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Conor Cruise O'Brien And Israel

Ireland's inheritance from Conor Cruise O'Brien is an egoistic brutality of sentiment. That is what his rejection of what he called *Pearsean romantic nationalism* amounts to. He did not reject nationalism. He knew that such a thing would be an empty gesture in the world of the late 20th century. What he did was try to teach the Irish what an Italian Prime Minister called "*the sacred egoism of nations*" in 1915, when he was launching an unprovoked war of aggression on the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Britain offered Italy a substantial addition to its territory, if it launched an irredentist war against Austria. The Italian Socialist Party and the Catholic Church were against this war for *romantic* reasons—reasons having to do with something other than power. But the Government, urged on by Mussolini, went to war and extended its State up to the Alps.

The sentiment of sympathy with the Palestinians under the Jewish cosh is *romantic* and deplorable because it engages with a lost cause. The duty of aligning one's sentiments with the reality of the power structure of the world leads one to sympathise with Israel over the difficulties it is experiencing in the completion of its conquest and colonisation of Palestine.

Some years ago President/General Sharon said he would hit the Palestinians until they begged for mercy. O'Brien did not live long enough to take pleasure in seeing them begging. He might have lived a lot longer and yet not had that pleasure.

Israeli Army Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan (a Minister in Sharon's Government in the 1990s) has said "*When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged cockroaches in a bottle*" (14.4.1983). One of the things about cockroaches is that they don't know when they're beaten. They lack the moral sense that would lead them to submit to the conquering Power and make obeisance.

It was imprudent of a leader of the Jewish State to describe the Palestinians as cockroaches. But he only expressed what is a very widespread view within the Jewish democracy of Israel. (The Palestinians within what is now considered Israel proper are not part of the democracy of the Jewish State. Last year Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni spoke of expelling them if the 'two-state' solution ever materialises.)

Those views of the Palestinian natives, expressed by busy politicians of the Jewish nationalist conquest, are somehow less objectionable than the academically stylised and oblique expression of the same position, worked out by O'Brien amidst his idyllic

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90th Anniversary Of First Dail

So the *Irish Times* has finally discovered that there was an Election in 1918 which gave democratic authority for the establishment of an independent Irish State, and not just an unauthorised rebellion in 1916. That fact escaped its notice in 1918, but was noticed on 21st January 2009 in a Supplement on Dail Eireann: *90 Years Of Parliamentary Democracy*.

But in its 32 pages, and over a dozen named contributors, one little thing is missing: an explanation of why a democratic election, followed by the formation of a democratic Parliament, and a democratic Government, did not lead to a peaceful separation of Ireland from Britain, as Norway had separated from Sweden in 1905, but to a War of Independence—just as if there had been no democratic election.

Fintan O'Toole—who must express an opinion on whatever is in the news whether he has one or not—says that:

"the basic and breathtakingly bold idea—win a majority and assume the administration of Irish affairs—was to be crucial to the foundation of the State".

"*Breathtakingly bold*"!! After four years of warfare, in which a couple of hundred Irishmen took part and 50,000 of

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The following letter appeared in the *Irish Times* of 15th January 2009

O'Brien & The UK Unionists

Jeffrey Dudgeon's memory errs on the side of exaggeration when he maintains (December 30th) that in April 1972 he observed the late Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien's "foresight as he went bail for a group of nine Northerners from the Workers' Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland". He did not Like myself, he went bail for just one of them.

The protesters had chained themselves to the radiators of the Department of Foreign Affairs, demanding the deletion

of Articles 2 and 3 from the Republic's Constitution. The nine protesters in fact comprised four from a Northern Protestant background, three from a Northern Catholic background (including one former Republican internee) and two from a Southern Catholic background.

As a fellow member of the same Workers' Association, I was deputed to ask Dr O'Brien if he would consent to be a bailman for one of the defendants, and to his credit he readily agreed.

Regrettably, once a Government Minister, Dr O'Brien was not so amenable to further lobbying on my part. When his government defended itself against the

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Cartoon showing Israel luxuriating in a swimming pool of blood and death, while Bush wraps himself in an Israeli flag, the UN brings pool-side drinks, and the world lies back on a sun-bed

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surroundings on the head of Howth.

In 1974 he refused, as a Government Minister, to budge either on the Council of Ireland or Articles 2 & 3 and thus wrecked the Sunningdale power-sharing. For the next three years he was in transition, and was neither one thing nor the other. After he lost his Dail seat in 1977 he revalued all his values. He was appalled by the stubborn insurrection against misgovernment in the North, and he described it as "irredentist". But in May 1974 he defended his refusal to budge on the Council of Ireland by saying that the violence in the North was "endemic" (meaning that it was internally generated), and postponing the Council of Ireland between North and South would have had no influence on it.

An insurrection arising out of conditions in the North, not supported by Government in the Republic, is not *irredentist*. The Italian attack on Austria in 1914, which the Redmondites played some part in bringing about, was purely an irredentist invasion. (There was no insurrection by the Italians in the region claimed.) But O'Brien, despite the pretence of academic rigour, often played fast and loose with

crucial facts—which is another inheritance of the present intelligentsia from him. He condemned the Northern insurrection as irredentist—and then immediately associated himself with the most extreme irredentism known to history: the Jewish national claim on Palestine after an absence of two thousand years.

The present predicament of Israel is the result of an incomplete Jewish conquest of Palestine. O'Brien gave the name of *The Siege* to his big book on that conquest. The factual grounds for this heavily biased name is that the conquerors are surrounded by the people they are conquering until they manage to get rid of them.

The project of establishing a Jewish State was launched by more or less secularised Middle European Jews as a response to the rise of European nationalist movements in the late 19th century. The British ruling class, with roots in the Biblical fundamentalism of 'the English Revolution' of the 17th century, was attracted to the Zionist movement by sentiment, and also saw a use for it as a British colonial movement in places where Englishmen would not go in large numbers. It first proposed to set up the

Jewish State in East Africa. O'Brien reprints the following account by the Zionist leader, Weizmann, of his discussion with Balfour about it:

"I said, 'Mr. Balfour, if you were offered Paris instead of London would you take it?...' He looked surprised. He: 'But London is our own!' I said: 'Jerusalem was our own when London was a marsh'..." (Ch 1).

O'Brien comments: "Balfour was profoundly impressed. The seed of the Balfour Declaration had been sown. Balfour knew that Palestine was already inhabited". (As, of course, Weizmann knew of the irrelevant detail that Paris was already inhabited.)

Britain gave Palestine to the Jews before it had got it. O'Brien describes the getting of it in Chapter 3, *A Home Contested*:

"On December 9, 1917, five weeks after the Balfour Declaration, British forces took Jerusalem from the Turks. General Allenby made his official entry into Jerusalem, through the Jaffa Gate, on foot. This was a snub to the Kaiser, who had entered the Holy City nineteen years before, mounted on a white horse, under a triumphal arch, practising

Such boastings as the Gentiles use
And lesser breeds without the law.

The original Muslim conqueror of Jerusalem, Caliph Omar, had adopted a median position, between the extremes of pride and humility, when he made his solemn entry into the city, 638 AD...

"Under British rule, the Muslim conquest was about to be undone..."

The Kaiser went to Jerusalem as part of a state visit to the Ottoman Empire. It was the opposite of a conquest. German policy was to help the Ottoman State consolidate itself as part of the order of the world. Islam, as one of the major cultures of the world, needed to be made part of the official order of the world in the form of a strong state. The Kaiser's visit therefore was accompanied by ceremonials marking an alliance.

The British entered as conquerors, but bearing the burden of the triple duplicity in which they had engaged in the course of the conquest: undertakings to the Arabs, contradicted to undertakings to the French, contradicted by undertakings to the Jews.

German policy was to give Islamic civilisation an orderly place in the world through the Islamic state. British policy (implemented in alliance with Russia) was to break up the Islamic state, erode Islam as a civilisation, and incorporate the region into the two Empires. But the Tsarist ally fell by the wayside in the course of the War.

A British anti-German hysteria was launched in England (and Ireland) immediately on the declaration of war in 1914. Germany was the democratic state in which the Jews were most at home—they were at home in a different way in a

Polish/Ukrainian corner of the Tsarist Empire, though occasionally subject to pogrom—and the Jews were seen as a particularly insidious kind of Germans. When the German resistance to the British/French/Russian alliance proved to be very much stronger than expected, Britain adopted the bold measure of turning the Jews against Germany by offering Palestine to the Zionist movement.

Britain, as is well known, said it launched the World War in 1914 in order to make the world safe for democracy and establish the rights of nations to self-determination. When America entered the War in 1917, as Britain's ally against Germany (but not against Turkey), it formalised this aim in President Wilson's 14 Points.

There was a strong movement in England to give structural expression in the post-war settlement to this declared purpose of the War, and it was reinforced by American entry. A League of Nations was set up. Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence before the War (who had played a major part in the secret arrangements made with France in preparation for the War) and Secretary of the War Cabinet during the War, thought the Government was in earnest about the League and prepared to become its Secretary, but was told to remain in his Cabinet position. The practical meaning of this was that Britain would run the world by means of the Empire and would marginalise the League. The League was window dressing.

The Middle East had lived contentedly within the Turkish Empire. Its various peoples and religions went about their affairs harmoniously. The State imposed no irritating and contentious ideologies on them.

If Britain had achieved the easy conquest it expected when invading Basra in 1914, the Middle East would have been governed Imperially, as an extension of the Indian Empire. But the Turkish resistance proved to be as difficult to overcome as the German. Britain therefore worked up an Arab nationalist rebellion against the Turks, and secured the proclamation of Jihad against Turkey, promising to recognise an Arab State when victory was won. For that reason the replacing of the Turkish Imperial administration by the British had to be discontinued. But Britain had no intention of honouring its promise to recognise an Arab State. It went instead for Balkanised nationalisms. And 'Arab States' sounds very like 'an Arab State', though entirely different in reality.

Instead of an Arab State, there was Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. The French demanded a piece of the Middle East during the War and were

Free Gaza!

Some Protestant groups in the Six Counties are flying Israeli flags while in the Catholic areas the usual Palestinian flag. In Derry `You Are now entering Free Derry has been changed to: `You are now entering Free Gaza.'. **Wilson John Haire**

Gaza & Ireland

Zion Evrony, Israeli ambassador to Ireland, in a letter in *The Irish Times*, January 9, 2009, said "Fintan O'Toole ... living in a State that, happily, has never had to defend its own existence...". Fintan O'Toole lives in Dublin, and the rolling noise that both he and Zion Evrony hears may be coming from graves in Glasnevin Cemetery. **Esme Geering**

Editorial Note: And the Imperial Power attempted to subvert Ireland's independence vote in the 1918 Election just as the West does today with the election of Hamas.

B&ICO and Birmingham 6

Jack Lane (*Irish Political Review* Jan. 2009) responds to Steven King's "review" of the Coolacrease book. Could I add a comment in relation to the Birmingham 6 business. As an (Irish extraction) born and bred Brummie I was in Birmingham that day of the bombings. I admit that I was somewhat apprehensive at having to walk through the city centre that night: I thought that if questioned by the constabulary my Irish name would count against me: a suspicion justifiable by what happened to the 6.

However there was no doubt in my mind and many others in Birmingham that the 6 were innocent. My own mother, Winnie Doherty, in her 70s, went knocking on working class doors, petitioning for their release.

Now with that background, wouldn't I have been highly sensitive if there had been the slightest hint that the B&ICO had slurred the names of the Birmingham 6? I had from the late 60s, the days of NICRA, looked for an explanation of the 6 Counties "problem": read everything from Eamonn McCann to the *Sunday Telegraph*, and eventually found the "Economics of Partition".

So I was aware of the B&ICO and indeed read their literature avidly. I recall nothing that said anything bad against the Birmingham 6. I discovered a year or two later that some members had come to Birmingham a few days after the bombings and handed out leaflets on New Street to explain to the Birmingham working class the reality of Northern Ireland: a brave thing to do in those circumstances. **Tom Doherty**

Foster On Line

An Australian reader writes:

Regarding the Australian letter on Roy Foster in the January issue of *Irish Political Review*—the audio is still available here - <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/latenightlive/stories/2008/2371351.htm>

given Syria. And when Arab independence was proclaimed in Damascus it was smashed down by the French Army. And disobedience in Iraq was broken by the British Army.

Britain and France gave themselves Mandates for these territories in the League of Nations. The idea of the Mandate was that the peoples of these territories were not yet ready to govern themselves as nation states and would be shown how to do it by their Mandatory Powers. There was a fair amount of humbug about it, but a condition was put on the Palestine Mandate that contradicted even the humbug. The other territories were governed by the Mandate authority with some gesture of preparing them for self-government by the inhabitants, but preparation for self-government by the inhabitants was prohibited by the Palestine Mandate. There had to be a change of people before self-government was broached. Arabs, whether

Muslim, Christian, or whatever, were to be replaced by Jews.

A quarter of a century later Richard Crossman, the Left Socialist in the British Labour Party, who was active in the establishment of the Jewish State in the late 1940s, criticised the British Government of 1919-22 for the way it went about implementing the Balfour Declaration. It funnelled Jews into Palestine and left it to them to overcome the Arab inhabitants. He said the right thing would have been to present the Jews with an empty land by undertaking a great act of Imperial ethnic cleansing of its Arab inhabitants.

What would have been the right thing for the Arab inhabitants to do when they realised what was in store for them? The CC O'Brien Society, which has been so vociferous in support for the bombing of Gaza, do not seem to have given moral instruction on that point.

Anyway, there was some Arab rioting

against Jews in 1920, and O'Brien quotes, from the Zionist Archives, the following exchange about it between Ronald Storrs, the British Governor of Jerusalem, and Menachem Ussishkin of the Zionist Commission:

"Col. Storrs: I have come to express my grief to Your Honour over the catastrophe which befell us...

Mr. Ussishkin: Is Your Honour referring to the pogrom?

Col. Storrs (Emotionally): It was not a pogrom! It is impossible to call these riots a pogrom!

Mr. Ussishkin: You, Colonel, are an expert in administrative matters and I am an expert in the laws of pogroms; I can promise you that there is no difference between the Jerusalem pogrom and the Kishinev pogrom" (Ch 3, Sect V).

O'Brien does not dissent from the view that an attack on the long-established Jewish minority in Russia (who seem to have been converts rather than immigrants?) by a mob urged on by the Tsarist State was of a kind with the mob response in Jerusalem to Jews as expropriators backed by the dominant military power in the world.

The scapegoating of the small Jewish minority in Germany by the Nazis in the 1930s, and the resistance of the Palestine Arabs to Jewish conquest and colonisation, have been lumped together in recent times as Anti-Semitism by committed ideologues like David Aaranovitch.

The Jewish State, we are often told, is surrounded by enemies. That was its choice. It chose to establish itself by conquest, colonisation and ethnic cleansing against the will of the inhabitants of Palestine and all the Governments in the region. After the League of Nations lapsed, and when the British Empire which was set the process in motion was being broken up, the UN General Assembly passed a motion giving more than half of Palestine to the Jews for a Jewish State, but did nothing to make the establishment of that State an orderly process. Greater Jerusalem was not awarded to the Jews, but was to remain under UN control. The motion was carried by Russia and its dependent states in Eastern Europe and the USA and its client states in South America. Every Middle East state voted against: Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and Yemen. Also: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Greece, India, and Cuba.

Almost half the population in the area was awarded to the Jews was not Jewish. A Jewish state could not be established in a territory that was almost half Arab. A massive ethnic cleansing of Arabs from that territory was therefore undertaken immediately after the UN Resolution was passed late in 1947 and the British pull-out (in the face of Jewish terrorism) in

May 1948. And things went on from there. Here are O'Brien's thoughts about it all:

"The Jews had recovered Jerusalem, after nearly two thousand years, through a train of efforts and events so strange and unprecedented as to appear to some almost miraculous and to others literally so. To expect the Jews, having thus again come into possession of Jerusalem, to hand over the Old City, with the Wall and the Temple, to an Arab Power, or to an international authority, is to expect what cannot be. To ask Israel to give up all or most of Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank Occupied Territory] is to ask for the unlikely; to ask Israel to hand over the heart of Jerusalem is to ask for the impossible.

"So the felt needs of the Jewish State, and the animating concept of the Return, oppose what seem to be impenetrable barriers to the voluntary acceptance by Israel of the kind of settlement which international opinion, almost universally, calls for on the West Bank.

"That those things are so, as a matter of fact, would be hard to deny... But some, who accept that these things are so... still passionately urge that *they ought not to be so*. The Jewish State and the Return may dominate the situation... But they have no right (it is argued) to dominate it. Both are illegitimate concepts. The Jewish State is a racist concept. The Return is a mystical concept... These concepts, being illegitimate, have no right to prevail over a legitimate, rational and humane principle: that of the Consent of the Governed.

"I should like to take a brief look at that argument...

"The Jewish State is a racist concept'. Yes, in a way. It is racist to the extent that all nationalism is racist, and that is a large extent...

"The idea of the rights of the Jews to return to Palestine, as transcending the will of the majority of the settled population of the area, is certainly basically a religious one.

"Does the fact that the Right of Return is basically a religious idea make it *ipso facto* illegitimate?

"Probably only the tougher-minded within the secularist tradition would answer that question with an unhesitating "Yes". But *some* kind of yes is implicit in the whole tradition of Western Europe and North America since the 18th-century Enlightenment... The question is, however, whether the dominant intellectual tradition in the West also applies in the Middle East.

"On the surface, it might seem to. The rhetoric of the Arab-Israeli debate has been almost entirely the rhetoric of the Western Enlightenment tradition. It is rhetoric which has extremely high international prestige—as rhetoric—largely due to the phenomenal success of the three great Western revolutions inspired by it—English, American and French—and through the mimicry of much

of it by the Soviet Union... The United Nations Charter is full of Enlightenment language...

"The Arab case against Israel is most effectively expressed in terms of that tradition...

"But this is a domain where rhetoric and reality are far apart. Political practice based on Enlightenment values... only exceeds the boundaries of the West in a few exceptional cases, none of them in the Middle East...

"It is argued that conquest, as a claim to rule... is no longer acceptable since the Fourteen Points, the Atlantic Charter and the Charter of the United Nations. But both the Jewish and the Muslim claims to Jerusalem are *exterior* to those documents, by many centuries...

"The Right of Return is based on the Bible, and contested (by implication) by the Koran. But when the Koran is defeated... the appeal goes out to the post-Christian world, in terms of the post-Christian ideology of the Enlightenment, under the slogan of Consent of the Governed. But the realities pertaining to that slogan belong to the world appealed to, not the world which appeals..." (Epilogue, Section VII).

Biblical fundamentalism, mysticism, racism, irredentism, romantic nationalism are all OK in the context of Western (Enlightenment) foreign policy for the Middle East, although *Pearsean ghosts* are abominable in Ireland. And the CC O'Brien Society supporters of the pulverising of Gaza seem quite happy with the duplicity laid on for them by O'Brien, though they are coy about expressing it themselves.

O'Brien's reasoning would be to the point if the Middle East situation since 1914 had been determined by a conflict mobilised under the banner of the Book of Joshua and forces under the banner of the Koran. Then the Enlightened West might look on it as a matter involving the forces of civilisations for which it had no responsibility. But that is not the case.

The re-establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine a couple of thousand years after the first Jewish State had brought ruin on itself by its excesses was an act of British Imperial policy. It was as an instrument of the Empire that the Jewish Agency was established in authority in Palestine. It was Britain that opened Palestine to Jewish immigration while restricting immigration to Britain itself. British Imperial power was applied in the work of destruction and construction in Palestine and elsewhere with the declared purpose of re-making the world in accordance with British values. And it was British power that held down the Arabs while the Jewish colony was being built up. The Zionist movement rebelled as the Empire decayed, and the Empire retreated in the face of Jewish terrorism, but it was the Empire that made it a force

in the world. Israel then became a protege of the USA as it was taking over world hegemony from Britain. So 'Enlightenment' standards apply, OK?

Also it was not the forces of the Koran that took Jerusalem from the Jews. That was done centuries earlier by the Roman Empire.

O'Brien's comment that Zionism was racist "to the extent that all nationalism is racist" does not stand up to much scrutiny. There is a basic difference between the nationalism of the inhabitants of a territory asserting their right to govern that territory themselves and a nationalism which has the aim of conquering a territory that they do not inhabit, colonising it, and then governing it.

The following observation is relevant:

"In two important respects the Jewish race is decidedly unique, and such even to an extent bordering on the miraculous. The first is the maintenance of their racial identity for almost two thousand years in spite of their having no homeland and no other central uniting authority, and more especially in spite of their being in dispersion among practically all the other nations of the world... The second is the amazing adaptability of the Jewish race, which makes it possible for them to fit themselves into the national structure of the various countries in which they happen to live."

This statement of the racial integrity of the Jews, maintained amongst the nations, is authoritative. Its author, D.F. Malan, was of course an expert in racial matters. He was in sympathy with Nazi Germany and he was the architect of the Apartheid system in South Africa. But that is not the reason why the statement can be taken as authoritative. The reason is that it was written for a Foreword to *The Birth Of A Community: A History Of Western Province Jewry* by Israel Abrahams, Chief Rabbi of the United Council of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations in Cape Province, and Professor of Hebrew at the University of Cape Town. And the book was published by the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation in 1955, during the high tide of South African Apartheid.

First Dail

continued

them were killed, and of which the declared purpose was to establish democracy and the rights of small nations, it was *breath-takingly bold* for a small nation to vote itself independent and begin to govern itself!

If that was bold, what would have been moderate? Not to have bothered with the election, but to launch another war, knowing that Britain took no account of elections whose outcome did not suit its purpose. That would at least not have exposed the British war propaganda so cruelly as total hubbug.

Professor Michael Laffan of University College, Dublin says:

"Despite the understandable self-confidence which the British government and people experienced after their victory in the Great War, Irish nationalist voters remained defiant".

"Remained defiant"! He does not mention when they had ever been defiant before. In election after election they had voted to remain in Britain and the Empire because their Home Rule leaders assured them that Britain would allow nothing else. But then in 1914 those same leaders told them that the British Empire had committed itself to establish democracy and the rights of small nations throughout the world, and had urged them to join in the fight. So Britain had changed the rules! And the small Irish nation availed of Britain's fundamental change of position on the matter, voted itself independent, and got? —another war.

The only sense in Laffan's sentence is that, because British self-confidence was high as a result of winning the Great War for democracy and the rights of small nations, it was in a position to deny the very things it had started the World War for—and the vote of the Irish electorate was therefore a breathtakingly bold act of defiance.

Laffan pretends that the Sinn Fein party constructed after 1916 was in some real sense a continuation of Griffiths' pre-1916

Sinn Fein. Referring to the latter, he says that Griffiths':

"aims and methods were rejected as unacceptably moderate by many in the IRB [Irish Republican Brotherhood]. They had no faith in politics, little trust in the mass of the Irish people and they believed the British government would yield only to violence."

Is there some doubt about the validity of that belief? Even after the Great War for democracy, when the people put their trust in politics, it was still the case that Britain would yield only to violence.

Stephen Collins writes:

"One paradox about the sweeping Sinn Fein victory in the 1918 election... is that the heirs of 1916 enthusiastically adopted the political tactics of their Irish Party opponents in order to crush them".

If he thinks Sinn Fein defeating the Home Rule Party in an election is a *paradox*, he needs to buy a dictionary.

He follows this pathetic excuse for a paradox with another one:

"A greater paradox is that the State that ultimately emerged owed more to the democratic tradition of O'Connell, Parnell and Redmond than to the cult of blood sacrifice and mystical nationalism personified by 1916 leaders like Pearse and McDonagh".

So there was no more "blood sacrifice" after the 1918 Election then!

As to the rest: O'Connell carried Catholic Emancipation with a credible threat of force by mobilised masses. He tried it again with the Repeal movement but backed down when the British deployed dragoons on the roads to Clontarf. Repeal was not got, and O'Connell's movement fell apart as he left the country without purposeful leadership of any kind.

Parnell tried to destroy his own Party when it refused to accept him as its dictator. He attempted to brush it aside with a wild appeal to the masses, as Mao Tse-tung did 60 years later, but failed, and left the

O'Brien And UK Unionists

continued

late Kevin Boland's challenge to the constitutionality of the Sunningdale Agreement by reasserting its commitment to Articles 2 and 3, I proposed to Dr O'Brien that a logical consequence of that stance was that he in conscience should no longer be a party to his government's insistence on ploughing ahead with the Council of Ireland in the face of mounting majority opposition in Northern Ireland to such a council with a Republic refusing to

amend the territorial claim in its Constitution. But as we in the Workers' Association plastered Dublin with posters saying "Save Powersharing, Drop Articles 2 and 3", Dr O'Brien insisted on implementing Sunningdale to the full, maintaining that otherwise there would be civil war (The Irish Times, April 2nd, 1974).

The net result of Dr O'Brien's bullheaded stance—in gross violation of the principle of consent—was that powersharing itself was brought down in May 1974.

I do not know of any of the nine Workers' Association defendants of 1972 who would have followed Jeffrey Dudgeon's logic in championing Dr O'Brien's later membership of the UK Unionist Party. The person for whom Dr O'Brien himself went bail, Belfast man Eamon O'Kane, believed in a united Ireland by consent. General secretary of Britain's second largest teaching union at the time of his death from cancer in May 2004, Eamon O'Kane chose to have Seán Ó Riada's music for *Mise Éire* played at his funeral.

Manus O'Riordan

country faction-ridden.

And Redmond? Well, he went to war without a mandate, was responsible for the greatest blood sacrifice in Irish history, and left a demoralised Party behind him.

Collins, the Political Editor of the paper, then writes:

"Just as Sinn Fein's triumph paved the way to independence for the 26 counties, the strength of unionism, as expressed in the ballot box, led to the creation of Northern Ireland".

Well, Sinn Fein sought independence, and got it eventually in 26 Counties. The division of the country had been accomplished, before the reconstruction of Sinn Fein after 1916, by the way the Home Rule Party had been conducting the national movement since 1886. But 6 County Home Rule did not follow from anything that was "*expressed in the ballot box*" in 1918.

When defying the ballot box in 1912-14 the Ulster Unionists raised an illegal Army, the Ulster Volunteer force, and set up a Provisional Government for Ulster, to be made operative if the Home Rule Bill for all Ireland was enacted and a move was made to implement it. The British decision to launch a World War in 1914 headed off that course of events. The British Unionist Party, of which the Ulster Unionist alliance was part, broke the Liberal Home Rule Party in the course of the War, and became the dominant party in the Coalition Government.

The conditions in which a Unionist Provisional Government was formed early in 1914 no longer existed in December 1918. There was no hint of any measure of Ulster Unionist separatism from Britain in the Unionist election campaign. The assertion that "*the strength of unionism, as expressed in the ballot box, led to the formation of Northern Ireland*" is groundless. What the Ulster Unionists wanted was to be governed as part of Britain. What they got was not Partition—which would enable them to be governed on the same terms as the rest of Britain—but Partition accompanied by 6 County Home Rule. They did not vote in favour of the 'Partition Bill' of 1920 because of its 6 Co. Home rule provisions. Their leader said in Parliament that they did not want to govern Catholics, but wanted to be governed themselves, along with the Catholics, as an integral part of the British State.

It was something else that led to the formation of Northern Ireland and all that followed from it. But the *Irish Times* can still not bring itself to say what it was. Certain things are still too sacred in Anglo-Ireland to be described and analysed.

Maurice Manning has an article called *The Fight For Democracy*. So the ballot box was not good enough for the Mother

of Parliaments. After the people had voted, they had to fight too.

None of the writers so much as hint that British conduct with relation to Irish democracy, at a moment when Europe and the world were waiting for a sign of what British victory in the Great War for democracy and the rights of nations meant, must have had a profound influence on the course of events internationally. By its conduct in Ireland, Britain was setting a precedent for the post-War era.

The most interesting thing about these articles is what is not said in them. While a number of the writers go through the revisionist routine of saying that Sinn Fein only got 47% of the all-Ireland vote, they all hasten to say this was only because the voters in a quarter of the constituencies were deprived of the right to vote by the defection of the Home Rule Party, and that if all constituencies were contested Sinn Fein would certainly have gained a massive majority of the votes cast.

And nobody says that Sinn Fein only sought a mandate for independence, and not a mandate for war in the event that the Mother of Parliaments refused to heed the verdict of the ballot box. The absurdity of the argument that Sinn Fein should have sought an electoral mandate for war seems to have sunk in finally. We have not been publishing entirely in vain all these years.

Gaza Round-Up

Briscoes This magazine has been effusive in praise of the role of the Briscoe political family (Ben as a Fianna Fail TD, Dev supporter and Lord Mayor of Dublin, and his father's brave role in the War of Independence). But its position on Israel is not so good however. Joe ("the Dub. Fusilier", RTE) Duffy had on as his top guest on Friday, 9th January Ben's son, Daniel. Dan is a doctor living 20 years in Israel, with sons/daughters apparently in the Israeli Army. He justified everything his chosen Government is doing in Gaza and despicably fobbed off the slaughter of 800 and the rest of it as unfortunate but necessary (this from a "doctor"), and the result of Hamas "human shield" activity. In his plummy Dublin middle class accent he cast doubts on Red Cross accounts of army attacks on ambulances (which are true). Apparently 20 of the 40 ambulances available to the main hospital in Gaza City have been destroyed by the Israeli Army. He would not say where the Palestinian State was meant to be located.... but obviously nowhere near him!

Here he follows in the footsteps of his grandfather. Robert Briscoe was a

strong supporter of the leading light of the right-wing "Zionist Revisionist" movement, Jabotinsky, and, in 1939, went on a fundraising trip to the United States for Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionist movement—the group that spawned both Menachem Begin's Irgun and Yitzhak Shamir's LEHI, both of which collaborated in perpetrating the massacres to accelerate the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, such as at Deir Yassin in April 1948.

On his 1939 US trip, Bob Briscoe used his standing in the Irish war to gain credibility among potential funders of Zionist terrorism in Palestine. In fact, Bob Briscoe's 1939 trip to the US was to raise money to buy guns for the Irgun—from which LEHI had not yet split.

The previous year, he had made a trip to Poland for Jabotinsky's Revisionists, who called themselves the "New Zionist Movement". On page 268 of his memoir, *For The Life Of Me*, Briscoe writes that, in 1938, the Revisionists sent him to make yet another proposition to Jozef Beck, the Polish minister of foreign affairs, which went as follows:

"On behalf of the New Zionist Movement... I suggest that you ask Britain to turn over the Mandate for Palestine to you and make it in effect a Polish colony. You could then move all your unwanted Polish Jews into Palestine. This would bring great relief to your country, and you would have a rich and growing colony to aid your economy."

This Zionist approach to Poland fitted in well with Poland's own policy to dump its Jews in Israel, which Eamon Dyas has elaborated in great detail in the current issue of *Church & State*, in an article entitled, *Anti-Semitism & British War Aims In 1939*.

Irish Jews Speak Out There were eight signatories to a letter published in the *Irish Times* on 22nd January, protesting at Israel's "*slaughter in Gaza*". They wrote: "*In this climate we feel it important to assert that it is not anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish to oppose Israel's action*". Leonard W. Abrahamson, Chairman & Stephen Molins, President, Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, said the signatories were unrepresentative, adding:

"The overwhelming majority of the Irish Jewish community supports Israel's right—indeed, obligation—to defend its population against Hamas... As Irish citizens and members of the Jewish community we are concerned by the tone taken against Israel by some of the media in recent weeks, ignoring altogether the steps Israel has been forced to take to protect its citizens" (IT 27.1.09).

Aengus O'Snodaigh TD of Sinn Fein during the Dail Foreign Affairs

Committee hearings on the Gaza *Blitzkrieg* (13.1.2009), said that Dr. Goebbels would have been proud of the propagandist defence of Israel's war crimes in Gaza by Ambassador Dr Zion Evrony. Alan Shatter, the Jewish Fine Gael TD and the Ambassador made an issue of this subsequently, but O'Snodaigh refused to apologise for the comparison.

Gerald Kaufman, the Jewish British Labour MP, drew a similar comparison in a powerful Commons speech on 15th January:

"My grandmother did not die to provide cover for Israeli soldiers murdering Palestinian grandmothers in Gaza. The current Israeli Government ruthlessly and cynically exploit the continuing guilt among Gentiles over the slaughter of Jews in the holocaust as justification for their murder of Palestinians. The implication is that Jewish lives are precious, but the lives of Palestinians do not count.

On Sky News a few days ago, the spokeswoman for the Israeli army, Major Leibovich, was asked about the Israeli killing of, at that time, 800 Palestinians—the total is now 1,000. She replied instantly that "500 of them were militants".

That was the reply of a Nazi. I suppose that the Jews fighting for their lives in the Warsaw ghetto could have been dismissed as militants.

The Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni asserts that her Government will have no dealings with Hamas, because they are terrorists. Tzipi Livni's father was Eitan Livni, chief operations officer of the terrorist Irgun Zvai Leumi, who organised the blowing-up of the King David hotel in Jerusalem, in which 91 victims were killed, including four Jews.

Israel was born out of Jewish terrorism..."

Foreign Minister Livni: In December 2008 she indicated that so-called Israeli Arabs would have to leave if a Palestinian State was established:

"Once a Palestinian state is established, I can come to the Palestinian citizens, whom we call Israeli Arabs, and say to them 'you are citizens with equal rights, but the national solution for you is elsewhere,'" Livni was quoted by Army Radio as saying to students at a Tel Aviv high school.

Experimental Weapons Just as the Nazi atrocity at Guernica was a testing ground for using new weapons against civilian populations, now Gaza is being used by the Israeli Zionists to test their new weapons of destruction and terror. This new type of weapon is referred to by the acronym DIME which stands for Dense Inert Metal Explosives.

Scientific studies have found that

HMTA is chemically toxic, damages the immune system, rapidly causes cancer, and attacks DNA (genotoxic). Dr Joma Al-Saqqa, chief of the emergency unit at Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa, says that

"despite the damage in internal soft tissue in the bodies of injured people, the fragments were not detected by X-ray. In other words, they had disappeared or dissolved inside the body. When the wounds were explored no foreign material was found. There was tissue death, the extent of which was difficult to determine." The effects of the weapon seemed "radioactive": and "it causes very strong burns that destroy the tissues around the bones... it burns and destroys internal organs, like the liver, kidneys, and the spleen and other organs and makes saving the wounded almost impossible. As a surgeon, I have seen thousands of wounds during the Intifada, but nothing was like this weapon."

Chris Andrews TD has declared Israel a "rogue state" and demanding that the Israeli ambassador be expelled from Ireland. In justifying Israeli terrorist attacks on Gaza, the Ambassador had said, completely misleadingly: "Try to imagine Dublin with 8,000 missile attacks day after day, night after night" (Irish Exam, 13.1.09). The call for the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador was backed up by 45 signatories in a letter to the *Irish Times*. Andrews also demanded international sanctions against Israel.

A Sinn Féin emergency motion at Dublin City Council (from Cllr. Daithí Doolin) proposed condemnation of Israeli invasion, the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador until a complete withdrawal of Israel's army from Gaza, and demanded that the Israeli Ambassador meet the political leaders of Dublin to account for Israeli crimes. It was rejected 7th January, with the opposition led by Eric Byrne of Labour (former Stickie), who banged on to Sinn Féin about "your terrorist friends". The Council agreed to invite the Israeli and Palestinian ambassadors to attend to explain their politics.

Prof. Henry Patterson of the School of Policy Studies (Univ. of Ulster, Jordanstown), an adviser to David Trimble and former Stickie, criticised "the throng of moralising grandstanders" who condemned Israel in a letter in the *Irish Times* (8.12.09).

148 Academics signed a letter in the *Irish Times* calling on sanctions against Israel:

"We believe that it is time to renew the call made by Irish-based academics in September 2006 for a moratorium on the funding of Israeli academic institutions by national and European cultural and research institutions, and an end to the EU's practice of treating Israel as a European state for the purposes of awarding grants and contracts. Such a morato-

rium should continue until Israel ends its repressive policies against Gaza, and abides by UN resolutions (which include the ending of the occupation of all Palestinian territories)" (23.1.09).

Boycott Gets Legs Around 500 people attended an organised boycott demonstration outside stores selling Israeli products in Cork city centre on 10th January. On 17th January, numbers were down because of torrential rain and high winds which blew placards across and along the street. It was intended to embarrass Tesco, Dunnes Stores and Marks and Spencer simply by standing outside chanting, while boycott leaflets were handed out to passers-by and shoppers. However, people were carried away by anger and most of the 300, carrying placards, flags and banners, accompanied by a powerful portable sound system on a trolley which was blaring out "Boycott Israel", marched into the Merchants' Quay shopping centre, proceeding down the central "street" of the centre to the entrance of Dunnes Stores, which was blocked by a line of security men who stood arm in arm.

ICTU: David Begg, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, has been an active intermediary with Government for Gaza, while President Patricia McKeown has written to the EU Office in London stating the ICTU position on Israel's illegal actions under the Euro-Med Agreement and demanding that "the EU... take the steps required to enforce Israeli compliance with its obligations or, in the alternative, to end the agreements if it fails to do so." The letter encloses a copy of the Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign document, *The European Union's Blind Eye*.

It is suspected that a group of Stickie supporters within the ICTU are obstructing the strong lead by Begg, McKeown and others. For instance, the launch of a report ("Israel and Palestine: ICTU Delegation Visit November 2007") was poorly organised. It died a death, despite its sensational findings and excellent policy recommendations to Government and the international Trade Union movement (including Sanctions, Boycott etc.). There was not one press report of its launch in 2008.

Trade Union Officials were directly written to on 6th January by the new Information Officer at the Israeli Embassy, Dermot Meleady. His letter carried a long attachment denouncing Iran, Hamas etc. as out "to wipe out the Jews". Queries have been raised as to where the Embassy got its database. (Meleady, a former teacher, had a biography of John Redmond launched by Eoghan Harris.)

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Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

GAZA

It is often said that in time of war the first casualty is the truth. It might also be said that a consequence of war is the debasement of language.

And so we learn that the Israeli attack on Gaza is a "defensive" measure to protect Israel. An Israeli writes to the *Irish Independent* saying that Hamas is trying to "bully" Israel, its *more powerful* neighbour. And, as the Palestinians are being brought to their knees by the only nuclear power in that part of the world, the Israelis denounce Hamas for aspiring to destroy the State of Israel.

The Israeli propaganda calls to mind the comment of Tacitus on the imperialism of Ancient Rome:

"They made a desert and called it peace."

THE BRUCE ARNOLD "WE"

Bruce Arnold OBE is someone who also uses language in an interesting way. He thinks that "we" really are awful. In a *Sunday Independent* article (16.11.08) he writes:

"The Department of Foreign Affairs makes up most of its protocol as it goes along. We don't do protocol. We've always done the opposite. We think a casual, 'Whatever-you're-having-yourself', approach is rather charming. The British, masters of the art of protocol, have it for almost everything and have taught it to the rest of the world. This teaching has been least successful here, where we have spent most of our history trying to undermine the protocol of our nearest neighbour."

This would be a typical example of the *Sunday Independent's* national self-hatred, if it were not for the fact that Bruce Arnold describes himself as "English middle class" (see *Dubliners*, February 2003). In the *Dubliners* article he explains that he doesn't mean "we the Irish" when he uses that pronoun but "we the people living in that place". In this way he can lecture us (the Irish) without appearing to do so. And the person who once referred to John A. Murphy's free thinking mentality as flabby compared to the "more rigorous discipline of the Protestant mind" (*The Irish Times*, 28.10.04) concludes his *Dubliners* article in slippery fashion:

"In what I have written I am always I, but we may be us, or we may be them."

WHY "WE" (THE IRISH) ARE AWFUL

But how did "we" or our public representatives breach protocol. Apparent-

ly, Micheál Martin, our Minister for Foreign Affairs dared to criticise the Czech President's attendance at a dinner hosted by Declan Ganley in Dublin. Arnold thinks:

"Martin must have seriously embarrassed many in the Department of Foreign Affairs who spend a good deal of time trying to control the raucous, gross and ill-bred politicians who barge into areas of formality and make a mess of things. None do it with more rude vigour than members of Fianna Fáil" (*Sunday Independent*, 16.11.08).

But how could Martin have embarrassed the Department of Foreign Affairs since Arnold has already said in the same article that the Department "makes up most of its protocol as it goes along"?

The fact is that in this instance Martin did not breach protocol. He was perfectly entitled to criticise the Czech President who *did* breach protocol. The public representatives of a State are perfectly entitled to discourage political interference by the public representatives of another State.

The dinner in honour of President Vaclav Klaus was not a "private" dinner as Arnold says. It was a political rally consisting of 100 anti-Lisbon guests from the world of politics and journalism. However, it was noticeable that none of the guests were from the Labour movement or Sinn Féin.

There is a basis for opposition to Lisbon. A strong case can be made that the Treaty does not sufficiently take account of national rights. But it appears that the Ganley wing of the "No" campaign has even more contempt for the Irish nation than the most arrogant of the Treaty's supporters.

NEWTALK 106

Unfortunately contempt for the nation is not confined to Ganley's supporters.

Newstalk 106 broadcasts a current affairs programme every Sunday morning hosted by Karen Coleman. The programme is noticeable for the host's propensity to express her own opinions. She doesn't just chair debates but actively participates in them. One of her guests on 21.12.08 was John Bolton, a neo-conservative and former United States Ambassador to the UN.

After some brief verbal skirmishes on Iraq and Afghanistan, Bolton went on the offensive. He said that Ireland has always let other countries do her work for her. She stood idly by while the Allies fought against the Nazis.

So what could the opinionated Coleman say in response to this provocative statement? She could have said:

"Ireland is proud of her neutrality and considers the policy of non interference in the affairs of other countries admirable."

Or, since Bolton seemed anxious to give history lessons, she could have said:

'The United States only entered the Second World War in 1941 to advance her interests in the Pacific after provoking Japan. And none of the Allies fought to save the Jews.'

Coleman could have made those points, but didn't. Her sole defence was that many Irish people joined the British Army in both World Wars. Is Coleman suggesting that Irish citizens who joined the British Army enabled the Irish State to achieve international respectability? Has ideological submission to the British world view reached such depths among the Irish chattering classes?

TONY GREGORY

No one can accuse Tony Gregory of ideological submission to a British World view. And the dignified manner in which he handled his last days was typical of his Republican values. He took out a legal injunction to prevent media speculation about his health, because his suffering and impending death were of no more significance than any other citizen of the Republic. But his life was another matter.

A few months before his death he gave an unsentimental political testament in an interview with RTE's Aine Lawlor. He will be forever known for the "Gregory deal" and he quoted the historian Joe Lee who said that the scandal of the Gregory deal was not that it had been implemented but that it had taken so long for the problems of the inner city to be tackled.

Gregory conceded in his interview that he was more well disposed towards Charles Haughey than Garret FitzGerald when the party leaders came knocking on his door following the February 1982 election. He believed that Haughey had imported arms for the Catholic population in the North when they were under attack in 1969. Also, FitzGerald's constitutional crusade was anathema to him because of the proposal to delete Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution.

It appears that most of Gregory's supporters were enamoured by FitzGerald's 'constitutional crusade'. But, in the final analysis, the choice of Taoiseach was determined by local politics. Gregory and his supporters believed that Haughey was more likely to implement their electoral programme. And Gregory acknowledged that Haughey behaved honourably after the bargain had been struck. When the Haughey Government fell in November '82 the Fine Gael/Labour coalition attempted to reverse the gains of the Gregory deal, but was only prevented from doing so by Trade Union solidarity.

It was wholly appropriate that representatives of the State should attend the funeral. Gregory had given service to the State and therefore the State was obliged

to acknowledge his passing. The eccentric decision to allow Joe Higgins give the graveside oration indicates that Gregory has no successor.

The least that can be said of Gregory was that he was an honest republican. And in that respect he contrasted with the "Official" republicans that he parted company with. Eoghan Harris drew attention to Gregory's association with Seamus Costello the leader of the INLA (*Sunday Independent*, 11.1.09). But, of course, the ex-Stickie couldn't tell his readers which organisation was responsible for Costello's murder.

ANGLO IRISH

Therevelations about Anglo-Irish bank call to mind the observation of Al Capone: "It is better to own a bank than to rob it."

The Long Fellow is relieved that the State has withdrawn its offer of a €1.5 billion loan to Anglo-Irish bank even though the loan gave the State 75% voting rights and 10% a year interest. The policy placed the State in a position of having to throw good money after bad in order to protect its loan. This could only have benefited Anglo-Irish's shareholders.

The Nationalisation of the Bank is a better option. At least the shareholders are taken out of the equation. The Long Fellow's initial view was that this sick bank should have been let die. However, Brian Lenihan thinks that its survival is important to the Irish economy. It has deposits of €100 billion which is not far short of the €150 billion of Bank of Ireland. It would be interesting to know the proportion of Anglo-Irish's deposits that come from abroad.

JOE HIGGINS

The Long Fellow thinks the shareholders of Anglo-Irish should receive little or no compensation from the State because the bank would not have survived at all if the State had not stepped in. But this is a view, which is not shared by Joe Higgins of the Socialist Party.

Higgins—the champion of the lumpen bourgeoisie—thinks the State should compensate the shareholders. He said this on the Pat Kenny show (16.1.09). On the same show he thought that the multinational Dell Corporation should be nationalised to save the workers' jobs.

This is typical of a certain kind of political tendency: revolutionary when there is no possibility of proposals being implemented but reactionary on practical matters of immediate effect.

A Little Loyal Jewish Ulster?

There has been a flood of support for the Israeli assault on Gaza from the Ulster Unionist columnists of *The Belfast Telegraph* over the past weeks. One lady, Gail Walker, wrote that she was with the Israelis "all the way" no matter what they chose to do. Eric Waugh and Lindy McDowell penned words of admiration for the Zionist campaign. And the whole impression given was one of envy. An envy that dare not speak its name—if only the lesser breeds could have been dealt with in Ulster as they were being dealt with in Gaza.

A few years ago, after the IRA ceasefire, I remember Eric Waugh writing in his column of the unfortunate accident that occurred at the Mull of Kintyre. Here a helicopter went down containing the cream of British intelligence. These were the men that had dealt with the IRA at Loughgall, and Waugh believed they had plans to begin dealing with Republicans in the Israeli manner, with helicopter gun ships and cross-border raids. They had the Fenians on the run and wanted to finish the job. But there was a mysterious crash of the aircraft in which, unwisely, all had been carried together, on its way to an unknown destination. Appeasement began almost as soon as they had gone.

It has been said that the Ulster Unionist affinity with the Zionist is that of a settler race surrounded by hostile natives. But there is more to it than that—there is the common cause of the higher races against the lesser breeds.

So where did it all go wrong? Why could the Ulster Protestants not be like the Zionists? In the past, when the Jewish State was being established and Northern Ireland constructed the question was reversed.

Ronald Storrs, the first British Imperial Governor of Jerusalem, set out what he imagined the Jewish Colony in Palestine might become under British direction in a passage in his autobiography, *Orientalism*:

"In spite then of non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews, world Jewry was at last within sight of home. No more would an infinitesimal minority out of all her sixteen millions creep to Jerusalem for the privilege of being allowed to die on sufferance as if in a foreign country. No longer would the Jews remain a people without a land, in exile everywhere... Civilization had at last acknowledged the great wrong,

had proclaimed the word of Salvation. It was for the Jews to prove themselves by action worthy of that confidence: to exercise practically and materially their historic 'right'. The soil tilled by their fathers had lain for long ages neglected: now, with the modern processes available to Jewish brains, Jewish capital and Jewish enterprise, the wilderness would rejoice and blossom like the rose. Even though the land could not yet absorb sixteen millions, nor even eight, enough could return, if not to form the Jewish State (which a few extremists publicly demanded), at least to prove that the enterprise was one that blessed him that gave as well as him that took by forming for England 'a little loyal Jewish Ulster' in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism" (p357-8).

The British scheme for Palestine did not envisage the establishment of an independent Jewish State. It was realised that in the past Jewish states had been conducted in a way that did not lead to stability and tended more towards catastrophe. A Jewish State would have been anticipated to go the way of all the others in 1918 but one was possible under British auspices—if a balancing act could be accomplished between the Jews and Arabs.

But, if Britain imagined that the Jews could be turned into a loyal garrison of England's interests in the region they were to be disappointed. The Jewish colonists were not content to meekly accept a role within a communal grind with the Arabs, in the Imperial interest and in perpetuity. They were of far more substantial stuff than the other group which Britain was embarking on this project with, the Ulster Protestants—and had ideas of nationhood of their own.

The Jews might have started out like the Protestant planters in Ireland but they almost instantaneously turned out to be more like the Irish Catholics, whom England had been intent on denying nationhood to.

The British objective of establishing a Home Rule State of Jews, or a Jewish Dominion in Palestine, for strategic purposes, had that one potential flaw—that the Zionists, like the Irish, might really want more. The Jews might even become whole-hearted nationalists and desire political independence. And what would become of Imperial plans then?

This possibility momentarily concerned some in the Imperial periodicals during the Great War. But, like many other potential problems of the post-War world that were being created in the waging of the War, it was a problem that was quickly wished away and left for another day. But it is very difficult to read the following

Israel Avoids Hamas Deal

IN APRIL 2008: "After extended discussions... Hamas leaders... agreed to accept any peace agreement that might be negotiated between the Israelis and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who also heads the PLO, provided it was approved by a majority vote of Palestinians in a referendum or by an elected unity government" (ex-US President Jimmy Carter, *An Unnecessary War*, 8 January 2009, *Washington Post*).

passage, with the knowledge of what transpired, without getting the impression that the author was hoping, rather than knowing, that everything would turn out as Britain desired.

This is from an Imperial publication, *The New Europe*, of 27th September 1917. The author is Albert M. Hyamson, an Anglicized Jew:

"A common fallacy is the belief that the aim of Zionism is the creation of an independent Jewish State, into which a vast body, perhaps the majority, of the Jews of the Diaspora, will migrate. To those who hold that view Zionism is an Imperialist movement, one aimed at the conquest, perhaps peaceably, if not, forcibly, of the Holy Land, carrying with it, presumably, the ousting of its non-Jewish populations. But this is very far from the truth. To responsible Zionists the attainment of the status of an independent State in Palestine is not a matter of practical politics at the present day. The Jewish people is not ripe, nor can it be in the near future ripe, for independence. In the political sphere all that Zionism asks immediately is autonomy for the Jewish population, present and future, of Palestine, self-government in domestic, in internal matters, an extension of the autonomy which the Jewish colonies already enjoy under the Turkish regime, independence in matters of education, of local government, of religion—gas and water Home Rule one might say, but rather more than that: cultural Home Rule. As the Jewish population increases the area covered by this system of Jewish autonomy will increase. It will not increase at the expense of the non-Jewish population, nor will its liberty, its right to self-government, diminish the liberty or the rights of its neighbours. There is room in Palestine for at least another million Jews without displacing the inhabitants. Palestine is an empty land, a deserted land, not a desert, one that has been deprived of its people. For its regeneration a population must be provided and it is only from the Jewries of the Dispersion that the population will come. That it is quite practicable for self-government of this character to be enjoyed by the Jewish population, is shown by the experiments of the past thirty years. During that period between forty and fifty self-governing Jewish settlements, ranging in size from three or four thousand inhabitants to less than a hundred, have sprung up. The Turkish Government has granted an autonomy that is practically complete. The only grounds of interference by the Central Government are in respect of taxation... and serious crime..."

The relationship between these Jewish colonies and their Arab neighbours is in every respect friendly. The benefit to the latter is direct and is admitted...

Zionists do not desire to obtain absolute control of Palestine... They want also the protection of a Power that will secure the land against all possibility of outside

aggression. Politically, the fondest dream of the Zionists is the incorporation of Palestine in an Empire whose basis is liberty and justice..."

According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* Albert Hyamson was an English Zionist Jew who became anti-Zionist after serving as Britain's Chief Immigration Officer in Palestine between 1921-1934. He published several books including *A History Of The Jews Of England* and also a general reference work, *Dictionary of Universal Biography*.

Hyamson was the Director of the Department of Information, which the British Foreign Office set up in 1917 to spread propaganda amongst Jewish communities about the Balfour Declaration. Part of his work was to organise aeroplanes to drop leaflets over Germany and Austria as part of the Department's work.

In 1898 during a visit to Palestine the Kaiser had spoken favourably of the Zionists and increased autonomy for the Jewish settlements. But the Ottoman Administration rejected any formal autonomy, restricted land transfers, and preserved the arrangements which proved conducive to good relations between Arab and Jew.

The tolerant, easy-going and cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire, before it was destroyed in Britain's Great War on Germany, had been a magnet to the Jews and a great facilitator of their prosperity. Ottoman Salonika became the greatest Jewish city on earth; Baghdad was their Garden of Eden; Ben-Gurion recruited a Jewish militia to defend Palestine from the British in 1914, Moshe Sharett (later Prime Minister of Israel) and many other Jews joined the Ottoman Army.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire had been a refuge for Jews escaping persecution in Christian Europe, particularly the Jews in Russia, suffering the pogroms of 1881. But the forcing of the tolerant Ottoman Empire out of Europe by the new Balkan nationalisms sealed the fate of the Jewish communities. Many of the Jews fleeing from the Russian pogroms settled in Rumania, where they were subjected to

THE SAD SANDS OF RAFAH

1

Why doesn't the name of Iman al-Hams ring out as loudly as that of Anne Frank. Shot twice, then automatic fire point-blank, a schoolgirl, 13, dies on Rafah Sands, back October 5, 2004. Anne, throughout the decades, is loved world-wide. Iman? For fifteen seconds the world cried. There was compassion but who closed the door. The EU and the US have sanctions against the oppressed Palestinians, while Israel adds land to its dimensions. Joshua calls from the millenniums, sending in settlers for multiple theft. No equality in life, less in death.

2

An Israeli army euphemism: 'Quickly approach and confirm the kill.' Any wounded enemy fits the bill. Dreaming, the watchtower looms into vision Does she hear?: 'Don't shoot, it's a little girl!' A soldier doesn't recognise the foe. But his commander knows the status quo and shatters this Palestinian pearl. Southern Gaza, Rafah Refugee Camp: Another day, another burial, one more Israeli media revamp, another life cast as ethereal. First found a nation on biblical tomes then ethnic cleanse and know that God condones.

3

The First Internal Investigation: 'Captain 'R' didn't act unethically.' (Truth, also shot, lies flat on its belly) His wounded heart receives embrocation. Second Internal Investigation: 'Captain 'R', a Druze, is a gun for hire!' His unit loathes him, drags him through the mire. But Death sings in any congregation. 'So, Captain 'R' killed a young teenager?' 'Yes, the girl died but it wasn't murder.' Compensation, promotion to Major, with a good view of the Gaza border. Iman's dad listens to the legal gen: 'Keep dying, Palestinian children?'

Wilson John Haire. 24th December, 2008

further persecution by the Rumanians aimed at forcing them to convert to Christianity or to move on to Ottoman territory. The newly-independent state of Serbia expelled what had been extremely prosperous Jewish communities in both Sarajevo and Belgrade. And, when the Greeks occupied Salonika, a wave of emigration was sparked. The result of all of this was that around 100,000 Jews fled from South-eastern Europe into the Ottoman Empire throughout the late nineteenth century up to the Great War.

Up until the emergence of Zionism the Ottoman State never restricted the number of Jews coming to Palestine. But the immigrants chose to go to Salonika and Baghdad instead. In a memorable phrase after the Balfour Declaration, *The Irish*

News doubted whether it had a chance of success in the long term, noting that the Jews would be unlikely to forsake their homeland, seeing that their historic preference for "flesh-pots".

Hyamson obviously believed that England could preserve good relations in the region, as the Turks had done, and build a substantial Jewish colony at the same time. But subsequent events proved how mistaken he was.

It would have been a realistic calculation to assume that there would be no real conflict of interest between Arab and Jew, provided that Britain honoured its agreement with the Sheer of Mecca and Britain recognised an Arab State at the end of the War. Faisal Hussein, who was to be the King of that State agreed to accept the Balfour Declaration on condition that Britain honoured its commitment to accept the Arab State. However, Britain divided the promised Arab State, sharing part of it with France, and then chopping up its own share of the spoils into a series of puppet-states. And that put the position of the Jews and Arabs in the new State of Palestine on an entirely different footing than Hyamson may have imagined.

So why did the Ottoman Garden of Eden for Arab and Jew so quickly become a Hell on Earth under British auspices?

It was a widespread view within the British Imperial ruling class that the Jews represented a force for disruption in the world. They were a dangerous independent source of financial power, mercenary agents of Germany, and the force behind the Young Turks (who originated in the great Jewish centre of Salonika).

They needed to be put in their place—their place being, according to the Bible, Palestine.

Britain, in attempting to turn the Jews from internationalist meddlers into a nationalist people, made a fatal miscalculation in its ecstatic state of Great War Biblical fervour. If Britain believed the Jews to be mere mercenaries of Germany, why could they not also be the same of Britain? It was never considered that in turning the Jews into nationalists of Zion this might cause them to cease being mercenaries.

Would they then not see themselves, after their return to Zion, as real nationalists with national independence as their aim—the only objective worthy of the name of self-respecting nationalism? And would that not make them repel them from the Imperial motherland—which was not really a mother to them at all but really just a surrogate?

Finally, what would the attitude of thoroughgoing nationalists, imbued with notions of religious and racial superiority, make of a large and hostile group within their midst? That seems to be what happened in 1947-8, and then ever since,

isn't it?

By the time he wrote his autobiography in the 1940s Storrs had despaired of Zionism and, like Hyamson, seen the experiment as a terrible mistake. When contemplating a note for a 1948 edition of *Orientalisms* Storrs wrote the following:

"Re-reading these chapters I compared what Britain had done for Zionism with what Zionism had done to the British, to the peaceful inhabitants of the Holy Land and to the Middle East, to Judaism and to world Jewry, to the fair name of the United Nations, to the Anglo-American relationship, upon which the future of humanity depends—then, in the speech of our book of common prayer—I held my tongue and spake nothing. I kept silence, even from God's words, but it was pain and

grief to me." (Rory Miller, *Sir Ronald Storrs And Zion: The Dream That Turned Into A Nightmare*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, July 2000, p.138)

Britain made the nightmare of Zion possible and then suffered for it—before washing its hands of it.

Knowing his Bible well, Storrs should have appreciated that and realised that he was the successor of Pontius Pilate. But there was no escaping the nightmare for "the peaceful inhabitants of the Holy Land and the Middle East."

They are paying for it today.

Pat Walsh

Pat Walsh's book on Ireland's Great War with Turkey will be appearing this Spring.

Cowen/Sarkozy Lisbon Deal: *the primacy of politics over legalism*

Brian Cowen was Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2001 and was in Ramallah at a meeting with Yasser Arafat when Al Qu'ida attacked the New York international financial services centre. He immediately held a joint press conference with the Palestinian leader and, while uttering platitudes warning against Arab rejoicing, nevertheless effectively displayed Irish solidarity with him at that crucial moment, a moment when no other European leader would have been seen within a hundred miles of him. While no Frank Aiken in Foreign Affairs, this display of character augured well for the contribution Cowen as Taoiseach might make.

Cowen and the illusion of Brown's "nationalisation" of the banks

Cowen was hardly in the post of Taoiseach when the property bubble burst in Ireland and the international banking/financial crisis hit. He acted decisively, first with the master-stroke of the bank guarantee, a lead that the rest of Europe have since followed. He refused to be railroaded into the 'British Solution' of Exchequer "capitalisation", favoured by the less than independent commentators of *The Irish Times* and RTÉ, who simply re-peddled the incessant attacks on Irish fiscal policy propounded by *The Financial Times* and lesser organs of British policy.

These attacks were reinforced by Irish left wing journalists who mindlessly repeated the fantasies of *Guardian* commentators on Brown's re-capitalisation programme and consumption-driven recovery package as some kind of socialist nationalisation of finance. Europe dithered—the Big Four met to decide what they would do, dispensing with European solidarity, and the meeting of the Eurozone States, which finally took place after

Ireland had acted, was notable by the presence at the table of a hostile currency in the form of Sterling.

So Cowen acted unilaterally after informing his European colleagues what he intended to do. The liquidity of the country was saved at a stroke (and a model was provided for other countries to follow, which most have since done). The Government has stood firm against exchequer re-capitalisation: the minimal pension fund or exchequer investment which may be undertaken by the State in a number of banks would seem to have stemmed the collapse of the system (at the time of writing no actual such investment had been made—the rescue package has not yet cost the Irish tax payer a penny).

Social Partnership given central role: SIPTU as the "industrial wing of the national movement"

In addition, a budget was hastily put together to stabilise financial and economic policy at a moment of potential economic meltdown. The fact that it was rushed (Departments had just weeks to come up with their restructured budgets) meant that mistakes were made, including some short-term and socially reactionary decisions. Once society protested, these were mostly rectified, thanks largely to SIPTU, the real labour party of Ireland. (A 1919 recruitment leaflet of the ITGWU—the forerunner of SIPTU—proclaimed the union to be "the industrial wing of the national movement" and, under the leadership of Jack O'Connor, it continues to operate in this spirit.)

As the crisis rapidly deepened, Cowen summoned the Social Partners and declared that the Irish pathway through the world economic crisis would be chartered through Social Partnership. A New Year agreement with the social

partners, he declared, "*will be the key to Ireland's recovery from the recession*" (Irish Times, 19.12.08). The Fine Gael position, which had been riding high on anti-budget rhetoric, was suddenly exposed as the hollow anti-public service and anti-Trade Union position that it was. The indiscriminate but well-orchestrated onslaught on FÁS was accompanied by Eamon Gilmore's shameful *Irish Times* soundbite headline about leading trade unionists having "*a case to answer*" (IT, 29.11.08). But since then, both FG and Labour have reined in, and appear to have moved on to supporting a Social Partnership-based national recovery programme (Richard Bruton most recently on *Questions and Answers* on RTE1, 19th January).

The Labour Party had toyed with breaking the role of the Unions in the party (as regularly reported in *Irish Political Review* over the last year). At its recent Kilkenny Conference, when the Trade Unions were again supposed to be marginalised within the party, it was the Trade Union input which was the biggest news. Jack O'Connor, David Begg and others again made the obvious case for a *real* labour party, which had workers' concerns at its core. Gilmore's *animus* against Trade Union power is incomprehensible. This party, which walked out of the Fianna Fáil coalition in 1994 for obscure reasons, subsequently condemned itself to the political wilderness by an obstinate refusal to share power with Fianna Fáil, despite this option being for the taking on several occasions. Had it so chosen, it could have co-shaped the State throughout the period of the 'Celtic Tiger', probably to all our benefit.

Europe and Ireland: Did the EU "stop and think"?

Now we have the Lisbon deal. This has (of course) received a sceptical and caustic reaction from the media. The academic elite was quick off the mark, apoplectic with rage at the very notion of compromising with the concerns of those who had voted No. Professor Antonio Bar ("*Jean Monnet professor of European Union constitutional law at the University of Valencia*") thundered that "*a simple reading of the Lisbon Treaty proves that there was no need for the guarantees demanded by Cowen*" (*Irish Times*, 17.12.2008). But is the deal so bad? An editorial in the first issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, just before the last referendum called for a 'No' vote, arguing that the EU, with its mindless expansionism, its embracing of un-European neo-liberalism and its gutting of the previously purposeful, integrationist Commission, had lost its direction, and that an Irish 'No' vote might make Europe stop and think about where it was heading:

"...we are of the opinion that the original

EU project is not irretrievable and that the Irish have a key role to play in its renaissance. The first step is to stop the momentum for enlargement and call on the EU to define the borders of its territory.

"A 'no' vote in the forthcoming referendum will help bring continental Europe to its senses and urge it to return it to the task of building a stable Federal European State. A continuation of the policy of a free trade area with undefined borders as well as ever closer collaboration with American imperialism is a betrayal of European ideals." (For an EU Federal State!, *Irish Foreign Affairs*, May 2008)

And events seem to be proving the substance of this view. I am constantly told that the Irish vote has put us in the doghouse of Europe in opinion, and Brigid Laffan and others can hardly conceal their deep sense of embarrassment about it all. I travel quite a bit in Europe as a result of projects I am involved in through work. This is not the reaction I get. After the Irish vote, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* editorialised that the result reflected not an Irish problem but a European one—the democratic legitimacy of the EU. It stated that bridging the credibility gap between the course the EU was taking in the world and what the populations of the core EU countries had believed the EU to be about (the Délor vision) was the challenge facing it. And Angela Merkel responded to the Irish vote immediately to scotch suggestions of a twin-track European process then being gleefully promoted by *The Economist* and others of its ilk.

I happened to be in Vienna as the European Council met in December in Brussels to hear the Irish case and decide on its response to Brian Cowen's proposed conditions for a new Irish referendum. Again, the Viennese press reported overwhelmingly positively on Ireland's stance. The Irish are seen as fundamentally pro-Europe and a solution to the stubborn Irish is regarded as a solution to a broader European problem. In the run-up to the Brussels summit, the new Socialist premier of Austria, Werner Faymann, defended the rights of the Irish electorate to vote as they did and called for the EU Summit to "*respect the feisty Irish*" (*Die Presse*, 01.12.08). This was front page news in Austria.

Is EU neo-liberalism collapsing?

What has happened since the Irish vote? Firstly—We must say: "*God bless Russia!*" In July the Russians and Chinese put down a marker that the days of a sole superpower—ushered in following the destruction of the Soviet Union: the *Project for a New American Century*—were over. This they did by vetoing the British-US attempt to impose UN sanctions on the former British colony Zimbabwe (on top of the existing USUK sanctions).

And then in August Russia drew a line in the sand in Georgia regarding the boundless NATO-EU expansionism of recent years. The boys are back in town, and the future of the continent will again be a negotiated one between the EU and Russia. Even the Poles balked at the prospect of a new Cold War against Russia.

Then Mandelson went. Along with Barroso and Charlie McCreevy, Mandelson represented the fanatical neo-liberal faction in the Commission. Though the circumstances of his recall to Britain are unknown to me, it is significant that he was forced to abandon his Commissioner-ship so soon after his neo-liberal solo run at the World Trade Talks had become unstuck. He had overstepped his mandate and had to go. The stubborn resistance of the Irish Farmers' Association to being bought for the *Yes* campaign was vindicated, and you can be sure there was many a wry smile in Irish farming circles at the news of his departure.

If the IFA can be credited with putting a spoke in the headlong—and scarcely mandated—globalist rush of the Commission, the economic crisis has certainly brought it to a standstill.

In foreign policy too, Europe has been showing an independence we had not seen since the French refused to allow the UN to approve the USUK onslaught on Iraq in 2003: Despite American opposition, Sarkozy visited Moscow in August to broker a truce deal in Georgia, and later also expressed reservations about US stationing of missiles directed against Russia in Eastern Europe. Despite American resistance, EU partnership talks with Russia are again back on the cards. On his recent visit to Japan, Cowen declared that the 2003 invasion of Iraq had shown the limits of US power (*The Irish Times*, 16th January 2009).

Forces of Production central again

In 1996 Will Hutton (*The State We Are In*) argued that Britain was abandoning its industrial base at its peril, and should resist the allure of an economy driven by ever more delusory "*financial instruments*". He hoped an industrial revival would be the basis of a reforming labour administration under the bright white hope of Tony Blair. Blair decided otherwise, making his choice clear when he allowed the car industry to go to the wall. Blair had been elected on a pro-EU platform and had appeared to represent a revival of the old Heath approach of British integration into Europe and abandonment of world imperial ambitions. Once in power however, Blair rapidly abandoned this scenario. Moving to the "*centre of Europe*" became shorthand for a programme for the anglicisation of EU economic and foreign policy. Britain got ten years of financial capitalism, relentless industrial dismantling, and continuous war. The

reformed financial speculator, George Soros, similarly warned at the time (*The Crisis Of Global Capitalism*, 1998) that the reliance on financial trickery would cause the next international economic crisis, and he was right.

This penny is now finally beginning to drop here too. Niall Fitzgerald, one of the Irish heroes of international capitalism thrown up by the Celtic Tiger (Chairman of Unilever, advisor to Nelson Mandela, speaker to the World Economic Forum etc.), set out in a recent speech the new terms of trade:

"How did so many bankers, regulators, Government ministers—everywhere, all around the world—wander into this with their eyes closed?... Were we all just blinded by the money circulating in financial services? How did the USA and Western Europe in particular—with their long histories of innovation, entrepreneurship and business-building—turn into financial playgrounds for traders and speculators, interested only in playing the markets for the greatest personal return?"

"... The truth is, that to feed the appetite for trading, the banks developed financial systems that no longer bore any understandable relationship with the world that we work in, the world of products and tangible assets and clear cash flows. At times like these, I turn to the volume of *Das Kapital* that I keep by the bed. Karl Marx and I do not agree on all matters, but he saw this one coming:

"This is what he wrote: *To the possessor of money capital the process of production appears merely as an unavoidable intermediate link, as a necessary evil for the sake of moneymaking.*' In other words, it is annoying actually to have to make something. Marx went on: *All nations with a capitalist mode of production are therefore seized periodically by a feverish attempt to make money without the intervention of the process of production.*'

"That seems to describe the most recent period well. We've witnessed a feverish spinning of money, through increasingly complex financial instruments that were beyond the understanding of the people actually running the banks.

"... Ireland took a brave decision to become an open economy and we have benefited disproportionately. Now we are in a downturn I fear we can expect to suffer disproportionately.

"... When did building sustainable businesses become boring? Well now is the time to make it fashionable again, to start valuing the builder mentality. Now is the time to think of long term, to think of legacy. Companies need to focus on fundamental value, producing what people really want to buy and building and investing for the long term. We were all guilty of bowing at the altar of next quarter's earnings..." (*Sunday Business Post*, 14 December 2008)

With the crisis of financial capitalism, the forces of production (the "real

economy") are back at the centre of things. Those involved in the production of things, in the creation of value, have moved to the centre of the strategy of recovery. After years of "financial instruments" and sharp practice accountancy, it is the calls by IFA leaders for an export strategy based on food production, along with SIPTU (and now business leaders like Fitzgerald) for an industrially-based recovery which puts productive policy and the strengthening of workers' skills at the centre of things, which are now getting a hearing. IFA President Pádraig Walsh has already pointed to the threat of renewed world trade talks next year and stated that the EU needed to rethink its negotiating strategy in the WTO and rebalance it in favour of Europe's food producers (*Sunday Business Post*, 14.12.08).

European crises and how to deal with them

In crises of the EU, there are forces which see them as things to be resolved and forces for whom they are an opportunity to undermine the EU project. I was reminded of the crisis for Europe which arose at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 'threat' of German re-unification. In Britain, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher reacted to the German 'threat' by summoning a special think-in of Oxford historians and the like in Chequers to discuss the German psyche, which they predictably declared to be faulty, due to not having been conquered by Rome two millennia previously. This was the start of two decades of destructive British policy aimed at reversing European integration by replacing it with a superficial and simple market-based expansionism.

Meanwhile Mitterand in France took another tack altogether. Rather than repeating the disaster of 1939—when France had previously followed British 'leadership' in Europe and issued a meaningless guarantee to Poland which precipitated world war—Mitterand got together with Kohl and worked out how they would do it. For France, the way to make German re-unification acceptable was to tie Germany further into the EU. For Germany, especially given the wrecking of EU integration by the forces represented by Thatcher's arrival on the scene, Mitterand's proposals presented an opportunity to launch the Euro project. If the British had brought European integration to a standstill, the project of a common currency, if successful, would create economic facts on the ground which could not be easily reversed, regardless of British success in disrupting European integration.

And so it has turned out to be. In 1996 Helmut Kohl visited Dublin during the Irish EU Presidency presided over by the Rainbow Coalition. The date of his visit was significant—it was the then German

national holiday, 17th June (the anniversary of the East German rising of 1953). In a speech at Dublin Castle, he stated, very emotionally, that he wanted to come to Dublin on this date and take the opportunity to thank the Irish for the role they had played in breaking the deadlock at the Council of Ministers back in 1990 over German re-unification. According to Kohl, Charles Haughey, presiding at a particularly fraught meeting of the Council in 1990, had broken the ice with a motion that the European Union congratulated the German people on the peaceful re-unification of their country. Who could vote against that? John Bruton, who as Taoiseach was hosting the 1996 Dublin Castle event, was left stuck for words.

The Irish as a European crisis

So, since the Irish vote on Lisbon, the mindless expansionism of the EU has been brought to a halt, as has its embrace of neo-liberal globalism. This has been the result of external factors rather than internal political development, but is no less real for that, and is providing the basis for a revival of the European integrationist forces. Mandelson is gone, and the Russians are back. Sarkozy, that sometimes ephemeral and sometimes quite brilliant statesman, sees the Irish Lisbon situation—*à la Mitterand* so to speak—as a crisis to be resolved rather than exploited. "We can only have the Lisbon Treaty," he declared, "if our Irish friends vote Yes and, for that to happen, something new has to appear, and that is one commissioner per country." ('Sarkozy lauds Irish move on second referendum', *The Irish Times*, 17.12.2008). The French know that the legalisms which the likes of Brigid Laffan, Ben Tonra and the rest of the Euro-enthusiast establishment in Dublin get so uptight about, are ultimately negotiable and fluid. The rules need to be changed? Ok, let's change the rules if that's what's needed. The primacy of politics over legalism. He cautioned that the fixation on the need for a smaller Commission (to be "efficient") was overstated, and declared that the assurances made to Ireland at the EU Summit—statements safeguarding Irish neutrality, tax sovereignty and family legislation—were "no problem" for the rest of Europe. We can only say "Vive la France!"

The Cowen-Sarkozy Lisbon Deal

The Yes campaign—i.e. *The Irish Times*—declared after the referendum that the Irish vote was an act of lunacy incomprehensible in rational terms, as the Treaty was simply introducing efficiency in EU Governance, which was self-evidently "in Ireland's interest". Following a poll showing the drift towards a No vote, editor Geraldine Kennedy had asked whether we had "lost our collective minds" while

Garret Fitzgerald pronounced that the electorate was being led astray by "nutters".

Thankfully the Government has not taken the advice of Tara Street, where the paper now resides, to treat the Irish vote as a problem of collective psycho-analysis. Instead it assessed the composition of the No vote and brought a coherent "Statement of Concerns" to Brussels, to be dealt with regardless of legalistic barriers to their fulfillment. This is the European way of doing things, how Haughey worked—the primacy of politics over legalism.

At the European Summit on 11th-12th December, Brian Cowen presented the "Statement of the Concerns of the Irish People on the Treaty of Lisbon" to his fellow European heads of state, stating that the Irish Government would put Lisbon to a new referendum by October 2009 once the following concerns were met:

a) Ensuring that Ireland's requirements regarding maintenance of its traditional policy of neutrality are met;

b) Ensuring that the terms of the Treaty of Lisbon will not affect the continued application of the provisions of the Irish Constitution in relation to the right to life, education and the family;

c) Ensuring that in the area of taxation the Treaty of Lisbon makes no change of any kind to the extent or operation of the Union's competences;

d) Confirming that the Union attaches high importance to:

- * social progress and the protection of workers' rights;

- * public services, as an indispensable instrument of social and regional cohesion;

- * the responsibility of Member States for the delivery of education and health services;

- * the essential role and wide discretion of national, regional and local Governments in providing, commissioning and organising non-economic services of general interest which is not affected by any provision of the Treaty of Lisbon, including those relating to the common commercial policy (*Annex I to Presidency conclusions—Brussels, 11-12 Dec. 2008, 271/08 12*);

The 'Presidency Conclusions' issued at the end of the EU summit state:

1. The European Council re-affirms that the Treaty of Lisbon is considered necessary in order to help the enlarged Union to function more efficiently, more democratically and more effectively including in international affairs. With a view to enabling the Treaty to enter into force by the end of 2009, the European Council, while respecting the aims and objectives of the Treaties, has defined the following path.

2. On the composition of the Commission, the European Council recalls that the Treaties currently in force require

that the number of Commissioners be reduced in 2009. The European Council agrees that provided the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force, a decision will be taken, in accordance with the necessary legal procedures, to the effect that the Commission shall continue to include one national of each Member State.

3. The European Council has carefully noted the other concerns of the Irish people presented by the Taoiseach as set out in Annex I relating to taxation policy, family, social and ethical issues, and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) with regard to Ireland's traditional policy of neutrality. The European Council agrees that, provided Ireland makes the commitment in paragraph 4, all of the concerns set out in the said statement shall be addressed to the mutual satisfaction of Ireland and the other Member States.

The necessary legal guarantees will be given on the following three points:

- * nothing in the Treaty of Lisbon makes any change of any kind, for any Member State, to the extent or operation of the Union's competences in relation to taxation;

- * the Treaty of Lisbon does not prejudice the security and defence policy of Member States, including Ireland's traditional policy of neutrality, and the obligations of most other Member States;

- * a guarantee that the provisions of the Irish Constitution in relation to the right to life, education and the family are not in any way affected by the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon attributes legal status to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or by the justice and home affairs provisions of the said Treaty.

In addition, the high importance attached to the issues, including workers' rights, set out in paragraph (d) of Annex 1 will be confirmed.

4. In the light of the above commitments by the European Council, and conditional on the satisfactory completion of the detailed follow-on work by mid-2009 and on presumption of their satisfactory implementation, the Irish Government is committed to seeking ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon by the end of the term of the current Commission. (*Presidency conclusions—Brussels, 11 and 12 December 2008, 17271/08 2*).

How to do it?

This statement of "legal guarantees" is a vindication of the constructive pro-Europe No stance adopted by the Irish electorate last June (as encouraged by the *Irish Political Review*). The commitment on commissioners is possible as Article 17 of Lisbon states that the European Commission will be made up of representatives of two-thirds of the member states from 2014, unless the European Council unanimously decides to modify this (e.g. in the accession agreement for Croatia expected in 2011).

As regards the statement on neutrality, this will qualify Article 42 of Lisbon, which commits member states to make their military and civilian infrastructure available to EU security and common defence objectives. It is up to Ireland to define what that policy actually is.

The deal seems like a legal tight-rope act, but one for which the Presidency seems to have found a mechanism. After the summit, Sarkozy declared:

"The problem is the legal form of those political commitments. In Ireland, there is a constitutional court, and no doubt people wanting to vote No would go to that court to ask for the [EU Summit] agreements to be complied with.

"So what we now need is not re-ratification by all countries—we have no interest in solving one problem to create 26 others."

He said the commitments given to Ireland would be legislated for in the next EU Treaty on enlargement, most likely to enable Croatia's accession in 2010 or 2011.

"So what we have proposed is that when this enlargement takes place—and only then—we will add to the Croatian accession treaty the so-called 'Irish protocol' with these guarantees" (*The Irish Times*, 17.12.08).

Sarkozy, as an inventive French statesman, has produced a mechanism which will provide a legal framework for dealing with Irish concerns. The Irish, after all, are the only Europeans who had the right to vote on Lisbon. And the constructive European response to the Irish vote is to provide a solution to the *European* (and not *Irish*) problem. For the re-institution of a commissioner for each country—regardless of what mechanism is found subsequently to make this "efficient"—is a victory for smaller EU states, and they know it (at least the Austrians do: Austria's Dublin Ambassador told the Viennese press that the concession to Ireland in relation to maintaining one commissioner per country "was certainly something with which Austria can fully identify"—*Die Presse*, Vienna, 18.12.2008).

Ganley

People get very worked up about Ganley of 'Libertas'. Ganley filled a gap. The substance of the No vote was rooted not in Ganley's Eurosceptic rhetoric but in the stances taken by the IFA, SIPTU, Bishop Brady, the Peace and Neutrality Alliance and others, and as listed in the Government "Statement of Concerns" to the EU Summit. Ganley is now attempting to spread his party throughout Europe and it will be interesting to see where this goes. But I would not hold my breath. The ground he represents is occupied in most countries by a wing of the neo-fascist and/or neo-liberal movements. Ganley's is in fact a very British Eurosceptic position, and it would not be surprising—and, given

Ganley's effuse expressions of nationalism, it would be certainly ironic—if the place where his movement does finally take wings at the Euro-Parliament elections next year is Britain, and Britain alone, possibly as a replacement for the jaded UKIP.

*Irish voters vindicated:
but SIPTU demand not met*

The unprecedented deal was steered through the European Council by Sarkozy operating on French realist reflexes in response to Cowen's robust deal making proposal. The Irish vote, as the *Irish Foreign Affairs* had hoped, did make Europe "stop and think" about where it was heading, and the results are palpable. While most "Irish concerns" are being addressed in the format of "legal guarantees", one glaring gap remains, and that is the area of workers' rights. During Lisbon 1, Jack O'Connor of SIPTU (which functions as the real Irish labour party, when the electoral one, as at present, is confused) expressed his reservations on the trend of European Court decisions in terms of workers' rights. While the Charter of Fundamental Rights attached to the Treaty protects any number of Trade Union and other workers' rights, decisions by the European Court (on the basis of the General Services Directive et al) have given precedence over these to neo-liberal trade "freedoms". But workers' rights anchored in national legislation would take legal precedence:

"Our position is that we will support the Lisbon Treaty if the Government commits to legislate for an entitlement to the benefits of collective bargaining for workers (and, by implication, prohibition against discrimination for seeking to organise to achieve it). This is enshrined in the treaty through the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is already enjoyed by workers in virtually every other country in the EU. However, it will be of little practical value here even if the treaty is ratified, unless the Oireachtas legislates for it" (Jack O'Connor, letter, *Irish Times*, 4th June 2008).

Incomprehensively, the Government failed at the time to respond, and Trade Unionists formed the largest single block of 'No' voters. Cowen will need to address the issue this time, as his efforts to secure a protocol on the rights of workers and Trade Unions in the new deal negotiated in December was effectively vetoed by Britain's "Labour" leaders:

"On the workers' rights issue, EU sources said there were concerns legally binding guarantees offered to Ireland on social rights could have caused political problems in Britain. British foreign secretary David Miliband said that giving workplace rights concessions to the Irish could have led to demands from the House of Commons to re-open debate on the Lisbon Treaty" (*Irish Times*, 13th December).

Nevertheless, the summit statement does specify that "the high importance attached to the issues, including workers' rights, set out in paragraph (d) of Annex 1 [i.e. the "Irish Concerns" –PO'C] will be confirmed". The British opposition to any concession in this area seems to make not a dent in the liberal-left fantasies of some Irish circles regarding the socialist nature of Brown's British Labour Party. But if Lisbon 2 is now to be passed, the absence of movement in the area of labour rights is the remaining barrier. Jack O'Connor has called for national legislation in this area, as such legislation would be protected under the existing terms of the European Treaty. He has reiterated the SIPTU position from the first referendum campaign:

"Workers voted overwhelmingly against the original proposition and are unlikely to be attracted by an alternative, unless issues relating to people's rights at work

are addressed in a tangible and meaningful way. There are issues which need to be dealt with at EU level but a great deal can be done by the Irish Government at an exclusively domestic level" (*Irish Times*, 13th December).

So far the Government has dragged its feet on this. But, if there is one issue which might secure a majority—including working class support—for the re-negotiated Lisbon Treaty, it is this. Unfortunately it is the re-emergence of Russia and the world economic crisis, rather than any internal political development, that have put a halt to the charge of the expansionist, neo-liberal EU of just a year ago. Come on, Brian Cowen, you have shown your mettle on many fronts. Give SIPTU what it needs and Lisbon 2 will be a deal that can be endorsed across the spectrum of Social Partnership and locate Ireland at the "centre of Europe" in the re-shaping of its troubled destiny.

Philip O'Connor

Book review: *Ireland And The European Union* by Brigid Laffan and Jane O'Mahony (Palgrave Macmillan 303pp, £22.99)

Lisbon Debate

Brigid Laffan draws the right conclusion in her most recent book on the EU. She says:

"The outcome of the Lisbon referendum in June 2008 leaves Ireland's European policy and its position in the EU loose of its moorings. The old narrative on the EU as a source of modernisation and financial transfers is no longer relevant. It has not been replaced by a new narrative of Ireland's place in the EU of the 21st century" (p264).

This perfectly sums up the current situation. However, it is most unfortunate that this appears in the very last paragraph of her book. It should have been in the first paragraph and if her book was then based on seeking to create that new, necessary, narrative this could have been a most useful publication. However we are not given that and we are presented instead with a most flawed narrative of Ireland and the EU.

The basic theme we are given is that Irish independence led to disasters and failures personified by De Valera and particularly the failure of protectionism—from which Sean Lemass saved us by introducing Free Trade and getting us into the EEC. Naturally, her sources are replete with reference to Roy Foster, Richard English, and Tom Garvin etc. Europe was and is the Panglossian solution to all our problems and this makes the rejection of Lisbon a total mystery which Ms Laffan can only explain by lack of information and explanation.

I do hope I am not caricaturing Ms Laffan's theme and I was reassured that I was not doing so when I read the review of

the book in the *Irish Times*. The 'journal of record' said:

"The authors draw the balance sheet of Ireland's engagement with the European Economic Community (EEC), then the EU, with great lucidity and authority, from precession as a peripheral basket case through, as emerging star pupil, to the simultaneous crises engendered by the demise of the Celtic Tiger and rejection of Lisbon" (22.12.2009).

I think that puts Ms Laffan's narrative as bluntly as it could be put.

However, the problem is that her narrative simply does not fit the facts. It will be news to many that the country was a basket case during the 1960s prior to accession in 1973. It was certainly news to me and I think to anyone who lived through the period.

The country was transformed at every level for well over 10 years before accession. Even the *Irish Times* itself changed quite a bit and it is not averse at times to claiming that it was the leading agent of the changes then made—an absurd claim but success always has many parents. The paper certainly did not lead the case for joining the EEC in those days. It was at this time that it decided at last to throw in its lot with the natives and catch up with the Ireland that was being made by Donagh O'Malley, Haughey, Lenihan, and the other Young Turks of the period. They were reforming at a rapid pace and implemented one of the most significant of all women's rights—non-discriminatory inheritance—years before entry. They were providing the ultimate proof that an independent

Ireland was here to stay and Anglo-Ireland has better join in or die off completely. In fact, Ms Laffan acknowledges that, in the anti-discrimination area, "*while such domestic non-discrimination legislation would more than likely have been introduced in the fullness of time, accession to the EC speeded up this process*" (p38-9).

In case my view was affected by sentimental rose-tinted reflection, I decided to check with the *Irish Times*'s own accepted authority on these matters—someone who could never be regarded as putting a Haughey or Fianna Fail line—the iconic Garret (the Good) Fitzgerald. Garrett also happens to be Ms Laffan's mentor in EU and other matters. So, an impeccable source for all parties concerned. He was a regular commentator in the *Irish* and *British Press* on the phenomenon that was 1960s Ireland. In one report he summed up the position of the 'basket case' during the 1959-70 period in the *London Times* as follows:

"The 1960s in Ireland were the years of industrial breakthrough. The small and seemingly fragile industrial sector of the republic's economy, painfully built up behind high tariff walls during the previous generation, burst into a flurry of growth after 1959, and doubled its output in the next decade. The growth of output was almost three times as fast as in Britain during the same period" (Garret Fitzgerald, 23.3.1970).

Some ruin, eh? Some might even be saying, please bring back the basket case? A number of other points should be borne in mind to put this in a fuller context—this development occurred effectively across three decades, from the late 50s to the early 70s; Ireland had the most nationalised economy in Western Europe during the period; development occurred with hardly a cent of outside money and with minimal FDI. All this defies the accepted mantras of recent years. Yet it happened and it meant that Ireland joined the EEC on a high in every sense and not in any desperate bid to save itself from the lunatic asylum.

There are many other flaws in the narrative presented by Ms Laffan. We are presented with a constant counterposing of Protectionism (bad) and Free Trade (good). It is assumed that entering the EEC was entering a Free Trade world but it was not. For Ireland, the attraction of the EEC in economic terms was that it was a larger, protected, guaranteed market. It took Mrs. Thatcher and Leon Brittan and a bitter struggle with Delors to get the protectionist outlook fundamentally changed in the EU. Remember the alleged horrors of *'Fortress Europe'*? But nothing of this dispute is even mentioned by Ms Laffan in her long account of the EU!

In fact she inadvertently points out that a choice was made between Free Trade

and the EEC in the mid 50s. At that point there were two rival European associations: the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), set up by the UK to destroy the incipient EEC. Irish political independence was the crucial factor that enabled it to avoid the Free Trade alternative of EFTA, which eventually disappeared into the proverbial dustbin of history. It was its failure that encouraged the UK to adopt a "*if you can't beat them, join them*" policy.

All this is missing from her narrative. She downplays the whole thing and simply says "*Ireland found itself outside the two alternative and competing European structures that were promoting different forms of trade liberalisation and economic integration.*" (p16). No explanation as to why these two organisations existed—apparently to do the same thing?

If only Free Trade and economics were at issue, then Ireland should have joined EFTA and not given a toss for the EEC and its Protectionism. But the issue never was and never is an economic one and that was proved by the fight to the death between the EEC and EFTA—between the UK and the EEC. Nobody tells it like that now and the whole thing therefore becomes meaningless.

Despite the constant counterposing between de Valera and Lemass, there is not a shred of evidence provided that de Valera and Lemass differed on economic policies. Lemass introduced and oversaw the Protectionist era and did the same with the Free Trade era. He saw no conflict whatever as both were simply economic tools to serve the country. In a similar way he had no objection to nationalisation or privatisation or any combination of them and neither had de Valera. Both were tools and what worked best in the context of the time was what mattered. If economic progress could be ensured by everyone standing on their heads it would be implemented.

Protectionism is a common tool used by countries developing infant industries. It was especially valuable in countering the Great Depression. And many countries were Protectionist in the 1930s. Ms Laffan does not mention the Depression. It is like Shakespeare writing *Hamlet* without the Prince. (In fact, I do not recollect a mention of either World War, which means even Shakespeare is missing!). Protectionist policy is therefore made to look like some sort of perversity on de Valera's part. Protectionism was a great success in its time and whatever weaknesses which emerged came after two decades of success—and there was more than one way of coping with those. Political independence enabled the Government to manage the success and to deal with the weaknesses that emerged after the success.

Will the conditions of Free Trade and De-regulation be castigated as vehemently for giving us the current recession and the

Celtic Tiger period ignored? As with many economic policies the strengths are also the weaknesses: it all depends on the context. That is how the Protectionist period was, and should, be regarded.

Also missing from Ms Laffan's narrative is Ireland's most significant contribution to the EU body politic, an instance where Ireland really punched above her weight, in the form of Pat Cox when President of the Parliament. Cox's unique achievement was to humiliate and downgrade the Commission on a stupid corruption charge. The Commission was disembowelled and has never recovered its central role as the focus of EU development. And without that the EU project is rudderless: at the mercy of whatever state or grouping of states wants to throw their weight around. The central integrating element is now just a bureaucracy. How could an Irish authority on the EU miss that?

Also missing is the EU role in initiating the Balkan conflict by recognising Slovenia, and thereby unravelling the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. She has nothing to say about the EU role in the war on Iraq, Afghanistan, nor does she mention EU threats to Iran, subservience to Israel, or its acceptance of the USUK 'war on terror' syndrome, etc. etc. In omitting all this she makes the EU narrative an esoteric collection of processes and procedures that float around in the ether.

There is an old cliché that if you don't where you have come from you are not likely to know where you are going to, and like all clichés it is true in many situations—and never truer than when reading Ms Laffan's book.

The real story is that Ireland joined the EEC, just as it joined the UN and other bodies, as a natural part of its development as an independent State. EC membership complemented Irish development in a variety of economic, social and cultural ways, but the main thing was that Ireland was an equal member of a European grouping that had a mechanism for closer integration and was establishing an independent polity in the Cold War era. It felt totally at ease in this environment.

That environment has totally changed and Ireland no longer feels at ease. By contrast, the UK—which felt ill at ease before—now feels totally at ease with the EU. That is because the Union now reflects its view of the world. That means that it no longer reflects Ireland's view of the world. Hence the problem over the Lisbon Treaty. Lisbon is essentially a request for a vote of confidence in the current EU. Ireland has to be browbeaten to give it. Not a sound practical basis for a union of any sort, whether of the political or personal kind. To proceed on that basis is to build on sand.

Jack Lane

History Of Irish Times

Review: *The Irish Times: a History* by Mark O'Brien
Four Courts Press; €5.00

In this reviewer's view the author of this book is overly sympathetic to *The Irish Times*. At times he suspends his critical faculties. Nevertheless the book is a valuable contribution to an understanding of the newspaper.

The author traces the newspaper's political orientation from its foundation in 1859. He rightly describes it as a conservative and pro-Empire newspaper. For example, it was against changing the Church of Ireland's status as the Established Church.

The Irish Times knew which side it was on and so did its political opponents. While the author says that it was "sympathetic to land reform", the Land League used to refer to the paper as the '*Liarish*' Times. When one of the paper's reporters attended a Land League meeting he was asked to leave by William O'Brien. O'Brien accused the reporter of not being a reporter at all but a "spy". O'Brien had to be restrained from assaulting the reporter when the latter denied the charge. As readers of the *Irish Political Review* will know O'Brien was a liberal who opposed sectarianism within the Home Rule movement and was an enthusiastic supporter of an alliance with the largely Protestant tenant farmers of Ulster and the Catholic tenants in Southern Ireland. So in this reviewer's opinion there is more to O'Brien's anger than the author has revealed.

The author covers the Parnell split quite well revealing that the newspaper like the Catholic hierarchy did not hesitate to denounce Parnell's morals.

The newspaper was also a supporter of the lockout of 1913 and praised William Martin Murphy for the "*fine stand*" which he took. Nevertheless it found space for George Russell's (Æ) powerful denunciation of the 'Masters of Dublin' which the author reproduces:

"Those who have economic power have civic power also, yet you have not used the power that was yours to right what was wrong in the evil administration of this city. You have allowed the poor to be herded together so that one thinks of certain places in Dublin as of a pestilence. There are twenty thousand rooms, in each of which live entire families, and sometimes more, where no function of the body can be concealed, and delicacy and modesty are creatures that are stifled ere they are born ... The men whose manhood you have broken will loath you, and will always be brooding and scheming to strike a fresh blow. The children will be taught to curse you. The infant being moulded in the womb will have breathed into its starved body the

vitality of hate. It is not they but you who are the blind Samson pulling down the pillars of the social order" (p42).

The author deals with 1916 quite well and reproduces the notorious editorial advocating the "surgeons knife" to be applied following the crushing of the Rising. He also remarks that the *Freeman's Journal* denounced *The Irish Times* for "*bloodthirsty incitement to the Government*". *The Irish Times* also disagreed with John Redmond's call for a halt to the executions that followed the Rising.

The author runs quickly through the 1918 Election and the War of Independence and then has the following bizarre description of Bloody Sunday:

"The events of Bloody Sunday in which Michael Collins's squad killed fourteen British agents was described as 'Dublin's most dreadful day since Easter week of 1916; a country whose capital city could be the scene of fourteen callous and cowardly murders, on one Sunday morning had reached the nadir of moral and political degradation'..." (p54).

Remarkably, the author doesn't mention the killing by the British of fourteen civilians in Croke Park on the same day. Perhaps the author is merely reflecting *The Irish Times*'s reporting. But if *The Irish Times* failed to condemn the killing of innocent civilians in Croke Park that is surely worthy of note.

On the Treaty the author comments that the newspaper felt that Southern Unionists would "*do their best to make the new settlement a success*". But he then concludes:

"The same could not be said for all nationalists; shortly afterwards, the country was plunged into civil war" (p57).

This seems to lay the blame for the post-Treaty conflict on the anti-Treaty side, which is at best a very arguable proposition.

Following Independence *The Irish Times* had to adapt to the new political landscape. However, the newspaper didn't hesitate to interfere in the formation of governments as the famous "*Jinks affair*" of 1927 showed. One story has it that future editor of *The Irish Times* R.M. Smyllie, Major Bryan Cooper (Independent TD) and National League TD John Jinks were 'on the batter' and Jinks forgot about a Government no confidence motion. But, while Jinks failed to turn up, Major Bryan Cooper not only turned up, but contributed to the debate and voted with the Government. The vote was tied 71 each and the casting vote of the Ceann Comhairle saved the Cumann

na nGaedheal Government and averted the possibility of a Fianna Fail-supported minority Government. William Redmond's National League was destroyed by the incident in the subsequent general election.

The author presents some evidence, including a claim by Jinks that he always opposed the no confidence motion. But this assertion was in an interview in *The Irish Times*. William Redmond said that Jinks declared his support for the motion on the morning of the vote and stated that Jinks "*must have been spirited away as a result of methods of a century back*". The author does not express an opinion, but in my view Redmond's view is much more credible.

The author deals quite well with the newspaper's views on the emergence of the Blueshirt movement in the 1930s. It thundered against de Valera's dismissal of Eoin O'Duffy and accused the Government of abandoning even the "*pretence of democracy*". But the paper made no such accusations against the Blueshirts. On the contrary it opined:

"Its organisation is distinctly Fascist, but its professions are democratic. It is constitutional but it desires large and, as yet, vague changes in the present system of parliamentary government" (p75).

The paper was disappointed with de Valera's decision to ban the Blueshirts (or Army Comrades Association to give the official name) and contrasted this with his tolerance of the IRA. It praised the "*new hopefulness, vigour and discipline*" that the Blueshirts had brought to public life and commented sympathetically on O'Duffy who had:

"...outlined an ambitious scheme of political reform, which seems to be inspired by Signor Mussolini's great work for Italy" (p76, *The Irish Times*, 26.8.33).

According to the author the paper seemed to approve of O'Duffy's proposal that:

"...by means of a chastened franchise and by various methods of vocational representation, to break the stupid rigours of the present parliamentary regime" p76. *The Irish Times*, 26.8.33).

It was ecstatic on the amalgamation of Cumann na nGaedheal and the Blueshirts to form Fine Gael:

"...the hearts of all good citizens are inspired with new hope and courage" p76, *The Irish Times*, 9.9.33).

And yet, despite Fine Gael's links with fascism the newspaper in the 1930s never tired of accusing de Valera of authoritarianism and comparing him with Hitler and Mussolini. As I point out in my own book, *The Irish Times* never had a problem with authoritarianism as long as it was not for a Republican purpose. The newspaper believed that what the country needed was:

"...a man who will be sufficiently bold to announce definitely that he is opposed to a republic, and that the Saorstát's future lies within the framework of the British Commonwealth" (p78, *The Irish Times*, 30.10.34).

In this reviewer's opinion the book gives an excellent description of *The Irish Times* during the Second World War. It is often said that *The Irish Times* was opposed to censorship. But when this proposition is examined more closely it turns out that the censorship it most vigorously opposed was the State's censorship of the newspaper's British propaganda during the Second World War.

The author gives a fascinating insight into the State's view of *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Times*'s view of the State during this period. The Controller of Censorship Joseph Connolly said this about the newspaper:

"...Running through all its editorials was a suggestion that our neutrality was unreal and of a temporary nature. Such phrases as 'the temporarily safe shelter of Éire's neutrality' frequently appeared" (p101).

Connolly wrote to de Valera describing his role:

"Our lines have all been aimed at preventing publication of anything that would in the slightest degree impair our neutrality, but it is already evident that it is going to be difficult to keep out of 'opinions', leaders and sub-leaders the suggestions a) that we are not really neutral, b) that we cannot continue to be neutral, c) that we are wrong in being neutral, d) that the big majority of the people are opposed to the enemies of Britain... it seems likely that we will have definite difficulty in the case of certain papers such as *The Irish Times* in restraining them from tincturing all or most of their material with a pro-British tinge and, particularly in their leading articles, getting them to follow a strictly neutral line of argument" (p102).

There is no doubt that *The Irish Times*'s view of Ireland's neutrality persists to the present day among historians. However, as Manus O'Riordan has pointed out in a previous issue of this magazine, senior military figures in the Irish Army operating along the Border considered the threat of invasion from Britain more likely than from Germany. All the evidence suggests that Ireland was genuinely neutral during the Second World War and that her primary concern was to preserve her independence.

The newspaper continued to use "*the Army*" and "*the Navy*" when referring to the British Army or Navy. When German citizens left Ireland to return to their own country at the beginning of the War, *The Irish Times* wondered if the "German Government does not believe in the permanence of Irish neutrality".

The Censorship Board excised an *Irish*

Times picture of the Royal Coat of Arms on the old Parliament Building opposite Trinity College. This appeared in a picture of a LSF (part-time Army, the forerunner to the FCA) recruitment rally. Frank Aiken, the Minister responsible for Censorship felt that this was an attempt to portray the Irish Defence forces as being pro-British.

For many years *The Irish Times* had included *memoriam* notices for Irishmen who fought for the British Army under the heading "*Roll of Honour*". However, it agreed to include death notices for the current war under the more neutral heading of "*Killed on Active Service with His Britannic Majesty's Forces*". However, this did not last long and all Irishmen killed in the service of Britain were included under the "*Roll of Honour*" heading. The Censorship Board was infuriated. It restricted the "*Roll of Honour*" heading to deaths during the First World War, arguing that many Irish people believed they were fighting for their country in that war and the Irish State did not exist. However, it threatened to ban the "*Roll of Honour*" heading even for the current War if *The Irish Times* did not change its ways.

Another cause of contention was *The Irish Times* social column. This column was headed "*Court and Personal*" under the British Royal Coat of Arms. The head of the Censorship Board felt that the column:

"merges the State and its personnel in a subordinate way with the British Court as though the State were part of the life and government of Britain."

The Censorship Board decided to prohibit the Royal Coat of Arms and the title "*Court and Personal*". It also prohibited mention of any foreign citizens. In 1945 the restrictions were lifted and *The Irish Times* resumed its descriptions of the doings of titled people. But the emblem of the Royal Court of Arms was not reinstated. Nor was the title "*Court and Personal*". It was replaced with the title: "*Social and Personal*".

However, the State continued to be 'at daggers drawn' with the paper. Right up until the end of the War *The Irish Times* listed President Douglas Hyde after "*every hyphenated name in the country*" in its *Social and Personal* column. This infuriated Frank Aiken. The State was also angered by the paper's support for the British-Soviet invasion of Iran to protect shipping conveyances. The parallels with Britain and Ireland were obvious.

The paper's *Births, Marriages and Deaths* column referred to Portlaoighise, Co. Laoighise and Dun Laoghaire by their imperial names of Maryborough, Queens County and Kingstown.

Smyllie complained that "*political*

censorship was acting under the aegis of the Gaelic League". But the new names were the names designated by the State, which the newspaper appeared not to recognise.

Of course, the censorship had its ridiculous side and most accounts of *The Irish Times* in this period play this side for laughs. One of the famous stories was that Smyllie referred to the naval attack of British soldiers of Irish nationality at sea as a "*boating accident*".

However, having read the author's account of this period, this reviewer has come to the controversial conclusion that not only Neutrality, but also war-time Censorship served to reinforce the independence of the State.

The author deals interestingly with the post-War period. In particular he has a revealing anecdote about Myles na gCopaleen. De Valera had set up the Institute of Advanced Studies with the participation of the distinguished German physicist Erwin Schrödinger. The latter gave a lecture in which he said there was no logical basis for the belief of a first cause or divine creator. T. F. O'Rahilly also outlined his theory that there were two different Christian missionaries—Palladius and Patrick—who had been confused as one figure, St. Patrick.

By any standards these were interesting intellectual developments in 1942. But how did Myles na gCopaleen respond to them? He concluded:

"... the fruit of this institute, therefore, has been an effort to show that there are two Saint Patricks and no God" (p130).

And that there was a risk the Institute: "... would make us the laughing stock of the world".

In this reviewer's opinion this was an unfunny and small-minded reaction, which contributed nothing to intellectual freedom in the country. And yet the conventional view is that de Valera was the rigid conservative and Myles na gCopaleen/Flann O'Brien/Brian O'Nolan was a broken man whose comic genius was stifled by Ireland's authoritarian environment!

The author also gives an intriguing anecdote about Smyllie's relationship with Archbishop John Charles McQuaid. During the Teacher's Strike of 1946 Smyllie wrote to the Archbishop to express disappointment that the Minister for Education had not taken up the Archbishop's offer to act as a mediator between the teachers and the Government.

Here we have Smyllie encouraging the Catholic Church to interfere in a political matter and yet within a few years he denounced the Church for intervening in Noel Browne's Mother and Child Scheme. The author does not make clear that *The Irish Times* failed to support Noel Browne's scheme. Its editorial denounced the

Catholic Church for intervening and thus giving the impression that the Church was running the country, an impression which would not be lost on Northern Unionists.

Interestingly, when Alfred O'Rahilly the President of University College, Cork, wrote a series of articles in the weekly Catholic paper *The Standard* denouncing *The Irish Times*, Smyllie initially made no response. It was only after the second week that Smyllie commented condescendingly by quoting from *Proverbs*:

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be likened unto him."

So, the Editor having abandoned the field of battle, it was left to Myles na Gopaleen, whom O'Rahilly described as the "court jester" of the newspaper, to defend Smyllie's editorial line. Myles conceded that the editorial lacked prudence. He also conceded that the Bishops' intervention was "perfectly legitimate". His only objection was that it should have been done "overtly". This eating of humble pie didn't prevent Myles from dismissing *The Standard* as a small pious weekly. To which O'Rahilly responded that it had twice the circulation of *The Irish Times*.

The author gives the false impression that *The Irish Times* opposed the inter-party Government in the 1951 Election. It is true that it was critical of it, but notwithstanding the Mother and Child debacle and—more seriously for *The Irish Times*—the declaration of the Republic, *The Irish Times* believed the outgoing government deserved another chance. The 1954 Election was the first election that *The Irish Times* advocated, albeit very grudgingly, a Fianna Fail vote. This probably reflected the fact that Alec Newman had become the *de facto* Editor in the last year of Smyllie's life.

Newman was probably the first liberal Editor of the newspaper. He was also the first Editor to be sacked by the newspaper. The author notes that Newman denounced the Anglo-French occupation of the Suez canal in 1956.

The author deals competently with more recent events. There is a detailed description of *The Irish Times Trust* which was set up in 1974. He also discusses the "white nigger" letter and the other 1969 documents released by the British Records Office. However, the newspaper's handling of the controversy in 2003 is inadequately dealt with.

The author is interesting on the brief and unsuccessful period in which Fergus Pyle was Editor (1974-1977). Pyle comes across as being a very cautious Editor who was anxious to avoid controversy. The author gives as an example the Bula Mines controversy in which the State bought a 24 per cent stake in the company. The

newspaper got hold of an independent valuation but sat on the story until the *Sunday Independent* published it first. It so happened that one of the beneficiaries of the sale was Richard Wood who also was a Governor of *The Irish Times Trust*. Unfortunately, the author does not spell out why *The Irish Times* sat on the story. Did, for instance, the State pay more than the shares were worth? Was there a suggestion that Wood intervened to prevent publication? This appears to have been a controversial political event, but the author does not spell out why.

Uncharacteristically, Fergus Pyle threw caution to the wind on a story revealing the existence of the Garda "Heavy Gang", which used psychological tactics to break suspects' resistance to revealing information or signing incriminating statements. The author notes the:

"...coincidental fact that the paper broke the story at the time that the State was pursuing a case against Britain in the European court of human rights over the use of unorthodox interrogation methods in Northern Ireland" (p216).

The European Court found Britain's "unorthodox methods" to be "inhuman and degrading".

But a number of deputies in Fine Gael thought *The Irish Times*'s revelations were very far from being a coincidence. Gerard Lynch TD in a speech in Listowel said:

"It is no coincidence that these charges get prominence in a section of the press that has been traditionally hostile to Irish institutions and who never cease to attack the moral and political standards by which Irish people live. Neither is it a coincidence that such charges are levelled with increasing ferocity at the very time when the nation from which such organs would have us take our standards is on trial before the world for activities that more properly belong to Cromwellian days or the era of the pitch cap for the mere Irish. Obviously the publicity given to such allegations in the British Press and their allies in the Republic is designed to distract attention from the Irish case at Strasbourg, and it should be seen as such by all Irish people" (p217).

Another Fine Gael TD, Fintan Coogan, accused the paper of "doing the dirty work for John Bull".

The author concludes his book with the following sentence:

"The Irish Times has helped open up and transform Irish society and will continue to do so for many decades to come".

This book is not critical of *The Irish Times*. Too often the author gives the newspaper the benefit of the doubt. However, there is much valuable information, which will give the discerning reader pause for thought. For readers interested in the subject of *The Irish Times* this book is highly recommended.

Review: From the Margins to the Centre: A History of The Irish Times by Dermot James.

The Woodfield Press. €45.00

The author of this book spent his working life in the commercial department of *The Irish Times*. He appears to have an interest in Anglo-Irish themes judging by the titles of the other books he has written: *The Gore-Booths Of Lissadell*; *John Hamilton Of Donegal 1800-1884: This Recklessly Generous Landlord*; and a book he co-wrote with the title *The Wicklow World Of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850*.

He was recruited to the newspaper by typically informal methods. His father knew someone in Helys, a printing company that shared directors with *The Irish Times* from the early 1940s up until 1972 when Helys was bought by Smurfits. George Hetherington, who was a director of Helys and *The Irish Times*, arranged in 1946 for the young Dermot James to work as one of the counter staff accepting pre-paid advertisements.

So James's book is written from the perspective of the insider. But this is no 'kiss and tell'. Nor is it the memoirs of a disgruntled employee with a few scores to settle. On the contrary he seems to have been treated with nothing but kindness in his long career with the paper.

The book is not without merit. The author is rightly proud of the fact that he unearthed a long forgotten Editor of the newspaper James Scott (1877-1899). As the author points out, this indicates the newspaper's complete lack of interest in its own history. Some readers will be interested in James's descriptions of developments in printing technology. However, although the book may not be the authorised history of *The Irish Times*, it reads like one and as such it has many of the evasions that one has come to expect from people associated with that newspaper.

While the author concedes that *The Irish Times* was a "Protestant and Unionist" paper (p19) he spends a lot of time trying to show that it was not quite as Protestant or Unionist as many people might think. For instance, he points out that the first owner Major Laurence Knox was a Home Rule MP. However, this requires some explanation. The Home Rule envisaged in the 1860s was a measure of local autonomy, but firmly within the Empire. It was a plaything of Anglo-Irish Protestants. Home Rule was compatible with Unionism. But, as soon as the Home Rule movement began to attract the support of the mass of the people and advocated greater independence, *The Irish Times* reaffirmed its traditional Unionism and denounced what the Home Rule movement had become under Parnell. The Home Rule movement had changed, not *The Irish Times*. Mark O'Brien in his book has

a pertinent quote from an editorial celebrating its 50th anniversary:

"In its fifty years of existence the Irish Times has had one change of ownership and no change in policy... We have supported every national movement, and all legislation, that seemed likely to promote Ireland's prestige and welfare as an integral part of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. Honestly, and to the best of our ability, we have resisted every action and every measure that seemed to us calculated to injure or retard that aim" (*The Irish Times*, 8.6.1909).

James in his book gives quite long and tedious extracts from the newspaper to indicate that it noticed Catholics. However, when it referred to "*the Church*", it always meant the Established Church and not the denomination of the majority of people on the island (p15).

It was also completely unaware and uninterested in political developments in the Catholic population. The author quotes from an editorial of 14th March 1864, which indicates to this reviewer how out of touch the newspaper was. The editorial was in response to a Member of Parliament who accused Ireland of being "*disloyal*":

"Ireland is thoroughly loyal, and well affected to the Queen and to the Royal line in which the inheritance of the Imperial Crown is vested. In no part of her Majesty's dominions is her character more respected, or her happiness more desired, than in her realm in Ireland. Though we rarely, and but fitfully, enjoy the sunshine of the presence of Majesty, we know and feel it is a miserable and selfish clique which interposes its shadow between the Sovereign and a faithful people. Irishmen are ready now, to contend to the death for the honour of her Majesty and the dignity of her Crown, and for the integrity of the constitution" (p14).

The author does not comment on this editorial, but it is quite typical of *Irish Times* editorials from its foundation to Irish independence and beyond. Its conception of the Irish nation was Protestant and loyal to the Crown. The emerging Catholic, nationalist and republican population was invisible to it.

The newspaper did, however, notice the Catholic Archbishops' denunciation of Charles Stewart Parnell following the O'Shea divorce case in 1890. The author reproduces this statement. But he doesn't let us sample *The Irish Times* editorial, which similarly denounced Parnell.

The author covers the First World War and 1916 quite well. As well as relevant editorials he quotes from P.S. O'Hegarty, one of the leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, on the paper's coverage of the 1916 Rising:

"...the army and *The Irish Times* demanded blood and got it" (p70)

The author does not mention the 1918 Election or the 1919 Dáil and devotes only a few lines to the War of Independence. There is not much about the newspaper's coverage of the first couple of decades after independence. There is no mention of the Blueshirts or the Jinks affair. He does mention the paper's opposition to de Valera's policy of ending the land annuities.

The author reproduces an editorial of 1st October 1938 on the Munich Peace Agreement:

"As we think, two men, above and before all others, have been responsible for the fact that Europe enters the month of October at peace instead of war. Both of them have not hesitated to make heavy sacrifices for the sake of those many millions of innocent lives... One of them is Neville Chamberlain; the other, Edward Benes..."

Interestingly, although the newspaper had spotted the significance of the deal, in particular the control Hitler obtained of the armaments industry, it was remarkably sympathetic to Benes's capitulation:

"From the moment when Herr Hitler spoke at Nuremberg the issue was clear. The rights and wrongs of the Sudeten Germans' case against Czechoslovakia did not matter. What did matter was the fact that Germany possessed the mightiest armaments in the world; that its leader had set his heart on a certain object, and that he was determined to go to any lengths to secure it..."

"What shall we say of President Benes for whom the heart of humanity is bleeding today? Since the crisis began, Edward Benes has been subjected to unparalleled provocation. He has been reviled and abused in the coarsest and vilest terms not only by Herr Hitler and Field-Marshal Goering, but also by the whole controlled Press of Germany, which has depicted this valiant and high minded statesman as a cunning criminal, seeking to embroil the world in a suicidal war. He hardly could have been blamed by history if he had given way to the popular clamour and led his nation to an epic fate; but Edward Benes has a conscience and no man... has deserved better of mankind" (p112).

Could this have been an example of international solidarity among Freemasons (Smyllie and Benes)!?

The author deals less comprehensively than Mark O'Brien with the issue of war time Censorship, but does look at the controversy between Churchill and de Valera after the war.

This reviewer found the author's handling of the Fethard on Sea controversy of 1957 curious. This was a boycott of Protestant businesses following the abduction by a Ms Cloney of her children

to Belfast because of her husband's refusal to bring up their children as Protestants.

James claims that the boycott was instigated by local clergy rather than by a "*number of women*" as reported by *The Irish Times* at the time. He doesn't give a reference for this although it appears that this was the view of Hubert Butler. Nor does James mention an affidavit from Mr. Cloney claiming that, when he searched for his children in Belfast he was approached by his wife's barrister who told him that his two children would be brought up in the Protestant faith and that he consider changing his own religion.

If local clergy instigated the boycott, it is extremely unlikely that it was all local clergy because *The Irish Times* reported that a local priest advised a Catholic teacher who had been working in a Protestant school to return to work and ignore the boycott.

Most curious is the following comment by James:

"When the Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, was asked to intervene, he was unable to do so but described the boycott as 'ill-conceived, ill-considered and futile for the purpose for which it seems to have been intended'" (p150).

It is difficult to know what James would consider as an intervention! De Valera made a public statement on the matter, which was welcomed by *The Irish Times*, whereas Fine Gael remained silent. What more does James expect of de Valera? *The Irish Times*'s editorial at the time said:

"We welcome de Valera's attitude to the boycott of Protestants in Fethard-on-Sea... He speaks for all honourable men in saying that it is unjust to confound the innocent with the guilty" (*The Irish Times*, 5.4.57).

The author is very disappointing on the setting up of *The Irish Times Trust* in 1974. He quotes extensively from the business editor of the time, Andrew Whittaker and from Conor Brady's book on the workings of the Trust. But there is precious little from the author himself who was much closer to the action. Dermot James was secretary of *The Irish Times* from 1974 and secretary of *The Irish Times Trust* from 1978 and yet he has very little of his own to say about them and their workings.

An irritating aspect of this book is that the author seems proud of the fact that he knows far more than he is telling. Commenting on the Articles of Association or Constitution of the Company he says:

"...it is interesting that while the articles specifically state that directors undertake to 'observe strict secrecy respecting all transactions of the company' no such rule applies to the company secretary" (p216).

While discretion can be considered a virtue in a human being, it is a vice in a writer and a source of endless frustration for the long-suffering reader.

Needless to say James doesn't even mention the "*white nigger*" letter or the subsequent controversy. There is not the slightest criticism of Major McDowell or his role in running the paper. There are numerous pictures of Major McDowell in the book, but not one has him sporting a monocle, which this reviewer gathers is no longer the image which the Major wishes to present.

In conclusion this book is not without interest. But while Mark O'Brien can be accused of not being sufficiently critical of the newspaper this does not capture the essence of James's book. Dermot James's work is not so much a description of *The Irish Times* as it has been since 1859 but rather a faithful exposition of how *The Irish Times* would like to be perceived.

It should be read with that *caveat* in mind.

John Martin

GAZA NOTES concluded

Oliver Donoghue published a pro-Israel letter in the *Irish Times* on 7th January. He is a former leading Stickie (organiser of the "Industrial Section", the unit set up to take over the Trade Unions in the 1970s-80s). Donoghue retired from the ICTU, where he was the senior industrial officer, in 2008, but still works on a consultancy basis. He married shortly before he retired, and the best man's speech was by Harris. Can it really be true that the old WP/Harris network continues to function in the Trade Union movement?

Trade Union Friends Of Palestine held a joint meeting in Liberty Hall on 7th January to launch a campaign of sanctions and boycott on Israel. Chaired by Philip O'Connor of IPSC, it was addressed by *Jack O'Connor* (Gen. Pres. SIPTU), *Michael Mulcahy TD* (Fianna Fáil), *Brendan Archibald* (former MANDATE official who had organised the Dunnes Strike against South Africa in the 1980s), *David Landy* (TCD academic—who coordinated the letter by 148 academics across Ireland calling for EU sanctions against Israel), and *Shane Cullen* (a well-known artist, who called for cultural sanctions).

Tony Gregory did a final post-mortem service for the oppressed at his well-attended Dublin funeral on 7th January. His brother called for all to remember the Palestinian people under current onslaught, adding that Tony if alive would have stood shoulder to shoulder with them. The audience of several thousand burst into long applause. The ceremony was *de rigueur* for political leaders: Cowen and Martin (among others) were in attendance.

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STRANGE TRAGEDY OFF SOUTH COAST

Before Christmas there was precious little media coverage of an incident that occurred off the coast of Cork that involved one fatality. With the exception of the *Evening Echo* and local papers, it was off the national radar. As there was a huge rescue effort involved, it makes the incident all the more intriguing. Nine Swiss men with their Irish host, Michael McGill, who owns Coney Island, left the Colla pier near Schull in a 16-foot punt for an 800 yard trip. It was after 11.30 p.m. and weather conditions were described as "*atrocious*", with "*gale force eight winds and high seas*".

The ten men, it has since been reported were wearing diving suits (highly unusual and this aspect has since been shrouded in secrecy and rumour) but all are agreed that they had engine failure and then tried using an auxiliary engine but allegedly this was not strong enough for them to be taken to Coney Island. It gets murky here as to what happened next. Some say a wave overturned their boat and one man *swam* to Long Island where he raised the alarm at 1.45 a.m. What is not in doubt is that a huge rescue operation began with up to

"60 people from Schull Inshore Rescue Boat, Castletownbere and Baltimore RNLI stations and coastguard units from Goleen, and Toe Head shortly before 2 a.m. The nine other men held onto the boat and eight of them were washed ashore on Long Island. The body of the 62 year old man was found shortly before 3.30 a.m."

The men were found shivering inside in two old houses and were taken to Bantry Hospital where they were discharged the following morning. The dead man was brought to Cork University Hospital where a post-mortem was held. But here is the kick. The gardai took the unusual step of **not releasing** the name of the dead man or any further details about him. They stated that baldly (a *first* in my opinion) as it is mandatory for the State to name the dead where the name is known and there was a total acceptance that they knew the name and it was not suppressed until the relatives were informed either. All very odd indeed.

But the next jarring note was sounded when members of the Schull Inshore Community Rescue crew brought ashore the punt. Bearing in mind this was supposed to have overturned, it was with *disbelief* that the front-page of the *Evening Echo* (Friday, 5th December 2008) pictured a perfectly turned out punt with all the men's bags, a petrol can, the white outboard engine and the anchor all nicely nesting inside with no evidence of **it having capsized**.

*** It Is Time**

There is a belief that there was some kind of operation going on, bearing in mind that Schull and its environs have some pretty big heavy hitters sometimes in residence nearby. Sir Anthony O'Reilly has a compound in Glandore, Peter Sutherland has a pad in Goleen. There is a history of death by *accidentally drowning* in these waters. One only has to remember the top business-man Bernie Cahill, who fell off the pier in Schull one night, and then of course there was the shocking drowning of former Marine Minister Huge Coveney, one of the Captains and the Kings of Cork, who fell off the cliff in Robert's Cove trying to save his dog it was said.

BARNARDOS

Barnardos is an English children's charity which has launched itself into Ireland in the last few years. It has an intense media presence. This is because it carries substantial advertisements *daily* in the national media, the *Irish Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Irish Examiner* and probably the *Irish Independent*. Its Chief Executive is former Labour handler and media *spinmeister* Fergus Finlay, who also has a weekly column in the *Irish Examiner*. It also acts as an advocacy group pressuring the Government into bringing a Children's Rights Referendum to the Irish people. They claim that our current Constitution doesn't protect them enough, instead giving primacy to the family unit—which liberals want to see abolished.

But there is already sufficient legislation enacted to protect our children. The *Childcare Act, 2001*—allows "*health boards extra powers to intervene in cases of suspected abuse. It also includes statutory duties to deliver support services*" (Irish Times, 2.1.2009).

Any story, in this case the Roscommon scandal—about which I feel hugely uncomfortable writing anything as there has been such media hysteria (a mother of six children was jailed for seven years for a catalogue of abuse)—immediately brings out the calls from *interested parties* for sweeping changes—not allowing a cooling down period of reflection first. The *interested parties* that I mention are of course various groups like Barnardos and the legal profession—all with something to gain if one has to be truthful.

It has to be said that Barnardos is sometimes given credit to which it is not entitled. In the *Evening Echo* (19.1.2009) there was a news piece declaring '*Barnardos open new kid's centre*'. We were told that the Minister for Education Batt O'Keeffe opened the "*Barnardos Brighter Futures Centre in Knocknaheeny* *officially this morning*" and that 97 children had passed through its doors since it opened last April. "*Brighter Futures*" offers a "*wide variety of services including a pre-birth group for expectant mothers, a parent*

and toddler group which teaches parents to get the best from their child's development, an early years service and après-school service". Next day there was almost a full page article on 'New €2.9 million children's centre officially opened'. There was a photo of four lovely children and one of Batt and Fergus with their hands painted bright green and blue respectively.

But who provided the money? There was a small clue above the children's photo—'Barnardos and Bon Secours Bring Fun'. Within the text of the article we were informed that the €2.9 million funding "was provided by private donors, the Bon Secours Foundation, The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, Department of Environment and local government". So there was **no funding** from the source who was claiming ownership—Barnardos. And in the *Cork Independent* (22.1.2009), there was a photo of the cutting of the ribbon ceremony, this time inclusive of a Bon Secours nun—Sister Margaret Mary Hanafin.

Private Eye, the English satirical magazine, in issue No. 1225, 12-25th December 2008, carried a piece on English Barnardos. Martin Narey, head of the charity there, rightly attracted strong criticism for suggesting "that had Baby P not been killed, his background suggested he may have grown up to become "feral, a parasite, helping to infest our streets"... " MPs accused him of being "insensitive and provocative" for using the case of a child who had died after months of abuse to illustrate the need to tackle poverty and deprivation.

What they didn't mention was that only eight days earlier, Narey had been spearheading a Barnardos's campaign to, er, stop branding children as "vermin", "animals" or as "feral".

As *Private Eye* commented, Narey in his labelling of Baby P was "clearly reverting to his previous incarnation as **head of the Prison Service**".

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Nosooner had the Roscommon woman been jailed than the media went into meltdown. What has followed had been one of the steepest learning curves for those of us who seek to analyse our society with some precision and clarity. Such precepts were sadly lacking in nearly all of the reporting that followed. From Day One the chorus of the most vitriolic abuse was against the Catholic Church. The *Irish Times* (22.1.2009) kicked off with front page reportage that "Court told of support for incest mother by Catholic group". Reading the text of the article, this turned into "a Catholic right-wing organisation"—which eventually boiled down into just one person, a "woman called Mina Bean Ui Chroibin".

By the next day, the *Irish Times*

(2.1.2009) accepted that only that woman was mentioned in court and there was no right-wing group involved, though the paper again tried it on, saying "she is known" to various anti-abortion groups).

Though admitting that she was now an elderly woman, the intrepid reporters rushed off to battle, besieging the home of the poor woman, trying to get in. Their front-line reports noted:

"Though an elderly woman could be seen through net curtains in the flat-roof house adjoining the post-office, there was no answer to calls. In the post office entrance area was an "Unsung Hero" certificate awarded to Bean Ui Chroibin in 2006 by then Lord Mayor of Dublin Catherine Byrne. It was given, it said, for: "Having demonstrated dedication as an active citizen through your participation and effort... Thank you on behalf of all the people of Dublin"."

How dare these people hound this poor woman? Why didn't Editor Geraldine Kennedy intervene in disgust to stop such harassment by her employees?

One notices, though, that as a fellow former PD member with a Fine Gael background herself Madam was careful enough about identifying the party to which Catherine Byrne belonged. If it had been Fianna Fail, there wouldn't have been such reticence—*non*?

In other papers it was the women columnists who were worst in the avowedly *sectarian outrage* against the Catholic Church. Regina Lavelle (who she?) screamed, "Those children were let down by the Church as much as by their mother". Nowhere is there any mention of a father or fathers letting their children down. One wonders how Lavelle came to overlook the forces in society which have been breaking down family structure—a structure which obviously was *absent* in Roscommon. Perhaps it is because she is one of those kicking down such institutions.

The *Irish Daily Mail* (23.1.2009) carried her article, and a two-page spread as well, with ever more lurid headlines. There was also an archive picture of Mine Bean Ui Cribin (sic) with the red-lined title 'The Fanatic'. Politicians like Alan Shatter were urging immediate inquiries. Another woman columnist for the *Irish Daily Mail* likened the story to the 'house of horrors' in Austria and called for a change to the Constitution. She—Aileen O'Meara—quoted the opinion of a legal expert, Geoffrey Shannon, that parents had "sovereign dominion over their children". So what does the Constitution really say about this issue:

Article 42. 1. "...it is the duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.

"Article 42.5. "...the State as guardian of the common good, by appropriate means, shall endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child."

By the following day, (24.1.2009) that paper had another two-page spread headed,

Betrayal of Ann Lovett by Susan O'Keeffe with a huge picture of the statue of Our Lady in Granard, Co. Longford. Going back to the death of the young girl in 1984, O'Keeffe ranted about

"the hypocrisy that prevents us screaming from the rooftops to rid ourselves of this ghastly church with its ghastly ways that long ago lost its right to be enshrined in our constitution, influence our politics and run our schools."

But what have young girls got out of this new dispensation, created by the liberals. The Mater Hospital released data over Christmas (14.12.2008) showing that the binge-drinking culture of our youth was impacting seriously on their health. The Centre for Liver Disease at the Mater stated that younger and younger patients were turning up for treatment and "one 18 year old female had end-stage liver disease". Sexual infections (no longer diseases) are growing among teenagers, as well as suicides. Contemporary Ireland is no safe haven for our young, but bashing the Church has become the new template for modernity.

And it is strange that a leading Churchman himself is leading the affray. Step forth Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. Take your bow because you have well earned it. If the leaked reports from Rome are true and you are soon to be out of here, it can't come quickly enough. You are a disgrace and a coward. When someone needed to say stop, you certainly didn't do so. You have blackguarded the very Church and its members you were committed to protecting. It finally took a layman—Richard Waghorne to say what everyone knew. It was

"open season for the national sport of Church-bashing... There comes a point when a willingness to attack Catholicism on whatever pretext is to hand shades into something discreditable. We don't know why the courts left the Roscommon children with their abusive mother in 2000 or why the HSE [Health Services Authority] did not appeal the decision. But we do know that those decisions were made by the arms of the State, not the Church. To blame the latter anyway is another sign of out-of-control anti-Catholicism" (Ir. Daily Mail, 24.1.2009.)

In a published letter, the *Irish Times* had a reader from Surrey write:

"...the time has come for individual priests and people to depart from the Irish RC Church, not merely as individuals, but as organised groups.

"We have fine, home-grown, patriotic, well-run, democratic, theologically modern Irish Christian churches such as the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterians, Methodists and the newer evangelical churches available as alternatives".

The Archbishop's silence is deafening..... and telling.

Julianne Herlihy

Historians

Keogh And Whitaker

Dermot Keogh's long, rambling, hagiographical apologia for Jack Lynch comes close to breaking down at one point under the weight of the hostile evidence even as presented by Professor Keogh himself:

"Lynch was under great pressure in mid-August 1969 to provide a vigorous response to the British. His public diplomacy strategy was hurriedly put together and was, in part, ill-judged. It was strident and confrontational and at variance with the conventional diplomatic policy subsequently adopted.

"Lynch found it very difficult to hold the different strands within his Government together" (p186).

And of course he failed utterly to hold it together. Indeed he failed catastrophically. He ended up prosecuting on a spurious criminal charge one of the most able Ministers in his Government, Charles Haughey; fearing to prosecute another, Neil Blaney, against whom a much more credible body of evidence could be assembled than against Haughey; and losing a third, Boland, who just walked away from him in disgust.

It is the business of a Prime Minister in a Parliamentary system to hold together in Government representatives of the major strands of his Party. Party politics never ceases to operate in the Parliamentary system. The American President takes his Ministers from where he pleases—from anywhere except the Legislature. He has no rivals in his Government. The Prime Minister must take his Ministers from the Legislature and therefore they are all his rivals, in principle at least. The President has free Executive authority for four years. Congress may obstruct him up to a point but it cannot replace him, as, for example, the Commons replaced Asquith with Lloyd George and the Dail replaced Haughey with Reynolds, and later replaced Reynolds with the Leader of the Opposition, Bruton. The political skills required of the Taoiseach are different in kind from Presidential skills.

Dublin journalists who turn to writing history with a world view apparently formed in a Kindergarten (e.g. Stephen Collins) seem to be shocked when they find that Lynch's Cabinet was not characterised by monolithic uniformity. And then all they can see in the politics of 1970 is personal power struggles between Lynch and his colleagues—or, rather, permanent scheming by Lynch's colleagues to overthrow him, and to manoeuvre against each other while doing so—because the commentators have reduced Lynch to a kind of plaster saint who would never do anything so vulgar as struggle for power.

continued

Rivalry amongst colleagues in Government should be assumed to be permanently operative, at varying levels of intensity, in the Parliamentary system. That should be presumed to be the case, even when there is little evidence of it, because it is the case in principle.

The evidence is that rivalry of this kind was at a very low level of intensity in Dail politics in 1969-70.

Blaney and Haughey ran the election campaign for Lynch in mid-June 1969, only two months before the North went into flux. Both had stood down in his favour when Lemass retired two years earlier. When Colley contested the leadership against Lynch Boland supported Lynch. The surviving Party founders were not happy with the development. Aiken supported Colley, and MacEntee thought Lemass's retirement was irresponsible.

Lynch had the active support of the most able of the new generation of the Party. And there is no evidence, beyond the general presumption that Parliamentary colleagues are *ipso facto* rivals, that they set about trying to replace him only two months after winning the Election for him and at a time when he was very popular in the country.

Less than a year after that Election he purged them all. They were too much for him to hold together. After the purge he was left with the reserves, the minor talents. But he even had trouble with those.

Why did he find it too difficult to hold the major figures of the party together in the Government? What was the pressure that made him do what he did? Was it a pressure from outside, or were the different strands that he could not hold together all present within himself?

He may have been a devil on the hurling field, but it seems that as Taoiseach he was weak, indecisive and uncomprehending, pulled this way and that by his own impulses, and without even enough understanding of the Ulster Protestants to know what he said to them in a nice tone of voice was certain to outrage them.

The plaster-saint figure presented by Keogh is not credible—not in a leader acceptable to Fianna Fail. In Fine Gael perhaps—for all I know, Enda Kenny is what he seems. But it could hardly be that somebody who was in Fianna Fail for so long—even though he entered it accidentally—and had risen steadily in the hierarchy until he became Taoiseach, should be entirely empty-headed, or a pure and simple careerist. He would have been found out. So it must be assumed that the conflicting tendencies on the North which always characterised Fianna Fail—and which spilled over to Labour and Fine

Gael too under Fianna Fail hegemony—were present in Jack Lynch too. And the speeches he continued to make on the North long after the purge were more destructive—assuming the object was to appease the Protestant community—than any speech of Haughey's that I ever saw.

The most interesting thing in Keogh's book is the revelation that Lynch's mentor in 1969-70 was the blessed T.K. Whitaker, whose Memos to Lynch are quoted at length and go some way towards explaining why Lynch's mind became such a morass. The following are from extracts given by Keogh of a Memorandum on Northern policy written by Whitaker in November 1968 (just a month after the Civil Rights movement took off on the streets of Derry):

"Long since, we abandoned force as a means of undoing Partition, and rightly so because (1) the use of force to overcome Northern Unionists would accentuate rather than remove basic differences and (2) it would not be militarily possible in any event. We were, therefore, left only one choice, a policy of seeking unity in Ireland by agreement in Ireland between Irishmen. Of its nature this is a long-term policy requiring patience, understanding and forbearance and resolute resistance to emotionalism and opportunism. This is the policy followed by Mr. Lemass... and it underlines the contacts made by him and by the present Taoiseach with Captain O'Neill..."

"*De facto*, at any rate, we have recognised that Northern Ireland is at present part of the UK and that the Government of N. Ireland exercises responsibility there to the extent of the devolution granted by Westminster..."

"The British are not blameless, as far as the origins of Partition are concerned, but neither are they wholly to blame. Nobody can read the history of the past century in these islands without some understanding of the deep, complex and powerful forces which went into the making of Partition. It is much too naive to believe that Britain simply imposed it on Ireland. For the Northern Unionists the main motive binding them to the UK is fear rather than loyalty—fear of loss of power, property, privilege and even religious independence if they were subject to a Dublin Parliament. They are also conscious (as are many Nationalists too) of superior financial advantage, in terms of agricultural subsidies, social services, etc. of being part of the UK rather than an independent dominion or part of Ireland receiving no annual subvention from Westminster..."

"We have already drawn the conclusion that all we can expect from the British is a benevolent neutrality—that no British interest will be interposed to prevent the re-unification of Ireland when Irishmen North and South have reached agreement. This, of itself, will be cold comfort if we cannot, in addition, achieve a good "marriage settlement—, in the form of a

tapering-off over a long period of present British subsidisation of Northern Ireland. Otherwise, we in the South will be imposing on ourselves a formidable burden which many of our own citizens, however strong their desire for Irish unity, may find intolerable. We cannot lay certain social ills in the North at the door of Partition without acknowledging (at least in private) that conditions for Catholics in N.I. would be far worse if Partition were abolished overnight...

"The concern aroused [in Britain by evidence of discrimination etc.] is rather about the image of Britain and the reaction will be to hasten the righting of social and political injustice in the local jurisdiction. The British merely want to clean up what they regard as an unpresentable back yard.

"... We must treat all British manoeuvres in relation to N.I. as being inspired by (1) short-term political party motives and (2) the longer-term desideratum of cleaning up a "back-yard" which gives Britain a bad image in the eyes of the world... We should be most careful... never to appear to suggest to the British that N.I. could be brought to heel by financial sanctions, such as the reduction, or withdrawal of present grants and subsidies...

"We, for our part, remain dedicated to the ideal of a united Ireland. We need not torment ourselves by the thought that Mr. O'Neill's policy might succeed, that even Northern Nationalists would some day be seduced, by the elimination of discrimination... into becoming happy citizens of a N.I. within the U.K. We should rather remind ourselves how Mr. O'Neill's policy, besides being best for our Nationalist brethren in the short-run, is the most likely to loosen the roots of Partition...

"So far as Partition (and Northern "loyalty" to the UK) rest on fear, the grounds for this will be progressively removed by the growing prosperity of both parts of Ireland, the approach to full employment and satisfaction of housing needs, the disappearance, in other words, of the root causes of discrimination. All the modern trends are towards liberalisation, towards greater concern with human rights and conditions, towards looser regional political grouping, towards greater tolerance (or indifference) in religious matters. There is also a growing desire, even within the U.K., for greater local autonomy and there is little doubt that the N.I. Government envies our distinctive statehood...

"Our minds should be open to explore all kinds of possibilities, confederation, federation, external association, condominium, the Benelux arrangement, the political integration principles of the EEC. The financial subsidisation problem is only one of the reasons why a very special formula may have to be found. It need not involve any surrender of our present independence. From the standpoint of North-South relations it is unfortunate that our 1937 Constitution

appears to claim for Dublin such a premature and dogmatic right, without reservations as to form, to rule the whole of Ireland. But there is nothing we can do about this, in present circumstances.

"... Force will get us nowhere... Relying on Britain to end Partition is also futile... Trying to get Britain to put pressure on the N.I. Government will pay no dividends politically... There is, in fact, no valid alternative to the policy of "agreement in Ireland between Irishmen"; any other policy risks creating a deeper and more real partition than has ever existed in the past. We were in real danger that such a partition could be created during the IRA raids [in 1956 campaign]" (in Keogh, p140-145).

That was dated the 11th of November 1968. Then:

"While Lynch assimilated the Whitaker memorandum, Craig announced a one-month ban on all marches. On 16 November 15,000 people from a broad front of nationalist groups defied the ban... On 22 November the Government of Northern Ireland issued a five-point programme for reform... On 30 November there was a confrontation between loyalists and civil rights marchers in Armagh. Ian Paisley was sent to jail for three months for unlawful assembly... In an effort to stem the spread of protest, on 9 December O'Neill made a direct appeal on television... saying that "Ulster stands at the crossroads"... Catholic leaders received the speech very favourably. O'Neill sacked Craig on 11 December... On foot of such decisive action, Whitaker wrote a note of congratulation to O'Neill... Much depended on the future course of events in Northern Ireland and on O'Neill's ability to win support for compromise. The Fianna Fail ard-fheis was held at the end of January, a week after the Government had celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of Dail Eireann. Lynch... warned against change that was based on "ideologies which are anathema to the Irish people"..." (p147-8).

It emerges from the memoirs of Maire MacSwiney, the daughter of Terence and Muriel MacSwiney, who had something of an outsider's view of Irish affairs as she had been brought up as German by her mother until the early 1930s, that there were no Government plans to commemorate the founding of the Dail until she asked Lynch about it. For all the talk about democracy, the 1916 Rising—not the 1918 Election—was taken to be the founding event.

In fact, we had prepared for the 50th anniversary even though the Government forgot, and because of us there was a stirring event in the life of the capital. We too were outsiders in that we brought "*ideologies which are anathema*" into the life of the people. We set out to show what a mockery the Democratic Programme of 1919 had become. An event was organised

by the late Denis Dennehy and Pat Murphy. Dennehy got himself arrested for squatting in an empty 'Georgian' property, in order to make an issue of the dire housing situation in Dublin. Then he ensured that his arrest led to conviction and imprisonment. And, in prison he went on hunger strike, timing it so that the crisis would be near on the date of the 50th anniversary. Nationalist reflexes were stimulated and were brought to bear on a social issue. Dublin went into uproar. Nostalgia was dispelled from the 50th anniversary event at the Mansion House. The government was nonplussed, and elements of civil society, with Jesuits prominent among them, came to its rescue. And the "*ideology which was anathema*" was suddenly out and about in the papers and the radio.

That was what preoccupied Dublin and Cork six months before the North went into flux. BICO, in conjunction with the remarkable student movement called *the Internationalists*, challenged the Cold War mindset head-on and it retreated. Bolshevism was in the air. Judges were denounced in the own Courts and warned that they would meet with revolutionary justice. And most politicians lost track of what was going on in the North until it exploded on them in August. They held their General Election in June 1969 and went on long holidays while Northern Ireland was being detonated. And then Lynch had to rush back from holiday and do something. The half-baked notions of Whitaker's Memo were of no use to him.

I was involved with Dennis Dennehy in the events in Dublin. I refused to take any part in the agitation in the North, which seemed to me to be a pursuit of illusion. The master-minds of the self-consciously revolutionary strain in the agitation put it to me that the agitation had either brought about a revolutionary situation (that was in the Spring of 1969) or would do so very soon. I was sceptical about whether that would happen, but asked what would be done if it did. What conceivable revolution would then be on the cards? The nearest thing to an answer I could get was on the lines of Lenin's quote from Napoleon: First you engage, and then you see what can be done. That was fine for Lenin and Napoleon, where the aim was clear and all that was doubtful was the means of achieving it. But, supposing the North was thrown into flux by intensifying the Civil Rights agitation, what could happen in the flux except an intensification of the conflict of the two communities?

When the situation detonated in August I played a very small part in defending West Belfast, and published the Two Nations view in September, which Lynch rejected in October. The revolutionary master-minds, having played a part in causing the explosion, retreated to safety.

Whitaker's description of the North, or of Partition, (he took the two to be one, but they were not), touches on reality here and there at a tangent, but misses, or avoids, the essential thing.

In those days there was learned, or at least high-faluting, discussion of the word "essence" in the "revolutionary Marxism" of the *New Left Review*, which came to me via Professor The Lord Bew. There was, as I recall, a theoretical deviation called "essentialism", but I forget what it was. And, if you took the kernel out of the nut, would it still be a nut: that conundrum was pondered over. That was what Marxism had become, and it put me right off.

It seems to me that there were two essential things about the North. The first was that the two communities were nationally distinct from each other. The second was that Northern Ireland was not a state, either developed or potential, but a part of the British State excluded from the political life of the British State.

If the two communities were not nationally distinct, but were parts of a general Irish nation, between which there were some political differences connected with local vested interests, then it would be a realistic policy to alleviate the conflict of vested interests, so that the underlying unity of national sentiment might exert its influence. That is what Whitaker assumed to be the case (or pretended to).

I could see no trace of national sentiment at all that was common to the two communities. When common traits were pointed out to me, they indicated no more than the influence of English or American culture on both.

Now, if the culture of Protestant Ulster included nothing that responded to the appeal of Irish nationality, and you then told the Ulster Protestants that they were nevertheless a disobedient part of an Irish nation, what you did was merely antagonise them. And, even if the matter appeared to be doubtful, the prudent thing would be to give the benefit of doubt to the difference and leave it to them to disagree if they would.

And, if it was the case that two hundred years ago there was an Irish nationalist strain in Protestant Ulster, the thing to do was to show what happened to it, rather than to beat them over the head with it.

However, if it was the case that practical politics in the South made it necessary for leaders to assert that there was a common Irish nation at every turn, and that the Ulster Protestants had no right to opt out of it, and if forcible unification was off the agenda, the best thing was to do nothing, as far as that was possible. Unity by agreement was pie-in-the-sky if you were compelled to affront the other party every time you opened your mouth.

It seemed to me that if one's primary concern was to establish some kind of

Gaza: An RTE Complaint

The following letter, dated 19th January 2009, was sent to RTE Radio's *Morning Ireland* programme

I write to protest at the unbalanced coverage of the Israeli assault on Gaza that occurred in this morning's edition of *Morning Ireland* (Monday January 19th 2009, RTE Radio 1). Your correspondent John Murray interviewed the Israeli Minister for Education and was so poorly prepared for the interview that he effectively gave an apologist for genocide a free run on prime time Irish radio.

Mr Murray had one basic point to put to the Minister: that the military action of the last sixteen days which had led to the deaths of at least twelve hundred people had achieved nothing since Hamas were still in power and probably more popular than before. That point was insufficient to maintain a balance in the broadcast.

The Minister replied by giving the Israeli version of the recent history of Gaza. When she articulated this version Mr Murray was unable to counter any of her points. She was able to present a premeditated, carefully planned, military assault on virtually defenceless people as a reasonable action, a legitimate defensive action by a sovereign Government that had a reasonable objective.

Actually what the Israelis have done in Gaza is indefensible by all contemporary standards of morality. The Education Minister's argument about Hamas breaking the ceasefire is a smokescreen. The ceasefire was not renewed by Hamas because the Israelis had kept up a crippling economic blockade of Gaza, reducing the status of the area to a large open air prison camp. Hamas did nothing to escalate the conflict following the ending of the ceasefire: the small number of weak missiles fired into Israel were launched by Palestinian militants outside of the control of Hamas.

Behind a PR smokescreen the IDF have been planning an invasion of Gaza probably since 2004 and certainly since their unimpressive performance in the war in Lebanon in 2006. The Education Minister made much of the unilateral evacuation of Israeli settlers from Gaza in 2005 but that initiative was clearly effected to facilitate a full scale military invasion, such as we have just witnessed.

The Irish public is known to sympathise with the plight of the Palestinian people. We deserve balance in the coverage of the conflict. Is it too much to ask that journalists do some research on the background of such an important world news topic?

I suggest that Mr Murray should check out the following source <http://ilanpappe.com/>. It is the website of an Israeli academic who disagrees with Hamas but has been hounded out of Israel for championing the human rights of Palestinians.

David Alvey

democratic political normality in the North, the way to do that was to normalise the 6 Counties within the political life of the State. If that was ruled out by the political culture of the 26 Counties, then again the best thing to do with relation to the North was as little as possible. And, in the course of responding in a weekly Belfast publication to Dublin initiatives during the 1970s and 1980s, it seemed to me that the only major Dublin figure who tried to do that was Haughey. Lynch, C.C. O'Brien and Dr. FitzGerald were always mischief-makers in office.

Whitaker presented Lynch with a collection of glancing observations about the North, tangents which never rolled up into a circle. He prepared Lynch to flail and flounder when the crisis hit.

On 15 August 1969 Whitaker advised Lynch, regarding the defence of the Bogside, that "no Govt. can afford to be critical—without overwhelming evidence of misbehaviour, of police attempts to restore law and order". and he urged him, in any statement to—

"avoid identifying the Govt. solely with the Catholics or Nationalists of N.I. and make it clear that the aim of a United

Ireland would be a scrupulously fair deal for all—indeed that the position of N.I. Protestants would be particularly respected". Otherwise: "the very moderate Protestants... may be driven to side with the extremists under threat, as they see it, of losing their 'freedom, religion and laws'..."

At this point Whitaker's advice becomes fantasy. Everybody knew what was what. The battle lines were drawn. And the issue was how the Dublin Government would handle its undeniable and undisposable connection with the 40% in the North.

Two months later (18 October) Whitaker's advice is:

"In the longer term interest of persuading the Northern Ireland moderates to listen to us, I would go easy on expressions like 'our claim to unity'. I think we could get the same idea across with less risk of provocation by some words like: "continuing to assert on behalf of the vast majority of the Irish people, our deep and legitimate desire for a united Ireland"..." (Keogh p209).

That'd stay 'em!

Brendan Clifford

TO BE CONTINUED

The Ex-IRA Chief Of Staff, The Free State General, And Irish Defence Policy

Seán Cronin's 1984 Profile of M.J. Costello

Introduction: General Michael J. Costello, who died in October 1986, had been General Manager of the Irish Sugar Company 1945-66, and his role in pioneering agri-industry in Ireland is worthy of study in its own right. This article, however, is limited to being an introduction to a reprint of one promised in the July 2008 *Irish Political Review*, where we detailed Costello's critical role in November 1984 in spiking any repeat of the previous year's involvement of the Irish Army in British Legion ceremonials. The *coup-de-grace* came after the Fine Gael Minister for Defence Paddy Cooney had accused Costello and other retired Irish Army officers—who had been protesting against any such involvement—of "making a show of themselves". Douglas Gageby, the *Irish Times* Editor and himself an ex-Irish Army officer and Protestant Republican, effectively lobbed a propaganda hand grenade in Cooney's direction, with the publication on 3rd November 1984 of a full page profile of, and interview with, the self-same "disgraceful" General Costello, which was skilfully penned by that newspaper's US correspondent, Seán Cronin.

In common with Gageby, Cronin had served in the Irish Army during the Second World War, and for a few years thereafter. He then began to have some world news commentaries published in the *Irish Times* during a period when it was edited by another Protestant Republican, Alec Newman. But during this period Cronin also had a parallel but secret life where his politics parted company with Gageby's Fianna Fáil brand of Republicanism. For it was none other than Cronin who became the military architect of the IRA's Border Campaign of 1956-62, serving as IRA Chief-of-Staff during part of that armed struggle, as well as assuming the *nom-de-guerre* and *nom-de-plume* of 'J. McGarrity', until his eventual capture and imprisonment.

Following his release from jail, Cronin emigrated to the USA, but he was to be brought back into the *Irish Times* by Douglas Gageby as its New York and Washington correspondent. Notwithstanding General Costello's Free State Army role in fighting against the IRA during the Civil War, and his related hero-worshipping of Kevin O'Higgins, the former IRA Chief-of-Staff penned a masterly profile which was published just a week short of Remembrance Sunday 1984. Cronin thus combined/conspired with Gageby—previously vilified as a "white nigger" by the *Irish Times*'s own owner, British Army Major Tom Mc

Dowell—to ensure that General Costello was able to deliver a fatal blow to Paddy Cooney's British Legion agenda for that coming weekend. They had made no overt reference to the Remembrance Sunday controversy itself, but with such a high profiling of Costello, the principal target of Cooney's vilification, they provided ample evidence of who was the man of substance and who was the pipsqueak.

Manus O'Riordan

[The sub-headings below are as they appeared in the original, which appeared in the *Irish Times*, 3rd November 1984.]

The General Looks Back And Forward

Lieut-General M.J. ('Mickey Joe') Costello has been a power in the land for half-a-century, though he has never been a political figure. **Seán Cronin** talked to him in his Dublin home about the Second World War years, Irish neutrality, and our role *vis-a-vis* NATO and European defence:

"You have the phenomenon in this country now that some of our civil servants and army officers are more English than the English themselves", said Lieut-General M.J. Costello, better known as "Mickey Joe", in the front room of his large military-style house that overlooks the sea at Clontarf. "Their view of NATO is the view from London", he continued. "The view from Washington is largely the view of the military-industrial complex. They want to build up arms regardless of the purposes to which they are put. The US wants to extend the Monroe Doctrine to Europe."

We were discussing Irish neutrality, and some explanations are in order. [US] President Eisenhower coined the term "military-industrial complex" to describe the alliance of arms customers and arms manufacturers who keep each other in business. The Monroe Doctrine, in effect, has given the US an exclusive right to intervene in the affairs of the Caribbean, Central America and even South America because "it is practically sovereign on this continent", as Secretary of State Richard Olney noted in 1895. However, the doctrine itself was conceived by George Canning, Castlereagh's successor as [British] Foreign Secretary, to thwart French designs on Spain's ex-colonies in Latin America and maintain the balance of power in Europe, with Britain as balancer. It suited the US, then an agrarian republic, to be shielded by the Royal Navy

from the other European powers. "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old", Canning explained in December 1823. NATO was called into existence in 1948-9 with a similar purpose by Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in Clement Attlee's Labour Government. Like Canning, Bevin did not quite trust the French. He would expand the Brussels Pact to include the US and Canada, and then Britain might play the balancer again. The rationale for NATO was that the Soviet Union planned to invade Western Europe. A State Department planning committee under George Kennan decided in November 1947 that there was no such threat; nevertheless, the US took the lead in forming the North Atlantic Pact. The Irish Government was invited to join but Seán MacBride, the Minister for External Affairs, argued that we could only be part of such a pact if partition were ended and the defence of the island of Ireland was controlled by Dublin. The Americans would not consider such a proposal, or even discuss it. The British did not think it would be "too tragic" if the Irish stayed out of NATO, since they held the North. At the same time, a British Cabinet sub-committee suggested that, "so far as can be seen, it will never be to Great Britain's advantage that Northern Ireland should become part of a territory outside his Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed, it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree to this even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it."

NO POWER BLOC

Irish neutrality was reaffirmed, and remains our policy; as in the Second World War, we are not part of any military bloc. This policy has popular support, but there are influential voices demanding change. This was the background to my talk with General Costello. "I make a clear distinction between the European defence community and NATO", he said. "My idea of NATO is that it originated as the desire of the British to restore the balance of power. I see the European defence pact as independent of the US and the Soviet Union." Since the foundation of the state, the Irish bureaucracy has believed that whatever was British was best, the general observed puffing on his pipe. He is 80 years of age, but his mind is clear, his brain is active. We would play our part in a genuine European defence community, he believes; we would not be neutral. We would have a voice in the formulation of policy. It would be a defence force without nuclear weapons or a devastating air force to destroy open cities. A defence doctrine must be based on actual people and actual terrain. A European defence pact would be a "third force". With NATO and the Warsaw Pact, "it's a question of who gets his blow in first". A "third force" would concern itself with genuine defence. The

position in the West is that there is a continuous cold war with the Russians. "I doubt very much if Truman, whom I did know rather well, would endorse this. He was his own man, and he believed that the buck stops with the President." If there's no European defence community, then we are back to 1939.

"We should build a defence in this country that Britain or America would hesitate to take on. When Cooney and company say we should be in NATO, they are saying what James Dillon said in 1939-40 when he was a minority of one. The fundamental factor in Irish defence is the people. We have a long friendship with the US, but no guarantee that the White House will not be occupied by someone with other ideas."

BUYING ARMS

Mickey Joe Costello is better informed than most about Irish neutrality and how to defend it. In May 1939, a few months before the Second World War began, he went to Washington to buy guns and ammunition for the Irish Army. "I was sent by Frank Aiken, who was dedicated to the idea that Ireland could be neutral in the coming conflict", he said. Aiken was Minister for Defence, Éamon de Valera was Taoiseach, and Colonel Costello was Assistant Chief of Staff of the National Army. "There was a strong lobby in the Department of Defence and the General Headquarters staff which held that it was not possible for us to be neutral", he recalled. "It is the same view that is echoed today by those opposed to our neutrality. This element believes we should do whatever the British do." De Valera did not involve himself in details of defence. "In many ways he was an innocent", Costello asserts, "combined with an ability to see things, and an incredible integrity."

Colonel Costello was well equipped to negotiate with the Americans. Here received his military education at the Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, in 1926-7, with Hugo MacNeill. The two commanded the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Irish Army during the Emergency—Costello facing South, MacNeill facing North. "Mickey Joe" is also a keen student of US military history and an admirer of General Phil Sheridan, the brilliant Union cavalry commander who forced the surrender of General Robert E. Lee, the Confederate Commander-in-Chief, at Appomattox on April 9th, 1865, ending the Civil War. Albany, NY, is listed as Sheridan's birthplace, but Mickey Joe and others maintain he was born near Virginia, Co. Cavan, before his parents emigrated. By his own ability he won a place at West Point and rose in the army. What did he learn at Fort Leavenworth? "The first thing I learned was that US techniques were unsuited to people like us, trying to maintain our neutrality. We learned how to handle big armies."

BRITISH IDEAS

When Costello and MacNeill returned from Fort Leavenworth, crammed with US military theories, the Michael Collins tradition and the British Army tradition were doing battle in the young Irish Army. Even the rules of the officers' mess followed British practice. "Desmond Fitzgerald, the Minister for Defence, said that London felt Irish officers should not be training in a foreign country (the US), but in England or one of the Dominions. So we were sent to visit the British Staff College at Camberley." Among the instructors at Camberley then were the future field marshals Bernard Law Montgomery and Alan Brooke; the future Field Marshal Alexander was a student there. All were Irish-born. "Monty had come back from Cork after being badly singed by Tom Barry", General Costello commented. "He organised a mutiny—no one should shake our bloodstained hands. Dorman Smith supported us and went out of his way to make us welcome."

Mickey Joe warmed to his subject. "Collins's idea was that if we didn't train our officers in a neutral country, they would be indoctrinated by the British." He believes that is what happened to the officer corps after the Second World War. Colonels P.J. Hally and Justin McCarthy took staff courses at Camberley and returned "with fixed British ideas which were inculcated in the Command and Staff School and the Infantry School of Military College. Big Tom Feely resisted while he was there."

Colonel Tom Feely, Officer Commanding the Infantry School, was also very much his own man. Having been on his staff at the Infantry School in 1947, I could see how he would go about it. A tough, hard-driving, down-to-earth soldier in the Costello style, he had the look of one of those Red Army generals who smashed the incomparable German war machine between Stalingrad and Berlin.

"They adopted the British three-man column which, unlike the four column, is unsuited to hedge country." General Costello continued. "They scrapped the man-handled (machine-gun) prams in favour of Bren-gun carriers—road-bound vehicles suitable for the plains of Germany, but not for Irish hedge country." Colonel Eoghan O'Neill was the best of the younger officers, General Costello maintained, presumably because his theories of training and defence are based on his country's requirements rather than on British or other "great power" doctrines of war.

The 1939 arms mission to the US was a success, but the pro-British element in Dublin—especially the Civil Service—sabotaged it. If we had bought the arms General Costello ordered, we would undoubtedly be in good shape between then and 1945. He had his eye on some advanced weapons systems; we could have

had them first. "The Irish Civil Service is built on the British system", he says with a tired smile. "They ape and adapt British ideas." One of the advantages of going into Europe, he believes, is to break that pattern—"otherwise we won't be able to shake British influence, not only in defence but in politics and economics."

TO THE POINT

He goes off the subject like that at times, chasing a hare down a side-road. "Am I rambling?", he asks. "I am", he'll answer. But he always returns to the main point. "Where was I?" He was in Washington talking to Joseph C. Green, chief of the State Department's Division of Controls, the man with the power to say "Yes" or "No" to the Irish request for arms. Costello thought the final word lay with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was pro-British; he was wrong, though. The final word, as it happens, lay with the British Foreign Office. And I have the documents to prove it.

The President's senior military aide, General Edwin M. Wilson—universally known as "Pa"—was at Fort Leavenworth with Mickey Joe. ("He was very thick", says the Irish general.) It might have given him an "in" at the White House, but the State Department had been told by Roosevelt that Costello was to get no arms without the consent of the British Embassy. So much for Irish-American influence.

Costello met Green at dinner in the Irish Legation on May 16th, and they had a long conversation. Costello said he had been well received by General Wesson, Chief of Ordnance, and by Colonel John H. Jouett, president of the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce, and "he thought he was making rapid progress in the accomplishment of his mission," as Green wrote in his memorandum next day.

"He was frank to say, however, that he had sensed the existence of some doubts as to the purposes for which the Irish Government desired the arms which he had been commissioned to purchase. He said that he realised that, as he had not been in a position to explain what those purposes really were, American officials might suppose that the arms were intended for aggression against Northern Ireland. He assured me that this was not the case."

The Irish Government had an agreement with Britain and "fully realised that it would be disastrous for Ireland to attempt 'to stab England in the back' in the event of a war with Germany"

The agreement referred to is that between de Valera and Neville Chamberlain in the spring of 1938. On March 14th, 1938, while the talks were still in progress, de Valera informed the US Minister to Dublin, John Cudahy, an Irish-American of the Chicago meat-packing family who was sympathetic to Irish nationalist

aspirations, that "in any defence arrangement, he (de Valera) said, the position of Ireland would be one of neutrality, with the understanding that Ireland would never take sides with any enemy of Great Britain." Cudahy's cable to Washington concludes: "Ireland must by necessity of events take a course parallel to England. This was made more manifest by the recent events in Austria and he (de Valera) was satisfied that Ireland on the continent would suffer a fate similar to Austria."

The British Government was aware of Costello's mission, according to Green's May 17th memorandum. But the Irish Government was fearful that if Irish-Americans got word that London and Dublin were cooperating the mission "might be subjected to widespread criticism in this country which would have dangerous repercussions in Ireland", Costello told Green.

BRITISH SAY

Looking across the span of 45 years, Costello recalls his predicament.

"If we didn't get the British 'okay', I was told, we wouldn't get the arms. I said that was all right: I would go back to Dublin and say that the British would interdict the arms. They said all that was necessary was to get the British Ambassador's approval. I withdrew to New York, for tactical reasons. The War Department was in favour of giving us the arms, for a number of reasons. They were anxious to build up the US capacity for manufacturing arms and, unlike the State Department, were anti-British, being influenced by the frontier and the Civil War and the image implanted by (Generals) Sheridan, Sherman and Pershing."

I regret to record that, in this instance, Costello was wrong. The archives indicate that the War Department was even more anti-Irish than the State Department was. "I called on the Assistant Secretary of War this morning and informed him of my conversation with Colonel Costello", Green's memorandum of May 17th states. Colonel Johnson said that Colonel Costello's anxiety had evidently arisen—at least in part—from the fact that General Wesson, with military bluntness, had asked the Colonel directly to what use the Irish Government intended to put the arms desired if they were obtained. Colonel Costello had replied: "Your guess is as good as mine", which had not served to remove the doubts which several officers of the War Department already had, and which he knew were shared by the White House and by officers in the Department of State.

The Green (May 17th) memorandum continues:

"He said that, as a result of these doubts, he had given instructions that Colonel Costello was to be treated with every

courtesy and assisted as far as the War Department could properly assist him in the purchase of most of the arms listed under (1) of his memorandum but that means should be found to place so many obstacles in his path in the obtaining of the artillery desired that it could not possibly be delivered in two years. Colonel Johnson said that if Sir Ronald Lindsay (the British Ambassador) should make the statement which I suggested, he would immediately modify those instructions so that the artillery would be dealt with on the same terms as the other arms listed."

This is a lesson in international relations: how great powers deal with small countries that seek to buy arms in order to defend themselves on the eve of war. Ireland was in Britain's sphere of influence and the US would make no move without clearing it with London. Six days later (May 23rd), Green telephoned the British Ambassador and asked him to call at his office. Sir Ronald said he was leaving for New York, but would send a Mr. Mallet immediately. "When Mr. Mallet called, I told him briefly of the activities of the Irish Purchasing Mission in Washington and of the hesitation of this government to facilitate the purchase of arms—artillery in particular—in this country by the Irish Government without definite assurance that such purchases would be agreeable to the British Government", Green's memorandum reads. Mallet said he would send a secret telegram to London explaining the situation, and asking for instructions. "He said he thought it probable that everything which Colonel Costello had told me in regard to those proposed purchases of arms was true but that he personally knew nothing about the matter and that he did not believe that Sir Ronald had any definite information."

Costello wrote a farewell letter to Green, saying he was returning to Dublin, which brought quick results. If he went home empty-handed, de Valera would protest to the Americans, he told me. They didn't want that. Green telephoned Garth Healy, Secretary of the Irish Legation, to discover Costello's whereabouts; and was told he was in Irvine, Pennsylvania, visiting the plant of the National Forge and Ordnance Co., as guest of the War Department. He was sailing to Ireland the following Thursday, this was Saturday. Green asked Garth Healy whether Colonel Costello would return to Washington if "by so doing, he might possibly make arrangements in regard to the plans and specifications which would enable him to enter into contracts with American manufacturers for artillery and artillery ammunition?" Healy readily agreed. He informed Green that the colonel had told him before leaving the city that he would return to Washington "at the moment of sailing" if there was any change "in the situation which he had encountered here". This change of attitude

was the result of not a change of heart on the part of the Americans, but of an "okay without reservations"—as Green paraphrased it—message from the British Foreign Office. An Embassy official told Green that the Foreign Office appreciated the way "this affairs had been handled". He asked whether the British Government could be told what arms the Irish Mission planned to buy. Green said the arms, or most of them, would be listed in the monthly press release on arms export licences issued by the State Department.

HOME VETO

"The sequel was that with the exception of the 155 mm guns for the defence of Cork Harbour and the Shannon estuary, I got what I needed", the general told me.

"I came back from America with a shopping list that subsequently was shot down the then Quartermaster-General (Colonel Dan McKenna) with the enthusiastic assistance of the Department of Defence. The anti-aircraft, anti-tank gun was shot down because the British didn't have it, and if it was any good they'd have it. The Martin Parry adaptor—each wheel is independent and doesn't need springs—was also shot down. We bought them from the British during the war at 250 percent of the US cost. We could have bought the Garand rifle—the most effective and best weapon in the world. It stood up to dirt and abuse. That was shot down because it wasn't British Army equipment. We had a choice of Smith & Wesson revolvers, Colt automatics, Webleys. I favoured the Colt automatic because the ammunition was the same as for the Thompson (sub-machine gun). The best revolver available was the Smith and Wesson and it was ruled out because it wasn't standard British Army equipment. Any bloody fellow who thought I could go to America and buy British equipment, was a fool. The US gas mask was cheaper, contained less rubber. It could be sterilised, but it was ruled out because it wasn't British equipment. Everything was cheaper in America. If you wanted an efficient aircraft, you paid the price for it. We were looking for the Grumman fighter—the British equivalent was the Walrus, a cumbersome aircraft—which was not dependent on an aerodrome ... None of these were bought."

In 1940 the Army received 20,000 US Spring-field rifles.

IRELAND AND THE WAR

De Valera's assurance to Chamberlain that Ireland would not be used as jumping-off ground against England was taken by the pro-British elements in Dublin to mean that Ireland would rely on the War Office for its defence needs. De Valera's declaration of neutrality was taken, not as an indication of his real intentions, but as a cover-up. The Irish Government was expected to do whatever the War Office or

the Admiralty asked. Some in England thought Irish neutrality would last a week. At the start of the war, the Army had a nominal brigade with auxiliaries in the Curragh. The fundamental factor of the defence of Ireland was the readiness of the Irish people to defend themselves. They ended the war with eight brigades.

"The only serious threat during the War was from the British", the general said [my emphasis—MO'R]. "They wanted to invade with one division. The Americans estimated later it would take eight divisions to do the job." They had good intelligence on British forces in the North. One source was Brendan Bracken's brother, who had been a Garda cadet in 1922 and liked the good life; he came to Dublin a lot and talked. (He was, after all, the son of an IRB man, so perhaps he talked intentionally.) Another source was the Chief Army Chaplain in the North, Archdeacon Duggan of Cork. Mickey Joe had no doubt that the Irish people forty-odd years ago would put up a stout defence in the event of an invasion, no matter who attacked. "In the war years, we had an agreement on the question that we would resist any invader."

He is supported by a US military estimate of the Irish situation drafted in March of 1942. It is titled, "The German Threat to Ireland and the Strength Necessary to Meet it" and was requested by the US minister to Ireland. David Gray—no friend of Irish neutrality. "The (45,000-man) Éire Army is composed of excellent material", the analyst wrote. He met the GOC, 1st. Division, Major-General M.J. Costello, and "I formed a very favourable impression of the character and ability of the officers and excellent discipline and quality of the troops". In the event of a German invasion, the analyst wrote, "I am convinced that the Éire Army would fight bravely and that its high command would welcome the assistance of the Allies and would cooperate loyally with them." The analyst believed that the Germans had the capacity to mount a Crete-style attack on Southern Ireland by air and sea, using three divisions. They would do so "if the possible gains justified taking the risks".

David Grey sent the estimate to the Irish Army Chief of Staff. Lieut-General Dan McKenna, who thought it painted too bleak a picture. A maximum effort would be made to defend the country's harbours and airfields, he commented, and "a denial of these facilities would render a successful German invasion of this country practically impossible". McKenna used the opportunity to send his own shopping list of arms requirements to the Americans, including mobile anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank rifles and ammunition, a much more modest request than what Mickey Joe could have purchased less than three years earlier in Washington. At the end of April,

General George C. Marshall, the US Chief of Staff, turned down the request.

MAKING OF A SOLDIER

Mickey Joe Costello was born in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, the son of school-teachers—his father taught Irish to Thomas MacDonagh. He joined Fianna Éireann and then the Volunteers. During the Tan War, "I was in various minor actions". In the two big operations in his area, an ambush and a barrack attack, "my only job was to block roads and to fell trees". When the truce came he was a divisional officer. "I took the view that the oath I took in the Volunteers was to Dáil Éireann," He has no problem with the Treaty.

He joined the National Army and was put in charge of training cadets at Mar-yborough, now Portlaoise. He and one other were the only survivors of an ambush in which the commander and staff were killed. "We took 35 prisoners and Collins promoted me colonel-commandant." He was 18 years of age. When he was sent to Fort Leavenworth he was 22, as much as "boy colonel" as some of the US war veterans he met there. In America he met John Devoy, the old Fenian, who told him that Michael Davitt went to General Sheridan for a plan of campaign against the British in Ireland, and apparently got it. According to Devoy, Sheridan sympathised with Fenianism but wouldn't join the movement because of his oath to the US. The American Consul in Cork during the war years, William Smale, who had served as an officer in the US Expeditionary Forces to France, 1917-18, said in one of his despatches that Costello was the best military commander he had known.

"The British are more dominant today than in my lifetime", General Costello says of modern Ireland. "More so even than in 1914." He has three fundamental documents he believes state the Irish national case for sovereignty. They are a speech by Judge Daniel F. Cohalan in New York in 1923, a speech to the Oxford Union by Kevin O'Higgins in 1924 and de Valera's address to the founding Árd Fheis of Fianna Fáil in 1926. "When I get into bad humour I reach for John Mitchel's *Jail Journal*", General Costello says, "and I feel that I'm not alone in being extreme. One of the things as a Tipperary man I'm proud of is that we elected John Mitchel to Parliament." They elected him twice—and he refused to take his seat because that would recognise Britain's right to rule Ireland.

Seán Cronin [November 1984]

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In Memoriam Bill Sharkey

SHARKEY, William Eugene Patrick (Native of Urris, Donegal. Late of Derry, London, Hampshire and Glasgow).

Suddenly January 10, 2009 after a full and vibrant life. His passing deeply regretted by his loving children Keith and Sarah, Muriel, brothers Jimmy, Kevin and Danny, his sister Moira, Grandchildren Liam, Hannah, Patrick and Niall, his daughter and son in laws, Alison and Paul, nieces and nephews and all his relatives, friends and comrades far and wide. Returning from Glasgow to the family home 33 Ewing Street, Derry to be waked on Wednesday 21 January. Funeral at St Michaels, Urris 22 January, 11am. Family flowers only. All donations to the ULTACH Trust.

We hope to carry Appreciations of Bill Sharkey's life in the March issue of *Irish Political Review*.

Bijou Book Reviews

"Preventing the present: why were we so rich, so briefly?" by Tom Garvin, BA, MA (NUI), PhD (Georgia), Professor of Politics. Alumnus, Wilson Center, Washington, DC; Fulbright scholar. etc. (€100.00)

"Luck and the Irish, Volume II" by Roy Foster, Carroll Professor of history, Oxford, MA PhD Litt (Hon) Dub, MA Oxf, DLitt (Hon) Aberd, Belf, DLaws (Hon) Queen's, etc. etc. (€150.00)

Prescriptive History

These books would make a welcome addition to anyone's library at the moment.

They explain to us how we got into the present mess. Our politicians in particular would be well advised to read them as a matter of urgency—and our bankers. As everyone knows these authors are renowned in the media at home and abroad for the new approach to Irish history which enabled them to explain to all why it took us so long to decide to get rich and the unique Irish qualities that made that possible. Most people were perplexed by these phenomena but not these authors. They rose to the intellectual challenge and found the secrets of our success and now they rise to the new challenges to tell us how it all went so wrong so quickly. More details when the books are written.

Jack Lane

Editorial Note: Readers are invited to submit book reviews to this new series.

OBAMA continued

the Irish operations of American firms made net profits of \$48 billion in 2005, the latest period for which figures are available" (*Irish Times*, 7.11.2008).

Figures indicate that the profitability of US subsidiaries in Ireland is second in Europe only to the Dutch subsidiaries of US firms.

Figures from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), a division of the US Commerce Department, suggest US firms moved hugely profitable activities into Ireland as corporation tax was gradually cut to 12.5 per cent in 2003 from 38 per cent in early 1997.

Companies backed by IDA Ireland, 48 per cent of them from the US, directly employ a total of 152,000 staff here and many thousands more work in spin-off firms.

The BEA figures show that the combined net profit of US corporations in Ireland was \$8.58 billion in 1997, rose to \$13.39 billion by 2000 and reached \$31.3 billion in 2003. The \$48 billion net profit in Ireland in 2005, declared in mandatory legal filings to the BEA, compares with \$37.01 billion in Britain and \$74.06 billion in the Netherlands. US companies in Germany made net profits of \$11.22 billion in the same period, their French operations made \$9.52 billion and their Italian operations made \$8.58 billion.

Revenue figures show US companies in Ireland had combined sales of \$151.52 billion in 2005. The Dutch operations of US companies had sales of \$195.48 billion in that period and their British units \$530.93 billion.

American companies in the Netherlands had an average net profit margin of 37.88 percent and Irish operations had an average net margin of 31.68 per cent. The average net margin in Britain was 6.97 per cent.

WHITHER FDI?

But could the 'golden age' of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) be nearing an end?

"Almost half of multinationals based here have told the IDA they would not choose to locate again to Ireland because of high business costs and poor infrastructure.

A survey from the State agency found that 45 percent of companies would choose to locate in another country, with most choosing Eastern Europe (61%), followed by India (23%), the UK (16%) or other locations in Europe (11%)" (*Irish Independent*, 10.11.2008).

The results of the survey come as the downturn in business at computer manufacturing giant, Dell, continues to have a devastating effect on its suppliers.

Dell computers made at least 700 temporary workers redundant but it is

speculated locally that this figure exceeds 1,000.

Companies said the IDA should be involved in addressing infrastructural deficits, upskilling and supports for research and development, and addressing costs—particularly of energy and utilities.

The 'key strengths' of operating in Ireland relate primarily to the quality of people, it found, adding: "*While infrastructural deficiencies, along with improving the R&D tax credit system, are areas of concern, the majority of companies would not choose an alternative location if such a location decision was made today.*"

This was "*based around quality of people (in the main) as well as favourable tax, regulatory and hi-tech knowledge environment.*"

But the "*high cost environment*" led 45 per cent of those surveyed to say they would not locate again in Ireland; 49 per cent said they would choose Ireland again and 5 per cent did not know.

A TRUE FRIEND OF IRELAND

"*Tax plans of 44th US president 'will not devastate investment into Ireland'*" read the headline in the *Irish Examiner* on 5th November 2008.

On the same day, the *Irish Independent* reported: "*Little to fear' from a new man in White House—aide.*"

Irish people are ill-served and patronised by their media, especially by what is regarded as the 'serious media', the main broadsheets all seem to be guzzling from the same trough and spill out the same nonsense: they don't give us the news, they give us their opinion. But that's another 'story'!

The headline in the *Evening Echo* in Cork on that same day read: "*Obama advisor warns Irish of dependency.*"

"Senior economic advisor to new US president Barack Obama, Dr Robert Shapiro, has said this country 'must wean itself from dependence on foreign direct investment' (FDI).

"His comments in Dublin yesterday will have sent shock waves throughout the IDA which is ready to send a high powered delegation to the US to lobby against the idea" (*Evening Echo*, 5.11.2008).

The comments of Dr. Shapiro, a former US Under-Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs, were being studied by IDA bosses.

Speaking at UCD Business Schools, Dr. Shapiro said "*Ireland must wean itself from dependence on FDI. A low corporate taxation rate was not the most important factor moving forward.*"

The next step was not FDI but a series of policies that actively promoted spillovers from FDI corporations to Irish indigenous firms.

The best way forward was for young Irish people to become entrepreneurs and force existing businesses to compete and become the best in the world.

FDI was a transitional strategy, not an end game strategy, that created a lasting impact.

The key to Ireland's next stage was to

make the entire economy a modern economy and not one that depended on the success of foreign companies.

"The ability to develop ideas is the single most critical factor and source of wealth and growth for advanced economies today, replacing physical assets and this is what Ireland needed to focus on." Shapiro stated.

Mr. Shapiro praised Ireland's favourable tax laws and said success was also half luck, and Ireland's half luck was our English-speaking workforce.

The out-going US ambassador to Ireland, Thomas Foley, touched on much the same theme in a recent interview:

"The government's low taxation policy were 'clever and very steady', but measures were needed to build an entrepreneurial class to invest in goods and products here.

"I've been surprised not to see more internal business generation. Most entrepreneurial activity has been in real estate development."

"He said that energy, property and food costs were high in Ireland and urged initiatives to attract businesses that were "higher up the value-added chain and more focused on productivity. We can withstand rising costs if we're getting increased productivity" (*Sunday Business Post*, 9.11.2008)

Both Shapiro and Foley are correct, their comments are straws in the wind: Ireland is still too dependent on foreign investment and too weak in its own corporate sector. Despite all the past failures, trying to reduce that weakness must remain a priority. The country is also too dependent on its low profits tax. Even if the tax rate does not rise, its effectiveness is vulnerable to actions from both the US and the EU.

The non-tax Irish attractions—skilled workforce, English language and good business climate—tend to be exaggerated.

If the same 'cleverness' Mr. Foley referred to was applied with the same gusto and energy to native enterprise and initiative, we would be a lot less dependent on foreign investment.

Even the Agricultural sector which has made huge strides since 1973, with the aid of €41 billion from Europe, has failed to contribute a really substantial advance to 'value added' and hence, the creation of real jobs in the economy.

We put the second home and the SUV ahead of any serious social obligations and laugh at the Germans for living in rented homes, whilst depending on Berlin and Boston to provide our people with jobs.

From an old socialist perspective, it is a crying shame that we are in the world forefront of continually reducing the tax take from capital, which ultimately is replaced by higher taxes on incomes, direct and indirect!

"he learnt to do without,
before he learnt to enjoy"

Machavelli

OBAMA, the man from Offaly

What will President Obama do for Ireland?

The same as Ireland did for Obama!

Twelve months ago, the Dublin glitterati were hosting a fund-raiser for Hilary Clinton. The same people were telling us that this 'messenger' Obama was really mucking the whole Democratic campaign up: that by the end of the Democratic primaries, both candidates would have so exhausted themselves and the Democratic machine, that John McCain would be a shoe-in!

That's what Ireland did for Obama.

Then to top it all—Obama proposes to reform tax breaks for US companies that send jobs overseas, and that public contracts should be awarded to companies that are 'committed to American workers'.

"American workers" but what about Irish workers? What game does this man think he is playing, in wanting to commit himself to American jobs!

Obama has previously said he will "*level the playing field*" for US business by limiting the ability of multinational corporations from using tax havens to "*hide income overseas*", and "*firmly institutionalise the economic substance doctrine so we can stop companies from creating abusive tax shelters*".

Outlawing "*tax havens*" and protecting American workers—a US President—that's going a bit too far!

If his actions correspond with his lips, American workers will indeed have a friend, and right now they damn well need one.

The cost of wars, bank bailouts, tax packages to help the economy; combined with slowing revenues as recession bites, means the US budget deficit is heading for all-time highs of at least \$500bn and perhaps one trillion (\$1,000bn).

The scale of the economic challenge facing the new President was starkly illustrated by the latest US jobs figures. Layoffs in October were 80 per cent higher than a year earlier. Total job losses this year come to more than 750,000.

Employment, and the perceived loss of jobs abroad, was a central issue in the Presidential election. Figures show that multinational companies shed two million workers inside the USA in the years 2000-05.

Mr Obama insists that more must be done to keep jobs in the USA, and bring back work currently being done overseas.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

However, President Obama will have to contend with the Irish Government

first!

"Proposals by the incoming Barack Obama administration to reform corporation tax for US multinationals will be strenuously opposed by the Irish Government.

"IDA Ireland has already discussed the matter with senior members of Obama's campaign team, and more meetings are expected following his election victory last week. The Irish Government plans to contact US multinationals operating in Ireland in relation to their position over the coming weeks. It also intends to lobby members of the US Congress and Senate, particularly public representatives with strong ties to Ireland.

"Brian Lenihan, the Minister for Finance, said there would be "continuous liaison with the business community through diplomatic and overseas channels" to monitor any potential changes to the US tax system.

Lenihan said his department was "*always mindful of any international developments that could potentially impact on foreign direct investment here*" (*Sunday Business Post*, 9.11.2008)

Obama wants to make it more attractive—or at any rate less penal—for US companies to conduct their operations at home rather than abroad. Ireland has taken huge advantage of the USA's peculiar tax laws. These say that US companies owe tax on overseas earnings only if they send those earnings back to the US. Most countries try to tax overseas earnings at the domestic rate.

So US firms based here can pay Irish profits tax at 12.5 per cent, and, provided they keep the profits abroad, are not liable for US tax at 35 per cent. The funds are then available for further overseas investment, which was part of the original purpose of the law.

Obama proposed two pieces of legislation to reduce these attractions—the Stop Tax-Haven Abuse Act and the Obama Patriot Act.

Ireland is not classified as a tax haven, but may have something to worry about in the Patriot Act, which Obama introduced in the Senate last year.

It proposed that one per cent of taxable income would be credited to employers who make their headquarters in the US and comply with other conditions in the Act. Even more significantly, companies with subsidiaries abroad would pay 35 per cent tax on profits earned overseas.

A measure like that could have a huge effect on US investment in Ireland.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

There are 580 US multinationals in Ireland, which produce goods and services valued at \$60 billion each year and pay corporation tax of around \$2.5 billion to the Irish exchequer.

Just under a fifth of our total exports are sold to the US and, of course, the US is the key source of foreign direct investment into the country, with over 500 firms employing close to 100,000 people, or seven out of 10 of all those employed in foreign-owned industry.

Or to put it in a more poignant perspective:

"Close to 80 per cent of Irish exports come from US multinationals and, for those who doubt the significance of the US in Ireland, consider the following: the combined output in Ireland of Dell, Microsoft and Intel amounts to 20 per cent of Irish GDP.

"Ireland benefits hugely from a strong US. When the US is confident, it invests abroad and we get a disproportionate amount of this loot. For example, since the end of the Cold War, Ireland has received twice as much US investment as India and China combined. (David McWilliams, *Sunday Business Post*, 24.8.2008).

It is one hell of a lot of eggs in a single basket! Taken with approximately €61 billion of European subsidies since 1973, it was the making of a modern economy in this state.

You could say we got it the easy way! Maybe too bloody easy!

FDI: €131BN IN 2007

"Foreign direct investment (FDI) into Ireland totalled €131.4bn in 2007, according to new figures from the Central Statistics Office.

"The 2007 figure reflects a €13bn increase on 2006 but it was offset by €48.3bn of loans being advanced by foreign-owned companies here to their affiliates abroad" (*Irish Independent*, 8.11.2008).

The rise was fuelled by a doubling of investment from the US to €1.3bn. FDI from Europe fell to €87bn, but still accounted for two-thirds of the total.

The most recently available figures also show that the services industry dominated both outward and inward investment. Services accounted for 80 per cent of FDI in 2007. Of this, monetary intermediation and insurance services accounted for €32m and insurance services €26.8m, respectively.

Earnings of foreign-owned firms operating in Ireland increased from €1.4m in 2006 to €7.4m in 2007. Most of this increase was attributable to offshore centres, while earnings of US-owned firms declined from €7.6m to €7m.

\$48BN PROFIT IN 2005 FOR US FIRMS

However, it was not all one-way traffic, far from it!

"The full scale of the profitability of US investment in Ireland has emerged for the first time in official data which shows that

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STERLING continued

affairs was regarded as a great asset.

"Many commentators postulated that Britain was a model modern economy, where services trumped industry and where a mobile workforce was sufficiently flexible to compete. In the areas of entertainment and finance, there is little doubt that Britain is a world leader. The City of London is a significantly bigger financial centre than New York, even if there are precious few British banks operating there.

"The model the British adopted in the City is termed, the 'Wimbledon Model'. Like the lawn tennis tournament, the British host the show and take the kudos for it, even though British players rarely feature in the last 16.

"The City is analogous. The big British banks are dwarfed by international names like Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch. Yet this hardly matters because the revenue, jobs and salaries stay in London, creating the cash and effervescence to keep it in pole position as a global cultural centre. In entertainment, the Premier League largely copies the City's approach.

"Up until recently, this service economy worked; unemployment fell to historically low levels and the demand for workers prompted a massive influx of over one million immigrants from Poland alone.

"However, the upswing was fuelled by massive debts and the ever-recurring British weakness—a housing boom. The British economy turned itself into, yet again, a large debt-laden casino. The more debt the locals incurred, the more they spent and the more the resulting 'feel good factor' reinforced the notion that this time it would be different.

"Politically, as well, the Blair boom came with the sweetener of positive spin. Government PR gurus made sure that the population was inured to bad news—whether it be the truth about weapons of mass destruction or the reality of ever more debt.

"Obviously, with sterling floating freely on the foreign exchange markets, this boom led to the currency rising rapidly against the euro, which put the remnants of Britain's industrial heritage under severe cost pressure. By making imports cheaper, the strong sterling policy condemned Britain to its now perennial trade deficit.

"The overwhelming problem with the British model of economics is that it is fatally prone to asset price bubbles. Without the anchor of a strong manufacturing base, every time the 'feel good factor' re-emerges, the price of houses goes through the roof and, each and every time, the people think this time it's different. The banks get in on the act and a credit free-for-all ensues.

"Today, we and the 'auld enemy' face recession together. The real shock, after nearly a century of independence, is just how similar we still are, and just how dependent we remain" (David McWilliams, *Sunday Business Post*, 14.9.2008).

He could have added "*and after 36 years membership of the European Union*".

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"They can cut interest rates to zero, and probably will, but after that, what has been called the nuclear option of printing money will have to be tried." (Brendan Keenan, *Irish Independent*, 11.12.2008).
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EURO DISINTEGRATION

James Saft is a *Reuters* columnist. His opinion was expressed in the *Irish Examiner* on 17th January. Rest certain that it will become a familiar theme in the British and Dublin press in the months ahead.

"Some crises bring partners closer together. Some, as investors in the euro zone are likely to discover this year, drive them further apart.

"The liquidity crisis of last year left smaller members of the euro thanking their lucky stars they were inside a big warm tent with a major currency and critically, a powerful central bank that could help banks and maintain order in financial markets.

"Ireland and Greece, to name but two, could look at the disaster in Iceland, which suffered a banking and currency collapse, and see the real tangible benefits of membership.

"But now that the crisis has morphed into one in the real economy, with exports plunging and employment hit, things will be less cohesive within the euro zone, with one currency having to do duty for different countries with different economies and levels of competitiveness.

"Standard & Poor cut Greece's sovereign debt rating, citing falling competitiveness and a rising fiscal deficit. S&P has also threatened the credit ratings of Ireland, Portugal and Spain on concerns about deteriorating public finances.

"The extra interest Greece must pay to borrow money for 10 years as compared with Germany stands at 246 basis points, while for Ireland the figure hit 180 basis points, also a record, and spreads have widened too for Spain and Portugal. Coming at a time of low interest rates, with German 10-year debt yielding just over 3 per cent, these are whopping premiums for debt that theoretically should be very tightly related.

"To be clear, the chances of a country leaving the euro zone currency project are still extremely small, though it now rates as a possibility for discussion in

polite company.

"For one thing there is no escape hatch, no plan as to how a national currency might be reborn. For another, there is the matter that while a bit of a weak currency and an accommodative interest rate might seem attractive at first blush, the reality would include much higher interest rates and the real risk of a Latin-American style inflation and currency crisis.

"There are a couple of bitter ironies here for the euro zone. The world has probably never needed an alternative reserve currency more, with natural demand likely to rise for liquid, safe non-dollar assets given U.S. imbalances and monetary policy experiments.

"It is also a bit raw that the downturn that will test the euro zone is not of its making. Its consumers by and large didn't gorge at the debt feast and savings rates remained on the whole higher.

"But that is cold comfort and no assurance the price of the risks of euro disintegration won't rise further." (James Saft, *Irish Examiner*, 17.1.2009).

Banks are toppling over like ninepins, there is no saying that a number of currencies could as easily disappear. The temptation to predict a collapse of Sterling is not unreasonable. However, perfidious Albion is not without political resolution, which is more than we can say about the current leaders of Europe!

As for the Irish advocates of Lisbon: they are a pretty miserable bunch, it is doubtful if they even know what they stand for—other than loads of dosh!

PS: "HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD"

The recession is good news for the "*so-called gap*" between rich and poor, a minister claimed.

Minister of State at the Finance Department and Oxford scholar, Martin Mansergh was compared to Marie Antoinette for his "*out of touch*" comments by Opposition TDs.

Mr. Mansergh drew heavy fire for claiming Ireland had done "pretty well" in wealth distribution, as it is midway in the table of western countries, and this would improve in the downturn.

"The paradox is that the so-called gap between rich and poor—which ignores the fact that many people are middle-class—narrows in recessionary times and tends to expand in good times. Therefore, those figures will probably improve in the current circumstances. This does not mean, of course, that real poverty will not increase at the same time," he told the Dáil (*Irish Examiner*, 13.11.2008).

Labour Finance spokeswoman Joan Burton said the remarks smacked of the same "*Marie Antoinette*" attitudes that saw generations of Irish people forced to emigrate to find work. She said the jobless had again been left fend for themselves after a Government "*surrender*" to the inevitability of mass unemployment.

STERLING continued

The cost to the State at current exchange levels would be roughly €800m over 12 months, he said.

Britain still accounts for about 18 per cent of total Irish exports and 60 per cent of small firms rely on it for their earnings.

"Ireland's dependence on the UK as a trading partner has diminished, while a substantial portion of our trade with the UK is denominated in our currency (the euro) rather than sterling, which should soften the blow, at least in the short run. Still, the challenge of coping with a relatively sudden 20-25 per cent currency appreciation against what remains our single most important trading partner (the UK accounts for 25 per cent of Ireland's merchandise trade) is a daunting one and poses a serious threat to a large number of jobs.

"The UK accounts for one-third of all merchandise imports into Ireland. Accordingly, the euro's strength against sterling should convert into substantial price reductions across a wide range of imported items, processed foods and other consumer goods in particular. The Government and its agencies should spare no effort in ensuring that this in fact occurs. This is the logical quid pro quo for sacrifices on the wage front.

"It is worth noting in all of this that we actually run a (merchandise) trade deficit with the UK. What this suggests is that the Irish economy is potentially a net beneficiary from sterling weakness: the gains from cheaper imports potentially exceed the losses suffered by exporters.

"In essence the challenge is to harness the gains on the import side in a way that ensures that the difficulties experienced by exporters do not lead to reductions in output and employment" (Prof. Jim O'Leary, Maynooth, *Irish Times*, 5.9.2008).

These spokesmen are all avid Lisbonites but haven't the moral courage to challenge the British policy on the Single Currency. A policy which has put thousands of Irish jobs at risk! This is as much a political issue as one about the Euro currency.

Politicians, industrialists, economists all refuse to engage on the issue—they jib at any criticism of the British position on Europe.

"If you want to see Brown's economic programme in action, the place to go is Debden in Epping Forest on the eastern outskirts of London. That's where the Bank of England has its notes printed. "Those printing presses are running at a record rate but the real value of their output is tumbling" (*Irish Independent*, 15.12.2008).

BRITISH ECONOMY

In Britain, official figures showed manufacturing output tumbling by 7.4 per cent year-on-year in November, 2008, the fastest annual rate of decline since 1981; trade data showed export sales plunging despite the boost from a weak pound; house prices continued their headlong slump; survey evidence showed high street sales suffering their sharpest slide since the early Nineties; and the British Chambers of Commerce said that businesses nationwide were reporting savage falls in orders, confidence, investment and employment.

British interest rates now stand at 1.5 per cent; they have not been lower since the Bank of England was founded in 1694. But many economists still fear the bank has not done enough and will be forced to follow the U.S. Federal Reserve into unorthodox measures later this year.

Last month, the Central Bank made their fourth cut since the global co-ordinated emergency reduction in October, 2008.

The benchmark rate has never been this low since King William III founded the Central Bank to fund a war against Louis XIV's France.

The rate began at six per cent and fell no lower than four per cent throughout the 18th century.

It touched two per cent several times in the second half of the 19th century.

The Central Bank held it at that level throughout World War II until 1951.

Financial institutions are hoarding cash and a Bank of England survey in December, 2008, showed they plan to constrict credit further, even after the Government unveiled a £50 billion (€5.5 billion) rescue plan.

"Sterling is trading at levels that indicate Britain may lose its AAA credit rating as the Government increases borrowing to pull the economy out of its first recession in 17 years, according to Merrill Lynch & Co.

"With speculators also betting the banking crisis will force the UK to adopt the Euro currency, sterling fell sharply on foreign exchange markets on January 22, 2009." (*Irish Ind.*, 23.1.2009)

"Why should we even consider joining the Euro now—British manufacturing and tourism should be seizing this opportunity in 2009 and kick start economic growth again. Look at Northern Ireland, up to 60% of trade is coming from Eurozone Ireland. A weak pound may just save us! RS, Belfast" (*Times*, London, 31.1.2009).

British unemployment is rising. Credit remains expensive or impossible to obtain. The Pound has fallen by a quarter in value since the middle of 2007, and its fall has

accelerated since the Royal Bank of Scotland announced the biggest corporate loss in British history on January 19, 2009. The prospect of a full-scale run on the Pound is still remote, given the weakness of other currencies. But it is now real.

It has become clear that the British economy was one of the most over-leveraged in the world. In 2000, British banks had only a small gap between loans and deposits. By 2008, under the noses of the Financial Services Authority and Bank of England, they had built piles of IOUs worth at least £700 billion more than their deposits. Many of those IOUs, such as loans to some now-bankrupt foreign investors, are worth nothing.

The Bank of England estimates that British banks have £4,400 billion of assets on their balance sheets. That is more than twice the country's gross domestic product. Not all those assets are worthless. But too many losses could spook investors. A vicious circle is already taking hold, in which UK liabilities grow as sterling falls in value. The lower the currency falls, the more that it costs to service British debt.

The Royal Bank of Scotland is 70 per cent Government-owned, its liabilities must effectively be regarded as state liabilities. If the Government were to underwrite all the British banks, as it might have to, the costs could prove prohibitive. Having overspent recklessly in the good times, presided over lax regulation and left the cupboard disastrously bare, the Government has few reserves to draw on. There must now be a risk that the credit rating agencies will threaten to downgrade Britain.

"The speed at which proposals are put together under pressure that don't even pass an economic test is breathtaking and depressing", Mr. Peer Steinbrück said in an interview with *Newsweek*, published yesterday. "The same people who would never touch deficit spending are now tossing around billions... "The switch from decades of supply-side politics all the way to a crass Keynesianism is breathtaking", he said in an obvious reference to British prime minister Gordon Brown, who has called for all EU states to spend more and cut taxes in an attempt to stave off a long-lasting recession in Europe. (*Irish Times*, 12.12.2008).

"Apart from banking, property and entertainment, there is very little going on in Britain. The great industries that gave Britain its competitive edge over the years have disappeared. In comparison to Germany, France or even Italy, Britain is denuded of manufacturing. Over the past ten years, this state of

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STERLING continued

Germany to gain a commitment from the UK whether it intends to become a full member of the Single Currency or not!

STERLING CATASTROPHE & IRISH EXPORTS

The depreciation of Sterling against the Euro has sent the British currency into a tailspin which spells very bad news for Irish companies, said Jim Curran, head of research, at ISME, the Irish Small and Medium Enterprise organisation.

Sterling's decline puts huge pressure on the 47 per cent of Irish firms who export to that market, he said.

For some time Mr Curran said the situation for Irish exporters to Britain had become "highly grim and is getting worse".

The dependence of Irish-owned firms on the British market *"is more than twice the national average, which shows a huge reliance by native companies on that market as an outlet for their overseas sales"*, he said.

"Margins are being undercut and the prognosis is not good for firms trying to operate in that market at present," he said.

The fall in Sterling means Irish firms are facing stiffer competition on the home market and also in markets overseas where they compete with their British counterparts, he said.

"Costs are a huge issue and we have to become a lot more cost effective."

He called on the Government to give a lead in that regard and demanded a halt to stealth charges that have placed such a high burden on Irish business in recent years. Of the 47 per cent of companies selling to Britain, recent research showed 65 per cent regard this as their main export market.

Of those, 56 per cent are paid in Sterling, and 39 per cent in Euro while 40 per cent of all SME exports go to Britain.

At this stage 68 per cent are threatened by British competitors on the domestic market, 71 per cent on the British market and 44 per cent in other markets, he said.

IRISH FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

The depreciation of Sterling against the Euro is the biggest threat facing farming and the agri-food sector in 2009, according to the Irish Farmers Association's chief economist Rowena Dwyer.

Predicting that the two currencies could reach parity this year, she said the weakness of the Sterling is having a disastrous impact on the competitiveness of the Irish agri-food and manufacturing exporting sectors, as Irish products are much more expensive to import into Britain.

CONSUMER V. PRODUCER

There has been a public preoccupation

with the effect of the Sterling currency's strength on prices in Irish shops.

Ministers have been kept busy in the Dáil, soothing TDs upset by shops not reducing prices of imported goods, and by queues of North-bound cross-border shoppers.

Ministers have been happy to panderto the worries of our shopkeepers and shoppers—but the most pressing need is to protect the exports that keep our country afloat from the currency trends.

The Euro's 30 per cent gain versus Sterling in 2008 has decimated food and drink export profits from British sales.

Bord Bia have put a special focus this year on switching sales from Britain to continental EU markets, to which Ireland exports more than €2.5 billion worth of food and drink annually.

Irish produce is generally welcomed on the Continent, where environmental concerns and sustainability come first for consumers.

Getting over the Sterling problem can enable the food industry to maintain its vital export role, because demand for food is less sensitive to recession than most other commodities.

And the strong Euro isn't all bad news for the sector, because it will help reduce fertiliser and feed costs on farms.

With the slump in the cost of crude oil also pushing down prices of these commodities, the recession may not hit farmers too hard—unless it costs many part-time farmers their jobs.

The agricultural sector has often performed relatively well during downturns, and can do so again. But the strength of sterling is a new factor this time around.

MORE HAND-OUTS

"More than 13,000 jobs could be lost in companies exporting to Britain unless the Government funds a measure to reduce their losses on the weak sterling exchange rate, it was claimed yesterday.

"The Irish Exporters Association (IEA) and the Irish Farmers' Association [IFA] jointly called for a scheme to allow exporters to sell the sterling payments they received to the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) at a more favourable rate" (*Irish Independent*, 16.1.2009).

Another 10,000 jobs would be indirectly affected by damage to the export sector, bring the total job losses to 23,500, IFA President Liam Shanahan said.

The total export sales exposure of manufacturing and services companies to the UK is €7 billion, Mr. Shanahan stated.

Farmers say that their sector is hardest hit and €1 billion of the €3 billion a year's worth of food exports to the UK are particularly vulnerable, with 4,400 jobs under imminent threat if action is not

taken.

With Sterling at 90p to the Euro, down 20 per cent since 2007, exporters submitted a sterling equalisation support scheme to the Department of Enterprise and the Government.

The two bodies are also calling for a State-backed credit insurance scheme similar to those introduced in France, the UK, Belgium and Portugal in the last few weeks.

FOOD & DRINK

Food and Drink Industry Ireland (FDII), the IBEC group representing the food and drinks sector, called for initiatives to help the industry deal with the emerging crisis in the food sector.

In the past 12 months Sterling has fallen 30 per cent against the Euro adding huge pressure on Irish food firms selling into a competitive market where margins have traditionally been very tight.

Paul Kelly, director, FDII warned *"thousands of jobs are now at risk"*.

Unless the Government moves quickly to cut the cost of employment jobs will go in large numbers, he warned.

"It is very hard to see given the 30 per cent drop how companies can cope in the long term," he said.

Up to 50,000 jobs are tied up in the food and drinks industry in Ireland and the British market accounts for €3.62 billion or 42 per cent of total food and drink exports. Europe accounts for 31 per cent while the rest is diversified across international markets.

Mr. Kelly said the fall in Sterling is having a *"dramatic effect"* on the sector and this is in a sector where margins are particularly low.

The industry has been making *"a concerted effort to strip out costs as fast as they can"*, he said

Costs here are very high by comparison with Britain with waste disposal up to 100 per cent higher than in Britain and the cost of electricity 15 per cent dearer.

"Irish costs are totally and utterly out of line with Britain" and the 30 per cent collapse in sterling represents a massive step change for the sector here that is pushing it to the brink, he said.

John Whelan, Chief Executive of the Irish Exporters' Association, said the situation was so serious the Government need to introduce *"a currency equalisation fund"* to avoid *"a very significant run down in our Irish export industry"* which sells €18 billion in goods and services in Britain annually.

This crisis is similar to that faced by the banks and the state needs to put a financial package in place to protect this key sector, he said, adding: *"We need the same radical solution to be implemented"*.

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STERLING continued

1st January 2008, when Cyprus and Malta joined; the other members are: Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia and Finland.

CENTRAL BANK

At the close of the old year, John Hurley, Governor of the Central Bank, expressed the following thoughts in a lengthy article in the *Irish Times*:

"An additional benefit of monetary union has been the continued progress in European economic and financial integration.

"Over the next decade I have no doubt that the euro will establish itself further as an alternative reserve currency. In the 10 years since EMU, we have seen the region expand, with five additional economies adopting the currency since its launch, including Slovakia on New Year's Day 2009. The continued attractiveness of monetary union is evidenced by the desire of most of the other EU member states outside the euro area to join, as soon as their economic circumstances permit" (John Hurley, Governor of the Central Bank, *Irish Times*, 30.12.2008).

Hurley makes not a single mention of our nearest neighbour, the UK (the one with whom we have the "special relationship") where as a result of the appreciation of the Euro against Sterling, Irish exporters are being bled white and thousands of jobs are at risk. Whatever about other commentators, one would expect the Governor of the Central Bank and a European Central Bank Director to forward some opinion, whether in hope or despair at the prospect of the second largest economy in the Union joining the Euro zone or not.

The entire body politic has spent the last six months bemoaning the outcome of the June referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, of how Ireland is being forced to the periphery of the Union and away from the heart of power and influence. Yet, the UK with the second largest economy in the EU refuses to be part of the single currency and has no intention of being so. A policy that is having disastrous consequences for Ireland, a member country that wholeheartedly upholds and defends the Euro and is now being financially screwed by a fellow member of the Union.

Then again:

"We have the absurd spectacle of the Council President [Sarkozy] criticising Ireland for causing problems for the City of London in attracting Sterling into the Eurozone—it should not dare upset the poor dears in the City of London! If this is Lisbon's answer to Ireland's crisis then it's a case of God Save Ireland

from the Treaty!" (*Irish Political Review*, January, 2009).

BRITAIN & THE EU

Britain marked the 10th anniversary of the single currency with UK Independence members burning Euro notes outside the Bank of England.

"British voters have maintained their opposition to adopting the Euro, the currency shared by 16 other members of the European Union, even after the pound plunged in recent months, a poll shows.

"Of those surveyed, 64 per cent said they would vote against accepting the Euro if a referendum were held now, while 24 per cent said they would vote in favour, according to a survey by YouGov published in the *Sunday Telegraph*.

"The pound's slide against Europe's common currency since the beginning of the credit crunch in mid-2007 hasn't altered voters' views of joining the currency, the survey showed.

"The UK currency dropped a record 23 percent against the Euro last year" (*Irish Independent*, 12.1.2009).

BRITAIN UNDERMINES EURO

"Last week Finance Minister Brian Lenihan complained that the UK had engaged in a 'competitive devaluation' against other members of the EU" (*Irish Independent*, 12.1.2009).

Of course, the UK is engaged in a 'competitive devaluation' against the EU Sterling is in competition with the Euro and nowhere is this hurting more than in Ireland. Minister Lenihan is correct and endorsement of the Lisbon treaty will not change this. Yet Britain is at the 'heart of Europe' and the Lisbonites tell us Ireland has been relegated to the periphery since the referendum outcome last June.

"Britain's difficulties have triggered fresh calls for the country to re-examine joining the single currency. Certainly, being part of a beefy and more stable currency bloc has attractions in such turbulent times. But if anything, the crisis has strengthened the arguments of the "no" camp. Britain has the flexibility to slash interest rates to zero. There is no such option for weaker eurozone economies, such as Italy and Greece, nor for economies grappling with property boom and bust—such as Ireland and Spain. How those economies cope with the single currency may determine whether Britain eventually dusts down its own euro plans." (*The Times*, London, 31.12.2008).

The Euro is a remarkable success story, it is now the biggest alternative trading currency to the mighty Dollar. Were the politics of Europe as sound as the currency it would be an even more remarkable story! This, despite the many grim warnings from sceptics that the currency union was doomed. The European single

currency would fail "*economically, socially and politically*", Mrs. Thatcher insisted: she has been proven wrong on all counts. Take a look at Mrs. Thatcher's Britain!

"It was very different in January, 1999, when the single European currency was launched. Then a Euro cost only 71p. It got better for Sterling: the new currency started to slide and by March 2000 a Euro cost just 60p.

"Since then the pound has gradually slid back and the fall has turned into a near-collapse in recent weeks. This is not about euro strength, but pound weakness. The pound is plunging against the currencies of almost all our big trading partners. It is hardly surprising. Among other things, a country's exchange rate reflects its economic prospects, and Britain's right now are lousy. Past dependence on growth fuelled by borrowing; a housing and commercial property bubble; overreliance on financial services (five of our ten biggest companies were banks before the crunch); an already heavily indebted Government—all suggest that Britain will be hit harder and will have fewer resources to claw its way out of the downturn.

"Monetary policy is adding to the pound's weakness. With every cut in interest rates, Britain becomes a less attractive destination for the trillions of dollars in footloose money that sloshes around the world's financial centres in search of the highest returns. Base rate at 2 per cent is at its lowest since the Second World War" (*The Times*, London, 31.12.2008).

THE LISBON TREATY

"We must look again at the wood as well as the trees," the Foreign Affairs Minister Micheal Martin said.

"We need to think about the big picture of Ireland's future in Europe alongside the details of the Lisbon Treaty." (*Irish Times*, 16.1.2009).

It has never been more imperative for the Union to consolidate—the Lisbon treaty proposes the opposite: expansion, get bogged down in more trouble spots.

That fits in entirely with the British aim of political expansion, never allow things to settle in Europe. You can bet your bottom Euro, if Brussels succeeds in achieving Turkish entry, the next applicant for an expanding EU won't be Palestine—it will be Israel.

Surely the one true test for full and committed membership of the Union is membership of the Single Currency! The Euro currency is a core principle of the entire European project, it should be a qualification for membership. No Euro, No Membership.

It is plain in the current global crisis, that Ireland's immediate political task is not Lisbon, it is to convince France and

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Sterling v. Euro

The global economic meltdown has changed the entire European perspective for Ireland's membership—the issue now is not Lisbon! The issue is British membership of the Euro zone! Is Britain at the heart of Europe or still pining after old Empire 'glories'?

Hardly a commentator, be it RTE, leader writer or columnist hasn't expressed some opinion on the plight of Sterling in the money markets, every single aspect seems to have been covered, well almost: bar the obvious one from Ireland's point of view—why is the UK not a member of the Single Currency!

The only exception was Finance Minister Brian Lenihan who complained early last month that Britain had engaged in a 'competitive devaluation' against other members of the EU.

Even the plight of Irish exporters to the British market is glossed over, typical of the abiding urban consumer mentality in the media, the sole concern is the rip-offs being endured by Irish shoppers buying British goods at exorbitant mark-up.

After extracting €180 million from a penniless exchequer over the dioxin scam, the Lords of the Land are now calling for a scheme to allow exporters to sell the Sterling payments they receive to the National Treasury Management Agency at a more favourable rate and let the taxpayer incur the loss. But nowhere in the Irish Farmers' Association statement is any criticism made of Britain's refusal to join the Euro zone.

Almost everywhere there's a latent sympathy for the weakness being experienced by Sterling—never praise or support at the strength of the Euro. In fact it has got worse!

A decision to leave the Euro zone would run the risk of Ireland being expelled from the EU, writes Jim O'Leary. It finally surfaced, at the best of times, it bubbles just beneath the intellectual surface—yes, we love the Euro but we miss the old pounds and pence!

"Might Ireland abandon the euro? This question, the mere articulation of which would have invited ridicule a year ago, is now receiving some attention among international economic commentators. The reason is clear. A good, old-fashioned devaluation would be an obvious response to the awful conditions facing the economy, were this option available.

"There are grounds, therefore, as David McWilliams has suggested, for seeking special EU assistance to get us through our current and prospective problems. But the grounds for threatening to leave the euro should such a request be turned down are thin and treacherous." (Jim O'Leary, *Irish Times*, 23.1.2009).

A most conspicuous aspect of all this is the silence of the Lisbonites on the issue—one would imagine it was a golden opportunity to highlight the advance of the Euro throughout the whole global crisis, but nay! Are they denying that the Euro currency is a core element of the entire European project?

"President of the European Central Bank Jean-Claude Trichet told MEPs the currency faced major challenges in the next decade. And France's former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

pleased MEPs by saying there was cause to celebrate because the Euro has made "the biggest contribution to the European project since direct elections to the European Parliament were introduced in 1979". (*Irish Times*, 17.1.2009).

There is near celebration at the opportunity to buy Sterling at extremely attractive levels. In mid-January, the major banks throughout Munster had run out of Sterling such was the demand for that currency.

EURO ANNIVERSARY

New Year's Day witnessed the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Euro. On that day also, Slovakia became the 16th country to join the Euro. With the entry of Slovakia, the currency will be used by 330 million people with an annual gross domestic product of more than € trillion.

Joining up is a milestone for the country of 5.4 million people in a region where others have seen their currencies buffeted by the financial crisis stemming from bank losses on securities backed by shaky U.S. mortgages. Economists predict the strong and stable Euro will help the country weather the storm.

Slovakia is adopting as some people in EU member countries, Denmark and Sweden are rethinking their countries' refusal to sign up, while Poland is speeding up efforts to join.

Iceland, which is not an EU or a Euro member, suffered badly as an outsider, being hit with a combination of a plunging currency and the popularity of high-interest foreign currency loans. That means monthly loan repayments for cars and homes have doubled this year, hitting Icelanders hard as the economy teeters and jobs are slashed.

Slovakia is also the first State that used to be in the Soviet orbit to join.

The Euro was introduced on financial markets on 1st January 1999 and notes and coins first came into circulation in 2002. The zone widened to 15 nations on

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