

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

**September 2008**

**Vol.23, No.9 ISSN 0790-7672**

**and Northern Star** incorporating **Workers' Weekly** Vol.22 No.9 ISSN 954-5891

## International Law ?

Russia has broken international law by recognising Ossetia's declaration of independence from Georgia. International law is law as laid down by the Security Council of the United Nations. Ireland recognised the independence of Kosovo as a Protectorate of the European Union even though the Security Council refused to validate Kossovian independence. But Ireland is not in breach of international law. Neither is Russia. In the absence of a positive Security Council ruling, international law is whatever you would like it to be. There has been no Security Council ruling against the independence of Kosovo—the US, UK and France would not allow it. There has been no Security Council ruling against the independence of South Ossetia, Russia would not allow it. International law on these matters is therefore a matter of private opinion. It is whatever you fancy.

The fifth Great Power whose will is necessary to the formation of an international law which is more than a private fancy is China. China is biding its time. It neither supported nor condemned Russia's recognition of South Ossetia's independence. The Western Powers commended its refusal to support Russia. It was never a practical possibility of world politics that it would condemn Russia.

It was explained that the reason for Chinese prudence in the matter had to do with Tibet. China holds Tibet as part of the Chinese State against the will of the inhabitants of Tibet, it is said. We do not know if that is the case in fact, but it what we are told by the media of the Great Power under whose hegemony we live. Thus, because China is holding Tibet against the will of the Tibetans, it declines to commend Russia for recognising the South Ossetian assertion of independence against the USA and its client state of Georgia. And that is a good thing, even though China's reason for doing this good thing is bad.

Meanwhile Radovan Karadic was brought before a Special Court at the Hague, established under international law, and was charged with the usual litany—genocide, crimes against humanity, etc. He refused to plead to the charge, saying that the Court was merely an instrument of NATO—which was true in substance though not in form. And he refused to accept a Counsel provided by the Prosecution—or by the Court, which is in substance the same thing—and decided to conduct his own defence.

This was reported on Radio Eireann on August 29th, and was the subject of a long interview with a British expert on those things, Dr. Brendan Finn of the Department of International Studies at Cambridge University. Dr. Finn said that Karadic was defending himself as a delaying tactic, as Milosovic had done, because in view of their obvious guilt there was really nothing else for them to do.

The interviewer, Keelin Shanley (if that is how it's spelt) did not protest that Dr. Finn was pre-empting due process and prejudicing a fair trial. What she said was that it might nevertheless be difficult to pin it on Karadic, as it was on Milosovic, who died before a verdict was brought in.

She then asked about Karadic's statement that he had an agreement with the United States that certain matters would be allowed to rest in oblivion. Dr. Finn doubted that there was a written agreement which Karadic could produce in Court, but acknowledged that there might have been a verbal agreement at a time when the West was thinking of a negotiated settlement. But things changed when Blair was elected. And now Serbia

*continued on page 2*

## Doha, Lisbon, ... Offaly

Brian Cowen must have heaved a sigh of relief at the failure of the Doha round of trade liberalisation under the WTO (World Trade Organisation). It is easy to imagine the small mercy of not having to actually exercise his veto over an agreement and of not having to face the fury of the Irish Farmers' Association along with his other problems.

It also took the focus off the EU Lisbon Treaty for a while and the truth is that the consequence of the Doha failure is much more significant for the future of the EU than the legal intricacies of Lisbon.

The failure was largely down to Sarkozy who as President of the Council was clearly opposed to the President of the EU Commission and his Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, on this flagship issue for the Commission. This being an area where the Commission has competence—legally speaking. One President had no confidence in the other President. So who really matters?

What a farcical situation for an organisation with the pretension of being a state. Yet, commentary on this absurdity is minimal. This inherent conflict is now a real issue for the EU, compared to which all the legal rigmarole of the Lisbon Treaty is comparatively insignificant.

Some years ago Sir Robert Mugabe was taken to task in an interview for his lack of progress in establishing political parties in Zimbabwe and after a frustrating effort trying to make the interviewer understand that it was no easy task for him to do so he blurted out something along the lines of: "Lookit, this is Africa, people here understand having a chief in charge, they do not understand the idea of having an opposition chief at the same time."

It is not only Africans who do not understand two chiefs in charge. The Americans always complain that they don't know who the chief of the EU is and the Doha debacle confirms this. Who is and/or who should be in charge of Europe? The Commission or the Council?

*continued on page 5*

## CONTENTS

<b>International Law?</b> . Editorial	1
<b>Doha, Lisbon . . . Offaly.</b> Jack Lane	1
<b>Readers' Letters: Georgia And Russia.</b> Feargus O Rahallaigh	3
<b>Editorial Digest.</b> (GB Culture: Olympic Handover; Shopping; The Divide; Irish Army, Then And Now; Cowen & Security Council; Small Armies; Resignations From SF; Strategic Investment Board; Letterkenny Union Jack; Stormont & PSNI; Archives; Card. Newman; NI Party Finances; Dr. Prince At Greaves School; Rule 42; IRA Ex-Prisoner Appeals; Rip-Off Ireland?; Youth Workers To Rescue; Help For Gaza)	4
<b>Partnership &amp; Futurism.</b> Philip O'Connor	5
<b>Millstreet Credit Union.</b> Report	7
<b>Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, Inst And Social Responsibility.</b> Report	8
<b>Fear And Misery In Britain's Six Counties.</b> Wilson John Haire	9
<b>Shorts</b> from <i>the Long Fellow</i> (War On Drugs; "Our Republican Democracy"; Trade Talks; Georgia; Trouble Again; Barack Obama; Family Values; Nice Work)	12
<b>Ronnie Drew.</b> <i>McAlpine's Fusiliers</i> (reprint of Dominic Behan's song)	13
<b>A 1968 Mixum-Gatherum.</b> Brendan Clifford (review of Dr. Prince's book)	14
<b>Economic Performance Of Last 15 Years.</b> Tim O'Sullivan (unpublished letter)	17
<b>R. V. Comerford On Irish Exceptionalism.</b> Pat Muldowney (part 2 of review)	18
<b>A Russian View Of Georgian Gallantry.</b> Manus O'Riordan	20
<b>Why I Had To Recognise Georgia's Breakaway Regions.</b> President Medvedev	22
<b>Zionist Colonialism.</b> David Morrison	23
<b>Around The Cork-Kerry Border.</b> Report of Launch	24

*Labour Comment*, edited by **Pat Maloney**:  
Lisbon Losers (back page)

was being encouraged to collaborate actively with the Court in the hope of being admitted to the EU if it did so. There was now even a possibility that General Mladic, who was being protected by the Serbian Army, would be handed over to the Court at the Hague before the mandate ran out in 2010.

Suppose that Radio Eireann, reporting an ordinary murder trial in Dublin, had said that the defendant was obviously guilty, though it might be difficult to pin it on him. Would that be OK?

The fact that it is OK to do that kind of thing under international law shows what kind of thing international law is. It is law under which Show Trials are held in which the verdicts are set beforehand.

The Defence is disabled as far as possible without dispensing altogether with the appearance that a trial is being held under a semblance of law. In the case of Milosovic, the residual scope allowed for the mounting of a Defence was still too much for the purposes of those who set up the Trial, with the result that the proceedings in the Court were scarcely reported in the international media, including the Irish.

The Irish Government in 1945 had the courage to conclude that the proceedings at Nuremberg were not law. The present

Irish Government, under much easier circumstances, just goes along with the barkings of the NATO/EU pack.

The British Tory magazine, *The Spectator*, reviewing a book on international trials, pointed out:

"Since the first political trial in modern history—that of Charles 1 in 1649—not a single one has ended in the acquittal of the accused. That tells us everything... political trials... are staged events, intended as theatre, whose purpose is to legitimise the new regime, or 'new world order', brought about by the fall of the old. They mete out 'victor's justice' by special courts or tribunals whose members both judge and jury, understand (and are picked because they understand) that the outcome has already been decided...

"... 'Due process' has been systematically been thrown out of the window by the creation of special courts... by the retroactive prosecution for 'crimes' not in existence when the alleged criminal behaviour took place, by the resort to *in camera* sessions, by the withholding of documents from the defence, by the blurring of roles between judge and jury. The list goes on and on. But the heart of the matter lies deeper. What has been overthrown is the long-accepted principle that government acts are different from private ones...

"...Treaties are not laws. United Nations resolutions are not laws. They are declarations of political intent and the responses to breaches of them, dressed up though they may be as court actions, are political responses" (Robert Stewart reviewing John Laughland's *A History Of Political Trials*, 31.5.08).

In such Trials the verdicts are always Guilty, because the defendants are always members of defeated states being tried by those who defeated them. If one goes along with this, one subscribes to the equation of both Law and Morality with predominant Power.

Greater Serbian Nationalism was set up as a demon by British and German propaganda around 1990 for the purpose of destroying the Yugoslav State—which Britain and France had set up in 1919, and which Britain had set up again, in conjunction with Communist Russia, in 1944.

Croatia and Slovenia were parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. They never launched an insurrection against Austrian government, or voted for independence from Austria, as Ireland did with relation to Britain, so there was no Austrian equivalent of the Black-and-Tan War.

Bosnia consisted of a secession from the Turkish Empire. It became part of the Austro-Hungarian State in 1908. The Greater Serbia movement, which aspired to bring Bosnia into the Serbian state, assassinated the heir to the Habsburg throne who was known to have the project of developing the Dual Monarchy of Austria and Hungary—admired by Arthur Griffith—into a Triple (Austro-Hungarian-Slav), Monarchy. That assassination was at least as serious a matter for Austria as the bombing of the World Trade Centre was for the USA, and it responded accordingly. Russia, with its eyes on Constantinople (Istanbul) mobilised in support of Serbia. The system of Treaties then led to European War. Russia and France versus Austria and Germany. When the European War got going, Britain—which had no Treaty obligations—joined France and Russia for its own Imperial purposes.

In 1918 it decided to destroy the Habsburg Empire and thus stir up Balkan nationalism. The Croats etc, who had fought with Austria to the end, were then included in the new state of Yugoslavia, which for all practical purposes was Greater Serbia. Fierce nationalist dissent from Yugoslavia by the Croats and others began almost at once.

In 1941 the German army entered Yugoslavia on the way to Greece, where Britain had secured the agreement of Athens to join the Greek-Italian War. The Germans were welcomed into Croatia and the Croat/

*continued on page 4*

## Georgia and Russia

It surely says something about the state of current Irish foreign policy that not a dicky bird, not a peep has been heard from the Government, or the Minister for Foreign Affairs or his department, about the events in Georgia. Not a word, not a signal. There is no sign of life, even in the month of August (1914?).

Sarkozy has been racing around the place in his diversionally domestic tactic as current 'President of Europe', essentially distancing himself and 'Europe' such as it is, to be fair, from American tin-drum beating. Even Berlusconi has for once put some shallow water between himself and the US.

The Baltic states of the EU have been, are, of course jumping up and down on behalf of their American masters, as have the Poles as usual. Europe is surely divided between the 'new' (American cyphers) and 'old' (the original EEC), although the Franco-German axis is holding a line of sorts against American (Bushite) mischief-making in Europe with as its project, the destruction of Russia.

David Cameron on his way to Turkish sun, has publicly pulled a fast one on brooding Broom in his Fife redoubt, and young (and plotting) Miliband (of Trot father) takes his belated place in the queue to turn up in Tblisi to rub noses with and make nice noises to the Harvard graduate, Sakashvili, including in his pitch, 'you're on-track for NATO membership'.

Rice keeps turning up the heat, what heat there is in the American oven, promising futile missiles in Poland, of all things to deliver the world from the 'great-power' nuclear threats of Iran and North Korea! Doh?

Putin turns up in Beijing for the Olympics and while there Sakashvili pulls a fast one but from China in response, Putin sends in his troops to Georgia.

Merkel keeps her distance (from the Americans) while slightly playing it both ways. Old war-horses such as Simon Jenkins (a former editor of *The Times*) and Max Hastings (a frustrated general who never was and who led the British Army into Goose Green, and a former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*) have (in the *Guardian*) put their sensible cards on the table: this is all nuts and let's get back to geopolitics and spheres of influence and diplomacy (old style). Let's.

The neo-cons in Washington are

refreshed and revitalised, though, equally, deeply frustrated. America has a long, impossible logistical tail to Georgia, the place is in Russia's backyard—Cuba reversed.

But in respect of all of this there is nothing from our Government Buildings or from Iveigh House. Nothing.

Now this might be said to be a canny, cute and sensible non-move by Ireland. After all we are neutral (ho hum), we are not members of NATO, or any military alliance (ho hum again, what about Shannon, trooping through and rendition?). But to give the benefit of the doubt maybe we—the Government—are playing it clever. This is essentially about global power-politics, and such view of the world we assuage and abhor. It is not about the EU as such, though many member states are also, as it happens, members of NATO: but that is a matter for them and a matter for NATO. We are not members of NATO, we are non-aligned and believe in and have enshrined in our Constitution, in Article 29, our commitment to the most high-minded ideals, values and procedures—peaceful conflict resolution, the rule of international law and so on.

As a realistic description of the present (non) stance of the current government this might be described in a word, as 'bunkum'.

Ireland is silent, for one thing because of our Government's lack of self-confidence, to do with one thing: American corporate investment in Ireland through foreign direct investment (FDI). Because we have given corporate America such a glorious tax haven we believe that the American Government will turn off the tap if we say 'boo' to 'Washington' (a Government that said 'yes' to the sell-off by IBM of its entire personal computer business to China's Lenovo), and play to a corporate America that has never cared anything other than about its bottom line, wherever in the world that might be delivered.

Ireland is also silent because our Taoiseach (a former Minister for Foreign Affairs) is by nature and inclination simply pro-American, regardless (read his record during the Iraq debates in the Dail). He will change his tone completely if Obama wins and Obama changes the tone of American foreign relations, or if McCain wins, he'll also go along with whatever that delivers: like Bertie, it is

whatever way the wind blows as far as America and such as it is, Irish foreign policy, is concerned. In the meanwhile, say nowt.

In world affairs Ireland has lost it's way on the big issues including Lisbon and the current biggest issue, Russia and Georgia. Yes, we are nice to Africa (not difficult). Yes we're in favour of 'development' in the 'third world' and among the 'developing nations' and so on (again, easy). But no, we refuse, or our Government refuses, to live up to Michael Collins vision of an international league of nations, Dev's ambition in relation to the League of Nations, or Frank Aikens's vision of the United Nations and non-alignment and nuclear disarmament. Whew, that was all very dangerous stuff—were we in favour of all of that?

To be fair to the Baltic States and to Poland they stand up and push their boat: they have foreign (obsessively anti-Russian) policies, flies intent on the destruction of the elephant, as do (differently) the French, the British, the Italians and others. They all make it all plain nonetheless, regardless of what one might think of the policies and stances they individually and collectively take.

Russia, the core of the former USSR, has for more than a decade been subject by the US to encirclement, internal disruption, subversion internally and along its borders—an intended, calculated destruction: Yeltsin was in this respect a Trotskyite sot (and a long-time secret Trot within the CPSU). Putin has said 'enough' to all of this decade-plus of American aggression, subversion and subterfuge. He has rejected English complicity in the US project of destruction and capture through BP and the (Kinnock-led) British Council, for such it is: it has all come home to roost, Europe is being divided by Ameranglian plotting against the great Bear, to the point of war, if deemed opportune.

And Ireland today stays silent, makes money out of the Shannon staging-post and trucks with America's 'trade' agenda and that of pinky poodle Mandelson, and has nothing to say or express on the big issues and issue of the day. What would de Valera have said and Frank Aiken have done? Or even Redmond?

We are a dissolute nation, reduced to being hardly worthy of the name—and still in the month of August.

**Fergus O Rahallaigh**

### Propaganda as Anti-History

Peter Hart's  
'The IRA and its enemies'  
examined

Price: €15, £10

postfree from addresses on back page

or:

[www.atholbooks.org](http://www.atholbooks.org)

# International Law

continued

Muslim parts of Bosnia, and separate states were set up under German protection.

The Royalist Serbs resisted the Germans, and when the regular Army was defeated resorted to guerilla warfare led by General Mihailovich under the authority of the Government in exile in London.

Later in 1941, after the German invasion of Russia (delayed for six weeks by the Serbian resistance, which possibly determined the outcome of the whole War), a Yugoslav Communist resistance was launched. The Royalist Serb resistance, taking account of the scale of German reprisals against Serb civil society, reduced its activity to operations whose military value was judged to be worth the reprisals. For Tito's Partisans, however, the reprisals helped to do their work of destroying bourgeois society.

Churchill, the fierce anti-Bolshevik warmonger of twenty years standing, found himself dependent on Soviet Russia after June 1941, and Communist propagandists were brought into his apparatus for the duration of the War.

In 1943 Whitehall decided that Tito's Partisans were the only anti-German force in Yugoslavia, and that Mihailovich was a collaborator, and that furthermore he had narrowed down his concern to Serbia and was willing to let Croatia go its own way.

He was denounced, the Government-in-Exile in England was forced to make terms with Tito, and Tito's Partisans were armed by Britain for the conquest of Royalist Serbia. Thus Britain was an active party to the construction of Communist Yugoslavia.

Four a couple of years Tito was the 'extremist' of the Communist world. Then there came his breach with Moscow, apparently over his ambition to form a Balkan Federation under Yugoslav hegemony.

Communist Yugoslavia then became 'non-aligned' and was effectively part of the West in the Cold War. As it was not part of the Soviet system, it did not collapse with the Soviet system around 1990. So Germany and Britain decided to destroy it by stirring up the old nationalisms within it. And when Croatian independence was declared under the Fascist flag of 1941, it was hailed by Margaret Thatcher.

The Yugoslav Constitution was seen as a good thing while it served the Western interest in the Cold War. Then came the time to destroy it. There was a rush by Germany and Britain to recognise Slovenian independence in breach of the Constitution.

When the process of disintegration was set in motion, the British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, wrote that Yugoslavia

could neither be held together nor broken up without violence.

The EU might have used its influence to persuade the Yugoslav nationalities to proceed within the forms of the Yugoslav Constitution. It chose to do the contrary. And now it salves its conscience by brazening it out with Show Trials under international law.

Milosevic was overthrown by an externally-stimulated *coup d'etat* between the two stages of a Presidential election in which the victory of his opponent seemed certain. The object was to get rid of the last vestige of the Yugoslav Constitution, and thrown Serbia back into the melting pot.

During the years when Karadic was leader of the Bosnian Serbs, the only state which openly supported and encouraged him was Israel.

The Kosovo Liberation Army was described as a murderous terrorist organisation by the British War ('Defence') Minister at a Labour Party Conference only a few weeks before being hailed as a National Liberation movement. This change in its character resulted entirely from a change in British and EU policy.

Such is the Europe we live in.

## Editorial Digest

**A Showcase of British Culture** was to be the essence of the handing over display at the end of the Olympics in China. Patrick Murphy in the *Irish News* of 30th August said that all it (the performance and the culture) amounted to was "*nothing more than a red bus, David Beckham and some woman singing*". It was worse than that. There was a troupe of dancers. One assumes they were a troupe, in spite of appearances. About twenty people ponced about the place in no particular order or direction, and with no obvious rhyme, rhythm or, indeed, reason. Beckham was accompanied by an old man from Led Zeppelin trying to play raunchy rock on guitar. The others on the bus, apart from some child who won a Blue Peter competition, were half naked but otherwise purposeless. All that was missing was Gary Glitter—though some wit has suggested that they are saving him up for the Opening Ceremony in 2012—"do you wanna be in my gang?..."

**What does Ulster Unionism** make of all this, one has to ask; and indeed Mr. Murphy in the *Irish News* asks exactly that. Brendan Clifford, in this magazine, has said that British culture is shopping. Richard Littlejohn in the *Daily Mail*

says it is shopping and stabbing. Beckham, for all that he may be a good footballer, is, alongside his wife, an international shopping brand. Belfast, though full of tanning parlours and their human products, has not quite adopted the full British culture of individual, isolated, but uni-formed shoppers. There is still a society in both Catholic areas in general (despite the virtual police condonement of anti-social behaviour), and in many Protestant communities. Experiments with late night and Sunday shopping have virtually collapsed, though they still keep the shops open in almost empty streets.

**Nationalist/Unionist divisions** are mostly expressed in differing attitudes to the Battle of the Somme although there has been a, so far unsuccessful, attempt by the *Belfast News Letter* to connect with current British Imperialism by having Victory Parades for Iraq and Pakistan around the Province. But, back when the issue was current, pro-imperialism was far greater in the South because it was thought out by the likes of Arthur Griffith, John Redmond and, in the end, Michael Collins. The remaining substantial difference was religion: the reasonable Protestant fear of Rome Rule. But that is gone forever.

**In 1969 the Free State Army** found itself completely inadequate to the task of helping defend Nationalist areas in the North against any British Army support for the RUC and the B-Specials. To be fair it set about righting that deficiency in quick time. After all the only war it was ever likely to be called upon to fight was one against the British. But this all came to an abrupt end when Jack Lynch crumbled before the British Ambassador and had politicians and soldiers arrested and tried. The Army was set up in 1922 as a force for internal repression. Fianna Fail altered the nature of the force during the Second World War so that it could combine with local militias and guerrilla forces to combat a British invasion. After that it was a subsidiary force of the United Nations when that body still had notions of aiding the weak—such as the Congolese under Lumumba or the people of South Lebanon.

**Irish soldiers** have more recently come into line with the Anglo-American view of what the army of a small country should be used for. So we have seen Irish soldiers in Britain's adventure in Sierra Leone and America's adventure in Afghanistan. These involved very small numbers, but they were all about developing a new military culture in Ireland. The result is a full-scale adventure in Chad in circumstances

continued on page 6

# LISBON

continued

The original aim of the EU project was that the Commission would be eventually in charge, gradually gaining the authority for this position by proposing and implementing sensible policies across Europe. It would prove in practice that the nation state was on the way out. It was a most laudable aim. It has failed. The Commission is now a sheer bureaucracy and the nation states are in charge, wheeling and dealing, using and abusing the Commission and everything else to their hearts' content—doing what comes naturally. All the rhetoric in all the languages of Europe cannot hide that fact. That is the real significance of the Doha failure for Europe.

As for Doha itself, Mr. Mandelson was at pains to explain that nobody was at fault and there was no real issue that collapsed the talks—after 7 years of negotiations! The spin-doctor had to spin pure nonsense

and disappeared up where the sun doesn't shine. Perhaps there was also no reason why every single WTO Ministerial meeting has also failed—Seattle, Doha, Cancun and now this one.

Maybe Mr. Mandelson has not noticed that the political and economic fault lines in the world have changed. The focus of the real economy of the world is now with China, India, Brazil, Russia etc. and they are simply not going to have rules made for them that they don't want. The WTO, G8, the World Bank and such are simply no longer relevant. The world will not have compulsory Free Trade imposed on it—just enough that suits its individual parts which will be done in a plethora of regional, bilateral and pluri-lateral agreements.

The pretensions and credibility of these international bodies have been shattered along with that of the UN, NATO and the EU itself. International concepts of socialism and communism are long gone and the bourgeois world is following suit.

Yet we hear constant talk of the 'international community' being concerned about this and that and wanting to right the

world even though all its actual manifestations are falling apart. How peculiar.

There is of course one real international community across all races and states that is growing in numbers, self-belief and is actually shaping world politics. That is the Moslem world. The achievement of the so-called, self-proclaimed international community may well be to provoke the creation of a real international community in opposition to it.

In Europe the EU is now simply a common trading area within a hulk that was destined to be something more. But European nations do remain a cultural and historic entity and will continue to need a focus to articulate their fundamental beliefs about themselves when necessary. What will now provide this except the Papacy? What else will?

And with a revived Moslem world some very old fault lines indeed could begin to emerge. Has Enlightened Europe run its course in world history?

Jack Lane

## Partnership & Futurism

The Partnership process has produced some wonderful offshoots. One of these is the "*Futures Ireland*" project of the NESC [National Economic & Social Council] initiated by Peter Cassels. This involves delving into the "stories" of people who are engaged in various aspects of Irish society and of building its social and economic structures. It then uses these to construct "pictures" of where Ireland will be or ought to be twenty five years from now. The "futurist" project attempts to mobilise a common will around the future of the country, and provide background and a context for political and economic strategy making through the partnership structure.

It is a fascinating process, and DEP [Dublin Employment Pact] has been making its modest contribution to it. Other bodies—from the Department of the Taoiseach to the IPA and Forfás—have been engaging in similar "futurist" projects.

There is no doubt that the social partnership process has entered a rocky period. But then it was born in a far more rocky period. I was reminded of this when I read a recent *Irish Times* headline: "*Unemployment soars to 5.1%*". Well, when the Social Partnership process was put together, Irish national debt was nearly 150% of GDP (it is now less than 35%), unemployment was nearly 20% and the IMF was knocking on the door to

pronounce on Ireland's insolvency. That was rocky!

Partnership was introduced to Ireland by a bunch of patriotic people across the social interests. But the process was invented and driven by political will (that of C.J. Haughey), and if it is to be saved and to move forward, it will be by another act of political will. When it was introduced in 1987, none of those involved saw it purely as a pay negotiation measure, but rather as a comprehensive new departure in the way Ireland was governed and how it would develop its social and economic systems. Haughey was inspired by the German system, which he interrogated Helmut Schmidt at length about, and Congress for its part was driven by an ideal based on the Scandinavian social state model.

These European systems of social partnership involve pay negotiations, but also a lot more, and can also survive regardless of the ups and downs of the pay negotiation element on its own. Before returning from the summer break, Taoiseach Brian Cowen announced that Social Partnership—now in its 21st year—might require "*new structures*". This is to be welcomed. A way needs to be found to further develop the flexibility of partnership processes and embed them more strongly as the way of doing business across all aspects of social and economic life without being dependent solely on the

wage negotiation element.

While the wage negotiation element of social partnership is the hard change of it, and must remain linked with it for it to remain rooted in reality, structures do need to be developed that enable the rest of the system evolve creatively.

Now, there's a project for the futurists!

Philip O'Connor

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

Contents:

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

Published, June 2008, by the *Aubane Historical Society*, [www.aubane.org](http://www.aubane.org)

**PRICE: €10, £7 postfree**

Orders:

**[jacklaneaubane@hotmail.com](mailto:jacklaneaubane@hotmail.com)**  
or from addresses on back page

(Readers of this magazine can claim a 20% discount when ordering)

## Millstreet Credit Union

The Credit Union Movement is one of the remaining hold-outs in the European Union against the globalising trend. And the commercial banking sector has been seeking ways of undermining its popular rival. At the moment the European Commission dare not touch the Credit Unions, but it has shown which way its policy is tending by proposing to issue a 'voluntary' code to protect consumers. If Credit Unions were to take any notice of this Code, it would soon be followed up with something more binding. And no doubt the European Court of Justice will feel able to take this 'voluntary' Code into account in any decisions it would be called upon to make. Dermot Kiely of the active Millstreet Credit Union protested about this interference from Brussels, occasioning a sneering item in the Business Section of the Irish Times. Here is the letter Mr. Kiely sent to Brussels on behalf of his Committee:

*"Re: The proposed Voluntary Consumer Protection Code for Credit Unions.*

Sir,

As regards the above proposed Code, we think it is unnecessary and unwarranted. There are, already, more than enough rules and regulations governing Credit Unions.

We are aware that this new Code is being pushed by the EU.

EU thinking is driven by the Liberal – Left, who want to control everything. These people are the heirs to the so-called "Enlightenment" of the 18th Century. This led on to the French Revolution with its massacres of innocent people and the "Reign of Terror". Later, this thinking led to the rise of Socialism, Marxism, Communism and Nazism (National Socialism), all sprung from the same root.

We do not need that kind of thinking in Ireland.

The people who started Credit Unions, 40 to 50 years ago, set out to give a service to their communities. If they could have foreseen attempts, over the past few years, to impose totalitarian control on Credit Unions, they would never have started them, in the first place.

This new Code, added to the impositions of recent years, is a recipe for driving all the volunteers out of Credit Unions; as they will not stand this type of tyranny.

Irish politicians and Irish civil servants seem very anxious to stand on their heads to prove what good Europeans they are. The voters of Ireland, recently, sent a message that they are not impressed with this craven mentality.

Irish civil servants, who are paid by Irish taxpayers, should serve the Irish people, and not some foreign masters.

Yours faithfully,  
Dermot Kiely, Treasurer"

## Editorial Note:

Ciarán Hancock describes this protest as a "right old rant", and letting "the EU have both barrels" and calls the author "a 'Rebel' without a cause" (Irish Times 8.8.08).

Incidentally, Dermot Kiely does not need to be told what 'voluntary' means: he does the full-time Treasurer's job on a voluntary basis, and draws no salary for it.

For those who are not aware of it, we should add that Credit Unions perform invaluable work: they keep money in communities, instead of centralising it in the hands of bankers, and they provide credit to their members, keeping them out of the hands of moneylenders and loan-sharks. On top of that, they invest in local projects which would not get commercial loans. There are 420 of them and a lot of voluntary effort goes into them: hamstringing them with rules and regulations is a recipe for undermining them by forcing them to become professional, increase their overheads and become more like banks. Such moves are hardly accidental.

Conspiracy theorists would wonder how the *Irish Times* got hold of this letter, which was sent to the Financial Regulator and not issued to the press.

## Editorial Digest

continued

which only a self-deceiver could see as anything other than support and cover for French Imperialism.

**Brian Cowen** may have signalled the way that things were going in his speech to the Royal [sic] Irish Academy in late 2000, as Ireland was about to sit on the UN Security Council:

"On the Security Council Ireland will be making decisions on issues of international peace and security that come before the Council. Critical to all these decisions will be the ongoing ability of the international community through the UN and its cooperation with relevant regional organisations to deploy resources for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and crisis management, including humanitarian operations. Over recent years we have seen too many examples of the international community standing aside as helpless witnesses, seemingly overwhelmed by a sense of moral defeat, hesitating to become involved while innocent people suffer. Sometimes the failure to act is a failure of political will

other times it is because the capabilities are not there. For a long time Ireland has shared the concerns of successive UN secretaries-general, and many like-minded member states, about the need to ensure that the UN's capabilities in these core areas of its responsibilities are strengthened."

**The Armies of smaller nations** can be geared for the effective defence of their territories while performing useful social tasks at the same time. It would be a foolhardy state that tried to attack Sweden or Switzerland, Vietnam or Cuba. But the US and the UK do not like these sorts of armies. They generously offer to train armies which are useful only for backing up imperial adventures and for internal repression. They must necessarily be useless should the US or the UK decide to attack them. They must also be handy should US-financed elections not be sufficient to produce the right results. Such strategy was developed at Fort Benning in Georgia (USA) for Latin America. This is still the source of policy for many former members of the USSR, with results we have seen in the other Georgia. Britain "trains" its client armies in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Jordan, and several

West African states. It now has begun to "share its expertise" with officers from Ireland. Time was when the Curragh was proud of turning out officers for African countries.

**Sinn Fein** has suffered a series of resignations by senior figures in recent times, mostly by disillusioned Republicans. Former Mayor of Dungannon, Barry Monteith, said: "I no longer share the belief that this [Sinn Fein's] strategy will lead to Irish unification. It is not solely about policing." Also to go were former Newry MLA, Davy Hyland; Mid-Ulster MLA, Geraldine Dougan; Garvaghy Road Spokesman, Breandan Mac Cionnaith; Fermanagh MLA, Gerry McHugh; Fermanagh Councillor, Bernice Swift; and Sinn Fein press officer, Eamonn Mac Manais (Irish News, August 6). It may be significant that there has been a serious leakage of members and an increase in so-called dissident activity in Fermanagh, but not in Tyrone or Armagh, which were much more active in the Provo war.

**The Strategic Investment Board (SIB)** in the North should not be confused with the Irish Development Authority (IDA).

The IDA is a popular and successful body which brings industries, large and small, to the country. The Strategic Investment Board is there solely to develop the privatisation—Public Private Partnership strategies of the New Labour Government in London. And, it has to be said, none of the Parties in Stormont have any problem with this. In the *Irish News* (August 21) Newton Emerson complains that the SIB's Chief Executive is paid £213,000 a year, £20,000 more than the President of the World Bank. But that reflects the importance of a job designed to abolish the large tracts of Socialism that were left untouched by Thatcherism and Blair during the War. It seems we are now reaping the 'Peace Dividend'.

**The Union Jack** was flown at a recent festival on the main street in Letterkenny. Fianna Fail Councillor, Damien Blake, called those who objected bigots. He was replied to by J. Woods of Gort an Chiorce in the *Irish News* of August 28: "*A brief recollection, now, of why it's not just any old flag left to flutter in the breeze. Some of the atrocities carried in the name of the colourful Union Jack, that even a naïve councillor should be aware of: Bloody Sunday, the Croke Park massacre, the burning of Cork, the Ballymurphy massacre, the Gibraltar killings, the sinking of the General Belgrano full of young conscripts, the degradation and murder of innocent Iraqis and, just a week ago, the slaying of four children in Afghanistan by British soldiers.*"

**Stormont and the PSNI's** irrelevance is illustrated by the fact that the Stormont Government has not met for months and nobody notices. The police, meanwhile, are invisible. They appear only after an event, if then. And occasionally their vehicles can be seen near their barracks. But there are more MI5 spooks wandering the streets than all the active paramilitaries put together. Funny old world!

**Annoying the dead.** Archbishop Dermot Clifford of Cashel and Bishop Bill Murphy of Kerry have complained to the National Library that opening its archives to all will allow Mormons to get the necessary details to re-baptise dead Catholics into the Mormon Church. Meanwhile in England, Peter Tatchell and the lads are up in arms about the proposed exhumation and reburial of Cardinal Newman prior to his canonisation. Newman shared the latter part of his life with Fr. Ambrose St. John for whom he declared great love and next to whom he is buried. A Senior Catholic, Austen Ivereigh, put the matter in context on the BBC's Sunday programme: "*I*

*don't think anyone disputes that Cardinal Newman deeply loved Ambrose St. John. He did say after St. John died that the grief is comparable to a husband losing a wife or a wife losing a husband, but he did not mean that the relationship with Ambrose St. John was a marriage like a gay relationship. It is simply wrong to read back from today's categories...*"

#### **Financial state of Northern Parties.**

According to the Electoral Commission, DUP donations jumped significantly—from £12,166 in 2006 to £190,144 last year. Excess income was £40,446. The SDLP had an income of £663,674—almost double that of 2006—but its deficit increased to £130,691. The UUP had a deficit of £405,647 in 2007. A statement of the Sinn Féin account from the Commission said £298,710 was brought in through donations in 2007 compared with £103,377 the previous year. The returns also revealed Sinn Féin had an income of more than £1 million in 2007, including donations, grants and contributions from elected representatives. The party has 27 Assembly members, five MPs and an MEP. Ministers in the Assembly give their salaries to the party. Its largest expenditure was on wages, administration and conferences, with a total of £41,092 devoted to security costs and £25,741 to political development. Sinn Féin's balance sheet showed a surplus of £108,330. (Belfast News Letter July 31)

**Greaves School.** The only report in the *Irish Times* from the Desmond Summer School was on Saturday, August 30th, where the paper reported from the previous night's session that Oxford University Professor, Dr. Simon Prince, had said that there had been no need for the Civil Rights demonstrators in Derry in 1968 to take to the streets. Dr. Prince refuted the claim that he had said this during one of the Saturday sessions. The *Irish Times* ignored this as well as views of interesting characters from the time such as Sean Garland, Edwina Stewart, Seamus O'Tuthaill, Michael Farrell, Seamus Rattigan and others.

**Michael Collins** was the inspiration for changing the GAA's Rule 42 allowing the playing of Rugby and soccer in Croke Park according to former GAA President, Tom Kelly. Kelly, who was the man most responsible for pushing through the change, made the claim at the Collins Commemoration at Beal na mBlath on August 24th. He claimed that the opening up of Croke Park helped to heal the wounds of the Civil War!?

**Former IRA prisoners** may lodge appeals against IRA membership convictions. According to *The Guardian* on August

24th, 300 Republicans may adopt this course in order to be able to secure visas for the US, Canada and Australia and to avoid discrimination. A former IRA prisoner questioned by this magazine said he had no problems getting into the US (a visa is not required) and in Ireland the only body discriminating against former IRA Volunteers seeking work in the Simon Community—though the chances of a job at Arlene Foster's office would probably be pretty slim. Former or current IRA membership is a positive asset in many cases. Nevertheless, a great number of convictions were based on Confessions extorted under torture and it is as well that the scale on which this happened be exposed.

**Rip-off Ireland?** There has been a recent flurry of letters and comments in the Southern Province about rip-off prices in restaurants. Pat Murphy, of this parish, some time ago expressed his astonishment at the practice of people going out to eat and then getting upset about the size of the bill. The notion of going to a restaurant without having some idea of the cost was beyond his understanding or indeed that of most people. But part of the Celtic Tiger culture among the "haves" was not to worry about prices. A woman on RTE radio recently described the wonderful feeling of no longer having to have a conscience about paying 400 euros for a pair of shoes. Affluence among a sizeable minority is a serious cause of inflation. This is also experienced when there is an influx of idle rich foreigners into places like rural Spain and France.

**And Finally!** It has emerged from Belfast City Hall that a couple of youth workers were called out as an emergency a few weeks ago to tackle a dozen youngsters in East Belfast who were verbally abusing trainee police officers at a local barracks. Poor dears!

**Breakthrough In Gaza!** A humanitarian convoy has finally breached the blockade of Gaza with humanitarian aid brought to Gaza on two ships. The SS Free Gaza and SS Liberty were shadowed by Israeli naval vessels as they started their 370km (230miles) return journey to Cyprus yesterday, carrying seven Palestinians, 31 human rights activists and several journalists. This voyage amounted to a fresh challenge to Israel, which since occupying the Strip in 1967, has exercised full control over everyone and everything entering and exiting Gaza. Among the Palestinian passengers, who have been denied Israeli exit visas, are Said Mosleh, a 10-year-old boy who lost a leg to an Israeli tank shell, his father, and five members of the Darwish family who plan to join relatives in Cyprus.

## Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, Inst, and Social Responsibility

Readers may not be aware that The Royal Belfast Academical Institution, known as Inst, backs on to the premises of the Belfast Historical & Educational Society, a charity. Last year construction works at the school caused serious damage to the premises of BHES and the school consistently refused to take responsibility for repair work. Below is a letter which the Belfast Historical & Educational Society sent to Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of Inst. He chose not to indulge in the civility of a reply, but a letter reproduced below was apparently sent on his instructions.

The cost of emergency repairs to the BHES was £16,000, and meeting this has delayed the production of further volumes of the writings of the founder of Inst.

## Belfast Historical And Educational Society Limited

12th June 2008

Dear Sir Kenneth Bloomfield,

I enclose a letter from David Morrison, which was sent to the Principal on 19th March. It may be that we should have contacted you, rather than the Principal, when your building works caused us a serious problem on Saturday 28th July 2007. Your contractors were using a mechanical stone breaker to break up the floor of a building they were demolishing. This caused severe shaking in No. 33 Athol Street. You should have been aware that the nature of the ground in this area exaggerates any vibrations. Luckily there was someone there at the time: they rushed round to the school - but all the gates were locked. It took about half an hour to attract the attention of the workmen. The Foreman, Michael Crozier, stopped the work at once. As it was, the side wall parted from the rest of the house at the upper level and was in imminent danger of collapse. Belfast council put an immediate Protection Order on the place.

We informed the School of what had happened and suggested that it would save a lot of trouble all round if the contractors who had caused the problem simply put the matter right. But that offer was rejected.

When the Principal refused to engage positively with us, we set repair works in hand and sent you a bill in March 2008. We received no reply from you.

It seems to us that Inst has acted irresponsibly throughout this affair. You caused the damage and then sheltered

behind your legalities and expert advice. You probably will spend as much on these as meeting our modest bill would entail.

I suppose this is the way of the world these days. It is certainly not the ethic of Protestant Belfast which was prevalent until modernity began to bite. You calculated that we were small fry, that the house was old and that therefore we would find it difficult to prove liability in court. Also, that we would not be able to afford the professional help we would need to establish our case. Inst boasts of its values, including inculcating a sense of responsibility. I suppose it's a case of 'Do as I say . . .'

All I can say is that William Drennan would have been ashamed of you. I have some knowledge of him - and of Martha M'Tier - having spent many hours with them in the PRO. The Belfast Historical & Educational Society, a charity which is

based in 33 Athol Street - has set itself the task of reproducing William Drennan's *Selected Works*. Three volumes have so far appeared and a fourth is in preparation. It is to be entitled *Citizen Of Belfast*. And, curiously, this volume is to carry documents about his involvement in the founding of the Academy. I think readers will be interested to find out something about the subsequent development of Drennan's philanthropic effort. The school he founded nearly wrecked the premises of the Society which is bringing him to a modern audience and has left it with a large hole in its finances! Ironic, isn't it?

So this letter is for your information, in case you and the Board of Governors are not aware of this unfortunate affair.

Yours sincerely  
Angela Clifford (Secretary, BHES)

	<b>The Royal Belfast Academical Institution</b>
	College Square East BELFAST BT1 6DL
	K J Wilson, B.Sc. (Econ), F.C.A. Registrar & Secretary to the Board
KJW/DR	
30 June 2008	
Ms A Clifford Belfast Historical & Educational Society c/o 33 Athol Street BELFAST BT12 4GQ	
Dear Ms Clifford	
Further to your letter of 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2008, I should wish to respond on behalf of the School as matters relating to the management of the property are my responsibility as Registrar.	
The alleged incident to which you refer would have occurred during works undertaken by contractors employed by the School - Downhill Enterprises of Skenehill Avenue, Belfast, and therefore it is to them, and not R.B.A.I., that you should address your comments. Indeed I understand that the contractors have refuted your allegations and are contesting the matter.	
Yours sincerely	
	
K J WILSON Registrar	
Fax: 028 9023 7464	Tel: 028 9024 0461
	www.rbai.org.uk



## Fear And Misery In Britain's Six Counties

I have often wondered how to compare a condition of the psyche of the Northern Catholic with a similar condition in the outside world. Brow-beaten Indians during the the period of British rule? Myanmar under the heel of the same enemy? Kenya maybe? A Northern Catholic usually did sympathise with these people but was there a European dimension that would match that same state of mind. Surely there was somewhere closer to home than Indian, Myanmar or Africa. I found it eventually in Brecht's *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich*. Brecht wrote this play long before the holocaust started in earnest during the Nazi/Soviet war. This was a time for humiliating the Jews, breaking them, destroying their self-esteem. *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich* captures that destruction of the soul in a scene where a Jewish doctor is forced to work on the construction of new autobahn as a labourer or in another scene when a Jewish wife is no longer just a wife but a Jewish wife who must be given up by the Christian husband if he is to survive the Third Reich.

My father in marrying a Catholic caused him to be ostracised by some members of his own family all his life. His preferring to live in Protestant areas put all our lives in danger. Escaping to the then rural area of Carryduff in County Down (mostly in flight from the debt collectors during the 1930s) brought even more danger from stone-throwing attacks on our house and a near-death situation when our well water was poisoned with blue stone used to dip sheep. Armed B-Specials—the sons of local farmers—would make our front gate their meeting place once a week. The same men in civilian clothes would, under the cover of darkness, stone our house, breaking windows and slates. This was during WW2 when we were being told the world-war had to do with the fight for democracy.

A few miles away a Catholic family had .303 rifles fired over their roof. This was the weapon of the B-Special. They didn't even bother to pick up the empty shells in the knowledge that the Carryduff police barracks was not going to respond to complaints from popeheads. When my father complained, the RUC told him that children were to blame for the stoning. They were just being mischievous. But this time it was not a Catholic complaining but someone who considered himself to be an Ulster Protestant and felt he had rights, even if they were denied to others, including his Catholic family. He was a literate man who had had poetry published in a Dublin magazine when he was a

young man and when the whole of Ireland was part of the British Empire. He promptly wrote to the Inspector-General of the RUC and also sent him the dead swollen frogs from the poisoned well. There was no answer and the attacks continued on our house but this time accompanied by massive bonfires in a field opposite our house. Burning branches were continually thrown towards our front door, setting fire to the hedge. A Protestant farmer at the back of our house was so enraged by this behaviour he came to our house with a shotgun and offered to lend it to my father. He refused. The next night the Protestant farmer had his house attacked. He came out of the house and fired into the darkness with the will to kill. He wasn't bothered again.

My father again informed Carryduff police barracks and again wrote to the Inspector-General. A few months later the RUC sergeant at the Carryduff police barracks was replaced by one brought from South Armagh. It seemed too much of a coincidence that he turned out to be married to my Catholic aunt, my mother's sister. It was a bizarre situation. Previously the door of the barracks had been closed in my father's face by the previous sergeant, now as a family we were going to the barracks to socialise. While my aunt made meat pies in the married quarters of the barracks my cousins and I rampaged through the barracks, into the gun room to press the triggers of the .303 rifles that were chained to the wall or entered the sergeant's office to look at his trophies from South Armagh. One of them was his cap with a bullet hole through the peak, got when he tackled two IRA men raiding a bank. Another was a defused hand grenade he used as a paper weight. On the wall was a large map of the Sperrin Mountains in County Tyrone with carefully drawn paths up it. This would probably turn out to be the sergeant's next assignment after Carryduff.

I often stayed in the barracks overnight and it was surreal to watch through the window of the living quarters as the B-Specials, who had been stoning our house, entered the duty room to sign in and draw ammunition. One night during an attack on our house there was the sound of police whistles. Later we found out that the sergeant had set up an ambush with a police unit drawn from Belfast for security reasons. To use his own men would have meant giving away the plan for the ambush as some RUC officers had maybe two brothers in the B-Specials. The gang fled but one of them had been caught—a B-

Special of course, the son of the farmer who owned our house. I expect he had been forced to give the names of the gang for, when he drove a tractor past our house a few days later, he had two black eyes and a swollen nose. My cousin told me he had heard shouting in the middle of the night coming from the gun room.

The stoning mob each had a visit from the sergeant and warned off. None of them were chucked out of the B-Specials. No courts were involved, no law dispensed. It was rough justice, a vigorous interrogation followed by a kangaroo court and the threat of a beating. That to our family was a fine justice. No court of law ever saw B-Specials before it for stoning a house in which there were Catholics or because a fusillade of rifle shots had been fired over their roof.

We continued to socialise with the sergeant and his family. It seemed that having a Catholic wife was putting the brakes on his promotion to District Inspector. He had converted to Catholicism but the general population in Carryduff didn't take it too seriously. His wife, my aunt, was blamed for his deal with the devil. As he still appeared to be a Protestant locally, he also appeared to me as being a Protestant. He and my father got along famously. They argued mostly about the Bible with my father poking holes in it and the sergeant defending it. Some evenings it was like a Bible-class with both of them quoting long passages from memory.

Local Catholics were allowed to use the chapel of the nearby US military camp and the sergeant would be there with his family, bringing rugs to kneel on, as the floor was concrete. He was treated as a honoured guest by the camp commander. He didn't appear to go to confession as I never saw him receive communion. (Now of course you can take communion without going to confession)

One Sunday the US camp was picketed by a group of local Protestant militants protesting about the US Army letting twenty local Catholics use their chapel. The sentries responded with gunfire over their heads. They were lucky as the US Army could apparently shoot anyone without having to explain themselves. A bus driver driving his bus refused to pull over on a narrow road in order to let an American army convoy pass. An officer in a jeep pulled alongside the driver's cab and shot him dead. There were sometimes large-scale protests by nationalists outside US Army camps whom they saw as yet another occupying force. Some of the protesters ended up in hospital with bullet wounds.

On the same day as the US sentries in Carryduff fired over the head of the loyalist

protesters a gun battle broke out between black and white US soldiers in Downpatrick. The battle raged for 24 hours and required two battalions from a US camp in Ballynahinch to quell it. There was a news blackout and we never did find out the casualty figures. We would never have heard anything about it only for the bus conductors running the Belfast/Downpatrick route which went through Carryduff.

Workers broke the censorship of the newspapers by telling their families what product they happened to be working on. The British Official Secrets Act couldn't be pinned on every worker in the war industry of the Six Counties. There were just too many. I had a cousin who, being older than me, was already working at the age of fourteen as a trainee machinist in a clothing factory in Belfast (mostly military uniforms). On a visit she whispered to my father that production was suddenly switched to the cutting and sewing of Irish tricolours of all shapes and sizes by the thousands. There were already rumours of a possible US Army strike over the border. It was guessed by my father that these flags would be used by the US army on their vehicles and sewn on to uniforms as a preparation for that invasion of the South. (Don't be alarmed it's only the Irish-Americans returning home?)

One day the RUC sergeant and his family were gone without telling us. We found out he was somewhere in County Tyrone. The sergeant now wanted no contact with us and his wife rarely visited her sister, my mother. With him gone the attacks on the house began again but we had been allocated a new house by the Northern Ireland Housing Trust by then. It had all mod cons and was on the mixed Sunnylands estate in Carrickfergus. Like the giant Rathcoole estate, it had been socially-engineered by the Unionist government, and that was welcomed by the Catholic tenants. Both estates would be ethnically-cleansed of Catholics by the UDA when the conflict broke out.

I was so struck by Brecht and his understanding of the Nazi endeavour to kill the identity of a human being that I began to sketch out in my mind a number of scenes pertaining to the situation into which I had been born: How some Catholics are maimed in their identity by being given Protestant first names in order that they may get jobs under one-party Stormont Unionist rule. How you then have to listen, when undercover, to sectarian rabble rousing all day long in your workplace but dare not stand up for yourself. But how you can also lose the game in your leisure time as a young person, should you meet a girl at a dance and fail to identify her religious persuasion.

You chat and you seem to be getting along all right when you react the wrong way to something she says. Maybe she tells you her wee brother has applied to join the Junior Orange Order or maybe you had a green handkerchief or was wearing a green pullover which causes her to be suspicious. Whatever it is things rapidly cool down. She says she can be a terrible bitter person—meaning she is anti-Catholic—and watches your face. This young girl is expressing the outlook of a Stormont which looks like a club for retired military men who have served the British Empire. (The late Lord Fitt—Gerry Fitt on earth—once said of the Stormont proceedings that you didn't know whether to bow or salute.)

You carry a mental identikit of the typical Protestant in the street whilst knowing they are also carrying one. They crease their brow and narrow their eyes when they identify a taig while you avert your eyes if in their strongholds. Jorg Lanz von Liebenfeis was a Nazi racist who ran a journal called *Ostara* which went in for sketches of human features and other parts of the body so as they could be identified as Jews and therefore inferior. The Catholic in identifying the Protestant by his features and body language is mostly doing it for survival reasons while the Protestant in identifying the Catholic is doing it for what could be termed racist or nationality reasons.

I have had no reason to alter that opinion having experienced such an encounter less than 18 months ago. If you hear a voice say: "*He looks like one*", then you can be sure the person is saying he looks like a fenian or in a more hostile situation you could be told you look like a *mickey* or a *wrong'un*. Sometimes it is said in a joking way but that is known as a joke with a jag in it. The joke is usually made in a workplace where there is a majority of Protestants. This attitude can go on all day and every day. Sectarianism never seems to tire. The same anti-Catholic songs never stops, the red, white and blue bunting and union jacks never wears out. Sinn Fein/IRA has certainly brought dignity and self-esteem to the Catholic population but Jorg Lanz von Liebenfeis's theories still reign and will reign for the foreseeable future.

As a teenager active in the left movement in Belfast I felt I was living under fascism. Armed police trod the pavements of the cities and towns while in the countryside their half-track armoured vehicles took up ambush positions even in a relative time of peace. Police barracks closed their doors at dusk. A visit there after dark to report a stolen bicycle or a lost dog meant you were met by cop pushing a .45 revolver in your face when the door was opened.

Basil Brooke, a prime minister, once made a statement in Stormont saying he wouldn't have a Catholic about the place, even as a servant. This was said after someone put a bomb on a motor launch he had moored in Lough Neagh. But he had been making derogatory statements about Catholics before that, as did his arrogant son after him.

A suspected republican was gunned down in Belfast by the RUC during WW2. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported the cop as saying he was more interested in the St. Christopher bracelet on the dead man's wrist than he was in his wounds.

The worse experience for a child is when he or she watches the humiliation of their mother when reading such a blatant sectarian statement. A grandmother in the same room doubles that humiliation.

Two of my sisters were put through secretarial college for two years at a great sacrifice by my father who only earned the wage of a shipyard joiner. When they finished the course both of them collected over a hundred letters from companies turning them down for jobs on the grounds of religion. These companies were so confident that sectarian rule would continue they didn't seem to care who knew. In fact they would most probably would like the Catholic community to know that this could well be the experience for their children. So the best thing was to emigrate to some other country and lower the Catholic population. At least the *Belfast Telegraph* and the *Newsletter* did have honest employers stating in the job column that they preferred Protestant applicants. For others their yellow star was their name and address.

Even the small Jewish community in the Six Counties was affected by the sectarian divide. I once applied for a cabinet maker's job and was interviewed by a woman personnel officer for a large company on the outskirts of Belfast. She wore the Star of David around her neck. She worked for her father who owned the company. I filled in the application form, but left the "state religion" blank. She took the form, scanned it for a moment, lifted her pen and asked me bluntly what my religion was and got ready to fill in the blank space. It's not much point saying 'atheist' to a Jew upholding Protestant Unionist ideals. I usually said Protestant in a jovial sort of way in an attempt to bypass the sectarian bottleneck and get a few weeks' work until the shipyard began recruiting again. Something made me say Hindu. Claiming to be a Hindu in those days did reveal a Catholic in either a cynical or a jovial mood. Claiming to be Muslim or a Buddhist would have equally been a giveaway. My application form hit

the bin and I was told to leave the office.

So two of my Catholic sisters undergoing such an experience threw their lot in with a born-again group. Most Protestants don't like converts but the sisters humiliated themselves sufficiently enough by denouncing Rome and oul red socks on public platforms and they were accepted into the true faith. But most Protestants don't like converts because there is the belief that you are born what you're meant to be.

But they could now tell employers they were Protestants and even better, they were Christians, which is a sort of super Protestant. Naturally jobs followed. The 100 letters of rejection for jobs on the grounds of religion were burnt.

Usually the convert in the Six Counties change their politics along with their religion automatically. The only exception to this rule I ever came across was a family in Derry I came to know who had a daughter go over to the Jehovah Witnesses from Catholicism. Despite this she continued to support Sinn Fein as did her family.

As one of those covert Catholics working in the heavy industry of Belfast I was able to listen in to the longing for what we now call ethnic-cleansing. Some of my workmates told how Catholic women were ordered to have a certain amount of children by their priests. Failing to do this the priest himself would get the woman pregnant. Others said that Catholic women only went through six months of pregnancy instead of the usual nine months. This wasn't the general attitude in the Protestant community but it is the minority who call the tune.

The idea among some was that a Catholic should be seized on a regular basis, killed and buried somewhere quiet. The fenians would then be asking one another where so-and-so was. Some more of this and the taigs would clear off in terror, *afeerd*. This was back in the early 1950s when things were quiet and the IRA barely existed. Maybe some will say that this is the usual kind of crude talk that goes in most work places. Yes, there is a certain amount of rough thinking there. For example in England I have heard workers at lunch time discussing the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan as a foretaste of what can happen in a world that is becoming over-populated. Large-scale wars were also the unconscious way that man sorted out his own kind. Famines, earthquakes, cyclones, and huge rivers breaking their banks were also good for cutting back on over-population. The argument was that these calamities always seemed to happen in over-populated countries in the Far East anyway. In that

case the culling of the world population was unlikely to happen anywhere near the shores of England. But the culling of Catholics in the Six Counties still wouldn't affect these Protestant thinkers. Then the pressure cooker exploded in the Six Counties and everyone was on-line to help bring down the world population with PIRA in the game.

A sectarian joke ran thus:

"The Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor is told by one of his priests that a lady in Newry has just given birth to her 25th child. The Bishop decides he must get to see this wonderful woman immediately, if not sooner. She is obviously producing in order to push up the Catholic population. Getting there in limousines, the bishop and his entourage gets ready to bless the mother. Before reaching the farmhouse he is helped to robe and put on his mitre. His holy water and candles are made ready. His entourage then follows him singing Ave Maria as they approach the door of the farmhouse. Entering he is about to swing the smoking frankincense burner and make the sign of the cross when the mother asks him if he hasn't made a mistake:

"Mrs Gordan isn't it?" asks the bishop 'That's me', she replies. 'Haven't you just given birth to your 25th child?' asks the bishop. 'I have', says the mother, 'but I expect the Reverend Paisley to be here at any moment to help me pick a name for the baby'. 'The Reverend Paisley!' shouts the bishop. 'So you know now you're in the wrong house', says the mother. The bishop then turns to his priest and says in a rage: 'You dragged me all this fuckin' way to visit a sex maniac?'"

Later the Falls Road Catholics, back in the early 1950s, got to like this joke so much they made it their own.

Every Catholic knew the pressure cooker would explode. My mother cautioned me about joining any armed groups when I was older. Her idea was that these groups were amateurs and it was too early for an empty sacrifice. She reckoned it was going to happen in the future anyway. She had already experienced her family home in Omagh being raided by the Black and Tans in 1920 searching for IRA men on the run. Her family was accused of hiding them, they did. Later her brother-in-law was tortured by the usual Crown forces and got seven years on a prison ship moored in Belfast Lough.

During the Catholic struggle for parity of esteem I wasn't surprised at the advent of The Shankill Road Butchers and the atrocities carried out by the UDA and the UVF. My own father was as much an Ulster Protestant as any of them but he believed in major reforms that might see

Northern Catholics reconcile themselves to an Ulster he loved (of the Six County variety of course): An odd position for a self-confessed communist but Protestant

Unionism over-rides most Protestants, as Nationalism and Republicanism can only be the priority for Catholics claiming to be communists in Britain's Six County setup. Sinn Fein seems aware of this and this makes it all the sadder when you remember the late Brian Keenan and his leftist beliefs that couldn't be put into practice when Sinn Fein accepted power-sharing. And what do the Protestant left and the Catholic left have in common? Nothing unless one or the other leans towards the other's national identity. When this doesn't happen; the Communist Protestant has little in common with the Catholic communist.

I found that out in conversations with my father before he died in 1983. I couldn't lean towards his nationality as he couldn't lean towards mine. He did try to struggle out of this cocoon as I tried to struggle out of mine. But he was still very upset at the conversion of my two sisters to Protestantism. He thought they should have fought for their human and civil rights as Catholics. He knew what his own people were capable of after living through the 1920–1922 conflict in Belfast and now the new one that began in 1968 was beginning to prove even more cruel. (1964 might be a better date. It was in that year that the ferocious assault of the RUC against the Nationalists and Republicans in the Lower Falls area happened after they tried to prevent the police from removing the Irish tricolour from the window of the Sinn Fein electoral campaign office with a sledge hammer).

In the long run my father came to the conclusion that PIRA was really fighting within an Ulster framework and he told me he was beginning to understand them. The two daughters he almost wept for when they were being continually turned down for jobs because of religion spread it around that he was senile when they heard of his switch in tactical thinking.

When he died in Rathcoole my two Protestant sisters hijacked the funeral. They engaged a Presbyterian clergyman to officiate at his funeral. Being a life-long atheist he wouldn't have been pleased. There was quite a tussle for his body for he had wanted to be buried with my mother. She was lying in the Catholic section of Carnmoney, a cemetery outside Belfast. My Catholic sisters managed to have his body interred with my mother. So on sacred Catholic ground a Protestant minister preached for a good hour. When my father was being lowered into the earth the grave diggers got glares from

some of the mourners as they blessed themselves.

I heard as far back as 1950 certain groups of Protestant workers discussing the building of a wall along the length of the border. There were discussions in the old Stormont about strengthening the border, with a dyke being proposed. There were even threats of isolating Donegal by cutting the narrow neck of land where it runs into Sligo. Donegal then being isolated could be "cleaned out like a barn with rats". It seemed that some men drilling with wooden guns had been sighted over the Donegal border.

Catholics were rats with dirty habits. The Falls Road was a slum area. The Shankill was vibrant and clean with women scrubbing their doorsteps every morning. No mention was made of the fact that there were a lot more people there in jobs than up the Falls. People in the Shankill Road had money to spend on their homes. Some of them kept pigs in their back yards as an added income. I know because I worked for Ranks Flour Mills at the Pollock Dock in Belfast for a time in 1957, delivering animal feed up the Shankill. Later pigs were banned in the city.

The old image of the Catholic can be gleaned from this antique Belfast children's skipping song:

The King he is a gentleman and wears a watch and chain  
The Pope he is a beggar-man and lives in Chapel Lane

**Wilson John Haire**  
5th August, 2008

**PS** Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov was our favourite poet during the Young Workers League days in the Belfast of 1949. I can't believe back then it was only 7 years since his death.

#### WORMS ALSO DIE

Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov  
Anti-fascist poet  
Dead at 32  
On the 23rd of July, 1942  
Follow the blood trail  
To its ink source  
He's in his cell  
Writing two last poems  
One to his wife  
One to us  
It's 2pm Thursday  
A heat-haze distorts Sofia  
Denied a reprieve from the monarch  
He's taken to the Garrison Shooting Ground  
The bullets sing his words:  
'After the firing squad—the worms.'  
But worms also die, Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov  
While your poetry lives on

**Wilson John Haire**  
28th August, 2008

# Shorts

from  
*the Long Fellow*

## THE WAR ON DRUGS

Fintan O'Toole had his usual article on how awful we are (*The Irish Times*, 29.7.08). But this time it was not on political corruption but on the subject of drugs. Apparently, our propensity for illegal mind-altering substances is not a recent phenomenon. And all attempts at law enforcement have been in vain. He stopped short of advocating the legalisation of class A drugs but that was the logic of the article.

It is very strange that at a time when legislation has been implemented to restrict traditional drugs such as nicotine and alcohol there has been an attempt to open a debate on liberalising the laws on cocaine and heroin. Vincent Browne and Eoghan Harris are other commentators in favour of such a policy.

The argument is that because prohibition has not prevented people from abusing such drugs the policy has failed. But there is every likelihood that the situation would be worse if the law were liberalised. Switzerland liberalised her laws and then reversed this policy when she saw the consequences.

O'Toole is correct to say that throughout human history people (not just the Irish) have used mind-altering substances to escape from the realities of life. And some of this had a positive side. But societies develop customs and practices around their drugs of choice to cope with this element of human nature. Alcohol and nicotine have tended to be consumed together in a social setting. The ban on smoking in public buildings has privatised much of this activity and therefore the social constraints no longer apply.

There is no obvious social need—even if there is a demand—for the new recreational drugs. The country has not developed the social mechanisms, which would enable it to cope with the consumption of these drugs. Liberalising the law could only be damaging for the society.

## "OUR REPUBLICAN DEMOCRACY"

O'Toole continued his theme on how awful we Irish are in his column of 12th August. But the problem for O'Toole (and Roy Foster) is how to explain our success. Since we are awful, the source of our success could only be external to ourselves. O'Toole explains it away by two factors: Europe and Social Partnership. But are they really external? Other countries that were poor have not benefited from Europe as much as the Irish. And how can Social

Partnership, which was instituted by Charles Haughey, be external? To imply that it subverted democracy calls to mind the Leninist phrase: "*parliamentary cretinism*". On the contrary it deepened democracy by making government more effective through engagement with representative interests outside parliament.

The title of the article was: "*Uncomfortable truths of our republican democracy*". Perhaps some other "*non-republican*" type of democracy would be more acceptable to O'Toole?

## TRADE TALKS

The collapse of the WTO trade talks is very good news. Small farmers around the world know that free trade is not in their interests. Why should Irish farmers have to compete with the unregulated corporate farms from Brazil?

It is said that poor countries need trade; that poor farmers are desperate to export their produce to Europe and the United States. But it is not the poor farmers who are involved in the export markets, it is only the foreign-owned corporate farms located in the developing countries which have an interest in free trade. The native farmers' livelihoods are being undermined by cheap imports from the developed world.

The Irish above all should be immune from the free market ideology of the WTO. During our Famine in the 1840s the country was exporting wheat while the mass of the population was starving: a perfect example of who benefits from free trade.

## GEORGIA

Georgia's attack on the autonomous region of South Ossetia prompted a fierce counterattack from Russia. And Georgia's dream of being the Israel of the Caucasus is in tatters. Since 2000 Georgia has bought hundreds of millions of dollars worth of arms from Israel. The close relationship between the two states was cemented by Georgia's Defence Minister, Davit Kezerashvili. This politician is a former Israeli who speaks fluent Hebrew.

On the Israeli side a key person in the lucrative trade was Reserve Brigadier General Gal Hirsch who commanded Israeli forces during the July 2006 Second Lebanon War. Hirsch personally supervised the training of Georgian troops (<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9756/shtml>).

Perhaps the Harvard-educated Prime Minister Mikheil Saakashvili thought that if Georgia continued to do the West's bidding the West would come to her in her hour of need. But the US has been long on rhetoric and short on action. Georgia was allowed to withdraw its 2,000 troops from occupied Iraq (the third largest foreign contingent after the US and UK) to deploy at home. And that was all.

The US with its 800 military advisors in Tblisi (Israel had 1,100) must have

known about Georgia's military plans. She didn't discourage them, but preferred to wait and see what would happen. Now we know. Russia had no intention of allowing herself be encircled. The planned US missile installation in Poland and the invasion of South Ossetia by a country which wished to join NATO was too much to bear.

94 years ago John Redmond paid the price for helping the super power of his day. It will be interesting to see if the people of Georgia will forgive Saakashvili.

#### TROUBLE AHEAD?

The Long Fellow is always optimistic about Ireland. But in the short to medium term the outlook is not good. He heard of a leasing company in Britain which has rented 37 acres to store the return of scaffolding from Irish builders (apparently no one buys scaffolding anymore, it's all rented). Warehouse rents in the Dublin Port have gone up because imported goods are lying unsold there. There is a well known Truck manufacturer in West Dublin, whose yard has never been more full of unsold trucks. The food industry seems to be the only sector that is doing well.

We are displaying the classic symptoms of an impending recession. All of this was described in detail more than a century ago by Friedrich Engels in Volumes 2 and 3 of *Das Kapital*. Production continues as normal until there is a build up of stocks, which become difficult to finance. The banks become nervous and panic sets in. The economy enters a downward spiral of decreasing demand as workers are laid off and production decreases.

The State will have to take a more active role in resuscitating the economy.

#### BARACK OBAMA

Barack Obama's speech in Berlin urged Europe to increase her military commitments in Afghanistan and other parts of the world. It is clear that he is an enthusiastic exponent of American imperialism.

A few months ago an advisor to Obama was on Irish radio. He made the point that, while Martin Luther King was an iconic figure, the latter's criticism of the Vietnam war as well as his support for various workers' struggles had alienated the white American middle class. The advisor suggested that that was a mistake that Obama would not make. (But Obama might have a different problem. Recent reports indicate that the Democratic candidate is not popular with the white working class).

In retrospect it can be seen that Obama's battle with Hilary Clinton was completely devoid of politics. The most significant event was his dispute with the Reverend Wright in which Obama distanced himself from the 1960s civil rights generation.

Regardless of what happens in the Presidential election, the nomination of

Obama by the Democratic Party represents the arrival of the African-Americans within the mainstream of American political culture (even though he himself hails from a different background). Perhaps that is a good thing. But the Long Fellow has mixed feelings.

#### FAMILY VALUES?

There has been a bizarre series of articles in *The Irish Times* by a Lieutenant Paddy Bury describing his British imperialist adventures in Afghanistan.

Could Lieutenant Bury be related to Robin Bury of the Reform Group, which campaigns for the return of this country to the British Commonwealth?

*The Irish Times* has felt obliged to publish letters from readers taking umbrage at the description of British soldiers, who happen to be Irish, as "*Irish soldiers*", implying that the Irish State doesn't exist and we are a region of the British State. This, of course, was the position that *The Irish Times* took before Douglas Gageby took over as editor in 1963.

On 19th August *The Irish Times* published the following grovelling letter defending Bury:

Madam,—Your correspondents who witter on about Lt Paddy Bury's uniform are missing the main frame. *The Irish Times* has discovered perhaps one of the finest diarists in the long history of war zone journalism and for this, Madam, your readers are indebted.

Well, I suppose if the *Hotspur* comic is to your taste . . .

The above letter was written by Jonathan Irwin. Could this be the same Jonathan Irwin who is married to Karen, the daughter of Major McDowell of the British Army? The Major, who is currently President for life of *The Irish Times* group was Chief Executive from 1962 to 1997 of *The Irish Times*. In the 1990s he appointed his daughter Karen Deputy Managing Director in an attempt to ensure that she succeeded him.

A Jonathan Irwin was also involved with Eamon Dunphy in the campaign to bring Wimbledon football club to Dublin.

#### NICE WORK!

A bizarre case of "racial harassment" was reported in the *Irish Independent* (12.8.08). An English pipe-fitter was awarded €20k after working for only two months in an Irish building firm.

But the report, which doesn't indicate the complainant's racial group, only gives examples of anti-English comments by his Irish work colleagues. There are no examples of racial abuse. The pipe-fitter who was on a salary of €75k a year didn't consider the abuse serious enough to complain to either the management of the building firm or his Union.

Nice work, if you can get it!

## Ronnie Drew

There has been a lot of 'auld guff' written about Ronnie Drew in the last month. Perhaps his best known song was *McAlpine's Fusiliers* about the experience of Irish recruits into the "Army of Labour" in Britain. This song was written for the *Dubliners* by Dominic Behan. It is reproduced below to mark the great singer's passing.

### McAlpine's Fusiliers

(Spoken:)

'Twas in the year of 'thirty-nine  
When the sky was full of lead  
When Hitler was heading for Poland  
And Paddy, for Holyhead  
Come all you pincher laddies  
And you long-distance men  
Don't ever work for McAlpine  
For Wimpey, or John Laing  
You'll stand behind a mixer  
And your skin is turned to tan  
And they'll say, Good on you, Paddy  
With your boat-fare in your hand  
The craic was good in Cricklewood  
And they wouldn't leave the Crown  
With glasses flying and Biddy's crying  
'Cause Paddy was going to town  
Oh mother dear, I'm over here  
And I'm never coming back  
What keeps me here is the reek o' beer  
The ladies and the craic  
I come from county Kerry  
The land of eggs and bacon  
And if you think I'll eat your fish 'n' chips  
Oh dear then you're mistaken  
As down the glen came McAlpine's men  
With their shovels slung behind them  
'Twas in the pub they drank the sub  
And out in the spike you'll find them  
They sweated blood and they washed down  
mud  
With pints and quarts of beer  
And now we're on the road again  
With McAlpine's fusiliers  
I stripped to the skin with the Darky Finn  
Way down on the Isle of Grain  
With the Horseface Toole I knew the rule  
No money if you stopped for rain  
McAlpine's god is a well-filled hod  
Your shoulders cut to bits and seared  
And woe to he went to look for tea  
With McAlpine's fusiliers  
I remember the day that the Bear O'Shea  
Fell into a concrete stairs  
What the Horseface said when he saw him dead  
It wasn't what the rich call prayers  
I'm a navy short, was the one retort  
That reached unto my ears  
When the going is rough you must be tough  
With McAlpine's fusiliers  
I've worked till the sweat it has had me beat  
With Russian, Czech, and Pole  
On shuttering jams up in the hydro-dams  
Or underneath the Thames in a hole  
I've grafted hard and I've got my cards  
And many a ganger's fist across my ears  
If you pride your life don't join, by Christ!  
With McAlpine's fusiliers

## A 1968 Mixum-Gatherum

"The French army had helped Charles de Gaulle... restore order during the summer of 1968. As millions went on strike, thousands of soldiers ensured that essential public services were kept going. But the military did more than stop the state from melting away, it dramatically raised the stakes in the struggle for power. With parachute regiments massing in the Paris banlieue [suburb] and the General muttering about Communist subversion, the Left was scared and the Right was stirred. Capt. O'Neill could not call upon an army of his own to save his regime..."

"With the French example in mind, Northern Ireland's papier-mâché de Gaulle opted to make a televised address ... The script was written by Bloomfield... Another of O'Neill's aides later complained that he "used to write in a particularly Churchillian manner for Terence's speeches"... With Northern Ireland in crisis, O'Neill's mock-Churchillian style matched the level of events..."

O'Neill's presidential appeal was followed by another Gaullist strategy: a plebiscite. The *Belfast Telegraph* was the driving force behind the unofficial referendum... In the following day's editions, the newspaper printed coupons for its readers to sign that stated: "I approve of Capt. O'Neill's broadcast and support his efforts to heal the divisions in the community. Over 75,000 of these coupons were sent off and in total the Prime Minister received almost 150,000 message of support in the week after his broadcast. In the evening after de Gaulle's speech, more than 500,000 people gathered in the Place de la Concorde to chant "Clean out the Sorbonne!", "Down with the Communists!", and "De Gaulle is not alone!". In France, the party of order had won. In Northern Ireland, it now had a chance of victory" (*Northern Ireland's '68* by Simon Prince: Irish Academic Press, pp186 & 190).

A De Gaulle without an army, with borrowed rhetoric and a plebiscite of newspaper coupons, had a chance of victory, with a "party of order" that was as "mock" as the rhetoric, by his appeal to a people that did not exist!!

There was a French state, a French army, a French people, and French mode of rhetoric with a history of substantial achievement behind it. There was not a Northern Ireland state, or army, or people, or functional mode of public rhetoric.

These facts about Northern Ireland are described throughout this book but not acknowledged, and in this passage dealing

with the critical moment an entirely different set of facts is presumed to be the case, though the presumption is disparaged by the language in which it is made.

Edmund Burke urged that a presumption of virtue should be made with regard to the rulers of a functional state. This presumption is suddenly thrown up in this discourse about something which clearly was not a state, and had clearly ceased to have rulers.

De Gaulle appealed to a nation, that was acutely aware of itself as a nation, to assist him in preserving a state which seemed to be in imminent danger of dissolving without sense or reason. The French disorder of 1968 had to be resolved within the French nation and the French state. France was not a part of something else, so there was nothing else around to look after it. And its political disorder was not of a kind that might be resolved by the breaking up of the French state into the rudiments of states of which it was composed, because it was not an assembly of potential states. It was France—the archetype of the unitary nation composed of citizens. The disorder that was making it dysfunctional had, therefore, to be resolved within the French nation-state.

There was no achievable purpose animating the disorder—at least I could see none at the time, and none has become apparent since. If the disorder is to be described as revolutionary—and it was—then the resolution of it had to be counter-revolutionary—and that is how it was described by some. But what the counter-revolution consisted of was a restoration of the authority of the State by De Gaulle with the consent of the populace, accompanied by some superficial reforms about which I am hazy.

Ten years before that, De Gaulle had returned to power in an event which was widely condemned on the British Left as Fascist. My scepticism about Fascism dates from then.

France let off steam in 1968, as it had done periodically ever since the Revolution. The Republic, constructed in an explosion of democracy, lacked the routine stability of England where a democratic franchise was gradually phased into the pre-existing political system under the supervision of the aristocracy. It gave expression to principles where the English system blunted them, and since principles can never be entirely implemented in a large state consisting of active citizens, there are periodic bouts of popular disorder, but always within the context of

France as a nation and a state.

Maybe that trivialises 1968 in France. But that is how I saw it then and it is how I see it now. If there was something of substance at issue in the Students' Revolution relating to students, it was something I could not see as I have never been a student.

French conflicts had to be resolved within the French nation and the French state. Northern Irish conflicts could not be resolved within the Northern Irish nation or the Northern Irish state, because neither existed—and everybody knew it.

And that is why this book is essentially worthless.

The saying that "*comparisons are odious*" may not be generally true, but meaningful comparison can not be made between Northern Ireland and anywhere else, because there is nowhere else at all like it. Nowhere else in the world is there a region of a functional democratic state excluded from the democratic political system of the state and required to live outside politics in the communal antagonism that was going full blast when it was excluded.

In this book much industry went into collecting items of information about various groupings, mainly in Derry, but the whole is so heavily larded with comparisons with France, Germany, USA, and even Switzerland, that these items are not allowed to have their own meaning in the particularity of Northern Ireland.

A recent book on Serbia has a chapter entitled, *Yugoslavia's Peculiar Authoritarianism*. It was not as peculiar as Northern Ireland with its disconnected elections.

Northern Ireland was the most peculiar place in the world—a gross anomaly deliberately created by the State which presents itself as the norm for the world. It was neither a state nor a nation, but it is presented as a nation-state amongst the nation-states:

"The central theme of this book is that Northern Ireland was different, but not exceptional... Northern Ireland should be compared to France and West Germany, not to apartheid South Africa and Israel-Palestine... Western Europe in these years was a place where former Nazis held high office, the police invoked laws from the fascist era, and a counter-insurgency war was fought in one of its greatest cities. Northern Ireland under the Unionists was not outside the mainstream of this Europe" (p6).

Forty years ago Desmond Greaves compared Northern Ireland with apartheid South Africa. I later found that influential Unionists did not reject the comparison, but gloried in it. At one point David Trimble's Young Unionists at Queen's asked if they could serialise something of mine in their magazine. I agreed in prin-

ciple but asked to see a copy of the magazine first. What I found in it was a tirade against the ANC. And later, after Trimble became an MP and Party leader, I found that he was a member of a strongly Zionist international political grouping. The mentality of the civilised colony amongst natives died hard in the Unionist Family. (I am assuming that it died when Paisley made his deal with Sinn Fein.)

Northern Ireland was not outside of the European political mainstream because Western Europe *"was a place where former Nazis held high office, the police invoked laws from the fascist era, and a counter-insurgency war was fought in one of its greatest cities"*. Therefore the Unionist regime was fascist?

It was certainly described as Fascist by Nationalist commentators. I could not see that the description was well-founded. I know that some Unionists engaged in a flirtation with Fascism. But I know of no Unionist leader who was as overtly and wholeheartedly Fascist as Churchill. (See, for example, his trip to Rome in 1927 to praise Mussolini as the saviour of Western civilisation.)

And it does not seem that Prince regards the Unionist regime as Fascist either. A few pages on he refers to the German writer of the inter-war period, Carl Schmitt (whose writings have been in vogue in the USA in recent times):

"The strong rule that Schmitt advocated could no longer be justified by the divine right of kings, so he turned instead to the people as a source of legitimacy. For Schmitt, "the political" was the most intense and extreme antagonism between friend and enemy. An authoritarian state was justified by the need to preserve the political unity of the people and defend them against the enemy within and without.

"The development of Northern Ireland seemed to support Schmitt's idea: the liberalism of the Government of Ireland had given way to a "Protestant state". At the start of the Anglo-Irish truce, Brooke hoped that "within the next few days the healing process will begin whereby all Irishmen can unite for the good of their country". By the early 1930s, at the very latest, he had concluded that the hostility that existed between the two communities could not be overcome. As Brooke explained to Parliament, "There is a catholic party which... ranges from benevolent nationalism to the extreme of the extreme... but the one plank in their platform is the destruction of Ulster". To defend the state against this ever-present danger, the Special Powers Act authorised the government to "take all steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order". But Northern Ireland fell short of Schmitt's stipulation that the state should have a monopoly on the political. While the German jurist wanted interest groups excluded from the political sphere,

Stormont... received an endless stream of delegations. Schmitt's beliefs brought him into the service of the Nazis; the unionist people's beliefs brought them into conflict with the Third Reich. Indeed, Brooke was prepared to accept reunification as the price for the South entering the 2nd World War" (p17).

That last sentence, as far as I know, is a comprehensive misrepresentation. The placing of Stormont under the authority of the Dail, outside the authority of the Crown, on the condition that the Dail declared war on Germany, was never offered by Stormont. And Churchill's vague suggestion was never concretised into a definite proposal that might be acted upon by the political democracy of the South.

As to the preceding sentence: what was it in *"the unionist people's beliefs"* that brought them into conflict with the Third Reich? It was hardly the points of similarity between the Unionist regime and the Fascist regimes! It was the fact that Unionism, as an all-class, all-ideology political bloc in which parties were superseded, was based on one single *"belief"*—maintaining the connection with Britain. Britain—which is usually called *"the mainland"* in the North, but should really be called *"the state"*—decided to make war on Germany. carrying Northern Ireland with it.

There was little in the way of organic connection between Britain (as the state) and Northern Ireland. That little was Lord Londonderry. Londonderry, having left Whitehall in 1921 to become a Minister in the Northern Ireland Government, returned to Whitehall and became a senior Cabinet Minister. He was one of the most thoughtful and articulate of the 'Appeasers'. If it had been up to him, Britain would not have started a World War in 1939 on the issue of Danzig.

The paragraph I have quoted is riddled with conceptual confusions. Prince is committed to the view—or at least to the statement—that Northern Ireland was a State. That is obligatory on fearless academic inquirers after truth who also aspire to make a career in a situation where state patronage is active everywhere. He tells us that *"Northern Ireland's difficult birth marked the state and its inhabitants"* (p13).

The state was conceived in Whitehall in 1920 and was brought to birth in a part of Ulster by Sir Ernest Clark, a British civil servant, in 1921:

"There was no parliament, no high court, no departments, no senior officials, and no plan. Displaying the discipline, diligence and determination upon which bureaucrats pride themselves, Clark helped to conjure a state out of thin air" (p16).

I knew that Belfast, as an actual town,

had brought itself into being and flourished outside the structures of the state throughout the 18th century. But that it continued to exist without the state until 1921—that it was a functional anarchy—why had the revolutionary ideologists and political scientists never discovered that wonderful fact? Because it wasn't so.

The industrial revolution of the 19th century was enacted within, and was facilitated by, the structures of the state. Belfast quietly welcomed the Act of Union in 1800 as a relief from the futile turmoil of the absurd Irish Parliament. It settled down within the Union state. The Chichester pocket borough of Belfast was done away with, and the actual town of Belfast was given representation in Parliament in 1832.

From 1832 to 1885 Belfast engaged in the party politics of the state. Its political life was disrupted from 1885 to 1921 by the rise of the Home Rule movement and the dithering response of Parliament to it. In 1921 the British Government coaxed and coerced a wing of Sinn Fein into making a deal for the 26 Counties under the Crown. It armed that wing and insisted that it make war on the other wing, that rejected the deal. After a brief flurry of internal warfare, the 26 Counties settled down to the game of electoral politics. An attempt by the Treatyite victors of the 'Civil War' to establish a Fascist regime after they were rejected by the electorate in 1932 was seen off by the losers in the Treaty War who had become the dominant democratic party in the state.

The Home Rule issue proper ceased to be a disruptive factor in British politics in 1922. Most of Ireland was allowed to take itself off after it proved too troublesome to hold. The small part that remained within the UK wished to remain there. At least a substantial majority did, and the wishes of the minority were in some degree uncertain, and in considerable degree remained to be determined by the political action of the state.

The Ulster Protestants were Tories and Liberals until 1885, when they were driven to submerge these party affiliations in a Unionist alliance against Home Rule. By the early 1920s the Home Rule issue was dead, and the way was clear for a resumption of the political development that had been interrupted in 1886. At that moment the Labour Party was supporting the Liberals as the second party of the state, and was likely to attract the large body of Home Rule Catholics in the Six-Counties that had not gone over to Sinn Fein.

There is no way of knowing whether that would have ended the Irish Question in British politics, but it would have been the normal thing to do when Government and Parliament decided that part of Ireland

must remain part of the UK when the rest of it took off on a course of its own. And I do not see how the operation of the party politics of the state in the 6 Co. region of the state could have failed to diminish the antagonism of the Protestant and Catholic communities there.

What Britain did was concoct a second Home Rule institution at a moment when Home Rule as a possible settlement with Nationalist Ireland was dead, and impose it on the Six Counties as a way of meeting Ulster Unionist demands. The Bill which did this had no representative Irish support. The Ulster Unionist leader said in Parliament that his movement had no wish to govern Catholics, but simply wanted to be part of Britain. But Britain would not have the Counties, which it separated from the rest of Ireland, simply as part of itself. The Ulster Unionists had to agree to operate a Home Rule system, outside British politics, as the condition of maintaining a "connection with Britain". And this meant that it had to govern the Catholic third of the population in a political medium which ruled out anything resembling "normal politics".

The Catholic community was aggravated by this arrangement more than any other arrangement I can think of would have done. It had to be policed by its intimate local enemy, the Protestant community; and the Protestant community had to return a Unionist majority at every election as a condition of "maintaining the Union"—because Northern Ireland was in principle, so to speak (or in Constitutional notion), a secession from the Free State, which would fall back into the Free State if the secession was not continually re-asserted.

And, while all of this was going on, the Government of the State retained full sovereignty over the Six Counties, and continued to provide the major services of state without having any local political representation.

There was never a moment when the British State ceased to exist in the Six Counties. The "state" which Sir Ernest Clark "conjured out of the thin air" in 1920-21 was a structure of devolved government under the authority of the State. Policing of the aggravated Catholic community was devolved to this local government. That was its only function of state. Its other major function was to ward off a relapse into the Free State by ensuring the return of a Unionist majority to Stormont at every election.

That was Northern Ireland in 1968. I could find nothing like it anywhere else in the world, and least of all in France and West Germany.

French conflict had to be resolved within the French State, or else it would destroy the State. But the conflict in

Northern Ireland could not be resolved within the Northern Ireland State because there was no such thing. It could not be resolved within the devolved structures, which were founded on communal antagonism and were without a medium of political mediation.

But the threat to the Northern Ireland Government was not a threat to the State. Much that was said in the Civil Rights agitation amounted to a demand that the State should intervene in the politics of its Northern Ireland region and take over from the facade it had imposed in 1921. And that is what was done in 1972.

Such a thing could not have happened in France or Germany.

Prince's comparison of the IRA with the terrorist movements on the Continent is equally groundless. He does not say in which European city "a counter-insurgency war was fought". I do not remember anything resembling an insurgency in Europe—unless it was the Basque movement, which he does not mention. What the Baader-Meinhoffs did in Germany was a long way short of an insurgency, and likewise what the Red Brigades did in Italy. Both were responding to the carry-over of propaganda from the 2nd World War in which Fascists were meaninglessly depicted as agents of an incomprehensible but powerful Evil with which there should be no compromise. They looked around them and saw that the administration of the German State was largely staffed by personnel from the Fascist era. And they tried to do something about it. But I could not see that they had a substantial and coherent political objective on which an insurgency might be based.

I think it was in the mid-1970s that Gerry Adams addressed a meeting laid on for him by the vigorous London Left of the time, and rejected comparison with the Baader-Meinhoffs and the Red Brigades. No doubt the IRA accepted help from wherever it could be got, but it knew that it was the product of an essentially different kind of situation than those Continental groups, and that it was not R-r-r-revolutionary, as they were. It saw itself as a representative body of a community.

SDS, CND, RSSF, SNCC, Rudi Dutschke, etc.—yes, they were all in the news then. But see the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentum* so relevant to the affairs of Northern Ireland that it warrants ten pages—143 to 153?

Every group that arose in Northern Ireland—Housing, Unemployed, Student, whatever—operated in essentially different conditions from comparable groups on the Continent, or in the Republic, because what they engaged with was not a state but the facade of a State, set up for their diversion.

Price is of course critical of "street politics" for getting out of hand. He is also critical of the McCluskeys' Campaign for Social Justice for failing to get out of hand: "The CSJ's attempts to fight discrimination through the courts show the group at its most dilettantish" (p76). Harry Calvert, a Queen's academic and member of the NILP, was of the opinion that reform could be got through the Courts, despite legal advice given to the CSJ that it couldn't.

"In 1968, before the civil rights marches began, Calvert presented his reading of the constitution in person to the CSJ. His audience was left unconvinced. The Unionists sent a kind of spy, Calvert... to our private Campaign meeting", Conn McCluskey wrote. "He was pathetically insistent that we... continue our local litigation against the Council—which they can manipulate, I feel sure. But nothing doing. We insulted him well". Northern Ireland's leading authority on constitutional and public law was held in higher esteem by the Unionist government. Two Attorney-Generals shared Calvert's opinion that discrimination by local authorities could be questioned in the courts... The CSJ had therefore received poor legal advice" (p76-7).

The CSJ initiated an action in the Courts but abandoned it when refused legal aid to continue it. Faced with the prospect of raising £20,000 (how much in today's terms?) to attempt to do what in a democracy it would be the business of the political system of the state to do, it gave up on the Northern Ireland facade, and appealed in vain to the Government of the State to do something.

But it is possible to write in Oxford forty years later:

"The CSJ had only crossed one of the hurdles placed in the way of someone seeking judicial review... The possibilities of securing the financing necessary to fight the test case or of acting as litigants in person were not properly considered by the CSJ. Instead the group had returned to seeking its favoured option of a Westminster intervention. It is understandable that the opaqueness of the law encouraged the CSJ to concentrate upon a political approach. This was an arena in which they were more comfortable. Nevertheless, the failure to explore fully the potential of the legal process tarnishes the CSJ's professional image. It also contradicts the claim made by Patricia McCluskey at a meeting held in Westminster that 'We have tried to take legal action. It is impossible'. Civil rights could have been pursued through the courts instead of in the streets" (p78-9).

And of course Prince is right, in the Oxbridge sense. It was not impossible to take legal action. Legal action can always be taken. The law was there to be bought. All that you needed was vast quantities of money. If one action failed, you could play a variation on it with another action



with a slightly different argument or slightly different phrasing. This kind of law was there for anybody with money to buy it. Patricia McCluskey meant, no doubt, that they had tried the law sufficiently to reach the practical conclusion that reform could not be got through it.

As for Harry Calvert as a "leading authority" on constitutional law: he was an academic ideologist seeking to open up judicial review as a mode of government, and living in the Constitutional illusion of the facade of state called Northern Ireland. The authority on the law sat on the Bench and handed down judgments, or sat is the Law Society and refused legal aid.

The McCluskeys gave the Law the opportunity to act, and it failed to take it. It was evident that nothing was to be got through facade politics. What remained was the Government of the State, and the street. And street politics became an insurgency.

Prince makes extensive mention of the Derry Housing Action Committee, and a passing mention of the Dublin Housing Action Committee. He suggests that the latter was run by the Republicans who became Stickies the following year. In fact it was run by us, and we kept control of it by making it a rule that only homeless people were eligible for the Executive. We engaged in street politics which brought Dublin to a standstill at one point, and brought the Government to its wit's end for a while. But we held the movement strictly to the homeless issue, warded off general revolutionism—which is what Prince seems to mean by his frequent use of Leftism—and brought about a radical improvement in the Government's housing programme.

The Derry HAC did not achieve a housing reform. It fed into the general movement which became an insurgency. Did the difference lie in political conditions or leadership? It is not a distinction that can really be made. What was done in Dublin could not have been done in Derry. We were acting on the Government of a state. They were acting on the facade of a facade—the gerrymandered Corporation of Britain's pseudo-state for the Six Counties.

(Introducing the "Leftists", Prince says that "McCann met Lawless for the first time in 1965 when both men attended a march in Britain calling for nuclear disarmament" (p138). Maybe so, though my recollection is that Lawless discovered McCann at Queen's, when recruiting the Irish Communist Group, of which Prince makes no mention—By their omissions ye shall know them!—Then McCann spent some time with the ICG in London before it split, one part of it becoming the Irish Workers' Group, which fed into the

## Economic Performance of Last 15 Years

\*This letter was submitted to the Irish Times on 21st August and has not appeared.

Fintan O'Toole (Aug 12) referred to "the outstanding economic performance" of the last 15 years. In a subsequent article (Aug 19) he referred to how "We imported development." and to how in major ways society and educational practice appear untouched by that development.

I have to take issue with what he perceives as an "outstanding economic performance". It is true the OECD and other international bodies and economic talking shops lavished praise on the Irish performance of the last 15 years. But their criteria for evaluation are based on neo-liberal ideology served up in the guise of economic theory and on what is good for the profits of multinational firms.

During that time much of the nation's credit was wasted on a rampant property bubble which is now unwinding. The price of houses was pushed unrealistically high and hundreds of thousands were entrapped in a web of debt. An overheated economy caused inflation which made this country the most expensive to live in the EU. Industry was faced with escalating costs for electricity, skilled labour, transport, etc. Meanwhile the fishing industry and farming have been in decline. The health service is struggling. Education has been 'dumbed down'.

Perhaps some of the smugness Fintan O'Toole derides has rubbed off on himself. Yours, etc.,

**Tim O'Sullivan**

People's Democracy, and the other into Dublin Housing Action in 1968-9, becoming "two-nationist" in West Belfast in August 1969, and thereafter an advocate of the integration of the 6 Counties into the democratic political system of the state—which, of course, Prince does not mention.)

In his opening Chapter, *Unionism And Its State*, Prince writes, with reference to the early 1920s:

"By pandering to Protestants, the Northern Irish government further alienated Catholics from the new state. But peace could never have brought reconciliation. The two communities could not forget the riots, the shipyard expulsions, the burning houses, the bombings, the kidnappings and the assassinations [i.e., the situation resulting from the decision of the British Parliament to govern Ireland in defiance of the Irish election result of 1918, and therefore by military rule]. As the violence receded, the conflict mindset persisted in the form of conspiracy theories. They described a society marked by a binary divide between patriots and a diverse—often incongruous—collection of traitors" (p14).

A short paragraph about the Munich Soviets of 1919 and Hitler follows, with a remark about the "stab in the back".

Then: "Conspiracy theories disfigured Northern life. They even gripped the mind of the otherwise phlegmatic Brooke", who at the 1933 Twelfth spoke of "'a definite plot to overpower the vote of unionists in the north'". Then:

"But Brooke's plot was not a figment of a rabidly sectarian imagination. In June 1933, the Unionists had lost the previously safe council ward of Lisnaskea

to an independent farmers' candidate... A slight increase in Catholic numbers and the defection of part of the Protestant vote to independent candidates would deliver Fermanagh to de Valera... Conspiracy theories, therefore, were not irrational: they constituted the dark reflection of competing visions of the future. Conspiracy theories gave expression to anxieties and reduced them to order" (p15).

Or to put it less poetically, the 'state' which Britain conjured out of thin air in 1919-21, and imposed on a situation in which the two coherent communities of the region were at each other's throats, did not include a general political medium in which interaction between the two communities might occur in a way that alleviated or obscured their antagonism. The "Northern Ireland state" was moulded to that antagonism, and in its functioning preserved it intact.

In the absence of a political medium facilitating interaction and development, the two communities understood each other in terms of what Prince chooses to call "conspiracy theory".

It was not memory of the past, or visions of the future, that kept communal antagonism alive, but the current functioning of the 'state' according to its inherent logic. In the absence of the democratic political medium of the real state, the two communities organised autonomously against each other, and in utter separation from each other, and without a medium through which they might have gained an insight into each other. One might therefore describe their modes of organisation as conspiracies as well as anything else.

Prince half acknowledges that in a back-handed way in this passage. But he then goes on to apply the term "*conspiracy theory*" in the usual pejorative way on page after page: e.g., 15, 16, 17, 29, 38, 39, 123, 129, 132.

He dare not lay responsibility for the impossible Northern Ireland situation under the Government of Ireland Act, where it belongs: with the Mother of Parliaments. And he can neither condone the Nationalist resort to street politics as being made necessary by exclusion from political life of the State, nor defend Unionist conduct straightforwardly as being in accordance with the *realpolitik* of the arrangement under which they were allowed to retain "*the connection with Britain*". So he ends up chasing his tail.

He says that the German Social Democrats were in "*the same position*" as Eddie McAteer's Nationalist Party. The Christian Democrats had won a couple of elections in a row, thus constituting West Germany into a one-party state. But at Bad Godesburg in 1959 the Social Democrats adapted to Adenauer's accomplished facts, and were subsequently elected. The Nationalist party was slow to make a comparable adaptation. And what was that? Prince doesn't spell it out, but it could only be recognition of the legitimacy of the pseudo-state, and role-playing a Loyal Opposition at Stormont.

In fact McAteer was browbeaten by Lemass into doing just that in 1965, and demonstrated the futility of it.

On the other hand, O'Neill is criticised for "*not trying to meet the minority population half-way, but pursuing a Catholic capitulation*". O'Neill was adamant "*that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is not a matter on which there can be any compromise*" (p47).

But, if recognising the constitutional position was capitulation, is that not what the Nationalist Party is criticised for not doing?

What I saw in Northern Ireland was a widespread willingness amongst Catholics to "*capitulate*" into the democratic politics of the State, but the absence of the means of doing so.

A merit in this book—the only one I noticed—is a dismissive attitude towards Lemass, which is at variance with the attitude of the author's patron, Professor the Lord Bew (I am told that is the correct designation), who supplies a Preface that must be commented on later.

(Prince, the Preface tells us, is "*one of the most gifted Cambridge historians (now teaching in Oxford) of his generation*".)

**Brendan Clifford**

Last month we reported on the 'Black Hand' Conference on Fenianism held at Queen's University, Belfast, in June. Here are some comments on a lecture delivered at that Conference Report of the 'Black Hand' Conference on Fenianism

## R.V. Comerford on Irish Exceptionalism

Comerford's view of the Great Famine is that it was a natural transfer of people. Like other places in Europe at the time, Ireland was overcrowded and natural forces produced migration and thinning out.

Irish exceptionalism turns this into MOPE ("most oppressed people ever"). They blame Britain for it, and malicious Irish opportunists use unfounded exceptionalism of this kind to stoke up anti-British bigotry, sectarian hatred and a cult of violence which persists into the present to produce atrocities such as the Omagh bombing and Enniskillen massacre, all justified by some pre-ordained Irish national destiny.

Comerford's Fenian Black Hand lecture (20 June 2008, at University of Ulster in Belfast) used this approach to provide explanation of Fenianism which did not depend on any British oppression in Ireland. British rule constituted what he called "*decent order*", and Fenian revolts were anti-social terrorism directed against "*decent order*". There was no British oppression or misrule, and the less malignant aspects of Fenianism can be explained in terms of routine social phenomena of the period—gun clubs for rural sports and pastimes, mutual self-help societies, ethnic "*freemasonry*".

### DEFINITIONS

What is exceptionalism? The specific examples of specious exceptionalism given by Comerford in his lecture were not convincing. Every human individual has a sense of himself as a unique person, even though in most ways he is a human being like any other. The same goes for any group of people who share some common identity and some shared history different from other peoples' histories.

It is sometimes claimed that the Jews see themselves as God's Chosen People, with a special, divinely-ordained destiny. Is there any comparable Irish exceptionalism? G.K. Chesterton wrote: "*How odd of God to choose the Jews—how could he fail to choose the Gael*". But Comerford did not come up with any comparable Irish notions. It is true that the Roman Catholic Church proclaims itself as the one true Church, outside of which there is no salvation. But the Catholic religion is world-wide and not particularly Irish, and anyway every tuppenny ha'penny religious movement worth its salt makes such claims.

If we set aside the religious viewpoint for a moment, then every species of human animal is a product of nature, and each

individual human history, no matter how unusual, strange or exceptional, is a natural history. That is, it follows natural laws of cause and effect. Because nothing in nature ever happens in a way that is contrary to nature, even when it is unique. In that sense there can be no such thing as exceptionalism.

### BRITAIN

Exceptionalism may be sought, not so much in actual history, but in people's conception of their history. Not every people has a sense of a pre-ordained destiny to which the natural laws of cause and effect are subordinate. But some do.

Here is part of Tony Blair's address at his Sedgefield constituency before his June 27th resignation in 2007: "*Your duty is to act according to your conviction. All of that can get contorted so that people think you act according to some messianic zeal. [But] the British are special. The world knows it. In our innermost thoughts, we know it. This is the greatest nation on earth.*" Earlier (Plymouth, January 2007) he declared that Britain was a "*war-fighting nation*" whose real frontiers reached to the ends of the earth.

This is the mentality which led to the present carnage in the Middle East. And it has been producing carnage for centuries. In the past 300 years, Britain has fought about 200 wars, none of them in defence of its own territory. It fought in other people's countries. In the 300 or so countries in the world today, the graves of British soldiers are to be found in about 200 of them. In his first speech to Parliament in 1653, Cromwell argued that England was "*called upon by God, as had been Judah, to rule with Him and for Him*". Milton's *Paradise Lost* talks about "*God's special Providence for England... His chosen People*". This outlook inspired Cecil Rhodes: "*Milton's faith in 'God's Englishman' will be our inspired principle—to work for the Empire, to extend it.*"

This was an aspect of the British mentality which inspired the Nazis and their *Sonderweg*: "*The Goddess of History would have to be a whore if she does not give victory to the Fuehrer provided by Providence*" (Ministry of Propaganda, 1941).

Hugh Egleton in his *History Of Colonial Policy* (1897) revealed that: "*Behind the mistakes and failures of individuals and generations, there grows upon us, as we study the history, the sense of an unseen superintending Providence controlling the development of the Anglo-Saxon race.*"

Kipling: *"The Lord our God Most High ... He had smote for us a pathway to the ends of the Earth"* (Song of the English).

A 1631 advertisement for New England says that *"God has provided this country for our nation, destroying the natives by the plague, it touching not one Englishman"*.

(Naturally, this was just a fortuitous thinning out of the indigenous population, in R.V. Comerford's terms, the establishment of *"decent order"*—the words he used to describe 19th century British government of Ireland. I wonder whether, as they lost everything, the American natives took an exceptionalist view of their destiny? Perhaps this was the meaning of the Ghost Dance which they took up in their last gasp at the end of the 19th century. British and American exceptionalism had certainly produced a very special destiny for these people!)

#### AMERICA

G.W. Bush, January 2004 State of the Union Address: *"America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. ... America acts in this cause with friends and allies at our side, yet we understand our special calling: This great republic will lead the cause of freedom."*

Howard Zinn described American exceptionalism:

"The notion of American exceptionalism—that the United States alone has the right, whether by divine sanction or moral obligation, to bring civilization, or democracy, or liberty to the rest of the world, by violence if necessary—is not new. It started as early as 1630 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony when Governor John Winthrop uttered the words that centuries later would be quoted by Ronald Reagan. Winthrop called the Massachusetts Bay Colony a 'city upon a hill'. Reagan embellished a little, calling it a 'shining city on a hill'. ...

"On the eve of the war with Mexico in the middle of the 19th century, just after the United States annexed Texas, the editor and writer John O'Sullivan coined the famous phrase 'manifest destiny'. He said it was 'the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions'.

"At the beginning of the 20th century, when the United States invaded the Philippines, President McKinley said that the decision to take the Philippines came to him one night when he got down on his knees and prayed, and God told him to take the Philippines. ...

"Invoking God has been a habit for American presidents throughout the nation's history, but George W. Bush has made a specialty of it. For an article in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, the reporter talked with Palestinian leaders who had met with Bush. One of them reported that Bush told him, 'God told me to strike at al

Qaeda. And I struck them. And then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did. And now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East.' ...

"Divine ordination is a very dangerous idea, especially when combined with military power (the United States has 10,000 nuclear weapons, with military bases in a hundred different countries and warships on every sea). With God's approval, you need no human standard of morality. Anyone today who claims the support of God might be embarrassed to recall that the Nazi storm troopers had inscribed on their belts, '*Gott mit uns*' ('God with us'). ...

"A hundred years before the Bolshevik Revolution, American armies were annihilating Indian tribes, clearing the great expanse of the West in an early example of what we now call 'ethnic cleansing'. And with the continent conquered, the nation began to look overseas. ...

"American exceptionalism was never more clearly expressed than by Secretary of War Elihu Root, who in 1899 declared, 'The American soldier is different from all other soldiers of all other countries since the world began. He is the advance guard of liberty and justice, of law and order, and of peace and happiness.' At the time he was saying this, American soldiers in the Philippines were starting a bloodbath which would take the lives of 600,000 Filipinos" (Boston Review, June 2005).

#### COMERFORD & REVISIONISM

This sense of Anglo-American mission, entitlement and Providential favour seems to overwhelm minds like Comerford's as he ferrets around for minuscule tit-bits in Irish history of which we should feel ashamed. As an experiment, replace the words "England" by "Ireland", and "Blair" by "Pearse" in the passages above. Or put "Germany" and "Bormann" instead of "America" and "Bush", to see how they read.

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

A second ballad included the lines:

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

The references here are to the election of the first Gladstone administration and its response to the minuscule show of

Fenian counter-violence against what Comerford described in his opening remarks as *"decent order"*. Gladstone enacted the disestablishment of the official Protestant Church of Ireland, so that its numerous clergy and institutions were no longer a charge on members of the other denominations. The collection of Church of Ireland tithes had earlier been transferred from tenants to landlords in 1838, so that tithes were collected in the form of rents. Disestablishment in 1870 meant that maintenance of the Church of Ireland became the responsibility of its own members.

*"Lust"* is a reference to Henry VIII's breach with the papacy over Anne Boleyn. The *"prophecy"* is probably a reference to the tracts of Pastorini, an eighteenth century English Catholic bishop called Charles Walmseley who produced an exegesis of the Book of Revelations to counter the widespread Protestant doctrine that the Pope was the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. Pastorini also predicted that the tercentenary of the Reformation in 1825 would see its downfall.

Early nineteenth century popular verse in Irish (which seems to have escaped Professor Comerford's notice—perhaps it was not relevant to *"decent British order"*) is full of references to Pastorini, and his *"prophecy"* became the poetic substitute for a Jacobite invasion from France which, in eighteenth century poetry, was supposed to provide relief from alien oppression. Before 1759 the remnants of the Irish armies still existed in Europe and relief from that quarter was still within the bounds of possibility. But after that only a miracle, or a Napoleon, could overthrow foreign tyranny in Ireland. Until the Fenians came along, there was nothing left to the Irish except the wishful thinking of Pastorini.

#### SECTARIANISM

The sectarianism of popular Irish poetry was a pale reflection of and reaction to the anti-Catholic psychosis, which permeated the British mind in Ireland and Britain, of which faint echoes can still be found around Ballymena and Ballymoney, and which wielded real power from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The actual Catholic threat to England ended forever when the last and only foreign invasion was fended off in 1588 (the Spanish Armada). But anti-Catholic paranoia became the glue which bound together the demented religious factions which fought each other in the Civil War, with Catholicism performing the unifying and energizing role of a Kaiser-Hitler-Ayatollah-Saddam Hussein-Osama bin Laden all rolled into one.

As traditional religion began to lose its hold on Britain in the nineteenth century, more or less in accordance with the Pastorini time scale, it was gradually

replaced by an even more malignant, oppressive and dangerous kind of fanaticism, bigotry and exceptionalism which is still menacing the rest of the world.

In an editorial of 2nd January 1852, the *Times* newspaper said:

"The pure Irish Celt is more than 1,000 years behind the civilization of this age. ... The native Irish ... defy all ordinary attempts to tame them into agricultural labourers, such as are the staple of the British agricultural population. ... Hence that miserable and helpless being the Irish cottier ... [Its] condition and character has been so often described ... that we need not prove the existence of such a class incompatible with civilization. ... Calamitous as are the events [the Great Famine] by which it has come to pass, we now thank Heaven that we have lived to speak of the class as a class that has been. ... We resign ourselves without reserve ... to [Ireland's] continued depopulation until only a half or a third of the nine millions claimed for her by [Daniel] O'Connell remain. We may possibly live to see the day when her chief produce will be cattle, and English and Scotch the majority in her population."

#### PROGRESS?

This stuff is infinitely more dangerous and destructive than the ideas of often well-meaning religious fanatics, bigots and sowers who were previously the ever-present face of British rule. It is the voice of the new, secular, enlightened Britain; committed to the liberal doctrine of economic rationality; the globalizing, progressive force which brings civilization/freedom/democracy (take your pick) to the lesser breeds around the world. Here is an example of how it dealt with unnecessary and inconvenient human garbage which gets in its way:

"In 1830 Tasmania was put under martial law, a line of armed beaters was formed across the island, and an attempt was made to drive the aborigines into a cul-de-sac." (Moorehead, *The Fatal Impact*.)

"The final extermination [of the Tasmanians] was a large-scale event, undertaken with the co-operation of the military and judiciary. ... Soldiers of the Fortieth Regiment drove the natives between two great rock formations, shot all the men and dragged the women and children out of fissures in the rocks to knock their brains out." (Ziehr, *Hell in Paradise*.)

The Comerford view might designate this as natural competition between cattle and stone-age humans, in which the latter came off worst. Nothing exceptional about that, is there?

This mentality destroyed tens of thousands in Kenya and Malaya. In 1942-45 it exterminated millions in Bengal. It is the elephant in the room. So successful is its relentless Public Relations propaganda that the likes of Professor Comerford can

prattle on about "decent order", as if British policy were not the predominant factor in Irish history, generating misery, violence and disorder until Fenianism came into the picture, producing land reform, independence and decent order.

In a comment on the post-1916 independence movement, Comerford said that the notion that British policies of execution, martial law and attempted conscription were not the main reasons for the shift in public opinion towards independence. He said that the entry of the USA into the Great War generated a worldwide change in attitude towards national

self-determination, and this was mirrored in Ireland. He said that regardless of 1916, after 1917 an IRB [Irish Republican Brotherhood] would have had to be invented if it hadn't already existed.

In other words, regardless of the 1918 elections and the election of an Irish Government with an independence mandate, we can take it that, whether or not there had been Fenians, a Rising and Irish Volunteers, Britain would have sought to suppress Irish democracy by force, in defiance of its Great War propaganda about the rights of small nations. Now that's exceptionalism!

**Pat Muldowney**

## A Russian View Of Georgian Gallantry

**{Introduction:** No, not quite *déjà vu*. As Marx once commented, history repeats itself, but the second time as farce. There are indeed some echoes to be found in the present of the past recalled below, without needing to be at all starry-eyed about Russia, either past or present. But the present US leader of Georgia is undoubtedly a farcical caricature of those Menshevik leaders of Georgia 90-odd years ago who at least previously had the stature of being among the leaders of Social Democracy in the Russian Empire as a whole, before the Imperialist World War—which Britain insisted should have Russia haemorrhaging to the bitter end—closed off the possibility of any such democratic paths of development and rendered inevitable the Bolshevik Revolution. The following excerpts from a 1922 Russian analysis begin with Lev Davidovich's own dedication, before he proceeds to deal with the role of Arthur Henderson, one of the British Labour Party's most vocal denouncers of Russian actions in Georgia, notwithstanding his own record as a member of the warmongering British Coalition Government in 1916.

**Manus O'Riordan}**

#### MENSHEVIKS

"... To the memory of the revolutionary leaders of the peasant revolts in Ossetia, Abkhazia, Ajaria, Guria, etc., shot by the Menshevik government of Georgia; THE AUTHOR DEDICATES THIS BOOK

...

The Social Democrats now present *in octavo* what the imperialist press has previously published *in folio*. Of this one can easily become convinced by perusing the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Second {Social Democratic} International on the question of Georgia. The text of the resolution deserves to be examined: ... "(1) The territory of Georgia has been occupied by the troops of Moscow ... solely responsible for the destruction of the Georgian Republic ... " ... Perhaps the Executive Committee in London does not see what is going on upon the Continent? But, in that case, one might be allowed to put a polite question to Henderson—was he not a Privy Councillor during the Easter Rebellion in Ireland in 1916, when the royal troops bombarded Dublin, and executed 15 Irishmen, including the socialist Connolly already wounded previously? ...

With the declaration of the independence of Trans-Caucasia (April 22, 1918), and without consulting the population, the Georgian Mensheviks, in the accepted

manner, proclaimed a new era of fraternity between the various races of the republic, upon the basis of democracy. And yet, barely had this new republic been established, than it collapsed. Azerbaijan sought salvation in the Turks, Armenia feared the Turks more than fire, Georgia sought the protection of Germany. Within five weeks after its solemn proclamation, the Trans-Caucasian Republic was dissolved. The democratic declamations at its obsequies were not less fervent than at its birth. But this does not alter the fact that the petty-bourgeois democracy revealed its complete impotence to overcome national friction and to harmonize national interests. On May 26, 1919—again without consulting the population—an independent Georgia was established as a fragment of Trans-Caucasia. Again there was a flood of democratic verbosity. Just five months pass, and between democratic Georgia and equally democratic Armenia, a war breaks out over a disputed bit of territory. From both sides were heard speeches on the lofty aims of civilization and about the treacherous attack of the enemy. {The German Social Democrat} Kautsky does not say a single word about this 'democratic' Armeno-Georgian war. Under the leadership of Zhordania, Tsereteli and their Armenian and Tartar doubles, Trans-Caucasia was

transformed into a Balkan peninsula, where national massacres and democratic charlatanry, have reached an equally highly flourishing stage ...

The whole history of Menshevik Georgia is one of peasant risings. They took place in all parts of the little country without any exception ... The risings were liquidated by means of punitive expeditions and disposed of by military courts-martial, composed of officers and landowning princes. The way in which the Georgian government disposed of the revolutionary peasants is best described in the words of the report of the Abkhazian Mensheviks on the activity of Mazniev's detachments in Abkhazia:

'This detachment, by its cruelty and inhumanity', reads the report submitted to the Georgian government 'has surpassed the infamous Tsarist General Alikhanov. Thus, for instance, the Cossacks of this regiment broke into peaceful Abkhazian villages, carrying off anything that was of any value and violating the women. Another part of this detachment under the personal supervision of Citizen Tukhareli, indulged in bombing the houses of those persons who were pointed out by informers. Analogous deeds of violence were perpetrated in the Gudaut district. The chief of the Georgian detachment, Lieutenant Kupuni—a former police captain at Poti—severely ill-treated the entire rural council of the village of Azy. He compelled all the members to lie down under the fire of machine guns, and then proceeded to walk over their bodies, striking at them with the flat of his sabre; he then ordered the council together into a group, and galloping on horseback at full speed, he dashed through the crowd, dealing out whip blows right and left. Abukhva and Dzukuya, former members of the Abkhazian National Council, for protesting against such brutality and violence, were arrested and thrown into a dungeon. The Assistant Commissioner of Gadaut district, Lieutenant Grigoriardi, resorted to the flogging of rural councils, and appointed village Commissioners chosen by him and hated by the people, from among the former Tsarist village elders.' ...

Djugeli acted no better in suppressing the Ossetian revolt. Since we have made it our task, for educational reasons, to characterize the policy of the Georgian Mensheviks as much as possible by their own declarations and documents we will have to overcome our literary fastidiousness and quote from a book published by the prominent 'knightly' Menshevik leader, Valiko Djugeli, the former chief of the National Guard. We will quote some passages dealing with the actions of Djugeli in the peasant rising in Ossetia. {The book is published in the form of a diary}:

'Night has fallen. There are fires visible everywhere. They are the houses of the insurgents burning. But I am already used to this, and I can watch the scene

almost calmly.' In the following day we read this entry:

'Ossetian villages are burning all round us ... We will be cruel. Yes, we will. I can look on with unperturbed soul and clear conscience at the fire and smoke of the burning houses. I am quite calm, quite calm indeed.'

On the following morning Djugeli writes again in his diary:

'Fires are growing ... Houses are burning ... With fire and sword ... And the flames are still glowing, glowing ...'

On the evening of the same day he writes:

'Now the fires are everywhere... They keep on burning. Ominous fires; some morbid, cruel, eerie beauty ... and gazing upon these bright flames burning in the night an old comrade said to me sadly: *I begin to understand Nero and the great fire of Rome ...*'

'And the fires are burning, burning everywhere.'

... After the evacuation of Ajaria (the region of Batumi), by the British in 1920 the Georgian government had to enter into possession of the region by the aid of artillery. In a word, Djugeli had continuous opportunities for displaying his Neronic mannerisms in all corners of Georgia ... He burns Ossetian villages, and in the manner of a corrupted schoolboy describes in his diary his elation at the beauty of the conflagration and his kinship with Nero ...

When the complete helplessness of 'independent' Georgia became increasingly evident even to the Mensheviks themselves, and when, after the defeat of Germany, they were compelled to seek the protection of the {Anglo-French} Entente, they more carefully concealed the instruments of their Special Detachment, and instead of the shoddy Djugeli-Nero mask, they put on the no less shoddy Zhordania-Tsereteli-Gladstone mask, thus associating themselves with the great herald of Liberal platitudes ... When Tsereteli speaks of 'international democracy' (at Petrograd, Tbilisi, or Paris) one never knows whether he means the mythical 'family of nations', the International or the Entente. In the last resort he always addresses himself to the latter ... When Zhordania, the leader of the clan, speaks of international solidarity, he at the same time makes allusion to the hospitality of the Georgian Tsars. The 'future of the International and (!) the League of Nations is assured,' announces Chkhenkeli upon his return from Europe. National prejudices and scraps of socialism, Marx and Wilson, flights of rhetoric and middle-class narrow-mindedness, pathos and buffoonery, International and League of Nations, a small dose of sincerity and a large dose of chicanery, put together with the smugness of a provincial apothecary—this mixture,

'well shaken before use' by the tossing of events, is the soul of Georgian Menshevism.

The Georgian Mensheviks hailed with glee the 14 points of {US President} Wilson. They welcomed the League of Nations. First they had welcomed the entry of the Kaiser's troops into Georgia, then they welcomed their departure. They welcomed the entry of the British troops. They welcomed the friendly assurance of the French Admiral. It goes without saying that they welcomed Kautsky, Vandervelde {Belgian Socialist Party}, Mrs. Snowden {British Labour Party}. They are ready at any time to welcome the Archbishop of Canterbury, if the latter is willing to hurl a few extra curses at the Bolsheviks. By this conduct these gentry hope to prove that they are 'part and parcel of European civilisation'.

Menshevism reveals its true character in the Memorandum presented by the Georgian delegation to the League of Nations at Geneva: 'Having rallied to the banner of Western democracy' (reads the concluding part of the Memorandum), 'the Georgian people naturally views with exceptional sympathy the idea of establishing such a political system as, being the direct outcome of war, would at the same time serve as a means for paralysing the possibility of future wars. The League of Nations... embodying such a system, represents the most fruitful achievement of mankind on the road to the future unity of the race. In asking for admission into the League of Nations ... the Georgian government thinks that the very principles which are to regulate international life, henceforth directed towards solidarity and collaboration, demand the acceptance into the family of free European nations of an ancient people, once the *vanguard of Christianity* in the East, now become the vanguard of democracy, a people which only strives to freedom and preserving labour in its home which as its legitimate and indisputable heirloom.' Nothing should be added or detracted. It is a classical document of shallowness ...

It has been said that the Soviet forces must evacuate Georgia, but the Georgian coasts are washed by the Black Sea, in which the Entente warships reign supreme. The invasions of the White Guard troops which were disembarked from the British and French ships are well remembered by the population of the Caucasus. The Soviet troops are to go, but the imperialist fleet will remain. This means that the people of Georgia will have to come to an agreement at any price with real master of the situation—the Entente ... Or are we to assume that there is no imperialist menace to Caucasia? Because Mrs. Snowden never heard anything about Baku oil? Perhaps she has not. May we inform her (with reference to this question) that the

road to Baku is via Batumi-Tbilisi? This last point is a strategically Trans-Caucasian fact, of which the British and French generals cannot plead ignorance. There are even now secret White Guard organisations under the high-sounding title of 'Liberation Committees' (a title which does not prevent them from receiving money subsidies from British and Russian oil magnates, Italian manganese magnates, etc.) The White Guard bands are supplied with arms by sea. All this struggle is for oil and manganese. It is all the same to the oil magnates if they get at the oil via {the Tsarist Russian General} Denikin, the Moslem Musavat Party, or via the gate of national self-determination with its doorkeepers from the Second International. If Denikin has not succeeded in defeating the Red Army, perhaps {British Labour Party leader} MacDonald will succeed in removing it by peaceful means. Anyhow, the result will be the same.

But MacDonald will not succeed. Such questions cannot be settled by resolutions of the Second International even if those resolutions were not as paltry, contradictory, dishonest and indefinite as is the resolution on Georgia ... When Mr. Churchill makes these demands, he makes as well a significant gesture in the direction of the long barrels of the naval guns and the barbed wire of the blockade. Upon what does Henderson rely? Is it the Holy Scriptures, or a party programme, or his own record? But the Holy Scriptures are nothing but a naïve myth, Mr. Henderson's programme is a myth, if not a naïve one, and as to his record, it is a severe indictment against him. Not so long ago, Henderson was a Minister in one of the democracies, viz of his own—the British democracy. Why then has he not insisted that his own democracy, for the defence of which he was ready to make all sacrifices, including the acceptance of a Ministerial portfolio from the Liberal Conservative Lloyd George, should begin to put into practice not our principles (heaven forbid) but his own—Mr. Henderson's? Why has he not demanded the evacuation of India and Egypt? Why did he not, at the right time, support the demands of the Irish for their complete liberation from the yoke of Britain? ..."

**{Lev Davidovich Trotsky, Soviet Commissar for War: "Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention, Russia 1918-1921", 20th February 1922.}**

### ... AND A GORI GEORGIAN POST-SCRIPT ON ETHNIC CLEANSING

"... Of course, if there were no Great Russian chauvinism—which is aggressive because it is strong, because it always has been strong, and which has retained the habit of oppressing and humiliating—if there were no Great Russian chauvinism,

local chauvinism, as a reaction to Great Russian chauvinism, might perhaps have existed, so to speak, only in the smallest way, in miniature, because anti-Russian nationalism is in the long run a defence, a rather ugly form of defence against Russian nationalism, against Russian chauvinism. If this nationalism were only defensive, it might not be worth making a fuss about. We could concentrate our entire weight of action, the entire weight of struggle, on Great-Russian chauvinism ... But the trouble is that in some republics this defensive nationalism becomes converted into aggressive nationalism. Take Georgia. Over 30 percent of its population are non-Georgians. They include Armenians, Abkhazians, Ajarians, Ossets and Tartars. The Georgians dominate. And among a certain section of the Georgian Communists the idea has been developing that there is no particular need to reckon with these small nationalities; they are less cultured, less developed, and there is therefore no need to reckon with them. This is chauvinism—a harmful and dangerous chauvinism; for it may turn, and has already turned, the small republic of Georgia into an arena of discord ...

Sometimes this chauvinism begins to undergo a very interesting evolution. I have in mind Transcaucasia. You know that Transcaucasia consists of three republics embracing ten nationalities. From very early times Transcaucasia has been the scene of massacre and strife and under the Mensheviks and Nationalists, the scene of warfare. You know of the Georgian-Armenian War. You also know of the massacres which took place at the beginning of 1904 and the end of 1905. I could name several districts where the Armenian majority massacred the entire remaining part of the population, which consisted of Tartars. Zangesur, for instance: in this region the majority of the population are Armenians, and they massacred all the Tartars. I could name another province—Nakhichevan. There the Tartars predominated, and they massacred all the Armenians. That was just before the liberation of Armenia and Georgia from the yoke of imperialism. (Voice: that was their way of solving the national problem.) This also, of course, was a way of solving the national problem. But it is not the Soviet way ...

Tbilisi is the capital of Georgia, but the Georgians there are not more than 25 percent, the Armenians not less than 35 percent, and the rest belong to other nationalities. There's a capital of Georgia for you! If Georgia were a separate republic, a certain transplantation of population might be effected—for instance the Armenian population might be removed from Tbilisi. Was there not such a decree, of which Comrade Makharadze said that it was directed against the Armenians? A certain transplantation might be effected

so as to diminish the proportion of Armenians to Georgians in Tbilisi from year to year, and thus convert Tbilisi into a genuinely Georgian capital. I grant that they have abandoned the decree on eviction. But they possess a vast number of possibilities, a vast number of flexible forms—such as "relieving" the town—by which it would be possible, while maintaining the semblance of internationalism, to arrange matters in such a way that there would be fewer Armenians in Tbilisi. It is these geographical advantages, which the deviators do not want to lose, and the disadvantages of the Georgians in Tbilisi, where the number of Georgians is less than that of the Armenians, that are causing our deviators to be opposed to the federation. The Mensheviks simply evicted Armenians and Tartars from Tbilisi. Now, under Soviet rule, eviction is impossible ..."

**{Josef Dzhughashvili of Gori, Georgia, aka J.V. Stalin, Soviet Commissar for Nationalities}: "Report on National Factors in Party and State Development", 23rd April 1923.}**

Report:

### Why I had to recognise Georgia's breakaway regions

By

*Dmitry Medvedev* (Russian President)

On Tuesday Russia recognised the independence of the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It was not a step taken lightly, or without full consideration of the consequences. But all possible outcomes had to be weighed against a sober understanding of the situation—the histories of the Abkhaz and Ossetian peoples, their freely expressed desire for independence, the tragic events of the past weeks and inter-national precedents for such a move.

Not all of the world's nations have their own statehood. Many exist happily within boundaries shared with other nations. The Russian Federation is an example of largely harmonious coexistence by many dozens of nations and nationalities. But some nations find it impossible to live under the tutelage of another. Relations between nations living "under one roof" need to be handled with the utmost sensitivity.

After the collapse of communism, Russia reconciled itself to the "loss" of 14 former Soviet republics, which became states in their own right, even though some 25m Russians were left stranded in countries no longer their own. Some of those nations were unable to treat their own minorities with the respect they deserved. Georgia immediately stripped its "autonomous regions" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia of their autonomy.

Can you imagine what it was like for the Abkhaz people to have their university in Sukhumi closed down by the Tbilisi Government on the grounds that they allegedly had no proper language or history or culture and so did not need a university? The newly independent Georgia inflicted a vicious war on its minority nations, displacing thousands of people and sowing seeds of discontent that could only grow. These were tinderboxes, right on Russia's doorstep, which Russian peacekeepers strove to keep from igniting.

But the West, ignoring the delicacy of the situation, unwittingly (or wittingly) fed the hopes of the South Ossetians and Abkhazians for freedom. They clasped to their bosom a Georgian President, Mikheil Saakashvili, whose first move was to crush the autonomy of another region, Adjara, and made no secret of his intention to squash the Ossetians and Abkhazians.

Meanwhile, ignoring Russia's warnings, western countries rushed to recognise Kosovo's illegal declaration of independence from Serbia. We argued consistently that it would be impossible, after that, to tell the Abkhazians and Ossetians (and dozens of other groups around the world) that what was good for the Kosovo Albanians was not good for them. In international relations, you cannot have one rule for some and another rule for others.

Seeing the warning signs, we persistently tried to persuade the Georgians to sign an agreement on the non-use of force with the Ossetians and Abkhazians. Mr. Saakashvili refused. On the night of August 7-8 we found out why.

Only a madman could have taken such a gamble. Did he believe Russia would stand idly by as he launched an all-out assault on the sleeping city of Tskhinvali, murdering hundreds of peaceful civilians, most of them Russian citizens? Did he believe Russia would stand by as his "peacekeeping" troops fired on Russian comrades with whom they were supposed to be preventing trouble in South Ossetia?

Russia had no option but to crush the attack to save lives. This was not a war of our choice. We have no designs on Georgian territory. Our troops entered Georgia to destroy bases from which the attack was launched and then left. We restored the peace but could not calm the fears and aspirations of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples—not when Mr. Saakashvili continued (with the complicity and encouragement of the US and some other Nato members) to talk of rearming his forces and reclaiming "*Georgian territory*". The Presidents of the two republics appealed to Russia to recognise their independence.

A heavy decision weighed on my shoulders. Taking into account the freely expressed views of the Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples, and based on the

principles of the United Nations charter and other documents of international law, I signed a decree on the Russian Federation's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. I sincerely hope that the Georgian people, to whom we feel historic friendship and sympathy, will one day have leaders they deserve, who care about their country and who develop mutually respectful relations with all the peoples in the Caucasus. Russia is ready to support the achievement of such a goal.

(26 August 2008)

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9c7ad792-7395-11dd-8a66-0000779fd18c.html>

## Comment

This article makes a good case for Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states.

The West have been quick to point out that this decision runs counter to several Security Council resolutions backing the territorial integrity of Georgia, all of them supported by Russia. This is true. As recently as 15th April 2008, Russia voted for Security Council resolution 1808, which reaffirmed "*the commitment of all [UN] Member States to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders*".

The West should recall Security Council resolution 1244 passed on 10th June 1999, which reaffirmed "*the commitment of all [UN] Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*". This resolution gave the Security Council's blessing to the agreement, which brought the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia to an end.

That agreement was founded on the principle that the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia would be preserved, in other words, that the final settlement would not include an independent Kosovo. Under the agreement, there was supposed to be (see Annex 1 of resolution 1244):

"A political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of the KLA;"

By recognising Kosovo as an independent state earlier this year, the US/UK and others have abrogated the principle on which the Agreement was founded. And Russia has good grounds for feeling aggrieved since it played a major role in persuading Yugoslavia to accept the agreement based on that principle, without which there wouldn't have been an agreement.

When the US/UK criticise Russia

recognising South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states thereby infringing the territorial integrity of Georgia, it's a matter of the pot calling the kettle black.

As Sir Ivor Roberts, the former British Ambassador to Ireland, wrote in the *Sunday Independent* on 31 August 2008:

"Western politicians maintain that Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and is contrary to UN Security Council Resolutions. Quite.

"Now substitute the West for Russia and Kosovo for South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the inconsistency and double standards of the West's position are clear.

"How can the West talk of the need to maintain an independent state's territorial integrity and to refuse to countenance forcible changes of borders when that is exactly what the US and most of the EU countries condoned in recognising Kosovo—against Serbia's will, and in the absence of any Security Council Resolution allowing it? To argue that Kosovo is unique is facile. Each potential secession is special, with its own often violent history."

David Morrison

## Zionist Colonialism

The following letter appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* of 15th August

(Text in square brackets was not published)

Adam Stevens (Write Back, August 7) says that my description of the Zionist project as a colonial enterprise is callous in view of the Jewish people's connection with Israel going back several thousand years.

But that is precisely what it was—since another people lived in Palestine already and had to be displaced in order to make way for a Jewish state.

After the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was mooted at a Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897, the rabbis of Vienna dispatched two representatives to Palestine to look into the suitability of the area for such an enterprise.

They reported back by cable: 'The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man', by which they meant that the area was inhabited by an Arab population[, whose homeland it already was].

Despite this, the Zionist project to establish a Jewish homeland there proceeded.

Adam Stevens is correct in stating that 'the state of Israel was called for by a United Nations resolution in 1947'.

If Zionist leaders had accepted the UN proposals, Israel would today consist of about 56% of the land area of Palestine, and Jerusalem would be under international control.

That is what the UN General Assembly recommended in [Resolution 181, passed on 29 November] 1947.

Had Zionist leaders accepted these proposals, it is possible that a modus vivendi would have been arrived at between Jews and Arabs in Palestine by now.

But they didn't. Instead, they established a Jewish state in 78% of Palestine, even though at the time Jews made up only about a third of the population of Palestine as a whole and owned a mere 6% of the land. [To ensure that Jews were predominant in the new Jewish state, nearly all the Arabs—around 750,000—were expelled from it into the rest of Palestine and the surrounding Arab states, where they and their descendants live today.

Had the Zionist project stopped there, it is possible that a modus vivendi would have been arrived at by now. But it didn't. Since 1967, Israel has occupied the rest of Palestine and continued its colonising mission in these areas. Today, there are nearly half a million Jewish settlers on confiscated Arab land in the Occupied Territories.]

An historic wrong has been done to the Palestinian people and Palestinian resistance[, armed and otherwise,] to this ongoing wrong was, and is, inevitable.

Any settlement must acknowledge that an historic wrong has been done and make appropriate redress so that Jews and Arabs can live at peace in Palestine.

**David Morrison**

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/letters/palestine-suffered-a-great-wrong-13943521.html>

#### Report:

**Book launch by Batt O'Keeffe, TD, Minister for Education and Science, of two publications\* by the Aubane Historical Society for Heritage Week, 26 August 2008, at the Aubane Community Centre.**

#### **Around The Cork-Kerry Border**

Jack Lane welcomed Batt O'Keeffe. He reminded the audience that this was the Mr. O'Keeffe's third visit and he was as willing to come after he had become famous as he was before. This was much appreciated.

Minister O'Keeffe with Dan Cronin's wife, Margaret, and Fr. Sean Tucker, along with Jack Lane



Mr. Lane said he was pleased that Batt O'Keeffe had got the job of Minister for Education and that he was putting this sphere centre stage in political debate. This was long overdue. Education is responsible for most of what was in the heads of the majority of people. Therefore there could hardly be a more important Ministry. Yet Education was long a poor relation among Ministries. One former Minister had described his job as being that of a plumber. Just marinating the buildings and paying the staff was sufficient. The content and policy was left to others—a once confident Church and national movement.

That no longer applied and the elected Government now had to deal with the policy as well as the administration. That was as it should be and Batt O'Keeffe was up to the challenge.

The audit he had initiated of higher education was welcome. He was looking at maths and science at present and how much time was spent by lecturers and professors in actually teaching across all subjects.

Mr. Lane said the Minister would be aware of the Society's concern about the content of the modern history curriculum and the fact that such low numbers are now taking history despite an increase in Professors and lecturers in the subject. There might be room there for savings. He hoped the Minister would look closely at this area of his responsibilities.

**IPR reporter**

\* The two publications launched were:

\* **Around the Cork-Kerry Border: Recalling the Rambling House** by *Dan Cronin* €15, £12

\* **The Origin and Development of the Parish of Millstreet** by *Fr. Sean Tucker* €6, £4.50

Both can be ordered from the addresses on the back page, or through the website:

**[www.atholbooks.org](http://www.atholbooks.org)**

Mention this magazine in order to obtain a discount.

## **LISBON continued**

### **BRITAIN'S POLICY**

Britain believes its future lies with the United States and that the European Union needs to be divided and weakened. The decision to make war on Iraq which pitted the "New Europe" (the Europe run by former Communists) against the Old Europe (the Europe reconstructed after 1945 on the basis of the social market by Christian Democrats and Social Democrats)—thereby neutralising Europe as a whole.

The London *Independent* reported in March, 2003, Blair saying there would be a reckoning with Europe after the war in Iraq.

This is entirely in line with British strategy since the election of Thatcher. Britain had almost been made into a European state by Heath and Wilson. Thatcher used the position of Britain in Europe to disrupt European development. But she became less effective as her hostility to Europe became more overt. Major was more effective because he could pose as a pro-European having to make concessions to the anti-Europeans in his own party because of his small majority. Most effective of all was Blair who came gushing with European sentiments and a landslide majority and European suspicions disarmed.

The eastward expansion of the EU was a British policy for weakening the EU as a political entity and reducing it to a kind of Customs Union. Even the Customs Union arrangement is now under sustained assault by Britain, which is committed to globalist Free Trade. And now there is the New Europe—the Europe of failed states—which has been nurtured into a relationship of hostility to the EU.

*"People behave as they do because it works"* and Britain's messing will only prevail if the leaders of Germany and France refuse to act.

Peter Sutherland isn't such a fool that he doesn't know that!

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Labour north inner city TD Joe Costello, the party's director of elections for the Lisbon referendum, would also like to get his name on the ticket—eventually.*

*"If he were to be elected an MEP, it would clear the way for his wife, Dublin City councillor Eimear Malone, to replace him as the Labour Party TD in Dublin Central in the fullness of time."*

("Kildare Street Confidential", Irish Independent, 23.8.2008).



## LISBON continued

for the ratification of the new treaty [Lisbon] a British referendum, given the British government's success in negotiating a number of British "opt-outs" from the treaty and protecting a number of British "red lines". In his presentation of the government's position on this issue to the House of Commons Mr. Brown has couched his contribution in the negative terms of political discourse current in both the main parties.

"New Labour's growing travails on European institutional questions are in reality a direct consequence of its incapacity to resolve the longstanding political cancer at the heart of Britain's membership of the European Union, namely the widespread belief in the United Kingdom that Britain can and should be a member of the European Union only on its own terms.

"Mr. Miliband, for instance, took the occasion of a recent article in the *Daily Telegraph* on Turkey to state that the Reform Treaty constituted a "rejection of the federal vision of Europe". The Conservative government in the early 1990s had made precisely similar claims about the Maastricht Treaty.

"As used in current British debate, the term "federal" is one almost entirely without a descriptive core, often little more than a formula of vague abuse. But this rhetorical sloppiness has definite political implications. On any coherent definition of the term, the European Union has, and will always have, within its structures important "federal" elements.

"Every day, Mr. Miliband and his colleagues participate in the workings of the federal structures of the European Union, voting on European law in the Council of Ministers; co-legislating with the European Parliament; applying European law domestically; appealing to the European Court of Justice; contributing to and benefiting from the (admittedly small) European budget; sharing sovereignty with other member states and the Commission in the day-to-day regulation of the internal market; and accepting the autonomous decisions of the Commission in its areas of exclusive competence, such as competition policy.

"A European Union which is a United States of Europe along the federal lines of the United States of America, or one which is a simply intergovernmental arrangement, purged of all federal characteristics, are today equally implausible final destinations for the European Union.

"It was the understanding of this nuanced reality which initially led Mr. Blair and his colleagues to avoid the polemical and exclusively pejorative use of the word "federal". The later recrudescence of this rhetoric is a reminder of how firmly much of British public and political opinion remains stuck in the political and intellectual morass into which the Conservative party plunged Britain's European policy in the 1990s.

"Today's British government essentially agrees, at least in public, with the Conservative Party in its distrust of the European institutions, in its belief that the European Union needs radical rather than evolutionary reform, in its fear that the European Union may by its legislation threaten the domestic economic policies of the United Kingdom.

"Nowhere, however, has this process of hollowing out the political and intellectual case for the European Union continued as long and intensively as it has in the United Kingdom, in which unwillingness to make a robust pro-EU case on the part of leading British politicians has been daily reinforced for fifteen years by systematic journalistic misrepresentation of all matters pertaining to the European Union. These fifteen years of silence and misrepresentation have found their inevitable culmination in the debate that has surrounded the proposed Reform Treaty in the United Kingdom. Mr. Blair allowed himself to be persuaded before the European Elections of 2004 (and with the prospect of a General Election in 2005 before him) to agree to hold a referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty, a suggestion which until then he had vigorously opposed. He and his government were dispensed from the need to hold this referendum by the fatal blows dealt to the Constitutional Treaty in the French and Dutch referendums of 2005.

"For the first time during Britain's membership of the European Union, this account has explicitly relied on the rhetoric of semi-detachment, stressing the view of ministers that the United Kingdom has not taken upon itself the same rights and obligations in the Reform Treaty as have its partners, and that this distinction is a welcome one to the British government. Britain's isolation from the European financial mainstream through its rejection of the euro is to be paralleled by its semi-detachment from much of the Union's further institutional developments.

### Britain in the World

"Above all, Britain should seek to influence and forge European policies in a way which reduces tension between Europe and the US. To do this, Britain must adopt a different approach to that which it adopted before the Iraq war. In particular it must consider that it is part of a Union and not detached from it.

"If so, the political pressure on Mr. Brown to continue with the unsuccessful and confrontational tactics of the past will be immense. Unfortunately, as has been noted, in the United Kingdom there is a substantial market for crude anti-Europeanism.

### Conclusions

"Instead, the past decade has witnessed an unremitting stream of criticism about the supposed inadequacies of all European economies compared with the United Kingdom; the ill-concealed satisfaction of Mr. Straw at the outcome of the French referendum to reject a treaty which he had

himself signed and which Britain had contended was a success for British Foreign policy; governmental evasion and confusion over the euro; and an at least partly opportunistic approach to enlargement, which the British government has regarded as a potential reinforcement for its own long-standing hostility to further political integration.

"The concept of the United Kingdom's being able in any foreseeable future to "put an end" to European political integration within the European Union is a delusion. If all such political integration is equated with the emergence of the European "super-state", it logically follows that as a member of the Union, Britain must be on the path to such an Orwellian nightmare.

"Logically, the best way to defend Britain against the "encroachments" of the European Union would surely be to leave it. Logically, the best way to defend Britain against the "encroachments" of the Reform Treaty would be to reject it entirely. The rhetoric and argumentation which New Labour has employed to describe its European policy over the past decade would be a powerful barrier to winning any referendum now called on any European topic or treaty, unless that referendum unambiguously involved ending the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union; a membership which is probably still favoured, however unenthusiastically, by a majority of British electors.

"British popular and public attitudes towards the European Union are so tarnished with suspicion and reluctance that Britain's gradual "semi-detachment" from the European Union is already a partial reality.

"The fact that the rest of the member states would probably have advanced much further with European integration in the absence of Britain is an increasing source of rancour in many other capitals.

"It must be clear to any unbiased observer that the British establishment's hope of constructing a largely inter-governmental European Union, simply devoted to the promotion of free trade, is one which has no hope of realisation and one which has few if any supporters outside the United Kingdom." **Peter Sutherland.** [www.fedtrust.co.uk](http://www.fedtrust.co.uk)

**The Federal Trust:** A Definition of Federalism. Federalism is defined as 'a system of government in which central and regional authorities are linked in an interdependent political relationship, in which powers and functions are distributed to achieve a substantial degree of autonomy and integrity in the regional units.

In theory, a federal system seeks to maintain a balance such that neither level of government becomes sufficiently dominant to dictate the decision of the other, unlike in a unitary system, in which the central authorities hold primacy to the extent even of redesigning or abolishing regional and local units of government at will.' [www.fedtrust.co.uk](http://www.fedtrust.co.uk)

continued on page 24

## LISBON continued

European Court of Justice judgements have worsened the conditions of workers across the EU.

General Secretary Designate Eamon Devoy said:

"Some trade union leaders may talk optimistically about the social charter and what it might achieve.

"But recent key judgements by the European Court of Justice show the direction in which the EU is heading, and it is in favour of big business."

Eamon Devoy's opinion is not an isolated view, many progressive elements in the European Union are expressing similar concern in relation to the power of the European Court of Justice! The following letter appeared in the *Irish Examiner* after the Irish defeat of Lisbon:

"The Key Issue—from a German viewpoint

An editorial in the influential German daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on June 15 had an important insight into the crisis facing the European Union in the wake of the Irish no vote.

"The peoples of Europe," in the newspaper's considered view, "apparently are no longer prepared to go further down the path agreed by their governments for ever closer union. This is because the EU decision-making processes are now so complex that hardly anyone understands them; and this is why their outcomes are no longer being accepted. To state it in abstract terms: both the expansion and the deepening of the EU raise doubts which at the first opportunity are expressed in rejection—not least because people detect that the two are not contemporaneously compatible."

This is a key issue.

The treaty did not define the borders of the EU and instead proposes boundless expansion.

The fact is that the huge volume of added treaty provisions which would have come into effect had Lisbon been adopted are largely unknown quantities.

That is until they are tested, which means until the European Court of Justice rules on them.

As recent European Court rulings on the services directive and other matters have shown, the political will which had driven and shaped the EU has been replaced by a judicial power which has authority in the EU over all national judicial systems.

The future of the EU—in areas as vastly varied as Trade Union rights, competitiveness and even expansion itself—was being put in the hands of the European Court of Justice.

The disquiet identified by *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is what needs to be clarified before the process of European integration can resume, and I believe resolving the role of the European Court is at the very heart of this."

Philip O'Connor (*Ir. Exam.* 19.6.2008)

### "FOG IN WESTMINSTER, EUROPE CUT OFF"

Peter Sutherland KCMG is a former European Commissioner and Director General of the World Trade Organisation. He is President of the Federal Trust. Fine Gael Attorney-General 1981-84. Chairman of BP plc. He is also Chairman of Goldman Sachs International and Chairman of the London School of Economics.

He is currently the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN on migration and development. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc. He is on the Advisory Boards of Coca Cola, Lilly, and Allianz.

Sutherland is also Chairman of The Trilateral Commission (Europe), Consultant for the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, and Foundation Board Member of the World Economic Forum.

In 2007, Sutherland made a major leadership gift of €4 million towards the development of a new law school at University College Dublin campus at Belfield.

In January of this year, he wrote a pamphlet for the Federal Trust, a UK think tank, expressing concern about the UK relationship with Europe—unlike his Irish counterparts in the pro-Lisbon campaign, he didn't mince words or evade issues.

Sutherland is an out-and-out Globalist: free market values must prevail over all else. Months before the Irish Referendum he made a prediction on the final outcome: "We will walk through a referendum."

The present writer believes that the EU will unravel, if it persists in its economic globalist direction. Sutherland doesn't believe this, neither is he an enemy of the UK, indeed he would see virtue in the UK line of further expansion. His concern is that Britain's 'semi-detachment' from full European participation whilst demanding ever greater influence will lead to big problems up ahead.

In fact, the "Westminster Fog" could bring the grand plan down.

### WHERE DOES IRELAND STAND?

From Ireland's perspective, it would be totally irresponsible for those in leadership to ignore the possibility that Britain would choose to leave the EU or mischievously 'limp along' as at present—without considering Ireland's role in any new European arrangement without Britain.

We would have to choose.

Any serious reading of Sutherland's pamphlet leaves that possibility in no doubt!

SUTHERLAND

Peter Sutherland writes:

"Logically and politically, it is a perfectly tenable position to argue against

British membership of the European Union. There are many advocates of that position who have presented the case cogently and sincerely. As an Irishman, I profoundly disagree with this perception of Britain's national interest as potentially lying outside the European Union.

"The United Kingdom is today nearer to systematic "semi-detachment" from the European Union than it ever has been since 1973.

"In 1997 European issues, although probably not central to the electorate's decision-making, certainly contributed to Mr. Blair's overwhelming victory. However, in the election campaign, Mr. Blair had somewhat trimmed his pro-European sails, stressing in particular his commitment to a referendum before taking any final decision on the Euro."

### The Euro

"If there was one issue on which it was confidently expected by commentators that New Labour's political choices would be different to those of their Conservative predecessors, it was the question of the single European currency.

"It was in order to allay such concerns that Mr. Blair echoed before the General Election of 1997 the Conservative government's pledge to hold a referendum before taking Britain into the Euro, and shortly before the Election itself published an article in the notoriously Eurosceptic newspaper *The Sun* telling its readers about how much he "loved" the pound.

"As the debate on the single currency gathered pace, the limits of such a cautious approach became ever clearer. Whatever Mr. Blair's personal predilection might be, it became evident in the late 1990s that the United Kingdom would never politically be in a position to join the Euro without a wholehearted commitment of the government to this project, a commitment accompanied by a political and economic strategy for bringing it about. The first five years of the New Labour government showed that no such strategy existed and that the government's political commitment was at best partial and intermittent.

"Instead, after what appeared to be a chaotic set of discussions between the Prime Minister and his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, the new government adopted a set of five criteria (economic convergence, employment, outside investment, impact on the City, economic flexibility) to be applied in the coming years to judge whether it was to Britain's economic advantage to join the euro.

"These five criteria, which in theory still form the basis of British governmental policy towards the European single currency, reflected the ambiguous and tentative approach of the New Labour government towards British membership of the Euro. They are sufficiently elastic and general either to be seen as roadmaps or as barriers to the United Kingdom's joining the single currency.

### The EU and its Institutions

"Mr. Brown's intention is not to hold

continued on page 25

## LISBON continued

European Court of Justice judgements have worsened the conditions of workers across the EU.

General Secretary Designate Eamon Devoy said:

"Some trade union leaders may talk optimistically about the social charter and what it might achieve.

"But recent key judgements by the European Court of Justice show the direction in which the EU is heading, and it is in favour of big business."

Blair Horan, of the Civil, Public and Services Union, however, said that the new charter of fundamental rights, which would be given legal effect in the Treaty, would be very important in reversing some of the decisions which had come out of Europe recently about which Unions had concerns.

If Trade Union unity and purpose on the new Wage Talks is anything like Lisbon—members are in for a rough ride!

Trade Unionists voted in their ten of thousands against Lisbon.

But the real "hawk in the holly" here is how a number of basic industrial laws, which are accepted in over 20 other EU states failed to be enacted in Ireland, despite a Partnership Process which is the 'envy' of Europe?

### IMMIGRANT INFLUX

Addressing a Conference of Religious of Ireland (Cori) meeting on June 19th, ICTU General Secretary David Begg said:

"While the reasons for rejection are many and varied, I have to say that I believe that the management of the labour market post-enlargement in 2004 was a factor.

"The many cases of exploitation of foreign and domestic workers that have been in the headlines since then are blamed on Europe. In truth, they are more appropriately left at the door of our own government which, at the behest of business, opened our labour market of two million to a wider 72 million without making any preparations in terms of regulation.

"In this, as in so many other things, we were following our nearest neighbour (SBP, 22.6.2008).

But the ICTU, despite warnings from their own members, voted in favour of the Nice Treaty in 2001 and 2002, allowing for the 10 member states' accession!

Again, going back to the Partnership Process, surely the ICTU could have foreseen then what was going to happen and through the Partnership Process have put their foot down, advocating a phased entry. Indeed, some of those who advocated this were accused of racism.

It is more to the credit of the people themselves, than to the Government or the Trade Union movement that the whole process of immigration worked out as well as it did.

### BRITAIN AND THE EURO

One of the most driven and enthusiastic proponents of the Reform Treaty (Lisbon) in the Labour Party was Deputy Joe Costello, of Dublin Central, the Labour Party Director of Elections, who availed of every media opportunity to push for a 'yes' vote. Much of his effort was concentrated on swinging the Trade Union movement towards acceptance of the Treaty on the basis that the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Article on Social Partnership would overcome the ICTU concern regarding the hiring of temporary workers.

His position struck a chord with the leadership of the Public Sector Unions but failed to convince the rest of the movement.

"Most of Mr. Costello's constituents tell him they'll vote Yes. But the seem to be doing it because they like the local politician, not because of any conviction..." (*Irish Times*, 29.5.2008).

Despite the best efforts of Labour in Dublin Central : on polling day, 56% of the electorate voted "No".

The pro-Lisbon campaigners laid great stress on the urgency of reform in an expanded Union—without Lisbon the Union would stall, we were told.

But the real "elephant in the EU sitting room" is how the third most powerful member, Britain refuses to be part of the Euro currency zone. It is in effect, competing with the Euro and must have a vested interest in protecting at all costs its own Sterling currency as against the Euro. What is good for the Euro is not good for Sterling and vice-versa.

The introduction of the Euro in 1999 was a major step in European integration. It has also been one of its major successes: around 320 million EU citizens in 15 member states now use it as their currency.

How can the EU hope to achieve a closer economic and fiscal union, and ultimately a single market when the third largest member, the UK, holding membership since 1973, shows absolutely no willingness to ever consider joining?

In Britain, the Euro is a foreign currency!

In itself this is bad enough, but of all the 27 member states, Ireland alone, because of the major trading relationship we have with that state pays the highest cost in relation to Britain's failure to become a fully committed member of the European family

Sterling has pushed up the price of British imports. The weakening Sterling against the Euro, is making it harder for Irish suppliers to compete against UK

manufacturers in this climate. Irish imports are seen as contributing to the UK inflation.

"The fall in the exports to the US and the UK arose primarily as a result of the Euro currency's strength against both the US dollar and UK pound sterling... This could pose major problems for indigenous manufacturers who are heavily dependent on the UK market.

"The first 6 months of the year has been difficult for the food sector (down 5%) and drink sector (down 19%). The UK is our principal market for processed foods and exporters have had pricing difficulties due to the 17% appreciation of the Euro against Sterling since November of 2007" (*Irish Exporters Association-Half Year Review*, July 30, 2008).

Yet this fundamental aspect of the European debate didn't rate a mention by either the politicians or the media.

Another major issue, again involving the UK, is the apparent ability of that member state to act unilaterally in respect of foreign policy.

However, if the politicians choose to ignore these major European issues, the electorate had other thoughts. Below, we give an account of a Dublin Central canvass:

"On the streets of inner north Dublin, local Labour TD Joe Costello rallied his troops for a blitz on the Lisbon Treaty.

"Keep it simple," Joe told his gathering of eight canvassers and local council candidate Claire O'Regan, as a French journalist looked on.

"It's good for Ireland, it's good for Europe," reiterated Joe". If any questions come up, give me a call and I'll deal with them. You've all read the literature, right?"

"There's some murmuring and foot-shuffling from the troops.

"I've read it but I don't understand it," mutters one of the canvassers, Gerry O'Meara.

"In the gritty northside flats around Seán MacDermott Street, the incomprehension is mutual.

"What's this about Joe?" asked a heavily tattooed resident, Paul Black. "It's about extra rights for working people," said Costello.

"It's not like the other one, Maastricht, then?"

"It's building on the other one," explained Costello. After a minute or so, Mr Black tells Joe that he'll vote Yes. Then, having Mr Costello's ear, he moves on to another, somewhat related, subject.

"What's the story with the bleeding English with the euro currency? Why are they not in the euro [zone]?"

England and its retention of the pound figure in several debates" (*Irish Times*, 29.5.2008).

### THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

The Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union advised its 45,000 members to vote 'No' because it believed recent

continued on page 26



"The error of the Roman Catholic priesthood is, that they despise the people too much; they think the high and deep questions of Deity and Providence above their comprehension; they require an implicit submission to dogmas, and an observance of certain ceremonials; but the rudest of human beings are not without ideas respecting Providence, and the government of the world; and they will assent to the dogma, and observe the ceremonial, without this assent or observance having any influence whatever upon the leading ideas which influence their character." (John O'Driscoll, *Views on Ireland*, 1823).

## Lisbon Losers!

Was Social Partnership the big loser in the Reform Treaty/Lisbon referendum vote in June?

If something so unique and basic to national and economic progress could not overcome the issues of 'collective bargaining arrangements'; 'agency workers' etc., which are the accepted norm in advanced EU countries—it surely raises serious questions about the whole concept!

"Mr. Begg said there is a sense among trade unions that the EU is moving in the direction of neo-liberalism and in favour of business, and the idea of social Europe is 'over'" (*Irish Examiner*, 16.1.2008).

Is the idea of social Ireland 'over' also?

"The State's largest craft union, the Technical Engineering and Electrical Union, has urged its 45,000 members to vote "No" in next month's Lisbon Treaty referendum. (*Irish Times*, 6.5.2008).

"TRADE union leaders clashed yesterday over the Lisbon treaty and its implications for workers.

"The country's largest craft union said the treaty would only strengthen big business and erode workers' rights.

"However, a union leader representing clerical and administrative workers argued a yes vote would boost workers' rights. (*Irish Examiner*, 7.5.2008).

"The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has voted to support the Lisbon Treaty—an expected but nonetheless significant boost for the yes campaign." (*Irish Examiner*, 22.5.2008).

"SIPTU will not support the Lisbon Treaty—unless the Government gives a commitment to introduce legislation to allow collective bargaining for workers.

"The country's largest trade union said collective bargaining was enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights to which the treaty would give

effect, however, the union said that at present the Government has not provided for such collective rights." (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 31.5.2008).

"Taoiseach Brian Cowen has refused to concede to Siptu's demand for automatic collective bargaining rights for all workers as its price for backing the Lisbon Treaty.

"The country's largest union yesterday said it would not support a call for a Yes vote unless the Government brought forward legislation guaranteeing workers the right to be represented in talks with employers.

"However, the Government has so far refused to compel employers to deal with unions, arguing that this could damage jobs and investment...the Taoiseach, speaking in Cavan last night, ruled out immediate concessions, insisting that such matters must be dealt with in social partnership talks." (*Irish Times*, 31.5. 2008).

The Executive Council of the *Irish Congress of Trade Unions* (ICTU) met on

Subscribers to the magazine are regularly offered special rates on other publications

**Irish Political Review** is published by the IPR Group: write to—

2 Heskin Court, Merrion Rd, Dublin 4, or  
PO Box 339, Belfast BT12 4GQ or  
PO Box 6589, London, N7 6SG, or

**Labour Comment**,  
C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City.

**Subscription by Post:**

12 issues: £20, UK;  
€ 30, Ireland; € 35, Europe.

**Electronic Subscription:**

€ 15 / £12 for 12 issues  
(or € 1.30 / £1.10 per issue)

You can also order both postal and electronic subscriptions from:

**www.atholbooks.org**

21st May 2008: the meeting was far from unanimous in reaching its pro-Lisbon stance, with 14 members voting in favour five against and eight abstaining including representatives of the country's largest union, SIPTU.

Among the Unions which voted to support the Treaty were the State's largest public sector Union, Impact; the Civil Public and Services Union, which represents lower-ranking staff mainly in the public sector; the Public Service Executive Union, which represents mid-ranking civil servants; the main teaching Unions; the Irish Nurses' Organisation; the Communications Workers' Union and the craft union UCATT.

The Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union (TEEU) and Unite were among the Unions which voted to oppose the Treaty. Mandate abstained.

Sources said there was a strong feeling that the ICTU, which represents 602,035 workers, had 'jumped the gun' by taking a vote when SIPTU and Mandate, had still not declared their position. The Executive Council debate was described as "vigorous" with Unions taking the opportunity to outline their stances.

Speaking after the vote, ICTU General Secretary David Begg expressed satisfaction that Congress had adopted a clear position on "an issue of major public importance".

He said ICTU would be recommending a 'Yes' vote but this would not preclude individual, affiliated Unions from advising their members on a different course of action.

In response, Unite said it was "disappointed" by the decision, while the TEEU pledged to continue its campaign against the treaty.

The Union previously announced it would be advising its 45,000 members to vote 'No' because it believed recent

continued on page 27