them because they cannot rise to the level of the disinterested Imperialism of Mr. T.P. O'Connor and the rest of the New Brigade."

"But in all the shame and humiliation of this disgraceful episode, what angers me most is that there is no one, not even one of their own countrymen, to stand up and defend them. Their crime is that they are not ready to die for England. Why should they? What have they or their forebears ever got from England that they should die for her? Mr. Redmond will say a Home Rule Act on the Statute Book. But any intelligent Irishman will say a simulacrum of Home Rule, with an express notice that it is never to come into operation. This war may be just or unjust, but any fair-minded man will admit that it is England's war, not Ireland's. When it is over, if England wins, she will hold a dominant power in this world, and her manufactures and her commerce will increase by leaps and bounds. Win or lose, Ireland will go on, in her old round of misgovernment, intensified by a grinding poverty which will make life intolerable. Yet the poor fellows who do not see the advantage of dying for such a cause are to be insulted as 'shirkers' and 'cowards', and the men whom they have raised to power and influence have not one word to say on their behalf. If there

is to be conscription, let it be enforced all round; but it seems to be the very intensity of injustice to leave English shirkers go free, and coerce the small remnant of the Irish race into a war which they do not understand, and which, whether it is right or wrong, has but a secondary and indirect interest for them."

In November 1915 the Royal Inskilling Fusiliers—with the Co. Meath poet Francis Ledwidge in their ranks—was the British regiment that had been sent to Kosovo to fight against the more recently arrived claim-jumpers from Bulgaria, in order that Kosovo might be copper-fastened under the control of the Serbian hands that had grabbed it in 1912. It was at this point that the *Irish Times* lent itself to a racist agitation against West of Ireland Gaeltacht men who did not wish to lay down their lives for either Belgium or Serbia. Under the heading of *Emigrants At The North Wall*, its anti-Irish report of November 4th recounted:

"A large number of emigrants left the North Wall on Tuesday night for Liverpool, en route to the United States. The number, it is stated, reached two hundred. About 150 were booked at the station on the express steamer to Holyhead... The emigrants are young people of the agricultural and labouring class, and have come chiefly from the West of Ireland, one train on Thursday bringing over a hundred. Soldiers and others attracted by the number of emigrants at the London and North-Western Station, remarked that they were going away to avoid war services, but the emigrants made no reply."

But an English mob would be on hand to do the *Irish Times's* dirty work for it. On November 7th it reported:

"In Liverpool on Saturday afternoon a party of young Irishmen were outside the Cunard offices prior to sailing, when a crowd assembled and taunted the emigrants with unpatriotism. The police had to keep the crowd back. The party proceeded to the landing stage to embark, but at the last moment the Cunard Company decided not to allow the emigrants to sail. A statement has been issued to all agents of the company that until further notice men eligible for military service are not to be booked. Six hundred berths had been booked by the *Saxonia*, and of the intending emigrants many were young fellows said to come from the South and South-West of Ireland. When they appeared outside the Cunard Company's offices recruiting officers immediately busied themselves in talking to the men, while a great crowd collected and jeered at and tormented the Irishmen, who had to be protected by the police. The Irishmen, sullen and obstinate towards recruiters' appeals, remained silent with bowed heads under a fire of caustic invective from the crowd. When the *Saxonia* came alongside the landing stage at noon, and the emigrants took their

passage vouchers to go on board, they had to run the gauntlet of most pointed criticisms, and there was a lot of booing. A woman in the crowd could not control her indignation, and going up to one of the emigrants, shook her fist in his face and tore his collar and tie. The emigrants, looking very frightened, proceeded on their way amidst a chorus of execration. Recruiting officers tried hard to stop them. ... It was decided that the emigrants should not be allowed to sail."

On the following day, November 8th, in an editorial entitled *The Fugitives*, the *Irish Times* expressed its satisfaction at this outcome:

"For the moment it is the sudden rush of men from the South and West of Ireland to secure passage to America that has come most prominently under observation. Our Special Commissioner said on Saturday that during the past few weeks the emigration of young men from certain districts of Ireland has reached serious proportions. On Saturday this movement received a sharp check. The number of Irishmen who had arrived in Liverpool to take passage to America by the Cunard line *Saxonia* had attracted public notice, and when they went to embark a hostile demonstration took place. A crisis was precipitated by the threat of some of the *Saxonia's* crew to strike if the able-bodied male emigrants were embarked. Their threat was effective: passages were cancelled, and the Cunard Company announced that it would cease to accept bookings of British subjects who are fit and eligible for military service ... Everybody will applaud the action of the *Saxonia's* crew. This is the first strike threat which will have won complete approval... It is indeed, somewhat surprising that the Government has not yet taken official cognisance of the extent of the exodus from the British Isles since the recruiting campaign entered upon its new and more vigorous stage. The whole accommodation of some of the steamers outward-bound this month was booked long in advance. In the case of Ireland, in addition to whatever may be done by the Government to deal with this movement, the influence of Irish members of Parliament ought to be exercised effectively..."

Such a record of "*the paper of record*", in respect of both Kosovo and Ireland itself, does indeed stink to high heaven.

Manus O'Riordan

Editorial Digest

Legislation at Stormont. There hasn't been any according to the *Irish News* (18.3.08). Though there has been legislation begun by the previous direct rule arrangements. Many of us would describe this situation as near perfect. But not, it seems, the *Irish News*. There is, however, the promise to legislate for a reduction in quangos. A quango has been set up to look at this! Actually quangos in Northern Ireland are often a form of Outdoor Relief Work—or in this case Indoor Relief. They keep people in employment and, for the most part, don't go around annoying too many people as they are wont to do in England.

Easter commemorations. This year the Sinn Fein march to Milltown Cemetery in Belfast took the form of a pageant. Marchers carrying pikes and muskets were dressed in the costumes of 1798. Others wore uniforms and carried "weapons" representing the volunteers of 1916 and the IRA of 1920. Some Sinn Fein members expressed annoyance that things ended there. But mostly, as usual, it was a mixture of a fun day out for Republican families combined with individual tributes by relatives of fallen Volunteers and the speeches and ceremonies at the Republican Plot. The IRA Army Council statement was read out and said nothing about disbanding itself! Earlier, a very respectable size of a march was held by the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the INLA. At its start there was a quite large police presence on the Falls Road. All of the policemen (though not the policewomen) seemed to be in their 50s. Some said that these were more likely to keep their heads. Others said that they were from the old guard, old enough to know who was who. The Official IRA also marched. Heavens, they are getting old!

The "riot" in Derry. Most of the media reported a serious riot in the Creggan area of Derry following a commemoration by "dissident" Republicans on Easter Monday. Local people told the *Irish News* that police had confronted

march organisers and had photographed and questioned children as young as seven. But it was the PSNI handout that was mostly reported, and this was believed by the local SDLP which immediately condemned the "rioters". Sinn Fein said that they would wait until they knew what had happened. Next day, Sinn Fein MLA, Martina Anderson made a statement: "*The community is able to identify what happened on their streets on Monday afternoon and they are saying quite clearly that this was not a full scale riot. Reports need to be accurate and there is a duty to ensure that they do not become sensationalised. I can recall past reports where we were told of a full scale riot at Shipquay Street only for eyewitness to tell a totally different story. We have also had reports of sectarian incidents which later turned out not to be sectarian*" (Derry Journal. 25.3.08)

IRA ex-prisoner Frank McGreevy was beaten to death in his home in the Lower Falls area of Belfast on 15th March. Gerry Adams condemned the PSNI for not investigating the killing properly and for not listening to local people. 24 years afterwards a man handed himself in to the police and has been charged. It is understood that he was given a lift to the barracks.

Partnership and Migrant Rights. Following the dispute over the employment of cheap immigrant labour by Irish Ferries, the Trade Unions gave notice that further progress in the Social Partnership process would not be possible until the matter had been addressed by law. This is now happening with a new piece of Government legislation.

"The Government has promised that under a second Bill, due shortly, agency workers will have to receive at least the minimum wage or the basic terms and conditions set out in registered agreements for specific sectors, where they apply. The Bill, published yesterday, will give legal effect to the commitments for improved employment rights compliance measures agreed by the Government and the social partners in the Towards 2016 national agreement. However, there is widescale disagreement between the

O Cuanachán & The Record

Last month we carried a moving appreciation by Jack Moylett of Pádraig O Cuanachán, who died on 2nd March, and noted that the *Irish Times* had not marked his death. This was despite the fact that he was an occasional contributor to the *Irishman's Diary* section of the

paper. We noted the omission and said we weren't surprised in view of that paper's obituaries policy. Those who feel they have to inflict the paper on themselves have on occasion been surprised to find that no Irish people died in the foregoing week—judging by the Saturday Obituary page. And the policy pursued on that page is curious to say the least: Irish people—when noticed—are generally given much

smaller obituaries than any kind of film star, actor, pop star, celebrity from the rest of the world and chiefly from the Anglo-sphere. So the 'paper of record' missing out Pádraig O Cuanachán was hardly a departure. Nevertheless, it seems that some mole in the *Irish Times* noticed our remarks and on 5th April the paper finally carried an obituary: four weeks after O Cuanachán's death.

social partners over how, or if, such measures should apply". (Irish Times 19.3.08)

The law will also exempt inspectors from the laws of defamation so that they can report their findings in full.

Countess Markievicz's husband, Casimir, was born in Poland but brought up in the Ukraine. The Countess, who came from Lissadell, Co. Sligo, is now to have a museum opened in her honour in that country. "*The Ukrainian ambassador, along with other embassy officials, met with Lissadell owners Constance Cassidy and Eddie Walsh yesterday afternoon and viewed oil paintings by the count and countess, many of which feature scenes from his native country. He revealed that he was establishing a Markievicz Museum in Zywtowka in the Ukraine dedicated to Countess Markievicz and Casimir, which will feature copies of material from Lissadell*". (Irish Independent 10.3.08)

The Queen of England visited Armagh and Hillsborough in the days leading up to Easter. She met up with President McAleese who then went on to speak at Queen's University. There McAleese intimated that any visit by the Queen to Dublin was linked to DUP agreement to the transfer of policing powers from Westminster to Stormont. Some Unionists thought that this was completely out of order. And probably they were right. But the most curious reaction came on Good Friday from the nationalist *Irish News*. Its editorial stated: "*Not every nationalist will agree with the link suggested by the president between a possible visit by the Queen to Dublin and the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland assembly... The president has been working diligently to prepare the way for the arrival of the Queen in Dublin throughout her term of office and a successful conclusion is now within sight.*" Confirmation once again that traditional Northern nationalism, as represented by the *Irish News* and most of what is left of the SDLP, has nothing to do with carving out a separate space in the world for Ireland; but wishes, like the Hibernianism that it is, to see Catholic Ireland as a recognised part of whatever England is in the world. This "nationalism" is merely sectarianism—getting one over on the Prods.

Normality. UTV Live (10/4/08) asked a mother on the Falls Road how she thought the changes in the 10 years since the Good Friday Agreement would benefit her children. She answered that people were more normal now and that soon they would be just like people on television!

Cowen's Selection. Someone from the North remarked on the speed of Brian Cowen's selection as Fianna Fail leader. Nominations closed on April 5th and he was selected four days later by the Fianna Fail TDs. The only reason for anyone finding this odd is if they compare it with the carry-on that recently took place in Britain. Gordon Brown was also unopposed for leader of the British Labour Party. Nevertheless he raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for his "election campaign". For Deputy Leader there actually was an election. But here the contenders also raised hundreds of thousands of pounds—much of it through very dodgy means. One candidate—Peter Hain—had to leave the government and there is much speculation about the winner—Harriet Harman—possibly being investigated by the police. Since then there has been the 'employing relatives' news: MPs using their allowances to pay members of their own families. It is one thing if a job of work is being done, but it is reported that Hain was employing his 82-year old mother. The media in Ireland never stops going on about corruption and wants us to be more like the British. Funny old world!

Parking Protests in Belfast were reported last month and have increased. The problem is commuters parking for free in inner city estates and blocking the streets and the parking facilities for residents. The protesters in the Markets have now been joined by residents from Sandy Row and Donegal Pass. Conor Murphy, Sinn Fein Minister, says that he is willing to impose parking restrictions if the residents pay £40 each. The result of that is that the residents have switched from protest, and appealing to commuters, to blocking off their streets. Catholic and Protestant working class areas do have something in common!

Black Propaganda is a favourite tool of the British. Both Republicans and Loyalists have been the subjects of it. The latest to protest about it is Iris Robinson MLA, wife of First Minister Designate, Peter Robinson. She says that the British put it around that her husband was beating her up. "*This malicious rumour was started by the [British] government in an attempt to blacken Peter's name when he was protesting at the Anglo-Irish Agreement. It took root because I was in hospital 17 times during that period with gynaecological problems*" (Irish Examiner 21.4.08)

Sinn Fein on Chad. Aengus O Snodaigh Made the following statement to the Dail:

"Despite the contribution that the

French have made to the EU in recent times we would be concerned that France is playing such an important role in an EU Force to a former French colony. The regime of Idress Deby is questionable in terms of its Human Rights record and levels of corruption. It is no secret that the regime is supported politically and militarily by France. Ireland has earned international respect and credibility within the UN for its support for the process of decolonisation, to be perceived to be doing the bidding of one of the major colonial powers is just unacceptable. From participation in the EU Rapid Reaction Force to NATO's Partnership for Peace, and now the EU Battle Groups, Ireland is increasingly becoming associated with the concept of a fledgling EU army and military intervention, as well as committing ever increasing amounts of money on acquiring weapons of war. For these reasons Sinn Fein continues to be opposed to Irish participation in this force. We would urge a rethink and would support the putting together of a genuinely neutral UN peace-keeping force."

Selling our heritage. Following on from the profiteering from the files of Tom Clarke and others, there has been another auction of our history. The BBC, on 15th April, reported the sale of 700 items relating to 1916 and the War of 1919-21. These include a letter from Michael Collins to Austin Stack expected to fetch 40,000 euros and a copy of the Proclamation going for 350,000 euros. Adam's Auctioners spokesman, one Stuart Cole, said his company was going to make this type of thing an annual event!

Mitchelstown And Mandeville

A few years ago an accountant and a solicitor from Mitchelstown Literary Society saw that almost everywhere else had a Summer School and decided that their own town should have one. Who was famous around there? It was suggested that they base it on William Trevor and Elizabeth Bowen. Like everyone else in the place they didn't know her at all, but what harm! And so last year was born the Trevor/Bowen Summer School. To be fair, Trevor was born there, but after studying at Trinity took himself off to England to do his writing. He is probably most known as the author of *The Ballroom Of Romance*.

Bowen, born in Dublin but, spending her Summers in the family Big House in Kildorrery, was a British spy in WW2 who said she detested Ireland. Martin Mansergh has taken it upon himself to defend Bowen by attacking those who

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Mad Dogs Are Irishmen

or Dr. McDonagh's Patent Remedy

The *Guardian* profile (a regular column) for Friday April 25 2008 was of Martin McDonagh. McDonagh is a (commercially, and much more important for the *Grauniad*, critically) successful playwright. The writer was Henry McDonald, described, in an affectation as, "*Ireland correspondent*", though McDonald rather rarely reports anything from the Republic. The reason being his being a NeoCon lapsed Sticky; and the PDs—virtual Saviours of the Nation for that ilk—no longer being the power in the land they once were. He is not the man to ask hard question of McDonagh, whose *shtick* is the inherent stupidity and violence of Irish people. It includes those of us with orange as well as green genes, but that's about as subtle as it gets, we're all scum, though McDonagh doesn't really 'do' the Orange.

McDonagh is introduced as being born in Camberwell, south London, to parents from the 'west of Ireland' (a rather large place: Sligo people are different from those from Galway, who are different from Leitrim, and so forth).

McDonald writes about "*Mad Dogs*". These were, at different times, appellations for Johnny Adair and Dominic McGlinchey, of the UFF (Ulster Freedom

Fighters) and INLA (Irish National Liberation Army), respectively. Johnny Adair enjoyed his *nom-de-guerre* (drug-pushing, more like). McGlinchey, while (apparently) a cold-blooded killer, was probably no more of a 'psychopath' than Adair. What was the matter with McGlinchey, and the INLA / IRSP (Irish Republican Socialist Party), was the crudity of the politics involved—not quality of character.

McGlinchey is compared to the central character, 'Padraic', in McDonagh's *The Lieutenant Of Inishmore*: both were "*too extreme even for the Provisional IRA*". Henry McDonald, like Dominic McGlinchey, is a former member of the Official IRA. Like most ex-'Sticks', he helps 'disappear' the latter organisation. *The Lieutenant* contains torture scenes, and "*you are transported back to all those houses of horror across Ireland ...*",—in one of which his fellow-revisionist, Sean O'Callaghan, killed an entirely innocent colleague, to consolidate his own position as an agent of British military intelligence.

McDonagh uses "*an Irish context*" to expose the squalor of "*the "armed struggle"*" in his play. McDonald (relatively subtly) quotes another

have pointed out what she actually was. There is a subtext which implies a defence of Protestants in the Free State is required. As most of them have long reconciled themselves to being good citizens of the State, they need no defending. Activities supporting Bowen and excusing her spying can only have the effect of encouraging grievances among Southern Protestants.

At this year's Summer School Mansergh will deliver the final lecture at the Firgrove Hotel, Mitchelstown, on Sunday, May 25th at 8pm. The title is "*Elizabeth Bowen and her wartime role; an ideological class problem of national identity, neutrality and world wars, then and now*".

MANDEVILLE AND MITCHELSTOWN

The notion that the above-mentioned Society had to look around for a subject for their Summer School is ridiculous. Mitchelstown is dominated by its main Square. And the Square is dominated by the imposing statue of John Mandeville. Mandeville was a local landowner: he

and William O'Brien from Mallow were two of the leading activists in the Land War and both were jailed in October 1887 under a new law for inciting tenants to resist evictions. Early in their sentence O'Brien was hospitalised. Mandeville pioneered the dirty protest and went on the blanket—or in his case the sheet and then just the towel. He was kept in freezing conditions and mostly a diet of bread and water. Six months after his release he died and an inquest was held. The jury returned the following verdict: "*We find that John Mandeville died on 8 July of diffuse cellular inflammation of the throat as defined by the doctors, brought about by the brutal and unjustifiable treatment he received in Tullamore gaol.*"

But no John Mandeville Summer School! The statue was unveiled on 9th November 1906 by William O'Brien MP. No other Irish MP turned up, but there was a crowd of 25,000.

Conor Lynch

revisionist journalist, Malachi O Doherty, attacking McDonagh as engaging in "*paddy-whackery*".

Unfortunately Malachi O Doherty rather loses the run of himself (or this item was badly edited). He is quoted as saying Beckett "*was Irish*". At the risk of causing fits of the vapours throughout Dublin 4, the *Grauniad* and RTE, it needs to be said that he was only born in Ireland. Beckett was a cricket-playing, Public School-educated Dublin bourgeois who went to France and stayed there for most of his long life. He also wrote in French. It is often said that he favoured Irish voices performing his translations into English. But one of his favourite voices was Billie Whitelaw, from the north of England. His favoured Irish voices belonged to Jack MacGowran and Patrick Magee, from Dublin and Armagh respectively.

Malachi O Doherty is reported as saying "*...there is a case to be made for the debilitating effects of an Irish cultural background...*". Eh? (As Sam Beckett might well have put it). As, (as is implied), opposed to what other sort of 'cultural background'? Malachi O Doherty and I lived in Lancaster, in the north of England for some overlapping years in the early 1970s. Lancaster (despite being given a City Charter by one of the more bloodthirsty Plantagenet kings, and acquiring a university—which it didn't really approve of—in the 1960s) is a market town. It is also a garrison town. I'd be surprised if, like me, he does not recall seeing children (as young as thirteen) in the town in the full 'regimentals' of some part of the UK's armed forces.

Lancaster does not have a cathedral, but does have a Priory, attached to the castle (built to keep the Scots at bay, should they have got past Carlisle) and now a functioning prison. The castle also has a Crown Court in which the Birmingham Six were tried (for want of a better word). The Priory, entirely unembarrassed, exhibits booty from various imperialist exercises in plundering by the local regiment. A major debilitating factor in Irish culture is that we were only tangentially involved in that sort of thing, and turned our backs on it decades ago. The Irish State's neutrality, despite the studied forgetfulness of the Establishment, is anti-imperialist in origin.

The above is important, even crucial, McDonald goes on to sneer at "*Irishmen with guns...*". The standard of comparison is, implicitly, England. The fact that England has been at war for most of the past three (nearly four) centuries never seems to strike McDonald, or the people he quotes. It does not seem to have struck McDonagh, either, as even pass-remarkable. (The 150th anniversary of the 'Indian Mutiny' aka Great Uprising, in

2007 barely caused a flicker of interest in intellectual England).

Despite his contorted view of contemporary [Northern] Ireland, and being something of an historical revisionist, McDonald uses the term "*sons and daughters of the Irish diaspora*" in his profile. This is in relation to McDonagh not "*romanticising... terrorism... in the name of Ireland...*". The profile adds that McDonagh was not "*sucked into the "Brits Out" bar ballad culture... in north London and south Boston*". (South Boston is always mentioned by 'revisionist' journalists—it appears to be their version of Purgatory, or even Hell itself). As noted above, McDonagh comes from 'south of the river': quite why he would trek north, to listen to 'diddly-i' music or 'rabble songs' it is difficult to get a grip on. (Incidentally, many venues in north London—the giant Archway bar, for example—did not supply musical background for armchair 'Rebels'. They were recommended by Comhaltas for the quality of the music and musicians they engaged.)

Apparently McDonagh told "critic and columnist Fintan O'Foole" (what a love-in that encounter must have been!) that he was "*innately suspicious of the IRA's armed campaign*". Presumably this was the Provisional IRA, as opposed to the Official IRA, the INLA, not to mention the others involved in the incivilities. (Engaged in the war were: the British armed forces (the Navy and Air Force were involved as well as the PBI, poor bloody infantry; the RUC, an armed gendarmerie; the Ulster Special Constabulary, the 'B-Specials'—this entirely Protestant paramilitary organisation had elite elements, which consistently won Gold Medals for sharp shooting at Bisley in the 1960s. The *Belfast Telegraph* was so proud . . . ; then, from 1966 onwards, the Ulster Volunteer Force; the Ulster Defence Association; and others.) Anyway, McDonagh said, "*I was always coming from a leftwing or pacifist or anarchist angle that started with punk, and which was against all nationalisms*".

Punk was a good running kick in the seat of the pants of British 'pap' music. It really amounted to little else. Some people in 'punk' were anything but 'leftwing', or 'pacifist'. Punk in Belfast was conscientiously 'non-sectarian', like every other 'urban tribe' and musical tendency, from jazz fans to New Romantics and 'Blitz kids'—you didn't get many sectarian punch-ups at Ulster Hall orchestral concerts. Anarchists—apart from, possibly, Stirnerite 'individualist anarchists'—would sympathise with abused minorities. The Taigs in the Six Counties were abused, and learned very

early on (about the time of the 'Arms Trials') that they were definitely a minority.

McDonagh was born in March 1970, and therefore has no memory of the images coming out of Belfast in August 1969—of whole streets in flames. The streets, despite the 'one side are as bad as the other' cliché beloved of the Beeb, when young Martin was listening to BBC Radio 1—were occupied, almost entirely by Catholics / 'Taigs'. The latter designation is quite important. There has always been a strong element of ethnic contempt for 'the minority' in Ulster Unionism. The attitude of the UK authorities to those images was irritation that the Moscow Government was able to trump 'Western' propaganda about the invasion of Czechoslovakia—by showing, on 'Eastern bloc' television services images of (what looked very like a pogrom) culled from the BBC and other 'Western' outlets.

For a punk anarchist McDonagh has a strangely credulous attitude to the BBC's spin on what is (or was) going on in Northern Ireland. His plays are set in the west of Ireland. But what happened in the Republic was mostly 'spill-over' from the North. And the worst incidents (by a long, long, stretch) were perpetrated by the British 'security forces', the Dublin and Clones bombings and a number of killings around the border. Some of these killings were of IRA operatives. Some were not, and may have been cases of 'mistaken identity'. There was a whiff of 'encouraging the others' (and ethnic contempt) about them. They were invasions of the Republic's territory. Why has this sort of thing never featured in McDonagh's work?

This article is not a demand that McDonagh (or any other writer), should not write what they please. Nor is it a demand that they should not take any attitude they please to the people of Ireland, West or North. The same in regard to the IRA. But McDonagh, and a number of other writers, are dealing with a living 'ongoing situation', and, more to the point, a multi-faceted situation. The 'security forces', apart from apparently being at odds with each other, have shed more blood than any other element in the North, particularly if their record from 1968 onwards is taken into consideration. They have used elements of the Loyalist paramilitaries to carry out atrocities, the Miami Showband killings being the most obvious example. There has been a lot of 'collateral damage' (killing, in plain language) to ordinary citizens. There is no reason why Martin McDonagh, in writing his scripts, should take this sort of thing into account. But the lack of even the most cursory allusion to them is a bit odd.

Seán McGouran

National Agreements

Employers are telling Irish workers that they must tighten their belts. No question of the employers, the board members, the executives both private and public, or the politicians, being expected to do so. It's the downturn in the economy, you see. A downturn caused directly by the greed and economic mishandling of these people. RTE reports (on the workers' day, May Day) that the employers are particularly disturbed by the idea that agency workers should have the same rights as anyone else. This is because of the huge costs (hidden from the public) of employing agency workers. Some Agencies (also, it must be remembered, a part of the employers' cartel) charge as much as a full year's wages to the employer for getting the staff. So it is unusual and rather welcome to come across the following editorial in the *Irish Examiner* on the matter.

THE EXAMINER ON THE WAGE ROUND:

"Workers and businesses who relied on national agreements to regulate pay have been, by and large, well served by the process and we are about to discover if that positive trend can be sustained.

Yesterday's vote by SIPTU delegates to enter talks on a new agreement suggests that it might. No one, it seems, has a formula that will satisfy business and unions. Unions argue that under the current 27-month deal workers did not enjoy any real increases. Inflation, which despite expectations, has accelerated again and has nullified any awards made. So, from a union perspective, there has been a wage pause... any public sense of responsibility and reality that might be fostered by IMF and World Bank warnings are diluted by the tremendous pay deals seen at the top end of our economy. No matter how businesses—especially in the financial sector—blather on about the market rate for the job, multi-million-pay packets topped off by share options and seven-figure bonuses undermine the suggestion that we are on the verge of a financial meltdown. Claims "substantially above inflation" have no prospect of being realised but if partnership is to have any real meaning, to play any part in advancing or protecting our society, then concessions will have to be made and workers, especially the lower paid, will have to be able to leave the talks feeling their financial position is relatively secure and that other issues, like agency workers, are being dealt with in a meaningful way..." (Irish Examiner, 15.4.08)

CL

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

REDMOND

The Irish Times had yet another article in praise of John Redmond (25.3.08). This time by Tom Fewer. Fewer finished his article with the following extraordinary statement:

"If we now consider ourselves to be a civilised, peaceful, democratic country, it is surely time we gave due credit to his life's work."

But it was precisely because Ireland was a civilised, peaceful and democratic country that it rejected what Redmond stood for in the 1918 Election, the first General Election since 1910. And in fairness even Redmond realised that the British had sold him a pup and died a broken man in March 1918, nine months before his party was all but wiped out by Sinn Féin.

The State has no obligations to Redmond. But what of *The Irish Times*? Redmondism represented a genuine native Irish development, which was sympathetic to British imperialism. Redmond enthusiastically recruited the Irish to fight for Britain in the First World War. In exchange for some local autonomy he committed Ireland to a junior role in support of British imperialism.

The Irish Times might have been expected to support this native development but in the 1918 Election it refused to urge a vote for Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party, even where there was no Southern Unionist candidate in the field. The only exception to this was William Redmond in Waterford who had fought for the British in the war.

The Irish Times preferred to rely on the might of the British Empire to overwhelm the movement towards independence rather than encouraging a pro-Empire sentiment among the Catholic population.

It is not the State, but *The Irish Times* itself which needs to explain its contemptuous attitude to Redmondism when that tendency was still an active political force.

PARNELL

John Redmond supported Parnell following the Kitty O'Shea affair. And Tom Fewer in his article blames the Catholic Church for the disintegration of the Irish Parliamentary Party following the O'Shea divorce case. But he doesn't say anything about *The Irish Times*'s view of the matter.

The Irish Times adopted a puritan stance in relation to Parnell. It also gave extensive coverage to statements from the Catholic hierarchy. This was extremely unusual for *The Irish Times*. In general it had no interest in the pronouncements of the Catholic Church.

Its editorial of 15th November 1890 is reminiscent of its pronouncements on more recent Irish leaders:

"We have no desire to repeat in detail the incidents of a mean and miserable story, which from beginning to end is a narrative of paltry deceit. The public cannot excuse the unworthy part that Mr. Parnell has played and the recital of it will astonish and disappoint many—even of those without the ranks of his supporters, who had placed his personality upon an ideal pedestal. That Mr. Parnell has compromised his reputation is obvious, and it is equally manifest that no exhibition of cynicism can obscure his conduct. The public will find it hard to discover for it any exculpation and while there is no wish to turn the scandal to political account, it is at the same time impossible to regard him as occupying that position of dignity which hitherto he has held..."

Later on the editorial continues with these weasel words:

"There can be no desire upon any hand to bear hardly upon Mr. Parnell, but he is himself responsible for the depreciation of his character, and if condemned by the public for a lapse of honour and of honesty that have irretrievably wrecked the reputations of smaller men, he has only himself to blame. It would seem that he has no intention to abdicate his position, but the utmost exercise of magnanimity upon any side displayed can hardly reinstate him in the respect of the community. These are days in which the public is censorious, but its moral sense requires a high standard as well of personal as of political honour. Whether the time has come to judge of Mr. Parnell's career from the standpoint of history we do not pretend to judge. Events have still to tell their tale. But it must be said that the revelations now made strike a heavy blow at his reputation and vastly injure an influence that had been respected. The record that now presents itself to the public is wretched in its duplicity and disgrace, and while they condemn it, they cannot but regret that it has dragged down a great name."

The *Irish Times* has had many honourable journalists, but as an institution it is rotten to the core. It is incapable of dealing honestly with its own history.

Parnell had allied himself and his party with the Liberal Party. To many within the Home Rule party the sacrifice of its leader in order to assuage the Liberals' non-conformist conscience seemed a price worth paying for Home Rule. Morality

had nothing to do with it. But that wasn't the reason for *The Irish Times*'s opposition to Parnell; it was against Home Rule and hated Gladstone's Liberal Party. That paper has always delighted in the downfall of strong Irish leaders.

AHERN AND *THE IRISH TIMES*

The Irish Times editorial of 3rd April 2008 was not much different from its editorial of 15th November, 1890. The 2008 version was of the opinion that whatever good Ahern might have done his resignation will have a "restorative effect on political standards".

Ahern may not have been the father of the Celtic Tiger but he can at least claim to have been the father's most faithful son. As the Minister for Labour in the Haughey Government he played an important role in establishing Social Partnership in 1987. On the North Haughey set the ball rolling by bringing Sinn Féin in from the cold and Reynolds and Ahern kept it going.

Haughey broke the taboo of single party government and Ahern, unlike Reynolds, could see that it would almost guarantee continuous Fianna Fail-led Government.

But in truth Ahern was the author of his own downfall. It turned out that his greatest strength was also his greatest weakness. He believed that a deal could be made no matter how antagonistic the person or the institution. But he didn't understand *The Irish Times*. That 150 year-old institution knows itself and its principles even if some of its own journalists pretend that they do not. It was never going to be amenable to Ahern's legendary charm.

On the day of the election results Ahern denounced the media. And in case anyone had any doubt about who he meant he identified *The Irish Times* as being the problem in an interview with Ursula Halligan of TV3. And yet within a few days he penned an article for that newspaper outlining his plans for the new Government. A contemptuous Martyn Turner cartoon accompanied the article.

Barry Egan's gossip column in the *Sunday Independent* indicated that the Taoiseach had lunch with Geraldine Kennedy after the election. But if Ahern had read this magazine a little closer than he does he would have realised that Kennedy was not the person to meet. The Editor of *The Irish Times* is of no consequence. Power resides with *The Irish Times Trust*. Ahern was demeaning himself by talking to a subordinate.

AHERN & TRIBUNALS

The current Tribunals were set up by the Dail as a means of taking the gossip, rumour and innuendo surrounding certain events out of the political arena so that firm conclusions could be reached by disinterested parties. That is certainly their

function in other countries. But in Ireland the opposite has been the case. Their deliberations have stimulated more gossip, rumour and innuendo, which have fed into—and sometimes dominated—the political debate.

They are not inquisitorial with the aim of finding the facts, but adversarial. The objects of the rumours are placed in the position of being defendants in front of Tribunal lawyers intent on prosecuting a case against them. But unlike in a normal court of law the prosecution can bring new charges against the defendants arising from the evidence. There has not been a shred of evidence to substantiate the allegations made by Gilmartin but that has not prevented the Tribunal from conducting a fishing expedition into the minute details of Ahern's financial affairs.

Unlike in a normal court of law the prosecution is not obliged to present its case beforehand so as to allow the defendant time to prepare its case. At present Ahern has had to appeal to the High Court to obtain information on the calculation of foreign exchange transactions.

It was with extreme reluctance that the Mahon Tribunal suspended operations during the last election. But it resumed its activities immediately after the election and before the formation of a new government. There is no doubt it had an influence—even if it was not a decisive one—on the formation of the new Government.

And it was clear following the formation of the Government that the political influence of the Tribunal was going to increase rather than diminish. The Taoiseach had made a number of appearances and the Tribunal reserved the right to recall him at any time. This was placing an intolerable strain on the proper functioning of Government as well as undermining the dignity of the office of Taoiseach.

Ahern and his Cabinet colleagues whinged about this but did nothing about it. Last month, before his resignation, this column stated that if Ahern didn't close down the Tribunals he would deserve his fate. But by then it was already too late. The moment of truth came when Fine Gael proposed a motion of confidence in the Tribunals. Since the Tribunals are a creation of the Dail it is perfectly entitled to wind them up. If Fianna Fail had the courage of its convictions; if it had any respect for the political institutions of the State, it would have voted against that motion. But instead it decided on a fudge.

This column sees no reason to change its mind. Politics is too important for sentimentality. Bertie Ahern was an exceptional servant of the State for a period of more than thirty years. But in the end he deserved his fate.

Report of Book Launch on 18th April of John Martin's *The Irish Times: Past and Present*

EDITORIAL NOTE: The event started with the Chairman, Philip O'Connor, thanking Conor Lenihan, Minister for Integration, for launching the book and referring to the historic links between Fianna Fail and the Labour movement. It is hoped to carry reports of both Philip O'Connor's and Conor Lenihan's remarks in the next issue. Below is John Martin's edited speech

Holding *The Irish Times* To Account

I first took an interest in *The Irish Times* in January 2003 following the publication of a document from the British public records office in the *Irish Political Review*. The document was a letter from the British Ambassador to Ireland describing a lunch he had with Major McDowell of *The Irish Times* in 1969. According to the Ambassador McDowell wanted to place the newspaper under British State influence because his Editor, Douglas Gageby was "a renegade or white nigger on Northern matters".

The most extraordinary aspect of the document was the "renegade or white nigger" phrase, which leaps out from the page. Douglas Gageby is widely believed to have been one of the greatest Irish Editors of the 20th century. And yet here we have evidence of a fellow Director—and not just any Director but also the Chief Executive of *The Irish Times*—trying to undermine Gageby and enlisting help from a foreign state to do so. Furthermore, this was at a time when there was conflict between the Republic of Ireland and Britain as a result of the outbreak of war in Northern Ireland in 1969.

But almost as extraordinary as the document itself was the reaction to it by the media. A copy was sent to Geraldine Kennedy, a distinguished investigative journalist and current editor of *The Irish Times*. And yet she was not interested in this story.

The *Sunday Independent* published the details of the document a few weeks after the *Irish Political Review*, but even then not in all of its editions. The following day *The Irish Times* issued a denial from Major McDowell

The Sunday after McDowell's denials *Sunday Independent* columnist Professor Ronan Fanning wrote that the idea that a British Ambassador would lie to his own superiors on a matter such as this "beggars belief".

But thereafter the story seemed to die. Major McDowell had issued his denial in *The Irish Times*. Professor Ronan Fanning had expressed his scepticism. The matter had not been resolved to anyone's satisfaction.

However, about a year after the *Irish Political Review* first published the so-called "white nigger" letter a distinguished British journalist, Roy Greenslade, took an interest in the story. Greenslade, as a

media commentator for the *Guardian*, was as interested in how the "white nigger" letter was dealt with by *The Irish Times* as the document itself. In particular he wondered why the document was not published by *The Irish Times* or any other newspaper when it was first released by the British Public Records Office in December 1999.

The excuse given by former Editor Conor Brady was that he didn't know why the letter was not discovered by *The Irish Times* but suggested that it was significant that it was also not discovered by other Irish newspapers.

In 2004 also, Martin Mansergh—for reasons best known to himself—defended *The Irish Times*. Incredibly he interpreted the white nigger letter as evidence of the declining influence of traditional Protestant business interests. But Major McDowell remained on as Chief executive until 1997 nearly 30 years after his lunch meeting with the British Ambassador. And since 1969 his power and influence had increased dramatically.

The inadequate explanations and evasions led me to do some more research on *The Irish Times*. My first port of call was the Companies Registration Office. By the early 1970s five shareholders—Ralph Walker, Phillip Walker, George Hetherington, Major McDowell and Douglas Gageby owned all the ordinary shares and in 1974 they cashed-in their ordinary shares for a total of £1.6 million pounds (or £325k each).

The structure of *The Irish Times* underwent dramatic change in 1974. Major McDowell was placed in a position of dominance which was some achievement given the fact that he had just cashed-in his shares for £325k. I have never seen anything like the 1974 Memorandum and Articles of Association of *The Irish Times*. As well as the dominance of Major McDowell there is also a requirement that the directors swear an Oath of Secrecy every year in front of a Commissioner of Oaths. This provision is strictly enforced as can be seen from Conor Brady's book *Up With The Times*. As far as I know this oath of secrecy is still in force.

Further investigation revealed more documents in the British Public Records Office relating to Major McDowell.

One of these documents gives a very revealing insight into the relations that

Major McDowell had with the British State. The document was written by one of Harold Wilson's secretaries. It says that McDowell phoned Downing Street in September 1969 from the Naval and Military Club in London. Unfortunately, he couldn't get through and by the time Downing Street had responded to the call McDowell had returned to Dublin.

When Prime Minister Harold Wilson heard about the call he wanted the British Ambassador to contact McDowell in Dublin. According to this letter Wilson thought the matter related more to intelligence than newspaper activity.

There are three significant elements to this document.

Firstly, it shows that McDowell was extremely well connected with the highest echelons of the British State right up to Prime Minister level.

Secondly it shows that he was not just a newspaperman. I have heard from one *Irish Times* source that McDowell worked for British Intelligence in Austria after the war. Also the famous British media mogul of the 1960s Cecil King says in a matter-of-fact way in his published diaries that McDowell was in MI5. So Harold Wilson wasn't the only person who thought McDowell was a spook.

Thirdly, this document indicates that the reason why the British Ambassador was meeting Major McDowell for lunch in 1969 was that Prime Minister Harold Wilson requested it. This lunch in October 1969 was the one that the Ambassador said that McDowell thought his editor Douglas Gageby was a "white nigger". Under the circumstances in my view the British Ambassador would have been especially attentive to what McDowell had said given that he was aware that Harold Wilson was taking an interest.

A *Sunday Times* profile of Major McDowell in 2001 indicates that McDowell received help in setting up the Trust in 1974 from Lord Arnold Goodman. Goodman has been variously described as "*Harold Wilson's Mr Fix it*" and "*the most powerful man in Britain*". And here we have him helping to put McDowell in a dominant position in *The Irish Times*. The same article says that McDowell has always tried to preserve the newspaper's "*British essence*".

I then tried to form a historical understanding of *The Irish Times*. From its first editorial it saw Britain, and a certain type of Englishman, as a role model. After Independence it retained its imperial outlook. Right up until the 1950s it supported the Pro-Treaty party because this was the best means of retaining the imperial connection. The fact that the Pro-Treaty side was the most Catholic party in

the State was beside the point. At times the support given by *The Irish Times* to Cumann na nGaedheal was an embarrassment to that party. For instance after the Treaty *The Irish Times* wanted the British Army to stay in Ireland.

Writers such as Lionel Fleming and Brian Inglis, who worked in the paper during the 1940s describe the newspaper as living in an Anglo-centric twilight world. So when Gageby took over the newspaper he had a job of work to do. The newspaper was on the verge of bankruptcy. Gageby rescued it from oblivion by bringing it into the mainstream of national culture.

And in truth by the 1960s many former Southern Unionists had grown accustomed to the new Irish State and had become proud of the achievements of independence. Even the old guard in the *Irish Times* had resigned themselves to the new State after the declaration of the Republic by the pro-Treaty party in 1948.

In the 1960s Anglo-Irish relations had never been better and the Unionists on *The Irish Times* Board were prepared to accept a nationalist such as Douglas Gageby to the Board of *The Irish Times*.

However in 1969 the old instincts were revived. In a situation of potential conflict between Ireland and Britain Gageby's *Irish Times* was unashamedly on the side of Ireland. On the Board of Directors he was supported by the Freemason George Hetherington. The newspaper's reporting of the North was sympathetic to the Civil Rights movement.

This is the historical context, which explains McDowell's contact with Downing Street in 1969. It was precisely because there was a split on the Board that McDowell felt he needed to enlist outside help.

In my view since the departure of Douglas Gageby *The Irish Times* has returned to a largely Anglo-centric view of the world. It continues to denigrate the achievements of independence and has been trying to restore the reputation of John Redmond. It has also reverted to an almost hysterical hatred of the most successful political party in the history of the State, Fianna Fail.

How does it explain the behaviour of Major McDowell in 1969? Why was he accorded such extraordinary powers after 1974? Whose interests does the newspaper represent?

In my opinion it is time that the institution which demands accountability for everyone else should itself be made accountable. It is my hope that this book will be the start of that process.

Pat Murphy made the following remarks at the launch of the *Irish Times* book

A Parallel Universe: Cynical Use Of Left-minded Journalists

John Martin's book, *The Irish Times: Past And Present*, gives us a graphic picture of its pro British Chief Executive and Director, Major McDowell, and his increasingly vice-like control of the paper from the 1960s onwards culminating in the setting up of the Irish Times Trust which became his mechanism of control around 1970.

He describes Douglas Gageby, a talented Editor whose loyalty was to the Irish state, as a 'White Nigger'.

Gageby started a staff recruiting drive which he delegated to one of his staff, Donal Foley, who came from a left wing/Gaelgoir family and had worked in London where much of the Irish hard left developed in the early 1960s.

Foley was given an unorthodox recruiting brief. All that was required of candidates was that they could write well and have an interest in the issues of the day. Previously journalists were recruited from the provincial or national press or had appropriate degrees from the universities.

It was obvious that this open recruiting brief had targeted candidates in mind. Those who were selected were from the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, the Militant, Sinn Fein, or student radicals from the Universities. Their energy, originality and commitment to society would have impressed Gageby for his paper. He would have seen them as a modernising influence on the society—but the Major would have noted that they were all professed internationalists in a society where the predominant politics were nationalist/Irish republican. How many people in the Irish Republic to-day (40 years later) describe themselves as nationalists or republicans?,

The first dramatic evidence of the transformation came during and in particular after the *Not Guilty* verdict in the Arms Trial in October, 1970. The Court heard from the Army's Military Intelligence that Capt. Kelly was operating in the north on its authority and that the arms importation was Government policy.

I should like to quote from Wikipedia: "after the trial all the accused were acquitted but many refused to recognise the verdicts of the courts". The many were the hard left (numbering a couple of

thousand—it was a very political generation) and the media.

The truth was turned on its head, the innocent—the defendants, were portrayed as the guilty and the guilty—the Government, was portrayed as the innocent party.

And thus the Irish media entered its parallel universe, which it still occupies to this day, playing havoc with the careers of three Fianna Fail Taoisigh—In the process ousting a left of centre Fianna Fail/Labour Government which would probably have lasted for 15 years. Truly, the Major has succeeded in converting the Irish hard left and the media into his anti-national gillies.

REPORT: Here is the *Irish Times* review of John Martin's book with the *Phoenix* comment on it

"New book about 'Irish Times' launched

CARL O'BRIEN

Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan yesterday launched a book which he said aimed to give an "alternative" history of The Irish Times.

The Irish Times: Past and Present by John Martin is published by the Belfast Historical and Educational Society.

Launching the book at a function yesterday, Mr Lenihan said the newspaper was one of the most influential institutions in Irish life which merited being held up to scrutiny.

"*The Irish Times* is an extremely influential newspaper. One could describe it as an institution, and it has been for more than 100 years. Like all institutions, whether it's the church, politics, the banks or, indeed, Fianna Fáil, they have all been subject to combative scrutiny over the years.

"It's good to have an alternative view of that tradition. I suppose you could describe this as an unofficial biography of *The Irish Times*. This is one side of the story. No doubt *The Irish Times* has its own story to tell through its own official biography, but I think people will be interested in both."

The author, an accountant and a contributor to the *Irish Political Review*, said the book was key to understanding the history of the newspaper and, on a wider level, the dynamics of Irish society itself.

It covers issues such as the The Irish Times's coverage of the rise of nationalism in the 19th century, the Treaty negotiations and the formation of the Irish Free State." [19.4.08]

"*Irish Times* Alternative History

The Irish Times published a short, sanitised report of the book launched by junior foreign minister Conor Lenihan last month, entitled *The Irish Times: Past and Present*. While it quoted Lenihan's comment that the book was an "alternative view" of the newspaper, the report omitted to mention the central points of the book, which amounted to a damning account of the *IT's* coverage of Irish nationalism in the 19th century as well as the Treaty negotiations and the founding of the Free State. Sounds like a dry tome that might find its way into the TCD library at some point. However, the book is a far more provocative read than this account suggests and the author, John Martin, refers to former chief executive Major Tom McDowell's membership of MI5—as quoted in *The Cecil King Diary*—as well as his despotic and profitable role at the paper.

Martin also deals with the Major's dealings with the British Government, his description of his own editor, the late Douglas Gageby as a "white nigger" and the view of former British premier Harold Wilson that McDowell was willing to offer intelligence to HMG.

It also accuses the newspaper of playing a role in the "resignation of (An Taoiseach) Ahern" and that this was "only the latest coup inflicted by the newspaper against democratically elected Irish leaders".

The workings of the mysterious trust that controls the *IT* and the financial arrangements that benefited McDowell and a few others, (much of it covered in past editions of *The Phoenix*) are also recounted in the book. And Martin writes about the oath of secrecy that directors of the Irish Times Ltd and the Trust are obliged to swear.

One awaits with interest a comprehensive review of this fascinating book in the paper's *Weekend Review*." [2.5.2008]

The Irish Times:

Past And Present,

a record of the journal since 1859

by John Martin

Index. 264 pp. ISBN 978-1-872078-13-7. Belfast Historical & Educational Society. 2008.

SPECIAL OFFER

Available to readers at €10, £8 postfree: write to one of the addresses on the back page or mention the *Irish Political Review* when ordering from the website: www.atholbooks.org

Oration delivered by Dr. Brian Murphy *osb* at Arbour Hill—Sunday, 20 April 2008. The event was hosted by the 1916-1921 Society, originally formed to gather all sides of the Treaty divide together, hence the dates.

An Easter Message

As we gather here to pay tribute to those who died in the Easter Rising of 1916 and to those who lived and died fighting for Irish freedom in the years 1916-1921, the words of Patrick Pearse, delivered at the grave of Wolfe Tone in Bodenstown Churchyard, 22 June 1913, are relevant and appropriate. I quote, with some paraphrasing, as follows:

"I feel it difficult to speak to you today; difficult in this place (the holiest place in Ireland). It is as if one had to speak by the graveside of some dear friends, brothers in blood or well-tryed comrades in arms, and to say aloud the things one would rather keep to oneself. But I am helped by the knowledge that you who listen to me partake in my emotion: we are none of us strangers, being all in a sense brothers and sisters, sharing their faith, sharing their hopes still unrealised, sharing in their great love. I have, then, only to find expression for the thought and emotions common to us all, and you will understand even if the expression be a halting one."

"We have come here not merely to salute this noble dust and to pay our homage to their noble spirits. We have come here to renew our adhesion to their faith; to express once more our full

acceptance of the gospel of Irish Nationalism which they formulated in worthy terms, giving clear definition and plenary meaning to all that had been thought and taught before them by Irish-speaking and English-speaking men (and women)."

Pearse had no doubt that Tone's gospel of Irish Nationalism provided the essential tenets of belief for the people of his time and for all time. He declared firmly:

"we need not re-state our programme; Tone has stated it for us: 'to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of our country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means'."

One cannot improve on these sentiments: to add to them would be to distract from the impact of their message. Political developments in the years following the Easter Rising have inevitably led to current debates on forms of

'association' with England that are compatible with breaking a 'connection' based on subservience. Such debates/negotiations may be accepted as an integral part of the political process. Recent allegations, however, that those buried here and their followers had abandoned the religious toleration of Tone and had adopted a policy of sectarianism should be contested. This allegation is made despite the clearest profession of religious toleration, composed by several in this cemetery, and read by Patrick Pearse on the steps of the GPO in April 1916.

I read from the *Proclamation of the Republic of Ireland*, paragraph four:

"the Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens... cherishing all the children of the nation equally... oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past."

Significantly, it should be noted that the expression "cherishing all the children of the nation equally", refers, not to mere children, but to all the people of Ireland. These sentiments of religious toleration were subsequently repeated in the proclamations of Dail Eireann in 1919 and were also incorporated into the post-1916 constitutions of Sinn Fein and the Irish Volunteers.

Despite these explicit professions of toleration, Roy Foster has concluded (*Modern Ireland*, 1988) that "the emotions focussed by cultural revivalism around the turn of the century were fundamentally sectarian and even racialist", and Peter Hart has argued (*The IRA And Its Enemies*, 1998) that

"nationalism veered towards sectarianism in late 1920 and guerrilla war became, in some places, a kind of tribal war". On a popular level the film, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, was criticised by those who accept the views of Foster and Hart for not portraying the sectarian character of the Irish war; and the same supporters of their views have praised the RTE film on *The Story of the Pearsons of Coolacrease* for accurately depicting the conflict as sectarian. Roy Foster dismissed Ken Loach's film because it did not provide sufficient background context; RTE and the BCC (Broadcasting Complaints Commission) defended the film on Coolacrease because it did reflect the context of the time.

The decision of RTÉ to treat the killings at Coolacrease as sectarian is almost inexplicable in the context of the contemporary evidence of Matilda, the sister of the two Pearson boys who were shot. She stated that the members of the IRA responsible for the shooting had told her: "Don't think we are doing this because you are Protestants. It is not being done

on that account." This evidence is not buried in the inner pages of Alan Stanley's book on the topic: it is highlighted, alongside a photo of Matilda, on the back cover of the book. One can but wonder why this relevant source was ignored and from what other sources Foster and RTE derived their understanding of the context of the period. Certainly it did not come from the Protestant people themselves, many of whom were prepared to defend the religious toleration of their Catholic colleagues and were prepared to participate actively in the work of Dáil Éireann. Their voices provide an alternative context to the historical narrative to that adopted by critics of Irish republicans.

For the years before the Easter Rising, the words of Douglas Hyde, President of the Gaelic League since its foundation in 1893, have a particular relevance. Speaking in January 1913, he declared that

"I myself belong to a great popular movement, the Gaelic League, and although I am a Protestant I have been re-elected President every year for the last twenty years... I have never known during all that time anybody to be warped or biased or even moved in his judgement by any religious or sectarian consideration... The men and women in the Gaelic League faithfully represent (if anybody in Ireland now does) the old Irish spirit and traditions... and the only thing they take into consideration in bestowing their favours is whether a man (person) is a good Irishman or not."

In the immediate aftermath of the Easter Rising, Protestant poets and authors paid their tributes to the Catholic poets and their comrades who had been executed in 1916. Among them were George Bernard Shaw, W.B. Yeats, Dora Sigerson Shorter, Alice Milligan, Eva Gore Booth, Albinia Brodrick, the sister of the Earl of Middleton, and George Russell (AE). From the formation of Dail Eireann several Protestants engaged in the constructive work of that body. Robert Barton was appointed head of the department of Agriculture and, in turn, appointed Erskine Childers and Lionel Smith Gordon to work with him as directors of the National Land Bank in December 1919. There were issues over land at that time but it is inconceivable that Dáil Éireann would have appointed Protestants in charge of a land reform programme, if they had wished to drive their fellow Protestants from the land.

Erskine Childers, himself, writing privately, was quite clear on the matter. "It is worth noting once more," he stated in his account of *The Irish Revolution*,

"that the violence evoked in this year (1919) was slight. Nor was it indiscriminate or undisciplined. At no time, neither then nor subsequently, have civilians—Protestant Unionists living scattered and isolated in the South and

West, been victimised by the republicans on account of their religion or religious opinion."

It is, perhaps, significant that Peter Hart has made reference to *The Irish Revolution* in the Childers papers, Trinity College, Dublin, but has chosen to reject its crucial source value on the issue of sectarianism.

During the War of Independence, in January 1921, when many Protestants joined their fellow Catholics to assist the work of the *White Cross Society*, there was no suggestion of sectarian discord. The names of the Church of Ireland Bishops of Meath and Killaloe, Dr Kathleen Lynn, Alice Stopford Green, Molly Childers, Albinia Brodrick, James Douglas and the Chief Rabbi, Dr Herzog, are to be found as members of the Society alongside several Catholic bishops, several members of Dail Eireann, including Michael Collins. Similarly, in the summer of 1920, when pogroms against Catholics began in the north of Ireland, many Protestants living in the south wrote to the national press asserting that they were not victims of religious discrimination. The words of George Russell (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 June 1920) have a special significance:

"I, as an Irish Protestant and an Ulsterman by birth", he wrote, "have lived in Southern Ireland most of my life. I have worked in every county, and I have never found my religion to make any barrier between myself and my Catholic countrymen, nor was my religion a bar to my work."

One could go on: there were many other letters and many other examples of co-operation. More than sufficient to indicate that these Protestant voices provide a context for the historical narrative that, on the one hand, confirms the idealism and the integrity of those we remember here to-day; and, on the other hand, indicates clearly that the historical narrative developed by Foster, Hart, their academic acolytes and their associates in the media is at variance with the original source material. Ironically, Roy Foster, in the sub-title to his book *The Irish Story*, may have provided some explanation as to how he, and his associates, have got it so wrong. *Telling Tales and Making it up in Ireland* is the sub-title of his book and, with these words, he may have revealed, unwittingly, some insight into the historical methodology that has created the allegation of sectarianism.

For ourselves, as we gather to pay our respects to those buried in this graveyard, we will leave the last word to one of those Protestant voices that has helped to shape the true historical context of the period. The words are taken from George Russell's poem, *Salutation*:

"Their dream has left me numb and cold,
But yet my spirit rose in pride,
Refashioning in burnished gold,
The image of those who died,

Or were shot in the penal cell.
Here's to you, Pearse, your dream not mine,
But yet the thought, for this you fell,
Has turned life's water into wine."

Lord Professor Bew And The Forging Of A Shared Past

Subversives And The State is the subtitle of a new book whose main title is *IRA Interments And The Irish Government*. I have not read it, so all I can discuss is the misconception implied by the sub-title.

When Fine Gael, in alliance with a recently-retired Chief of Staff of the IRA, declared the Free State a Republic in 1948, and launched an international anti-Partition propaganda, De Valera, in order not to be outflanked by the Treatyites making amends for what they had become under the Treaty, went on a defensive propaganda campaign of his own. He made a speaking tour of the world, of which the most important places were India and the English Midlands. According to a report of a Midlands meeting he was asked if he thought the IRA had outlived its historical function, and he replied that he did not think so. I cannot give a reference for that report. I did not come to write history through studying it at school, or through even the vaguest intention of sometime becoming a historian, so I did not have the habit of accumulating references. I just noticed things as they drifted by, but I have found that my memory of them is seldom mistaken.

The surprising thing would be if Dev had said around 1950 that there was no longer any proper business in Ireland for the IRA. Of course he did not see it as being the proper business of the IRA to set about subverting the 26 County state as it had been reformed by him. But how could he possibly have thought there could be no proper business for it in Northern Ireland? With his acute sense of political reality it is inconceivable that he did not see that Northern Ireland, considered apart from Britain, was a dysfunctional substitute for a state, and that in essential respects it was not part of Britain?

Britain is a well-conducted state. It never discloses the reasons for its most important decisions, and sometimes it succeeds in obscuring the very fact that a decision was taken. This prevents its decisions becoming a subject of thought. Thought is restricted to the consequences of the decisions. That is substantially the case with its decisions to launch its two world wars of the early 20th century. Those wars are therefore put in the category

Part Two

of things that happened instead of things that were done. And so it is with the exclusion of Northern Ireland, as a region of the United Kingdom, from the political life of the state.

I know of only one oblique reference to the fact that it was decided by the state to cut Northern Ireland out of its political life while retaining it under its sovereignty. It is mentioned in passing in Nicholas Mansergh's book on Northern Ireland, in a way that seems designed to ensure that it does not stimulate the reader into thought. If it became a subject of thought the reader would be likely to see it as by far the most important fact about Northern Ireland.

I noticed it because I searched for it. I had concluded from reading his various histories of Ireland—or the various editions of his history of Ireland as it slipped away in the course of the thirties and early forties—that as a British historian of Ireland he wrote carefully biased history in the interest of the British state. He could hardly have made a successful career as a functionary of the British state if he had not done so. He wrote guardedly on the whole, but in his big book on Northern Ireland he let his guard down for an instant. For the most part he described Northern Ireland as if it was a state, while showing that he understood that it was not. In his chapter on the Northern Ireland party system he dealt with it as if it was the party system of a state, while showing that he understood that it existed because the region had been excluded by the state from its party politics. And then he proceeded to treat that fact as being of no consequences.

Northern Ireland was a region of the UK state with separate policing and separate politics. Almost everything else was arranged by the Government and the administration of the state, which were always directly present in Northern Ireland, but these two spheres of activity were devolved to a regional authority in a region which at the moment of devolution was in the throes of communal antagonism. Political life in Northern Ireland, in exclusion from the politics of the state, could never be more than an expression of this communal antagonism.

The Protestant community had a secure

majority, and in order to maintain its strange mode of being part of the UK it had to return a Unionist majority at every Six Country election. Nothing else of any consequence was dealt with in the Stormont Parliament. The things of consequence were dealt with through the party-politics of the state at Westminster and then formally adopted at Stormont.

In the 1940s Jack Beattie was elected from West Belfast to Westminster with a mandate to take the Labour Party whip. The Labour Party refused him the whip. He sat through the great Parliamentary battles over the Welfare State in the late forties, voting with the Labour Government through excluded from membership of the Party. He was also a local MP at Stormont. The Unionist Party members at Westminster voted with the Tories at Westminster. Beattie looked forward to doing battle with them at Stormont on the same issues. But there was no Parliamentary battle at Stormont. The Unionists voted with the Tories against the Welfare State Bills at Westminster, and then, when they were passed, copied them at Stormont.

There was nothing for Northern Ireland politics to be about other than the antagonism of the two communities.

The first Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Craigavon, ensured that the region would remain part of Britain for social welfare purposes, and then sought to reduce Northern Ireland politics to the routine of returning a Protestant majority at every election to maintain 'the connection'. His successor, Brookeborough, continued that practice. Then came Captain O'Neill and Sean Lemass, neither of whom seemed to understand what Northern Ireland was. Between them they tried to activate politics in the North. Lemass browbeat the Nationalist Party into apeing the role of Loyal Opposition, as if Northern Ireland was a democratic state—or even a state of any kind. Brian Cowen said recently that this was the beginning of the Peace Process. It was in fact the political preliminary to the war. Jazzing up Northern Ireland politics could only have the effect of energising the communal antagonism.

The IRA persisted in Northern Ireland because there was nothing in the politics of the region for it to give way to, as it gave way, by and large, to the Fianna Fail reform of the Irish State. And its persistence in the South, while being formally an ongoing dissent from the Treaty, was always connected with the condition of the Catholic community in the North.

I spent thirty years trying to disconnect Partition from the Government of Northern Ireland in the way that the Northern Ireland problem was thought about. The distinction was obvious but there were powerful interests determined to obscure

it and to take two distinct things to be the same thing. If the two were taken to be one it could be said that the incorrigible nationalist idealism of the Catholic community, often described as 'atavistic', was what prevented normal politics from coming about after Partition. That was the Unionist interest. This suited the general Nationalist interest too in that, if the chronic instability of the North was directly due to Partition, that kept alive the possibility of realising the United Ireland ideal. Thus there was a bipartisan agreement—not formalised, but more real than many formal agreements—to take Partition and Northern Ireland as being the same thing.

That way of looking at it was general in the politics of the South. On the Nationalist side in the North it was most clearly present in the view of the SDLP, and its academic supporters such as Professor Cornelius O'Leary at Queen's (who was from Cork) and Professor Brendan O'Leary of the London School of Economics.

My view was that, on the Nationalist side, this persistent confusion of thought was an obstacle to the realisation of the purpose that gave rise to it, since it necessarily went along with an equal persistence on the opposite side.

Partition of itself would have left the Catholic minority in the Six Counties with openings into the democratic politics of the State. Of course it cannot be demonstrated that they would have availed of these opportunities in large numbers. But, if they had done so through involvement in Labour/Tory politics, during the generation when the Labour Party was constructing itself to be a governing party in the State, it is unreasonable to assume that this would not have tended to diminish support for "subversives" based in the South. The predicament of the Catholic community in the Northern Ireland system, which the purposeful confusion of thought allowed to be referred to simply as Partition, was what fed the propaganda of the great Fine Gael/Clann na Poblachta/ Labour Party Anti-Partition campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which stimulated a revival of Sinn Fein and led to the 1956 invasion of the North.

I cannot demonstrate that simple Partition would have led to an extensive engagement of Northern Catholics in the British state. But that is not to the point. The point is that the British State, when enacting Partition, made arrangements which cut the Six Counties out of the democracy of the state. And it is inconceivable to me that the British statesmen of 1921-22—the rulers of the world, with an incomparable wealth of political experience in their make-up—did not know what they were doing when they did it.

He Who Must Not Be Named

The following is the text of a letter which Stephen Richards submitted to the *News Letter* by email on 4th April. On that date the paper published an announcement that it had paid Peter Robinson costs and undisclosed damages on foot of a letter published on 13th December, 2007. That letter was from an SDLP councillor who alleged that Mr. Robinson in his Budget had been activated by hostility to Margaret Ritchie, the Minister for Regional Development. The reason given for this hostility, apparently, was Mrs. Ritchie's withdrawal of funding from some Loyalist community groups. The paper had to recant from the allegation, made not by a columnist or reporter but by a reader in the Letters column.

Stephen Richards's response to this announcement was eventually published on 18th April, but in a bowdlerized version, with the whole of the first paragraph omitted, and the reference to Peter Robinson in the parenthesis in the second paragraph deleted. The letter therefore was deprived of its context. It would seem that it would not have been safe for Robinson's name to be mentioned at all, even though the references to him in the letter were of an obliging nature, in that Stephen Richards was careful not to number him with the self-important litigants who formed the subject matter of the letter.

John Martin has recently written of the power of the press, as wielded particularly by the *Irish Times*, to 'go after' elected politicians in the Republic. It seems that in Northern Ireland we don't have that problem, and instead the press has been cowed into submission by the libel laws.

No doubt Mr. Robinson has donated the proceeds to a worthy cause, as one would expect of a magnanimous man in public life.

Dear Sir,

I'm not at all sure of the details behind your decision to pay costs and undisclosed damages to Mr. Peter Robinson on foot of a letter published in your correspondence columns in December 2007. I didn't see the letter in question and I don't intend to comment on the rights or wrongs of the matter. For all I know, the allegations about Mr. Robinson contained in the letter were so utterly outrageous that no self-respecting person could have let them pass without recourse to legal action or threat of action.

It seems to me however that there is a tendency in Northern Ireland for our politicians to use the defamation laws in a way that is unusual when compared with elsewhere in the UK. I can think of very few examples of mainland UK politicians suing for defamation, apart from John Major and the Scottish Socialist Jim Sheridan. In both cases the allegations related to conduct in private life. Politics is not a career for super-sensitive souls who look upon each and every attack on their decisions as a ground for litigation. The political arena is a place where you need a "rhinoceros hide", to use the memorable words of our First Minister. I would be concerned that some politicians—and I'm sure that Mr. Robinson isn't among them—might be using the legal process as a form of political trench warfare with a view to stifling debate on matters of public interest.

I suggest that as a general rule the libel courts should be left as a playground for celebrities. Our politicians have, or should have, better things to do.

Yours faithfully, Stephen Richards

All of which brings me back to the Lord Professor's book, *The Politics Of Enmity*. He tells us in the Preface that—

"the mutual contempt which characterized the relationship between the two main traditions—Protestant "British", and unionist on the one hand, Catholic and nationalist on the other—on the island of Ireland at the beginning of the last century, and is not so much diluted at the beginning of this century, as the violence which met the Ulster Unionists in the "Love Ulster march" in Dublin in February 2006 demonstrated. Such animosity is the theme of this book. The book is about the conflict of the Protestant British—both on the British "mainland" and in Ireland itself—and the Catholic Irish. It is perhaps more particularly about the ideas and attitudes which underpin that conflict: it is about rationalization and self-justification.

During the 19th century mainland Britain became both less ardently Protestant and less emotionally engaged in this battle of Irish communal wills... In the 1880s British liberalism detached itself from the cause of Irish Protestantism: the Tory leadership stuck to it for much longer... Nevertheless by the end of the 20th century Britain was perceived to have formally declared itself neutral, save perhaps for a vestigial element of concern for the protestant community...

"This is the conflict which, for many, defines the modern Irish question... At the heart of this relationship is the problem of the management of enmity. The union... in 1801 was, above all, presented as a sophisticated attempt to manage that enmity: a new benign framework for Irish development. Not everyone accepted British professions of good faith" (pviii).

This purports to be a history of Ireland.

I do not see how an intelligible history of Ireland—either before or after the Act of Union, but particularly after—could be written apart from the history of the British state. Even in the 18th century when there was a Kingdom of Ireland with a Parliament, the Government—and therefore the state—was never anything but the English/British state. The flimsy semblance of representative government in Ireland as a region was done away with in 1801, and there was never again an appearance of Irish autonomy within the British state. But Bew does not write the history of Ireland up to 1919 as the history of a segment of the British state. And yet he refers to Britain as "*the mainland*".

I don't know if "*the mainland*" was the way Britain was generally referred to in Ireland prior to 1919, or if Southern Unionist enclaves referred to it as "*the mainland*" after 1921. I can only say that I never heard the term until I went to live in Belfast, and I have taken it to be a particularly Ulster Unionist usage.

If Britain is to be thought of as "*the mainland*", and as being engaged in a benevolently neutral management of Irish enmities, the case needs to be grounded in an account of the decision not only to *Partition* Ireland, but to set up Northern Ireland as the means of doing so. It needs to be shown, in terms of the realities of British politics, how that decision can be understood as benevolence. The Lord Professor makes no attempt to do so. He simply plucks abstractions out of the air—"*benevolence*", "*enmity*".

Enmities, in my understanding of the world, arise out of circumstances and give expression to conflicts of interest. And enmity is a universal characteristic of democracy, which operates through party-political conflict. It seems to me that the ideological enmities of party-politics often lie beyond the scope of reasonable expression of actual conflicts of social interests, but that on the other hand such unreasoning blocks of ideological antagonism form a kind of ballast within functional democracy.

What is distinctive about '*enmity*' in Northern Ireland is that it exists outside the party-political enmities of the state. But that is a consequence of the exclusion of Northern Ireland from the party-politics of the state.

I cannot demonstrate that the Hibernian politics of West Belfast would have found a place in the Labour Party of the state in the 1920s and 1930s if that possibility had been open to it, and that the strong trade unionism of East Belfast would also have felt at home in that party, and that the fudges of actual democracy would have been operative on both.

I can only show that both were excluded

from that possibility of development—from structural normality of the state. And therefore I see their persisting enmities against each other as having reasonable grounds in the circumstances of each, largely determined for them by the state—and as being on the whole more reasonable than the normal ideological antagonisms of party politics often are.

Passions abstracted from their causes I first came across in Professor Foster's little cameos, and I suppose the Lord Professor picked it up from him.

Something similar was in evidence in Blair's mode of denying that his decision, taken for barely concealed Islamophobic reasons, to invade Iraq and destroy the Iraqi state, had any causative connection with subsequent Islamic attempts to retaliate against the British state—or the British democracy which authorised the Government to do what it did.

Blair in this matter, like Foster and Bew in Irish affairs, leaves one with the notion of a world in which a passion of hatred floats around in the air without a case and is seized upon for the purpose of making trouble by 'radicals' (used at first by Blair as a term of praise but later a term of condemnation) for no reason except that they are evil. And they don't even believe in the existence of the devil—though Blair in flight from the consequences of his actions now pretends to.

Bew was chosen for advancement within the Northern Ireland system (as operated by Whitehall) about a generation ago. That, as far as I can see, is what "*meritocracy*" means.

Soon after the Stormont system was set up, the Unionist Party published a book of pictures and potted biographies of the Very Important Persons of the Whatdoyoucallit—the Province, the Region, the Statelet, Our Own Wee Ulster. It was a sad affair. A collection of the VIP nonentities of a Somethingorother that nobody had wanted but nobody had the will to refuse. At least it appeared sad to somebody who knew what this Ulster had once been but had ceased to be through segregating itself from both Ireland and Scotland and being segregated from England. Ulster, which had once been something impressive in its own right when it was closely interconnected with Scotland and Ireland, was made into Northern Ireland through no will of its own, and did not know what to do with itself, having lost itself in the process of becoming. In its parish life it was stubborn and secure. In its public life as a Whatever it was lost. But it had to show something, so it showed this collection of Very Important People who were instantly forgettable.

I find Bew's book even sadder than that one. Those people were what they had the capacity to be, which was ordinary decent bourgeois. What was sad was that Ulster, pretending that it was embarking on a great new adventure as Northern Ireland, could not present a more inspiring collection of VIPs. The sadness about Bew's book is that it is the product of a lost soul. I knew him fairly well for a couple of years long ago, and the person I knew could not have written this book.

When he was chosen to be an Important Person little biographies of him began to be published. They all leave something out, and I assume that what is left out is where he got lost.

I first met him in early 1970, when I think he was still attached to the People's Democracy.

Brendan Clifford

To Be Continued

**Does
it
up?**

Stack

CALL THIS DEMOCRACY?

Metric speed limits were introduced on Ireland's streets and roads by ministerial order (no democracy here) on 20th January 2004. Local councils did not have to vote to give effect to these limits (no democracy here either).

However, the ministerial order introducing the new kilometre limits did allow for councils to create special areas where speed limits could be lowered or raised to suit local conditions. Apparently decisions were taken by Council officials (non-elected i.e. not democratic decisions) to vary many speed limits throughout Ireland. But in most cases, the decisions of the Council officials have not yet been ratified by the elected councillors at duly convened council meetings. The result is chaos. The speed limit signs were erected on the decisions of the officials but they are not legal until "ratified" by the councillors who, it would seem, have no democratic decision-making to do, only to ratify, sometime, the decisions of the officials. In the meantime, the killing on the roads goes on and the statistics head upwards. Summonses for speeding are being dismissed in the Courts because the limits are not legalised. You just couldn't make it up?

A TOTALITARIAN STATE

In Ireland now we have the Broadcasting Act of 2001 and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC) which has decided that no one can run an

advertisement on local or national radio or television that is remotely critical of government policy, or trying to change any aspect of government policy. Public-awareness advertising is affected, as is campaigning for change. The National Consumer Agency was not allowed to run an advert inviting public comment on the Groceries Order. It was held by the BCC to be “political” and therefore not allowed. Has it all gone too far to be reversed? Of course the media, especially some outfits like the *Irish Times* seem to believe that they are the *de facto* opposition but when Madam Editor under her guise of being a Progressive Democrat TD went to the people for a second term, she was given the boot by them and it really seems to have done huge damage to her.

THE KYOTO AGREEMENT

There is a certain shock when we find ourselves calmly reading in newspapers that to fulfil our “obligations” under the Kyoto Agreement, there may have to be a tax on Bovine Emissions. Will a tax really cause cattle and sheep to stop flatulating and belching? To whom is the tax to be paid and for what purpose will the money be applied? And while we are at it, what about elephants, zebras, giraffes, lions etc? How about zoos and wild animal sanctuaries and parks? Researching the answers to these questions, a Scottish company Rowett Research Ltd. is coming to the rescue—it has produced a feed supplement, already tested on lambs, which will reduce emissions by 70%. Also, it will increase weight gain by 10% by metabolically trapping hydrogen in the animal. What this does to the human who eats the meat is not yet clear. Vegetarians may not be too worried about the meat but if things under the Kyoto Agreement proceed further, the vegetarians themselves will be taxed because, it seems, Vegetarians produce more emissions than carnivores.

Where is all this leading us? The USA and several other large states have not signed the Kyoto Agreement. President George Bush says he does not agree with it but then he is the biggest dumper of depleted uranium on this earth. There is a theory that most ‘unwanted’ emissions arise from natural causes—i.e. volcanoes, wild animals, forest fires, etc. And relatively enormous emissions come from aeroplanes (which by *some logic* are not counted for Kyoto purposes). In reality, and in common sense, we all know that by far the biggest polluters are those governments who use and develop nuclear weaponry and to date the USA have that heinous honour.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

Irish Art has become very very pricey due to the demand for it from the many new Irish millionaires who made their

wealth in the Celtic Tiger era. And so Sotheby’s (of that great book on ‘Buying Class’) have moved into the Irish Art in a big way. A preview of their May auction was held some weeks ago in Lismore Castle hosted by Bill Burlington (best pal of the Prince of Wales), the son of the Duke of Devonshire. Also at Bill’s bash in the ducal pile were his wife Laura, daughter of Richard Roundell, Vice Chairman of Christies of London, and Marita Doyle of Kinsale, wife of Conor Doyle of the great Cork stevedoring Doyle family. The Doyles are into Harbours and Ports in a big way and have huge factories in the UK and other interests further abroad. Are they interested in developing Youghal Harbour? This is held by the present Duke and the water beneath it as he claims under—wait for this—the *Magna Carta*, which shows his desperation as the Magna Carta certainly had no application in Ireland. The lads and lassies in Leinster House should get on with the job and render to the Irish the things that are Irish and let that be that. Recently the Duke let it be known that the Youghal Urban District Council should attend upon him in his Castle and he might be persuaded to discuss the matter. The Duke’s title to Youghal Harbour and Bay is of course quite absurd. His forbears were “granted” (what a lovely *sanitised* word that is) the title by an English king who had no title to it himself. Why does not the Minister of the Marine grant the title now to the State?

There is also the matter of the weir built just below Fermoy which is the cause of flooding but the Duke says it is to keep the salmon in his own fishery near Lismore. He pleads “Tourism”. It would be interesting to know the actual amount contributed to the Irish economy by the Duke’s tourism interests.

MAJOR TOM

According to the Irish *Daily Mail*, 14th April 2008, the revelation in Saturday’s *Irish Times* that the St. Stephen’s Green Hibernian Club is “*the old school stalwart*” “*of Dublin clubland*” will have raised a few eyebrows in the neighbour of the Stephen’s Green Club, the Kildare Street and University Club. Even that notoriously *louche* establishment, the United Arts Club, got a mention. So spare a thought for Major T.B. McDowell, former Chairman of The Irish Times and, ahem, trustee of the Kildare Street and University Club. In fairness, the club is very secretive and rarely, if ever, divulges anything to journos. Including the fact that on Wednesday, 9th April 2008, the members gave a dinner in honour of Major Tom to mark his retirement as a “trustee” of the club of course.

LEST WE FORGET

On the 24th and 25th April 1915, General Haig ordered the British troops’

Special Gas Companies 1400 men into the trenches to discharge chlorine gas at the German Army. The wind was not favourable, not that Haig thought too much about that one imagines. It blew the gas across the British trenches as well as the German trenches. It was a disaster for the troops on both sides. Many gas cylinders were defective and leaked in the British trenches. Vermorel sprayers had been provided for decontamination but they proved to be useless. General French had bravely stationed himself twenty-five miles away from the danger and he had no telephone—a major blunder. How many Irishmen had he killed that day, or injured for life? By nightfall 15,470 were dead or wounded by French and Haig. It was known that French was hugely motivated by jealousy of Haig. Haig was ‘hung out to dry’ that day by French and his cohorts in Army HQ.

Michael Stack

Church & State

No. 92

Iraq: Our Fifth Anniversary

Executions Under Saddam

The CIA's Afghan War

Benign Tyranny? C.S. Lewis

Once Upon A Time In Tibet . . .

The Frontiers Of Empire View

Pearse And Casement Tim O'Sullivan (report)

Post-Modern Gaels? Stephen Richards

(review of Friel play)

Wikipedia & The War Of Independence

Pat Muldowney

Vox Pat: by Pat Maloney (British-backed

Clerics; Rosary Beads and Mass Cards;

Tullylease To Christ Church; Priest Shortage;

Guinness; Sports Ban; Proxy Wedding;

Lisbon Referendum; Clerical Landlord

The Irish Times John Martin

"Coolcrease Complaints Rejected By

Broadcasting Commission"

A Journey Around Tom Dunne

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NIPSA: Palestinian Relief

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A Religious View Of 9/11: Pastor Wright

Iran: Puncturing The Zionist Dream?

(report, with David Morrison letter)

De Valera's Fine Ghaedheal

(report: Brian Murphy letter)

Quo Vadis? Pat Maloney (Thoughts on 2006

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P. Maloney,
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Cork City

Paddy Heaney On Coolacrease

The following letter appeared in the *Tullamore Tribune* of 31st March

The Slieve Bloom Mountains played a noble part in the history of this country. The area is steeped in history and folklore. At present it is a beacon for tourists and walkers who come to visit its many attractions—such as bronze age burial mounds, standing stones, ring barrows, monastic sites, ruins of castles, and ancient roadways.

Aware of the connections between Offaly and the State of Maryland, many Americans are coming on weekend breaks to Kinnitty Castle. Maryland's Charles O'Carroll was one of the Founding Fathers, who signed the American Declaration of Independence; and his grandfather, also named Charles O'Carroll, was born at Bally Mac Adam Castle in Cadamstown

The area was the last stronghold of the Gaelic language, music and song. Many organizations have worked tirelessly over the years to showcase the area. The Slieve Bloom Association, Rural Development Society, Offaly and Laois County Councils, Shannon Development, Bord Fáilte—and many more—are playing their part to develop awareness of the Mountains.

The people of Cadamstown, and of Offaly as a whole, were deeply offended by RTÉ's Coolacrease documentary. And, by falsely portraying this area in a sinister and menacing way, its attraction to tourism was damaged.

The Coolacrease documentary, and the newspaper articles of Eoghan Harris, painted the area in a false and negative light. It is amazing to think that Irish taxpayers' money was used to promote this destructive and hostile agenda. Especially when public money for constructive and positive purposes is so hard to obtain. For example, our local Tidy Towns Committee applied recently to the National Heritage Council for funding to erect an information board to promote tourism. The application was turned down, the reason for rejection being given as: "There were 236 applications this year and only 350,000 euro available. Given our limited financial resources, it would be impossible to finance your project."

Our local elected representatives, including our TDs in Dáil Éireann, should tell us how taxpayers' money has come to be used lavishly to promote revisionist propaganda.

I make no apology to anyone for the public stand I have made on behalf of the men and women who took part in our struggle for independence.

Pádraig Ó hÉanaigh, Cadamstown, Birr, Co. Offaly

Silence continued

production of silicon and saline breast implants from Arklow to a state-of-the-art plant in Costa Rica.

A few days earlier, Jacob Fruitfield Food Group confirmed it was restructuring its operations with the loss of 220 jobs in Tallaght, Dublin.

And 100 jobs were lost in Dundalk, Co Louth with the failure of iQon Technologies.

In Bray, 40 staff at Trinity Biotech's manufacturing facility lost their jobs in a major restructuring operation.

LABOUR UNIVERSITY

SIPTU President Jack O'Connor has said unions should come together to develop a new university which would teach courses from a social solidarity and social science rather than a business perspective.

Speaking at an ICTU Economic Conference in Dublin yesterday, Mr/ O'Connor said the time had come for unions in Ireland to come together and "*look at a fresh initiative that would breathe fresh life into the idea that education is about something broader and better than simply supplying a given quota of narrowly-qualified and narrowly-focused professionals to corporate Ireland*".

Such a university would need to be "*academically proofed and independent*", but would also have to be informed by the principles of social solidarity and the assertion of human values over the market.

"It would be a university that provided a seamless progression through the Fetac-Hetac framework of qualifications with a social science rather than a 'business school' perspective of the type that predominates in all the existing institutions that teach subjects such as industrial relations, human resource management and financial forensics."

Mr. O'Connor said the only requirement for entering courses would be that students would be members of a union that was affiliated to the university.

He said if the Government was serious about its commitment to create a knowledge society and the need to up-skill up to 50,000 members of the workforce then the provision of funding should not be a problem.

He also said the agreement of strategic partnerships with one or more third-level institutions should also be achievable relatively quickly.

"Even if the Government does not see the obvious merit of such an initiative, I believe we have no choice but collectively or individually to pursue such an objective.

"In reality it will call for collective action because none of us, even my own union, is big enough to undertake such an initiative alone. But greater co-operation and pooling of resources is inevitable anyway if we are to meet the challenges of globalisation."

Pat Maloney

Report

"State urged to act now to end suffering of Palestinians"

The Government was urged to take a stand "*against the relentless destruction of the Palestinian people*" at a demonstration organised by the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign in Dublin on Saturday.

Hundreds of people marched from the Central Bank to the Dáil and on to the GPO on O'Connell Street, where they heard from speakers including Dr Bassam Nassar from the Palestinian community in Ireland.

They carried posters saying "Gaza's pain, EU shame" and "Stop Israel's war crimes".

Outside the Dáil, Michael D Higgins of Labour urged the international community to act now to bring the suffering in the Israeli-occupied territories to an end.

Senator David Norris said Israel was breaching the Euro-Med Agreement because it was failing to protect human rights. The agreement covers political, economic and social co-operation between the EU and Mediterranean countries.

Protesters welcomed the news that Bono had refused an invitation to speak at a celebration to mark the foundation of Israel.

Philip O'Connor of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign said Gaza was being strangled economically, while the EU looked on and the Government here wrung its hands."

[Alison Healy, Irish Times 14.04.08]

**Look Up
Athol Books
on the Internet**

www.atholbooks.org

Silence continued

Paul Hansard from the Dublin Construction branch said conditions on construction sites were now *"actually worse than they were before the agreement came into play"*. Large firms were removing direct employees and workers were being let go if they queried any practices, he said.

MANDATE RETURN

MANDATE, which represents about 44,000 staff in the retail and bar sector, is to return to the national pay talks, two years after withdrawing from social partnership.

Mandate pulled out of the process in 2006 because it believed that national deals had failed to deliver for low-paid workers in the private sector. In the interim, the union has negotiated locally with employers and has said it secured a number of deals which gave workers increases over and above those in the National Agreement.

MANDATE General Secretary, John Douglas yesterday said that while the union would take part in talks today on a new pay deal, it would *"reserve its position and re-evaluate its participation at any time in the future"*.

THE GOVERNMENT has been strongly criticised by some of the social partners over a failure to implement several commitments set out in the current national agreement, *Towards 2016*.

The director of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) Justice, Fr. Seán Healy, said he would call into question the Government because of the non-implementation of key commitments.

Fr. Healy said these included the provision of funding for 300 primary care teams.

He also said the Government had failed to provide adequate funding for the mental health strategy, to deliver the National Carers Strategy and to make progress on resourcing those who had not previously pursued third-level education.

Fr. Healy said targets adopted in other national strategies had been hugely at odds with the commitments contained in *Towards 2016*.

He said these included setting a target for adult literacy in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion *"which accepts as okay that between a third and half a million people in the labour force will have serious literacy difficulties in 2016"*.

Fr. Healy added: *"Major commitments on social issues in areas such as primary healthcare teams and adult literacy have not been honoured"* (*Irish Times*, 25.4.2008)

"SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP MUST GO!"

"That time is past. Bertie Ahern and Brian Cowen should not waste too much energy chasing an agreement if it becomes clear that none is possible. Social partnership has served its purpose and is edging towards history. Its passing should not be mourned. (*Sunday Independent*, 17.2.2008).

"The danger now is that another deal will be agreed in order to keep the process alive, regardless of the economic consequences.

"This must be avoided at all costs. Strong political leadership is now much more important than a social partnership deal.

"Hopefully, Brian Cowen will deliver that. It is time to give social partnership a Christian burial." (Jim Power, Chief Economist, Friends First Group, *Irish Independent*, 24/4/2008).

"'Social partnership', far from promoting social cohesiveness and inclusion, has created a privileged class of workers in the public sector whose wages are paid for by a much less well-paid private sector. This isn't 'social partnership', it's social exclusion.

"'Social partnership' was very much the creation of one man, Bertie Ahern. Now that he is leaving in disgrace, it's time to take a long, hard look at his legacy.

"'Social partnership' and centralised pay deals which only benefit public-sector workers should be top of the list.

"Brian Cowen should scrap 'social partnership' right now." (Dan White, *Evening Herald*, 24.4.2008).

NO WAGE AGREEMENT— NO PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT!

"Since the social partnership process began back in 1987, the wage element has been the central feature of the process, and it will be so again this time around.

"Without a wage agreement, the partnership process would fall apart." (Jim Power, *Irish Independent*, 24/4/2008).

"Of course, national pay agreements are not set in stone. If negotiators cannot reach a wage deal that benefits both sides, all bets are off and there would be a reversion to free collective bargaining. Many would applaud just such an outcome, but they should be careful of what they wish for.

"Free collective bargaining would reward the strong and punish the weak. Those operating in the non-traded sector—in local monopolies and the public sector—would benefit while those in the traded sector, particularly low-skilled workers in vulnerable industries, would suffer.

The transition to new types of bargaining procedures would cause dislocation and, most probably, an increased incidence of industrial disputes.

"But the principal costs would be social, not economic. Social partnership has been an attempt, often muddled, at creating

a common bond—a sense of belonging—among all who live in Ireland at a time when exceptional economic change has placed great stress on the social fabric. Prolonged booms usually induce sharp redistributions of income, widening the gap between rich and poor.

"The evidence suggests this has not happened in Ireland. Income inequality has not decreased, but neither has it increased appreciably. Prof Robert Erikson of the Swedish Institute of Social Research wrote last year *: "The general increase in income does not seem to have been matched by a general change in income inequality, except for a possible but uncertain increase of the relative share of the very highest incomes."

"The Irish social partnership model, supported by the policies of successive governments, is founded on the belief that there is such a thing as society. This is not an article of faith that should be lightly discarded. We are more than a collection of individual self-interested profit-maximisers. (Paul Tansey, *Irish Times*, 25.4.2008).

**Best of Times?*, edited by Tony Fahey, Helen Russell, Christopher T. Whelan, IPA, 2007, page 271.

UNEMPLOYMENT reached its highest level in almost nine years (5.5%), the state employment agency FAS warned of further job losses by next year.

The general jobs market situation has been bleak since Christmas, with almost 1,500 employees being told they were to be laid off, either immediately or in the coming months.

Company liquidation, the relatively high cost of labour here and the downturn in the economy were among the reasons given for the job losses.

On April 29th, computer giant Dell announced the loss of 250 jobs in Dublin and Limerick.

Smurfit Kappa plant in Waterford is to cease production on May 8 with the loss of 24 full-time jobs.

Wavin, Europe's leading supplier of plastic pipe systems, said it would have to shed 50 jobs at its Balbriggan base, due to the fall-off in construction.

In February, Merriott Radiators in Clonmel, Co Tipperary announced that it was to close with the loss of 90 jobs.

The same day, staff at Grove Turkeys in Smithboro, Co Monaghan, were told of company plans to shed 130 jobs.

Workers at one of the country's most iconic stores Arnotts also heard of plans to cut 400 jobs this year, ahead of a €1bn redevelopment. Arnotts, however, will employ a total of 1,200 in its new store.

On January 31st, pharmaceutical company Allergen announced that it is to close its plant in Arklow with a loss of 360 jobs.

The company will transfer its

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Silence continued

* Further legislation to give agency workers equal treatment and protect them against exploitation by employers.

* A legal framework to protect the right of an employee to bargain with their employer through a trade union.

* Adequate investment in public services especially health, education and care infrastructure.

Peter McLoone, General Secretary of IMPACT, the Public Service Union, said: "Left to their own devices, Government and employers want no wage increases—even increases in the minimum wage. In fact, what they want is lower wages."

IBEC, the employers' group, warns that a pay deal that tried to keep up with inflation would be bad for the country and put more jobs at risk at a time when the economy is facing its biggest challenge in 20 years.

Director General, Turlough O'Sullivan, added: "It is not sustainable to suggest that pay should chase inflation" (*Irish Independent*, 18.4.2008).

The Trade Union, UNITE also backed the decision to join pay talks but warned they will be fraught with difficulties.

Regional Secretary, Jimmy Kelly of Waterford said:

"It is right that we should enter the talks but nobody should be under any illusion about how difficult they will be. We represent members for whom wages are real. they know that Ireland is a tough place to make ends meet.

"Employers who salt away big profits and then plead inability to pay because of macro economic trends need to listen to the voice of the working people of Ireland. We will bring that voice to the table loud and clear." (*Daily Mail*, 18.4.2008).

SIPTU DELEGATE CONFERENCE

SIPTU President Jack O'Connor predicted that talks on a successor to *Towards 2016* will be the "most difficult negotiations in the history of this process".

And he warned Taoiseach-in-waiting Brian Cowen he would be "*foolish*" to attack workers who vote for Fianna Fail—something the current Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern "*knew so very well*".

The Tanaiste, Deputy Cowen has previously urged the social partners to accept wage restraint.

A spokesperson for Mr Cowen said the Finance Minister maintained that "*all stakeholders in our economy must bear in mind the need to maintain our international competitiveness*" (*Irish Independent*, 15.4.2008).

More than 500 delegates attended the Dublin conference at which SIPTU leaders demanded a pay rise above inflation—

currently at 5%.

Proposing the motion that workers take part in the new partnership talks, SIPTU Vice-President Brendan Hayes said workers had not secured any significant contribution for the economic growth of the past 27 months.

"The people who made the profits, the people who made the super incomes, are the people who should accept the adjustments, not ordinary working people, and we'll be delivering that message to Government."

In addition to a pay increase equal to inflation, it wants an extra payment based on a proportion of the country's annual economic output, or Gross Domestic Product.

SIPTU leaders dismissed the previous national agreement as essentially a "pay freeze" because it "barely kept pace with inflation".

Towards 2016 awarded workers a 10% pay rise that was spread over 27 months.

The Trade Union said inflation in that time was far higher, at 11.7%, than the wage rises given to the two million-strong workforce under the pay agreement.

As a result, the Union calculated that the average worker is now taking home 1.2% less in real terms than before *Towards 2016* began.

"We want to wish him (Mr. Cowen) well as all our interests are in his hands," said SIPTU President Jack O'Connor at the conference.

"But if 40% of workers are members of trade unions and Minister Cowen's party gets 35% to 40% support in opinion polls—many of them are the same people.

"It's alright to attack workers and attack unions, but it is very foolish to attack your own." (*Irish Independent*, 15.4.2008).

He told delegates

"...his negotiating team would do its best to deliver an acceptable agreement but SIPTU also had to prepare for the alternative. We are not afraid to negotiate, but we are not afraid to fight either," he said.

"SIPTU General Secretary, Joe O'Flynn said that a nationwide consultation process had identified pay, pensions, trade union recognition and quality of life issues such as accessible and high-quality healthcare, affordable housing and childcare facilities as key concerns for SIPTU members." (*Irish Times*, April 15, 2008)

Mr. O'Flynn stated that members would also like an agreement of a shorter duration than previously, with a review clause included.

"Dr. Ed Walsh, founding president of the University of Limerick, called for an immediate pay freeze to make Ireland a viable option for foreign investment. "We have been paying ourselves too much

for the last six to eight years and we have not attended to the needs of the multinationals in Ireland," he said. (*Irish Independent*, 30.4.2008)

BENCHMARKING

On the controversial Benchmarking report, which recommended no special increases for most public sector workers, SIPTU General Secretary, Joe O'Flynn said members wanted a new mechanism put in place.

The SIPTU motion describes the Benchmarking process as "*irrelevant*" because of "*growing inequality*" between lower and higher paid workers.

The meeting also heard a call for the scrapping of benchmarking by shop steward Kieran Allen. He said workers must enter into new partnership talks but must do so "with a very very different spirit".

Following a number of recent court cases there is now "no legal basis for collective bargaining", Mr Begg said. (*Irish Times*, 23.4.2008).

INFLATION WIPE OUT

SIPTU Head of Research, Manus O'Riordan said that higher inflation had wiped out any real wage gain under the current national pay deal which provided for 10% increases over 27 months.

He said that the consumer price index had increased by as much as 11.7% over the period, leaving the lower-paid facing a decrease of 0.7% and those on average earnings with a drop of 1.2% in real terms.

Manus O'Riordan told the meeting that real pay and living standards were basically frozen when inflation and mortgage payments were taken into account.

"Higher inflation has wiped out any real wage gains," he said, while average pay had fallen by 1.2% in the 27 months of *Towards 2016*.

SIPTU Shop Steward Kieran Allen said the recession was caused by financial speculators "*who've gone around the world, treated the world like a global casino. They're now bringing the world economy down to its knees*".

Workers would not "*carry the can*" for them, and he warned that incoming Taoiseach Brian Cowen "is not going to bully the trade union movement".

Workers were not responsible for higher interest rates, higher fuel and food prices, he said.

Michelle Monaghan from the Health Professionals branch said the partnership talks were "the only game in town" and it would be a "*disaster*" to negotiate pay increases individually.

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Silence continued

ECJ held that this was fine: worker's rights to collective action are less important than market freedom of access to cheaper workers.

That theme has run through all 3 decisions; the ECJ stated that the right to strike only exists where it is 'proportionate' and 'justified', and their test for those is heavily weighted in favour of exploitative employers.

"RUFFERT"

In the 'Rüffert' case the ECJ cut the member states' power to make law to protect worker rights. It overruled the German regional government of Lower Saxony, which makes its contractors ensure that local union-backed labour standards are maintained. This case could be used to destroy progressive agreements that have been won in Ireland which exceeded the National Minimum Wage.

ICTU SUPPORT 'LISBON'

Since April 17th, the Farmers' organisations have put the Government on the run, with a first-class co-ordinated advertising campaign which highlights the loss of agri-jobs if Mandelson succeeds—it is now accepted that if the Referendum fails to get the support of the farming community, it is dead in the water.

The 20th May 2008 is decision day for the WTO negotiations in Geneva. Agriculture Minister, Mary Coughlan has met Commissioner Mandelson in recent days. There is talk that the May 20th meeting may not now take place, well, certainly not before the June 12th date of the Referendum in Ireland—it is a calculated risk by the Government but it is doubtful if the Farm Organisations will change their mind on Lisbon over a mere alteration of a date.

Both the Labour Party and the ICTU support the Lisbon Treaty, perhaps with their leadership, they might get enough workers out to vote 'Yes' and save the Government, however, a substantial section of Irish workers are now following the line of the farm organisations and they are not in the least concerned about "*the remit of the Lisbon Treaty*" and its relation to WTO talks, they are worried about their jobs and they're correct!

Padraig Walshe, IFA President, said 50,000 processing and service jobs would be lost, 50,000 farmers would be put out of business and there would be a €4 billion a year loss to the national economy.

"In 50 towns around the country, meat, milk and other food processing and allied services are vital employers and wealth creators—in some cases they are the only enterprises in the town," he said.

Mr. Walshe said the greatest threat comes from the proposals to cut beef and dairy product import tariffs by 70% and those for lamb, pig meat, poultry and cereals by 55% to 70%.

There is an amount that Brussels could achieve through internal reform before going down the road of a 'Constitution', but it hasn't the courage.

Why is Britain which is the third largest member of the community still refusing to enter the Euro monetary zone? One would think that of all the member states, Ireland, more than any other, pays the greatest price for Britain's refusal to leave Sterling and become a full and proper member of Europe.

With the Euro at such strength, Irish exports to Britain are being crucified at the moment and none more so than the indigenous trader. But not a 'beep' out of the Government, our 13 MEPs or Dick Roche!

ICTU DELEGATE CONFERENCE

Delegates representing more than 50 trade unions and over 850,000 workers agreed to enter talks on a Wage Agreement on Thursday, 17th April 2008, at a Special Delegate meeting of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Liberty Hall, Dublin.

The motion to enter talks was carried by 350 votes to four.

On the previous Monday, April 14th, at the Savoy Cinema in Dublin, more than 500 delegates from Ireland's largest trade union, SIPTU also voted overwhelmingly to back proposals put forward by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) that it should participate in the talks with the aim of securing improvements in pay, pensions, rights for agency workers and public services.

Talks were due to begin on 24th April 2008.

Congress is looking for measures to help the low paid and to reduce the gender pay gap. It also wants better pension provisions for workers and the introduction of a mandatory contributions regime that would secure the livelihood of workers in their retirement.

Other demands include the equal treatment of agency workers, the legal recognition of workers' rights to engage in collective bargaining with employers and further investment in public services, especially health, education, childcare and care for the elderly.

Small business group ISME has called for a 12-month wage freeze to provide "breathing space" for companies being hit by the slowing economy.

ICTU General Secretary David Begg told the conference that when the concept of social partnership was first developed 20 years ago, there was a feeling that Employers, Unions and the Government

were coming together to work for the common good. However that "*appears to have diminished on the employers' side*", he said.

He dismissed a call from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to show restraint in wage increases, and pointed to the hefty salary increases enjoyed by executives in the private sector.

"I know when somebody is taking me for a ride and this is what is happening in our economy at the moment—it just cannot go on," he told delegates.

But suggestions that Trade Union demands would lead to a wage price spiral were "*nonsense*", said Mr. Begg.

Recent factory closures could not be blamed on wage costs as this only accounted for 5% of employers' expenses, he claimed.

Mr. Begg warned delegates the health service was going the American way with the co-location plan. If the middle-class pulled out, soon only the rich would be able to afford healthcare.

Concern was raised about workers being exploited. More than 500 employment agencies exist in Ireland, delegates were told, and some were using legal loopholes to avoid providing standard rights or wages.

"Therefore, they don't have to worry about discriminating against people who are pregnant, old, people who are black or disabled or any of these normal provisions that they know they would not get away with in the standard arrangements for recruitment," said Mr. Begg.

He said a fifth of workers in Ireland were earning less than €10 an hour and hit out at private groups where bosses had given themselves millions of Euro in bonuses including in Bank of Ireland, Diageo, AIB, Tullow Oil and Ryanair. Talks will begin next Thursday.

"There's a real difficulty in Irish society. We need to develop a sense of common purpose, but it's missing because society is so unfair," the general secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), David Begg, said yesterday, launching its Economic Outlook 2008. (*Irish Times*, 23.4.2008).

But Begg says that, in the absence of any shared sense of social purpose, "*it would not be the worst thing in the world if there were no agreement*". (*ibid.*).

The five main pay talks objectives are:

* **Sufficient pay rises to protect against the cost of living and a fairer share of profits that help the lower paid and reduce the gender pay gap.**

* **The establishment of an enforceable pensions policy which includes mandatory contributions from employers.**

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Silence of Labour?

AS THE 400 Irish Congress of Trade Union delegates assembled in Liberty Hall in Dublin on 17th April 2008, to consider new National Pay Talks—across the river Liffey at the entrance to Dail Eireann, the Agricultural 'pillar' of Social Partnership marshalled 10,000 of their 140,000 membership in protest "*over EU proposals they fear will destroy the beef and dairy industry and bring rural Ireland to its knees*" (*Irish Independent*, 18.4.2008).

The protest coincided with the visit of European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso who told the National Forum on Europe that it would be in the interest of Irish farmers to have a quick resolution at the upcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks in Switzerland.

Padraig Walshe, President of the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), said the decision to be made by EU Commissioner Peter Mandelson at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva in May will have a huge bearing on the way farmers vote on the Lisbon Treaty.

Walshe told the rally outside Leinster House that since the turn of the year Mr. Mandelson had completely undermined the position of the Irish farmer and warned: "*Sell us out and we will have our say on the 12th of June.*"

Mr. Walshe continued:

"Don't come back from Geneva having sold us out. Thousands of workers in the food industry will lose their jobs, hundreds of businesses will have to close down. Don't expect us to do your bidding in the referendum."

"We are all here today to defend our own interests, because if you shut down Irish farming—you shut down rural Ireland. Our battle is your battle, we have had our battles with the meat factories in the past, but today we are on the one side."

He attacked previous EU trade directives affecting agriculture, saying assurances given about the sugar beet industry before the Nice Treaty has seen that industry shut down.

UNITED WE STAND

Agriculture, industry and businesses closed down in a show of support for the farmers' protest, the largest in a decade. Major co-operatives, all 50 FBD insurance offices and 1,000 businesses, including livestock marts, closed their doors for the duration of the protest.

To a roar of approval, Jackie Cahill, president of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA), warned: "*Tougher men than Commissioner Mandelson have learned to their cost it is a mistake to underestimate Irish farmers and the population of rural Ireland*" (*Irish Independent*, 18.4.2008).

The protest coincided with the visit of EU Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso to Ireland.

Mr. Barroso was at pains to point out that the issues of concern to the farmers were outside the remit of the Lisbon Treaty.

He made the point that negotiations on the Doha Agreement and the WTO were ongoing and that the EU was intent on staying within the 2003 mandate.

He stated that the new deal would not affect the high-end of the agricultural market, which is where Ireland is placed.

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Mr. Barroso also said that, in the main, tariffs would hit only half of the low-end market : a statement he surely would not repeat in Warsaw, Riga or Vilnius—but then they won't be engaged in any Referendums!

If the ratio of attendance at the Farmers' Protest were applied to the ICTU affiliates with a membership of 850,000, we could rally over 60,000 trade unionists outside the Dail and would we not be equally justified in the light of recent developments taking place in the European Union in relation to workers' rights? Are the rights of workers inferior to the rights of farmers?

In 3 recent cases, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has moved to decimate the rights of collective action, including the right to strike.

"LAVAL"

In the 'Laval' case, a construction company from low-wage Latvia won a contract to build a school in Sweden. The company refused to sign a collective agreement with the Swedish construction union, but instead did so with a Latvian one which did not observe the Swedish collective agreement standards. In response, the Swedish union took collective action in the form of a blockade of the site and got sympathy action from other unions. The Latvian company went bankrupt, but the ECJ have held the Swedish union liable for their losses.

The ECJ ruling on the case means that unions cannot take action against companies employing imported workers at rates below those for local workers, except to defend wages up to a universally applicable minimum. For Ireland, this means the National Minimum Wage.

"VIKING"

In the earlier case of 'Viking', a Finnish shipping line sought to evade a union agreement by re-registering its ship under the Estonian flag so it could instead employ workers from Estonia at lower cost. The