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A Watershed

When the Irish electorate voted for the Lisbon Treaty, it voted for a probable Blair Presidency in a Great Power Europe in which little countries must toe the line. The Taoiseach seemed to acknowledge this fact by initially declaring his support for the chief warmonger of our time, Tony Blair, as President. But something caused him to recoil from Blair and transfer his support to the low key ex-Taoiseach and ex-EU Ambassador to the USA, John Bruton. What caused him to change his mind? Could it be the "underhand diplomacy of bloggers and pygmy politicians" on which John Water (ex-*Dancing At The Cross-Roads*) pronounced anathema in his *Irish Times* column on October 30s (*Only Blair Has The Right Stuff For Top EU Position*).

"Blair has the skills and personality to communicate a renovated message about the nature of community, to nurture relations between Europe and the rest of the world, and to speak authoritatively about issues such as climate change, immigration and new models of economy. The danger is this perhaps final chance for the EU to become a genuine political organism may be scuppered by the underhand diplomacy of bloggers and pygmy politicians..."

What new model of economy does Blair stand for? What he stood for during his ten years as Prime Minister was globalist uniformity under the direction of the USA, with Britain holding the position of agent of the USA.

What "relations between Europe and the rest of the world" does Blair stand for? The subordination of the rest of the world to a Europe guided by Britain acting as agent of the USA.

The British Labour Party was suspicious of the European Union during the 1970s and 1980s, seeing the "social market" ideal as an obstacle to the full-blooded socialism which it was committed to establishing in Britain. Blair came to power as a committed European and his Party, overwhelmed by charisma, followed him. He appointed an ultra-leftist of the mid-1980s as Minister for Europe—or was it Minister for Competition in Europe? Kim Howells was a die-hard Scargillite ideologue in the suicidal strike into which Scargill pushed the National Union of Mineworkers. When he became Blair's Minister, Howells' job was to destroy the socialist element of European Christian Democracy, which was an obstacle to free globalist capitalism.

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Obama Bows To Israel

The Obama administration has capitulated to Israel's demand that there should be no pre-conditions for the opening of negotiations with Palestinians. In particular, the freezing of all settlement activity, which seemed to be a US pre-condition until recently, has been abandoned.

This capitulation flies in the face of the terms of the internationally approved *Road Map* for these negotiations. This was put forward by the self-appointed Middle East Quartet (US, EU, Russia and the UN Secretary General) in 2003 and accepted by Israel and the PLO—and endorsed by the Security Council. It laid down several pre-conditions for negotiations (of which more later), including that Israel freeze all settlement activity.

The Obama administration had assured the PLO that this time negotiations would be under the terms of the Road Map. The PLO has made it clear from the outset that it wouldn't enter into negotiations unless this was so, its bottom line being that Israel must freeze all settlement activity.

BLUNTNESS MELTS AWAY

At the outset, both the President and his

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Report

. . . and some fell on dry land:

the imperviousness of Dublin's Academic Economists to interventionist Economics

A seminar in Dublin was held on 2nd November under the auspices of the "Dublin Economics Workshop". This is a circle of Dublin-based Economics academics, and the workshop received high profile billing in the media. So I went along.

Chaired by John Fitzgerald of ESRI, the "workshop" was treated to a lecture by David Blanchflower, an academic historian at Dartmouth University who also

advises the British Government in various capacities, but particularly on the issue of employment policy. He spoke on the theme "What Should Be Done About Rising Unemployment?". He argued that the financial crisis is deeper than anything we have seen since the 1930s. He stated that the 1930s Depression in the US was neutralised by the New Deal, a package of massive stimulus measures, but that the US Government at the time made the error

of prematurely reading the results of the stimulus inputs as the end of the recession itself, leading it to ease those inputs. As a result in 1937 the US plunged into a second trough of recession (the famous "W" effect), only finally being freed from it by the economics of war production in the early 1940s. He warned that we were again at a "1937 moment".

Evidence showed that the easing of the current recession, and the much trumpeted

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Labour Comment, by Pat Maloney:

[The Great PRSI Swindle](#)

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Blair's "new model of economy" was only Thatcher's model. Thatcher acknowledged him as her successor. She gave him her seal of approval right at the start. She had done the heavy lifting. All he had to do was carry on privatising and deregulating, carrying the message to parts she could not reach.

Globalism can be presented in ideology as egalitarian meritocracy—a universal struggle of each against all, in which each has an equal chance of doing down his neighbour to his neighbour as everyone else has. But it cannot be realised in that form. And those in power who preach it most fervently know that it can't. Globalism is necessarily hierarchical. It is realisable only as a world hierarchy with gradations downwards from the controlling influence of the United States.

The English bid for world domination began with the victory at the Battle of the Boyne—which we are now officially obliged to celebrate—and the subsequent conquest and subjugation of Ireland by the Glorious Revolution. The European strategy of the bid was the balance-of-power. The first ideologue of English balance-of-power strategy was John

Toland, who grew up speaking Irish in Donegal, converted to the fanatical English variety of state-oriented Protestantism in Derry in the 1680s, and evolved after 1688 into a skilful pamphleteer in the service of the Whig gentry.

The strategy was to prevent Europe from being consolidated into a political power. England set out to keep Europe "balanced", or in conflict, by allying itself with the weaker Powers against the Power which might have made a hegemonic settlement in Europe as Britain itself did in the 'British Isles'. Britain itself was never in the balance. It stood outside the balance and manipulated it.

That was the English view of the world for close on three centuries. It fell into confusion when the British Empire fell apart as a result of its second War on Germany, but it was not specifically rejected until Blair took office and declared for a unipolar world—a single world power structure under the dominance of the US, with Britain as No. 2. In that conception the world was Ameranglia and its hinterland. And John Waters signed up for it enthusiastically, fanatically, under the impact of the destruction of the World Trade Centre.

If Obama bin Laden plotted the WTC event with a view to driving Ameranglia crazy, he succeeded brilliantly in the case of John Waters.

The idea of the world as a systematic hierarchy run by the White House was a delusion of the early 1990s. The closer it came to realisation, the less practicable it became because of the forces of resistance that arose in opposition to its wild brutality.

Waters looks to Blair as a Hero for our time:

"If the EU is to shake off the sense of disconnection that has rendered it culturally moribund, what is required in the new job is a leader who can define the presidency outside the bureaucratic framework already established by EU institutions, signalling to the citizens of Europe and the wider world the EU is at last becoming a community of peoples..."

A "community of peoples" is what the EU was under its bureaucratic institutions, and what it is unlikely to remain under the new arrangements. The Commission, the rotating Presidency, and the consensual mode of decision-making were what made the Six a community, and carried over a sense of community to the Thirteen. But the Commission has been emasculated—with Irish PD Liberal Pat Cox acting as catspaw in the matter. The Presidency will no longer rotate. And majority rule is on the way.

Judge Barrington was surprisingly frank about this when championing Lisbon in a Radio Eireann debate with Joe Higgins. He said that the greater States must have a greater say in the running of the EU, and that the EU must have the military power to *defend*—and everyone should now know what that means—to defend its interests in the world.

Under the rotating Presidency, every little State had its moment when all the other States had to look to it, and when it could show what it was made of. The Irish Presidency under Charles Haughey was a nodal point on the way to the Celtic Tiger. Ireland was from that moment a force in European affairs, and the view of it as an appendage of Britain fell away.

Lisbon arranges that such aberrations will happen no more.

Under the old 'bureaucratic' arrangement, Europe was federal in substance because of the requirement that decision-making should be unanimous. That federal Europe has now been displaced (in principle at least) by a Europe of Great Power dominance.

The Irish voters voted for this Great Power Europe because of the threat that it would be punished if it refused to do so. The threat was issued by the German representative in Ireland. At about the same time Germany wiped out a village in Afghanistan. That is to say that, acting in

a moral capacity, it called down an airstrike on an Afghan village. It was reminiscent of mediaeval times, when the Church called on the secular power to deal with heretics. Germany fingered the villagers and America wiped them out.

Chancellor Merkel disclaimed responsibility. There will be no German compensation for survivors, or for relatives of the victims. And she was right. Germany has handed its conscience into the keeping of the USA. Its own moral posturing is spurious. The lesson it learned from the carpet bombing of Hamburg, Dresden, etc. by the Ameranglian air force in 1944-5 is that it must never again commit atrocities on its own account, and that, so long as it acts at the behest of Ameranglia, it will be physically secure and therefore morally in the right.

But we are not Germans. We do not need to render ourselves mindless out of a sense of ancient guilt. And the least we can do in response to the 'good German' extermination of an Afghan village is to strike Lidice out of the catalogue of war crimes. The action against Lidice was a reprisal. And the assassination of the German Governor of the Czech Protectorate that was organised by Britain in furtherance of its policy of "*setting Europe ablaze*" by acts of terror. This was after declaring war on Germany, losing the battle, and refusing to make a settlement.

The Czechs had given in to British intimidation in the Autumn of 1938 and handed the defensible Sudetenland over to Germany. Hungary and Poland then took other parts of the artificial Czechoslovak state, and the Slovaks declared independence. The Czech remnant was then made a German Protectorate without Czech resistance, or any action by Britain, in March 1939. The Czechs began to settle down as a Protectorate. They did not launch a resistance, even after Britain in an apparently capricious change of policy, decided to make war on Germany—or at least to declare war on it and get others to fight it. Britain therefore dropped in an assassination squad to kill the Governor, making it appear to be a Czech action. A number of Lidice villagers were executed in reprisal—which was not illegal under the 'laws of war'—and the village was razed.

The German-inspired action against the Afghan villagers was, by comparison, a wanton act of destruction. And if that was OK, let us strike Lidice from the list of horrendous atrocities.

We have become decadent, says Waters, as a consequence of "*six decades of tranquillity, interrupted momentarily by 9/11. At the core of this culture is the idea that peace is natural*".

We were saved from drowning in the swamp of pacifist decadence when Blair made his appearance in the image of

Insidious History-Telling

I was amazed when Eoghan Harris appeared in an excellent TG4 documentary on the life and games of Christy Ring. He told a long yarn about Christy pulling up a young player for moping about an ankle injury which ruled him out of a major game (All-Ireland). The story, Harris alleged, had been told to him by that young player. He didn't name him as far as I recall. The whole thing sounded like his usual invented tale unencumbered by mere "*factism*".

Harris also appeared in a TG4 programme celebrating the 125th anniversary of the GAA (1st November), which featured the life of Sam Maguire, and had Eoghan Harris and Ian Paisley commenting on him. Peter Hart was also in the credits programme.

Seeing Harris and Peter Hart come up as historical consultants on the history of the GAA is telling. There seems to be a new tactic underway—making themselves central to Irish history-telling. Harris has been on TV numerous times in the last two years—more than in the previous 20 years I'd imagine—speaking "*as Gaeilge*" (except where he had a point to make, e.g. about the 60,000 Protestants he alleged had been '*run out*' of Ireland in the early 1920s, which he made a point of saying in English in the middle of his contribution in Irish on the RTE programme on Dunmanway (*Cork's Bloody Secret*, 5th October, RTE TV). John A. Murphy was also on (introduced as a "*historian and writer*").

One has to wonder whether the GAA is being targeted at the moment for special treatment. A lavishly illustrated book—"The GAA—A People's History"—has just appeared (Collins Press). It is written by Mike Cronin, Mark Duncan and Paul Rouse (the latter a "*historical researcher*" on the discredited RTÉ *Coolacrease* film—he's also a regular contributor to the GAA website *An fear rua*). On the 1914-18 period the book states:

"Thousands of GAA members followed this call [from Redmond] and fought at the Western Front, in Italy and in the Dardanelles. Their story has largely been forgotten in the history of the GAA, but so great was their number that GAA clubs were left struggling in their absence... Various counties even considered lifting the ban on membership of the GAA for British soldiers, at least for the course of the war. This proposal never gathered momentum... A small minority of volunteers split from the Redmondites and founded their own volunteer movement. They united with James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army and staged a rebellion against British rule at Easter 1916... Estimates of the numbers of GAA members involved in the fighting run to around 350. This is about one fifth of the total number of rebels out on Easter Week. Five of the men executed after the Rising had a GAA connection..." (pp149-151)

"Attempts by the British government to introduce military conscription to Ireland in 1918 saw a fresh wave of political unrest... Increased unrest led to the British government, in July 1918, prohibiting the holding of any public meetings in Ireland except under official permit. The GAA chose to defy the prohibition and organised a mass protest for Sunday 4 August. County Boards across the country were instructed to stage marches without permits at 3 p.m. In Dublin alone, twenty-four matches were played at different venues... It was a major act of defiance, and one which linked the GAA to the gathering momentum of radical nationalism which led to the election victory of Sinn Féin in 1918. The electoral success of Sinn Féin led, in turn, to the establishment of the First Dáil and the initiation of the War of Independence in 1919. The GAA was involved in the emergence of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and particular IRA leaders... most likely made use of their GAA connections to recruit... (pp. 151-4).

So, the GAA enlisted *en masse* in the WW1 British Army; 1916 was a revolt by a "*small minority of volunteers*", who "*founded their own volunteer movement*"; and only one-fifth of 1916 rebels had GAA connections. A 1918 protest in defiance of a British ban on public assembly—which were occasioned by "*increased unrest*"—led to GAA matches being played at 24 locations "*in Dublin alone*". The electoral victory of Sinn Féin led to the 1st Dáil and to "*the initiation of the War of Independence*".

The comments on GAA players in the British Army in WW1 as contrasted with 1916 are odious. Also, the 4th August 1918 games played in defiance of the British ban in fact—according to Paddy Heaney, *Coolacrease*, p. 72-3—saw over 1,000 matches being played "*illegally*" at locations nationwide (and not just 24 in "*Dublin alone*").

Philip O'Connor

'Bambi', which of course delighted us, but was camouflage for—

"a deep seriousness that counterpoints his superstar image... Blair seemed instinctively to know what was necessary

for survival in an age in which charismatic vacuity was prized over everything, and to guard his deeper thoughts and talents until he was able to put them to what he regarded as their proper use... And while

it is true that the situation in Iraq since 2003 has gone from bad to appalling to better and, right at this moment, back to appalling, none of that should be the measure of the morality of the cause... Tony Blair was motivated well in advance of the invasion by a desire to rid the world of its ugliest dictator. There are few who, when the argument is couched in these terms, can argue convincingly he was wrong. But the well of popular opinion has become so contaminated on this issue it is almost impossible to be heard in Blair's defence..."

—except of course in Britain's newspaper for the Irish.

(The *Irish Times* is on the verge of bankruptcy. Those in the know are convinced that it will go out of business within the next few months, and wonder what they will do without it. If it does go out of business, then it will, of course, cease to be Britain's newspaper for the Irish, and the aberration of the past 20 years will possibly be rectified.)

Blair went up a mountain in Spain and he came down with a message from God telling him to make war on Iraq. That's what he said, in his own disarming way to John Lloyd of the *Financial Times*. At that moment Ireland had its brief moment of prominence in world affairs, with Buggins turn as Chairman of the Security Council. Brien Cowen gave it as his opinion that an invasion of Iraq was allowed for by resolutions for a different purpose, adopted a dozen years earlier. The British Foreign Secretary of the time disagreed, as we recall, on the ground that Iraq—disabled and impoverished by sanctions, and closely supervised—did not constitute any threat to international peace. But Blair decided to make war, and when he could not get a fresh UN Resolution, he covered himself with the Irish agreement. And Ireland played its little part in the War—urged on by Waters, Kevin Myers, and Eoghan Harris.

War was right because Saddam was a dictator, Waters says. Is that not a view from the swamp of democratic decadence which cannot face the realities of world affairs.

Iraq was a state haphazardly thrown together on the spur of the moment by the British conquest of the Middle East in 1918-19 so as to secure the source of oil, which had become vital to it in the course of the Great War. It never had a democratic election. Its first election was openly rigged by Britain, which kidnapped and deported the rival candidate. It was only under Saddam's long dictatorship that representatives of the disparate elements were drawn together into something like a functional Iraqi body politic sustaining a regime. The 2003 invasion deliberately broke up that body politic. It sought a semblance of internal support by throwing

Iraq back into its constituent elements, setting Shia, Sunni and Kurd against each other.

The amount of killing done by the Saddam regime in the course of hammering the disparate social elements into an Iraqi body politic is grossly exaggerated by the invasion propaganda. It is sometimes put at unspecified "*millions*". Most of that killing occurred in war against Iran—which was actively supported by the West for the purpose of containing the Islamic enthusiasm of the Iranian revolution. Amnesty International estimated the internal killing for the purpose of maintaining the regime at "hundreds" in 2000, "scores" in 2001, and again "scores" in 2002 (see Amnesty website at <http://web.amnesty.org>).

How many have been killed within Iraq since 2003? And to what actual purpose.

Saddam's regime was a secular welfare state, in which women had begun to behave in the European manner. A separation of Church and State—without the oppression of religion, but restricting of Islam to the private sphere—is considered to be oppression.

Irish businessmen traded freely with Saddam's Iraq, and Irish nurses felt at ease in it.

The Irish Government facilitated the war on Iraq for trivial reasons. The Irish voters authorised the formation of a new Great Power Europe for vital reasons, but reasons which had nothing to do with the actual purpose of Lisbon.

*

Bertie, at his book launch by Charlie McCreevy (8th October), boasted that Ireland was in safe hands when he and McCreevy were running it. But the depth of the crisis was brought about by the way he ran it. We do not say he was wrong not to curb the Celtic Tiger. In order to do so, he would have needed an Opposition demanding that it be curbed, and the general demand was to make hay while the sun shone. But the suggestion that the crisis happened because he was ousted is absurd. (It is not surprising, however, as we repeatedly described him as having the world-view of a huxter.)

The Celtic Tiger had illusions about itself which we did not share—hence our Winnie the Pooh variation of Tigger. It was created by Charles Haughey, which it repudiated and blackguarded. In its collapse the hope of a resurgence of tigerishness is maintained by Brian Lenihan in the face of general opposition and ridicule, and an element of bad faith. Let us hope that the experience will have a de-Anglicising influence on him.

Anyhow, the decision to run the economy on the basis of future property prices in the hope that those prices will be realised in the future is a bold venture.

It depends on ultimate European fund-

ing: the Irish economy has still been much too small, and too dependent on globalist flows, to undertake such an extreme Keynesian measure on its own. So, in the referendum, the electorate played the tune that was paid for.

Economists

continued

"*green shoots*" now being detected, were almost entirely the result of temporary stimulus measures. But the "*green shoots*" of renewed "*growth*" at present in the US, Germany etc. are the result of public, not private, stimuli (i.e. business activity). Of the up to 150 economic sectors in the US only one—healthcare—is showing any actual organic growth. There is no evidence of any other private sector stimulus making any showing at all. Cuts in public wages or in employment deep in a recession, he said, would be "*a big mistake*" and would only deepen the recession and if pushed too far tip the economy "*over the cliff*" into a protracted Depression.

Blanchflower also noted that British "*quantitative easing*"—i.e. currency deflation [printing money]—was being carried out ruthlessly at the expense of the Euro Zone economies—and was particularly hurting Germany, France and Ireland.

Blanchflower's argument is very similar to that being promoted by the ICTU in its 10-point Plan for Economic Recovery, published the same morning as the Workshop. Needless to say there were no takers for that perspective at the "*Workshop*".

ICTU argues that the four-year recovery period permitted to Ireland by the EU is too short, particularly as the EU is demanding deflationary measures to provide a type of negative stimulus for recovery of the export economy. This, Congress has argued, is mistaken on two counts—firstly, as deflation at the trough of an economy could push the economy over the edge into Depression; and, secondly as there is no basis for believing in a revival of world trade to a level that would cause a resurgence of Ireland's export economy. ICTU seeks an easing of financial cuts and the spreading of a recovery strategy (combined with internal economic and direct employment stimulus measures) over a longer period—to 2013. This makes sense, and it is only unfortunate that no political party seems willing to abandon the neo-liberal consensus at the heart of current Irish "*recovery*" policy thinking and actually support the ICTU perspective.

That wretched consensus was well in evidence at the event at which Blanchflower was speaking. While he was treated with politeness and respect by the 100-

plus largely academic audience at the seminar, not a single voice was raised in support of his neo-Keynesian arguments. John Fitzgerald of ESRI defended his own theory of the need for downward wage "adjustments", based on the dogma that it would act as a stimulus to a recovery of international trade upon which Ireland depended. The nearest thing to an applause Blanchflower received was when he stated—in response to George Lee TD—that the best thing that could happen for Ireland would be for Germany to leave the Euro, thus allowing "quantitative easing" in Ireland's interest without exposing it to the vagaries of an independent currency!

Various other academics put forward their invariably neo-liberal pet theories. A Colm Harmon of UCD predictably used American behavioural studies to explain the value of pre-school education, while downplaying the value of technical and vocational education and on-the-job training. Blanchflower called for a return to massive investment in general, rather than trade-specific, education, given that the jobs of the future were still an unknown quantity, and targeting this at the young unemployed and the low skilled employed. This directly contravenes the thinking of the hard core proposals of the McCarthy Report, which held that such training should be left to the market.

Harmon supported the proposals of McCarthy in all areas except one—the proposal to radically reduce state subsidisation of PhD studies! This is of course pure academic self-serving. Blanchflower on the other hand regarded such investment as of little value from a state employment investment perspective.

Blanchflower argued that the focus of investment should be on the "young". While not entirely convincing, he did have a case. High rates of unskilled youth unemployment—as is currently being experienced in Ireland particularly—could devastate a generation. Particularly as unskilled work would be the least available type of work in the future or in any recovery scenario. He argued that state policy should focus on cutting the "supply" of "unskilled unemployed" precisely by investing to turn the "unskilled unemployed" into "skilled employable" workers. He also argued for using whatever resources existed in the state sector to provide opportunities for the integration of young unemployed people back into the workforce.

The present writer was pleasantly surprised to hear Joan Burton TD intervene to propose precisely such a scheme of subsidised employment opportunities throughout the public sector, and so could finally leave the 'true blue' "workshop" in a more pleasant mood than the atmosphere up to that point would have allowed.

Philip O'Connor

Israel

continued

Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, made unusually blunt demands of Israel that settlement building should cease. For example, on 27th May 2009, Clinton laid down the law in the following terms:

"With respect to settlements, the President was very clear when Prime Minister Netanyahu was here. He wants to see a stop to settlements—not some settlements, not outposts, not natural growth exceptions. ... That is our position." [1: note all references can be found at the web address at the end of this article.]

However, the US never applied any sanctions to Israel to ensure that it obeyed, nor stated bluntly that there would be no negotiations unless it obeyed. And as time went by, the administration's bluntness melted away.

By September, the President was commending Israel for having "discussed important steps to restrain settlement activity" [2]. As we will see later, these "important steps" don't amount to a hill of beans. Nevertheless, on 31st October 2009, standing beside Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem, Clinton described these "important steps" as "unprecedented":

"What the prime minister has offered in specifics of a restraint on the policy of settlements, which he has just described—no new starts, for example—is unprecedented in the context of the prior two negotiations." [3]

There, she was drawing attention to the fact that there was no freeze on settlement activity, or even Israeli "restraint" on settlement activity, prior to the Camp David talks in 2000 and the Annapolis process which began in November 2007. On those two occasions, settlement activity was an issue within the negotiations, not a pre-condition of the negotiations beginning.

So, her earlier demand for "a stop to settlements—not some settlements, not outposts, not natural growth exceptions" has been satisfied by Netanyahu's "restraint".

What is more, she made it clear that the US now accepted Israel's position that negotiations should be without pre-conditions. True, when a journalist asked her "if both sides should re-launch the peace process without any preconditions", she refused to express an opinion "as to whether or not there should be conditions". However, she added:

"The important thing, as the prime minister just said, is to get into the negotiations. ... I think the best way to determine the way forward is, as the prime minister said, get on the path."

What the US is now proposing is a

repeat of the Annapolis process, which began without any of the Road Map conditions being fulfilled and got nowhere. As Saeb Erakat of the PLO said on 1st November 2009, in response to the US capitulation:

"Israel has signaled its rejection of any serious discussions on permanent status issues like Jerusalem, recognition of the 1967 borders, refugees or settlements. If America cannot get Israel to implement a settlement freeze, what chance do Palestinians have of reaching agreement with Israel on permanent status issues?" [4]

At the time of writing, the PLO is refusing the US demand that it enter negotiations without Israel fulfilling the Road Map pre-conditions.

THE ROAD MAP

The Road Map requires Israel to take a number of well-defined steps prior to the start of negotiations (see *A performance-based roadmap to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict* [5]). These include:

- (a) "Israeli leadership issues unequivocal statement affirming its commitment to the two-state vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel"
- (b) "GOI [Government of Israel] immediately dismantles settlement outposts erected since March 2001", and
- (c) "Consistent with the Mitchell Report, GOI freezes all settlement activity (including natural growth of settlements)".

On 25th May 2003, the Israeli Government, headed by Ariel Sharon, approved the Road Map by 12 votes to 7, but entered 14 reservations [6]. However, these reservations did not relate to points (a), (b) or (c). The PLO accepted the Road Map without reservations.

The Road Map was endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council in resolution 1515, passed on 19th November 2003, which called:

"on the parties to fulfil their obligations under the Roadmap in cooperation with the Quartet and to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security;" [7]

ISRAEL FLUNKS ANY PRE-CONDITION

Israel hasn't fulfilled any of the pre-conditions laid down in the Road Map, and shows no sign of doing so. It hasn't dismantled the settlement outposts erected since March 2001, nor frozen all settlement activity. It hasn't even agreed to the ultimate objective of the Road Map—the establishment of "an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state".

Netanyahu made it crystal clear, in his speech on 14 June 2009 [8], that the Palestinian "state" he envisaged would be neither independent, viable or sovereign.

The security needs of Israel demanded, he said, "*clear commitments*" from the US that "*in a future peace agreement, the territory controlled by the Palestinians will be demilitarized*", by which he meant:

"without an army, without control of its airspace, and with effective security measures to prevent weapons smuggling into the territory—real monitoring, and not what occurs in Gaza today. And obviously, the Palestinians will not be able to forge military pacts. Without this, sooner or later, these territories will become another Hamastan [i.e. a Hamas state]."

On 24th September 2009, a Quartet statement called

"on Israel and the Palestinians to act on their previous agreements and obligations --in particular adherence to the Roadmap, irrespective of reciprocity--to create the conditions for the resumption of negotiations in the near term." [9]

A few weeks later, the US is attempting to pressurise Palestinians into negotiations without Israel fulfilling any of the Road Map pre-conditions. Just imagine if the boot were on the other foot, if Palestinians were refusing to abide by previous agreements and obligations. Just imagine the opprobrium that would be heaped on their heads.

NETANYAHU'S 'RESTRAINT'

What does the "*restraint*" with regard to settlement building amount to? Here's how he described it in his press conference with Clinton on 31st October 2009:

"I said we would not build new settlements, [would] not expropriate land for addition for the existing settlements, and that we were prepared to adopt a policy of restraint on the existing settlements, but also one that would still enable normal life for the residents who are living there." [4]

First of all, this "*restraint*" only applies to the West Bank, not to East Jerusalem, which Israel regards as an integral part of Israel.

Second, all that Netanyahu is proposing is a temporary halt to the planning of new settlement construction in the West Bank. He's not proposing any restriction on construction that is already "*planned*". What does this mean? An article by Hagit Ofran of Peace Now in *The Huffington Post* on 28th October 2009 explains:

"... there are two stages to the approval process for settlement construction: approval of plans and approval of actual construction. If you want to build in a settlement, you have to get your plans approved, and then, when you are ready to implement the plans, you have to get the actual construction approved. A real settlement freeze would have to apply to both of these stages—no new plans approved, and no new construction approved, even under already-approved

plans. Freezing both of these stages is entirely within the government of Israel's authority, but that is not what has been done.

"Instead, we have in place a sort of passive freeze—one that applies only to new planning, while permitting a huge amount of new construction to go ahead, since there is a backlog of plans that have already been approved but not yet implemented. Indeed, according to an official report of the Ministry of Defense, published in Ha'aretz newspaper (the Spiegel Report) [10], the settlements have the theoretical potential to build 40,000 new housing units—units that are already in the pipeline in the context of plans that were previously approved." [11]

This article also presents evidence that in preparation for a possible freeze on the planning of settlement construction a new "*fast track*" mechanism is being operated to ensure that lots of construction is planned in advance of any freeze on planning:

"A few weeks ago we obtained a letter written by a key figure in one of the regional settlement councils, in which he refers to a new 'fast track' offered by the council for initiating new settlement construction. This new fast track shortens and expedites the process necessary for starting new construction by letting people obtain a permit to dig and lay foundations, rather than begin construction on the building itself. This is not business as usual. Normally when a building permit is granted, that permit applies to everything—the structure and its foundations. Getting such a permit is not a quick process, since applicants must satisfy a series of planning, safety and bureaucratic requirements. The new 'fast track' is clearly designed to circumvent this longer process. Why? Simply stated: so that settlers can get as much activity going on the ground as possible, in the hopes that if/when a settlement freeze is declared, anything that is already underway will be exempted from the freeze." [11]

So Netanyahu's "*restraint*" doesn't amount to a hill of beans.

ALL SETTLEMENT BUILDING ILLEGITIMATE

In his speech in Cairo on 4th June 2009, Obama said that "*the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements*" [12].

But, it is not just future settlement building that is illegitimate. All settlement building in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is contrary to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which forbids an Occupying Power to "*transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies*" [13].

The Security Council has endorsed this view—in resolutions 446, 452 and 465—and demanded that settlement building cease and existing settlements be removed.

Every year, the UN General Assembly

makes the same demands, most recently in resolution 63/97 passed on 18th December 2008, which reiterated its demand

"for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls in this regard for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 465 (1980)".

This resolution was passed by 171 votes to 6, the only opponents being Israel and the US, plus Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru and Palau. Ireland and other EU states voted for the resolution.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has also declared Israel's settlement building contrary to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention in its Advisory Opinion on the construction of the Wall [14] (paragraph 120).

(The Rome Statute [15] defines the offences—genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes—for which the International Criminal Court (ICC) may, in certain circumstances, prosecute individuals. Article 8.2(b)(viii) of the Statute defines

"the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies"

as a war crime. It would seem that there is a strong prima facie case that Israel's settlement building programme is a war crime.

Like the US and others (for example, Sudan), Israel has not signed up to the ICC and accepted its jurisdiction, so the ICC cannot prosecute it for this.

Theoretically, the Security Council could refer matters in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to the International Criminal Court, as it did the situation in Darfur in March 2005. Then, Israelis could be prosecuted by the ICC for settlement building carried out since 1st July 2002, when the Rome Statute came into force. Needless to say, the US would wield its veto on the Security Council to prevent that happening.)

Since 1967, Israel has transferred around 500,000 Jews into the Palestinian territories it occupies, contrary to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It has ignored demands from the UN Security Council and General Assembly that this transfer cease and be reversed. And the US is not even prepared to force it to cease this transfer—on a temporary basis—to facilitate negotiations with Palestinians.

David Morrison

3 November 2009

www.david-morrison.org.uk/palestine/obama-capitulates-to-israel.htm

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

IRISH HEALTH SYSTEM IMPROVES

The *Long Fellow* is fortunate not to have too much experience of the Irish Health system and so his impressions of it are from personal anecdotes and media reporting. The media view is that the system is disastrous and incapable of reform. However, a report by the Euro Health Consumer Index shows that we rank 13th of 28 European countries surveyed. The UK ranks 14th. When the survey was inaugurated three years ago we ranked 28 out of 29. So it appears there has been a dramatic improvement.

It might be thought that such a report would warrant front page news, but the Irish media doesn't like good news stories. *The Irish Times* had the report tucked away in its Health supplement, while there was minimal reporting in the Independent Group and Broadcasting media.

Foreign observers of this country must be perplexed by the tendency to denigrate. The EHCI director Dr Arne Bjornberg put it diplomatically:

"Ireland has been climbing steadily in the EHCI. However, the Irish healthcare system seems to have a domestic 'marketing' problem."

The *Long Fellow* thinks that it is not a "marketing problem"; it is a "media problem".

MEDIA PROBLEM

The problem is that the media here exists separately from the society and therefore can pursue its own agenda. Indeed, it could be said that the media here exists in an antagonistic relationship with the society. This is certainly not the case in other countries. In Britain the BBC is an organ of the State. While this institution is not monolithic, the conflicts and divisions within it are a reflection of those within the Party system. Every so often a journalist or even a Director General believes the BBC's own propaganda and acts as if the institution really is independent. It appears that Greg Dyke was surprised when he was dismissed from his position as Director General for acting against the interests of the State.

In this country the political parties believe that the national broadcaster should be independent. They might interfere in cases where they perceive that there has been bias against them but they will never act to protect the overall interests of the State. When was the last time an RTE Director General was sacked?

A second particularity is that an influential component of the Irish media has an

external inspiration. The unique character of *The Irish Times* has been well documented in this magazine.

A third reason for the media's position is that other forces within the society do not exert an influence on it. The national bourgeoisie is of recent origin and does not appear to have acquired the necessary political skills. Perhaps that will change if Denis O'Brien obtains control of Independent newspapers. Also, the preponderant middle class outlook of journalists ensures that the Trade Unions are marginalised.

As an example, Manus O'Riordan, a research officer representing the largest Trade Union in the country, had to compete with members of a studio audience to make a point on Pat Kenny's new television show (22.9.09). Manus was also on RTE radio's *Late Debate* programme (28.9.09). Other participants were two elected politicians, as well as Lise Hand of the *Irish Independent* and Moore McDowell, a professional economist. The Chairwoman was Rachel English. It has now been established that the hosts of these shows are not just facilitators, but are entitled to participate in such debates. The three participants, who represented something—Manus and the two politicians—were treated with the usual contempt by the other people, who represented nothing.

The practice might have some justification if the unrepresentative participants had something interesting to say, but Lise Hand made an inane remark about Bernie Madoff going to jail and no one in Ireland receiving the same treatment. To which Michael Mulcahy, the Fianna Fail politician, made the obvious point about due process.

There is absolutely no comparison between what Madoff did and what, say, Sean FitzPatrick is alleged to have done. Fitzpatrick's operation was at least a business employing hundreds of people. From the time he was Chief Executive in 1986 the Bank generated high returns for its shareholders during most of that period. Madoff's operation, on the other hand, was just a vehicle for financing his family's lavish lifestyle. If anyone outside the Madoff family benefited it was at the expense of other investors in the criminal enterprise. This is not to say that there was no wrong doing at Anglo-Irish, only that the comparison is odious.

Moore McDowell exposed his political prejudice when he said the Government was warned by the Opposition parties of the impending recession. If they did, they did not take their own advice. All the Opposition parties accepted the low tax policies of the Government. Indeed Fine Gael wanted to go further and lower the top rate to 40%. FG also took a completely opportunistic line with regard to Stamp Duty (calling for its abolition without any alternative property tax).

NATIONAL GUILT

The independence of the media translates into contempt for the society and its traditions. In recent times there has been an attempt to dredge up long forgotten incidents in our history in order to portray our Republican tradition in an unflattering light. The *Aubane Historical Society* found it necessary to produce a book to counteract the lies and propaganda of RTE's *Coolacrease* documentary.

It was inevitable that RTE would want to broadcast a programme on the April 1922 killings of 13 Protestants in West Cork. The documentary was entitled *Cork's Bloody Secret* and was broadcast as part of a series on crime investigations. But how could an event that was discussed in the Dáil and condemned by such National figures as de Valera, Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins and Erskine Childers, be considered a secret? It might also be objected that this was no crime investigation since no attempt was made to identify the culprits. But such an objection would be to misunderstand RTE's anti-national project.

The guilty had already been decided upon: they were we the Irish people. And our guilt could not be expiated by the condemnations of our Republican political leaders.

Since the culprits had been established *a priori*, the collection of evidence or the further investigation of the crime was superfluous. According to Eoghan Harris our guilt had its origins in the Penal Laws. Had we provoked the English into such measures?! And the killing of the 13 Protestants was but a symptom of a greater crime: the forcible expulsion of 60,000 ("a conservative estimate") Protestants.

THE YORKSHIRE RIPPER

But our murderous seed could not be confined to this country. At the end of the *Cork's Bloody Secret* programme RTE promised that it would investigate the Irish origin of the "Yorkshire Ripper".

The following week the Irish connection was revealed. At the beginning of this programme we learned that the Yorkshire Ripper's mother had an Irish name (Clonan). There followed some speculation that she might have come from Connemara. Later it was revealed that the Ripper, after his conviction, had changed his name from Sutcliff to Clonan. Was he acknowledging his Irish essence?!

It was only at the end of the programme that the true extent of the Ripper's Irishness was revealed. The name Clonan came from his mother's grandparents who emigrated from Ireland in the 1870s!

The Yorkshire Ripper must be one of the few people in England who is not eligible to play for the Irish soccer team!

THE BACK LASH

It appears that the tolerance of Irish people for this orgy of self-flagellation

has its limits. Following the *Aubane Historical Society's* dismantling of the *Coolacrease* documentary's theses, the programme was denounced by *History Ireland*. However, most of the prominent academics who participated in that documentary maintained their silence in the face of the withering attacks.

Perhaps because he was the only academic who participated in the much milder *Cork's Bloody Secret* documentary, Professor John A. Murphy felt obliged to speak out. He quite effectively exposed the flimsy basis of Harris's outrageous assertion that 60,000 Protestants were driven out of this country. At least as serious for Harris was the intervention of Dr Andy Bielenberg in the Letters' pages of *The Irish Times*. The latter made the point that the *maximum* figure of involuntary Protestant emigration between 1919 and 1923 was 41,000. But this figure included:

- emigration for ideological reasons
- emigration because less jobs available in Landed estates
- emigration because of intimidation or fear of intimidation

So only a part of the 41,000 can be explained by involuntary emigration. Even if it could be established what proportion of this figure was "involuntary", the task of the researcher would not be completed. He would then have to determine what "part of the part" of the 41,000 could be explained by the emigrants being loyalist participants in the War who happened to be Protestant and what part of the part was purely because they were Protestant.

It is likely that the number who were intimidated purely because they were Protestant was insignificant, otherwise it would be difficult to explain the participation of so many Protestants in leadership positions on the Republican side of the War of Independence.

HARRIS LICKS HIS WOUNDS

After the rout of Harris and his supporters, the polemicist chose to remain silent on the issue in his *Sunday Independent* column of 18th October. But, when he raised it again the following week, his words sounded more like the cries of a wounded animal than someone engaged in serious debate. He did not deal with the points raised by Murphy or Bielenberg, but instead emitted the following whimpering squeal:

"The political websites are packed with tribal patrollers who pour out pure poison after every attempt to address what happened to southern Protestants in the period 1919-22. Each incident, be it the Coolacrease killings, the burning of Clifden orphanage, or the Dunmanway Murders, is subjected to tribal scrutiny. If a single fact is found faulty, the experience as a whole is deemed not to exist.

"Phoenix strongly supports this punctillious (sic) approach."

How sad! Even the tribal patrollers are

exposing Harris's faulty facts! But Harris has never acknowledged or apologised for them. He just stops repeating them when they can no longer be sustained.

Of course, Harris's supporters—if not Harris himself—participate on these political websites as well and their mode of reasoning is remarkably similar to that of their hero. Following John A. Murphy's letters in *The Irish Times*, a pro-Harris blogger was incapable of dealing with the issues raised but preferred to suggest that Murphy's criticism was motivated by personal animosity towards Harris.

A failure to deal with political points on their merits is a sign of political bankruptcy, but it must be admitted that there might be an element of truth in the blogger's remarks. Murphy would be less than human if he did not bear a personal animus against the political revisionists.

In 2004 he dissented from some of the more extravagant views of the Reform Movement—which includes Eoghan Harris among its supporters and whose main policy seems to be to return Ireland to the Commonwealth. Another supporter, Bruce Arnold, responded to Murphy in the following sectarian terms:

"I am tempted to call his 'free-thinking mentality' flabbiness when it fails to recognise the difference between whatever it is that he means and the more rigorous discipline of the Protestant mind" (*The Irish Times*, 28.10.04).

PROTESTANT SCHOOLS

The Duke of Wellington is reputed to have said at the Battle of Waterloo that his soldiers may not frighten the enemy, but they frightened the life out of him. There must be many Protestants who feel the same about Harris and other *Sunday Independent* writers who are supporting the subsidy to Protestant schools.

The Protestant schools may or may not have a case, but no self respecting State can concede to demands on the basis that it has been "sectarian".

O'KEEFE DEFENDS POLICY

The *Sunday Independent* accorded the Minister of Education Batt O'Keefe a right of reply in the most demeaning form imaginable. His article (11.10.09) was surrounded by antagonistic quotes from, among other sources, *The Irish Times*. It appears that the traditional rivalry between Abbey Street and the Old lady of d'Olier Street (now tottering in Tara Street) has been consigned to the past.

O'Keefe made a reasonable case, but the reader of the article might wonder at the preferential treatment that Protestant schools still retain.

All O'Keefe has done is withdraw in last year's budget a €2.8 million grant for Protestant fee-paying schools employing caretakers and secretaries. This grant was not available to Catholic fee paying schools.

Protestant fee-paying schools also

receive the same capitation grant as non-fee-paying schools. This is greater than the grant for fee-paying Catholic schools. The amount of extra grants that Protestant fee-paying schools obtain by being part of the free education scheme is €6.5 million. *This preferential treatment will remain in place.*

The justification for this is that poorer Protestants are not able to avail of non fee-paying schools in their neighbourhood because there are fewer such schools with a Protestant ethos. But does this logic apply in urban centres such as Dublin?

Also, it would be interesting to compare the incomes of, say, the poorest 10% of parents of children in a fee-paying Protestant school with the corresponding parents in fee-paying Catholic schools. Unfortunately, such information may not be easy for the State to come by. Once the State hands over the extra €6.5 million, it is disbursed by a committee consisting of "representatives from the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist churches, and the Society of Friends".

If ever there is a radical reforming Minister for Education who has a policy of expanding the non-fee paying sector, he will find it prohibitively expensive if the link in funding of non fee-paying schools and fee-paying Protestant schools is not broken.

POLITICAL REACTION

Surprisingly the Catholic Church appears to be sympathetic to the Protestant cause. David Quinn in the *Irish Independent* wrote that O'Keefe's modest reform was an attack on *all* denominational education. Archbishop Martin on *Morning Ireland* defended the "pluralist" role of the Protestant schools.

The reaction of the Opposition parties was muted. Enda Kenny lived up to Sean Lemass's description of Fine Gael as the "irresponsible party" by suggesting that the Department of Education was taking revenge on the Protestant schools because of losing a High Court case against them. This was an outrageous slur on the professionalism of the Department. Kenny does not have any concept of the overall interests of the State. Last year he sought to embarrass the Minister for Finance by publicising in the Dáil some gossip to the effect that the British Finance Minister had made numerous phone calls to Lenihan when the latter proposed the Bank Guarantee scheme.

It was a pity that Kenny didn't give the details of the relevant High Court case once he had raised it. Last year the Department of Education attempted to place teachers from city centre schools, which had closed, into nearby Protestant schools. The Protestant schools refused to accept these unemployed teachers on the grounds that it would compromise the ethos and independence of such schools. They brought their case before the High Court and won.

So much for the "pluralism" of Protestant schools!

On Press Suppression Of The Unpalatable

Lisbon is an issue on which I and *Irish Political Review* commentators on the EU have agreed to differ. Readers of whatever viewpoint may, however, be interested in which pro-EU partisan positions the Establishment press, from Sir Anthony O'Reilly's *Sunday Independent* to the City of London's *Financial Times*, remains determined to silence.

It is true that sometimes a different tone is momentarily tolerated from a resident columnist, as in the case of the *Sunday Independent* of 20th September, when Marc Coleman wrote:

"Our gallant allies in the ECB have not only cut interest rates, easing the pain of tax increases, but by lending to our banks are keeping our economy alive... It was the EU that first gave the Irish language international recognition and status. The West-Brit commentators who now oppose Lisbon have always hated the Irish language and our native traditions. Their vision for us is a pre-1916 one of an island called Western Britain, culturally and economically tied to our nearest neighbour. Pádraig Pearse, James Connolly and Arthur Griffith fought to make Ireland a success story and once this recession is over, it can be."

Coleman did not name the principal West-Brit commentator from Sir Anthony's own stable, but I thought it worthwhile to do so. While having little or no expectation of having such a letter published by the *Sindo*, I nonetheless emailed one on 24th September and made the extra effort of also emailing the following message to Coleman himself:

"Harris might try to have such a letter blocked, given his neurotic anti-German agenda. Perhaps you might indicate to Fanning that publication would be welcome in the final days of the debate. It is the only letter to advance Socialist Republican / Larkinite reasons for a Yes vote!"

Coleman immediately emailed back that he was "*glad to advance that argument*". He followed with a phone call to confirm that he had now put it to *Sindo* Editor Aengus Fanning.

Why, then, am I not at all surprised that my letter remained suppressed? Because Fanning has form for being very much under the political thumbs of his Deputy Editor and wife, Anne Harris, and her ex-husband, the *Sindo* Senator, columnist and *de facto* political director, Eoghan Harris. Four years ago, in December 2005, I wrote a piece on Muriel MacSwiney, with a covering email to Fanning. He promptly phoned me, expressing enthusiastic interest in publishing a shorter version, and followed up with this email

on 9th December:

"Dear Manus. It was interesting to talk to you. Having read the piece carefully, I would suggest that you might cut it by about a half, if that's possible. Best wishes, Aengus."

I duly complied, submitting the truncated article on 12th December 2005. It never appeared, nor did I receive any communication from Fanning as to what had happened to what, at that stage, amounted to a commissioned article. He had obviously been subjected to "*Harrismment*", and had knuckled under by suppressing my exposure of the falsehood of the Harris attempt to feign some kind of political kinship with Muriel MacSwiney. I had, *inter alia*, commented:

"Conal Creedon's TV documentary *The Burning of Cork* was reviewed by Eoghan Harris ... in the *Sunday Independent* of December 4. In taking issue ... I should first declare an interest. I was privileged to have met with Muriel, the widow of Cork's martyred Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney ... as a teenager of the 1960s... During the 1970s I also went on to have a political association with Muriel."

"Eoghan Harris writes that Muriel '*rejected the Redmondite politics*' of her Cork merchant prince family, the Murphys. That is both inaccurate and unfair to Home Ruler John Redmond who, prior to his disastrous declaration of war on Germany in 1914, had honourably opposed Britain's previous Imperialist War in South Africa. The Murphys, however, were totally opposed to any Home Rule. As Muriel herself wrote to me: '*All my family, although entirely Irish by race, were West Britons, English Imperialists.*' ... As for Muriel's later politics, Eoghan goes on to write, in a tone suggesting retrospective approval, that '*she lived in Germany and France, became an anti-fascist activist, and later in life rejected the republican claim on Northern Ireland.*'"

"What she in fact specifically rejected was the territorial claim of this State itself, in Articles 2 and 3 of its Constitution, notwithstanding the objections to that claim by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. During the last decade of her life, Muriel pursued that rejection, in common with myself, as a member of the Workers' Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland. It was a rather lonesome position to espouse in the face of the nationalist consensus upheld by an unholy trinity of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Labour Party. But eventually, in June 1981, a year before Muriel's own death, one of our members, the late Jim Kemmy, was at last elected to the Dáil. He was, however, immediately attacked on RTE

by Sinn Féin the Workers' Party's first elected TD, who restated that Party's demand for '*the whole of the national territory*'. It is regrettable that Eoghan did not then see fit to support the democratic stand taken by Jim Kemmy and Muriel MacSwiney at such a critical juncture. ... [But] Muriel's pioneering stand in upholding consent as the essential precondition for Irish unity in no way led her to any revisionist questioning of her own nation's right to fight for its self-determination... Muriel herself had written to me: '*We should know our history, especially when all knowledge of it has been suppressed by a foreign power.*'"

"Terence MacSwiney TD became Lord Mayor of Cork in March 1920, after the RIC murder of Tomás Mac Curtain in front of his own family... What Cork was to experience at the hands of the RIC auxiliaries would afterwards be described by their own founding commanding officer General Frank Crozier as '*murdering and shooting up innocent people*' and nothing less than '*a Fascist dictation cloaked in righteousness*'. The charge against Lord Mayor MacSwiney on his arrest in August 1920, of '*being in possession of a resolution pledging the allegiance of Cork Corporation to Dáil Éireann*', amounted to declaring that to be a democrat was a '*crime*'. And the pogrom that British forces would unleash on Cork in December 1920 not only involved the murder of the Delaney brothers, it also resulted in the death of a Jewish refugee who had fled the pogroms of her native Tsarist Russia, only to die of a heart attack as the Black and Tan stormtroopers ransacked her Tuckey Street home. Muriel MacSwiney had indeed been an anti-fascist activist. But it was in struggling against such '*a Fascist dictation*' in her own native city that she had first become one."

Given such a track record of press suppression, I was not therefore particularly surprised, unlike Marc Coleman himself, at Fanning's negative response to Coleman's overtures in favour of publishing my letter. The following is the text of my letter emailed to the *Sunday Independent* on 24th September, but denied publication:

MARC COLEMAN, 1916 AND EUROPE

While I would often disagree with Marc Coleman on economic policy, I nonetheless welcome his invocation of the 1916 Rising in calling for a Yes vote on Lisbon and, indeed, his restatement of the Proclamation's reference to "*our gallant allies in Europe*". (*Sunday Independent*, September 20). Marc would, of course, adhere more to the Irish Volunteers rationale of Casement and Briscoe in their championing of such an alliance with the Central Powers, while I would rather follow the Citizen Army perspective of Connolly and Larkin.

It was as heir to the latter's tradition of union leadership that his son, Denis

Larkin, went on to champion EEC entry in 1972. I myself also voted Yes to Europe in that referendum, and in every other one since. As Marc points out, it is thanks to membership of the EU that Irish-UK trade links no longer have the master-slave relationship that they had right up to the 1970s. It is also noteworthy that the most coherent critique of the EU has come from the respected *Irish Independent* columnist and Reform Movement pioneer, Bruce Arnold, and that his No campaign also coincides with his call for a debate on Ireland's "return" to the Commonwealth.

Just as Connolly was under no illusion as to the class forces with which he was in alliance in 1916, I have no illusions about the Yes camp. I am in fact more pro-Lisbon than a lot of them. I have called on the Irish Government to legislate for implementation of the Lisbon charter on collective bargaining rights, but the Taoiseach refuses. At least, at the other end of the Yes spectrum, Labour Party leader Eamon Gilmore promises, if in power, to do so. I also wish that Marc Coleman might become more pro-German in this respect: while the capitalist class attack on Irish workers' living standards has resulted in an 8 percent collapse in consumer spending that is driving Ireland ever deeper into recession, Germany, in sharp contrast, is now emerging from its own recession, because both jobs and living standards have been protected. It is to that Europe that I say Yes!

Manus O'Riordan

And then there is the issue of Britain's relationship with the EU. It was UK's "New Labour" Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who forged an alliance with arch-right winger Aznar, the then Prime Minister of Spain, to try and roll back on the workers' rights achievements of "Social Europe". Meanwhile, Blair's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, pursued anti-regulation banking and economic policies at variance with EU interests, and this pursuit has become even more blatant since he succeeded Blair as Prime Minister. Brown's Union Jackery went on to formulate the "*British jobs for British workers*" slogan for the BNP. Brown is not the first Scottish politician wishing to appear more English than the English themselves. "*Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!*" is the name of the song Robbie Burns penned about the first lot. But the British Establishment does not like rogue behaviour being named for what it is. The following is the text of a letter, written in an official Union capacity, which was emailed to the *Financial Times* on 15th October, but denied publication:

STERLING AND THE RISING EURO

Ralph Atkins reports (FT, October 14) that an increasingly concerned ECB has been moved to escalate its "verbal interventions" on the subject of dollar weakness. Fair enough, as far as it goes.

As an Irish and European trade unionist I have even greater concerns about the job losses arising from such adverse exchange rate movements. But what planet does the ECB inhabit, if it cannot see the even greater economic havoc being caused by the elephant in the EU's own room?

As of October 14, the dollar's value against the euro was 8 percent less than 12 months previously, but the pound sterling had depreciated against the euro by as much as 16 percent. The sterling elephant in the EU room is in fact a rogue one, persistently undermining any coherent and effective EU-wide strategy for economic recovery. Over the past 24 months the total extent of sterling's competitive devaluation against the euro came to a whopping 25 percent.

If any other Member State had sought to address its economic problems by slapping a *de facto* 25 percent tariff on imports from the rest of the EU, it would have been denounced as a rogue state. Yet there has not been even a single "verbal intervention" from either the Commission or the ECB on the subject of such systematic sabotage of the EU single market. Small wonder, then, that there is widespread concern among EU citizens at the possibility that the European Presidency might be awarded to the former UK Prime Minister responsible for sterling's "opt out" from the European single currency.

Manus O'Riordan,
SIPTU Chief Economist and Member of the ETUC Economic and Employment Committee, Liberty Hall, Dublin

Manus O'Riordan

Cologne To Ballinloch

Herbert Rimmel of Cologne was one of 400 German children brought to Ireland in 1946 from a Germany that was close to starvation, and fostered out to Irish families for nearly three years. Herbert lived briefly with a Dublin family at Inchicore, and spent the rest of the time on a small farm in Mayo. He came from a Communist family. When, some years after his return to Germany, he was called up for military service, he chose to move to East Germany and serve in the Army of the GDR, the GDR being the state formed by the force that had actually defeated Nazi Germany—the Soviet Union.

Half a century later Herbert wrote a book about his wartime experience as a child in Germany and his experiences in Ireland, which had chosen not to go to war. It was published in German in 2006 under the title *Operation Shamrock: Eine deutsch-irische Nachkriegs-Kindheit*. An English translation, by Angela Clifford, has now been issued by the Aubane Historical Society under the title *From Cologne To Ballinlough: A German and Irish boyhood in World War II and the*

post-war years 1946-1949. It was launched during October at meetings in Liberty Hall, Dublin, at an event hosted by SIPTU and attended by the German Ambassador—a replacement of the one who uttered the Lisbon threats—and in Balla, Co. Mayo, which was attended by people who knew Herbert sixty years ago, and their children and grand-children.

The *Irish Times* carried a comment on the book on the day of the Dublin launch, taking care to touch all the German 'sore points' which come up in the book, but keeping away from less politically correct matters, like the author's experience of liberation by Cossacks in Red Army in 1945.

And the *Irish Times* is not happy with the way Herbert experienced life in that awful neutral Ireland—the isolated, ignorant, suffocating, xenophobic Ireland that resulted from the decision not to go to war: "*Rimmel's Ireland is undoubtedly romanticised*", it said. Young Rimmel liked it. The modern article of faith is that it was not likeable. Therefore, if he liked it, it must be that he projected a romantic illusion onto it. And yet, what he gives is a detailed and accurate account of life in rural Ireland during the post-war years. If there is projected illusion, it is not in Rimmel's book.

The *Irish Times* also finds fault with the translation: "*a few things are lost in translation. The book has several mentions of something called Kilmainham 'Goal' (sic) for example*".

Here is one of those mentions along with the translation:

"Mr. Cunningham liebte sein Pint of Stout... Unten in der Tyrconnel Road, gleich gegenüber vom Kilmainham Goal hatte er sein Stamm-Pub, da durfte ich schon mal mit, musste mich jedoch mit einer Limonade begnügen" (p65).

"Mr. Cunningham was very fond of his pint of stout... His local was a pub down on the Tyrconnel Road, directly opposite Kilmainham Goal, and sometimes I was allowed to go with him, but I had to content myself with a lemonade..." (p89).

So nothing is lost, or changed, in the translation. It says Goal in the German. It says Goal in the translation. And it said *Goal* on the jail itself—at least until comparatively recently. Goal and Gaol were common ways of spelling Jail. Surely the *Irish Times* should know that.

An interesting thing about the *Irish Times* review is that it does not mention the name of the translator or the name of the publisher.

It did once mention the Aubane Historical Society, seeking it out in the remoteness of North-West Cork in order to denounce it (22nd March 1997). That denunciation led to an investigation by Aubane of the *Irish Times*, an exposure of its tax-dodge 'charitable trust', and the discovery of the 'white nigger' letter

showing its effective owner, (British Army) Major MacDowell seeking advice on Irish affairs of state from Whitehall.

Once bitten——! Now it cannot bring itself to name Aubane, even when publishing what is on the whole a favourable review of an Aubane book. That is a great improvement.

Herbert Remmel has now told the story of his life in Ireland. It is to be hoped that he will go on to tell the story of his subsequent life in Germany—in the Federal Republic, in the Democratic Republic, and in the unified Germany in which West Germany colonised the East and treated those who co-operated with the actual liberators of Germany from Nazism as collaborators, Quislings, while according honourable continuity of service to the state to those who served in the Gestapo.

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Constitutional Change

Below is an article submitted by Feargus O Raghallaigh to the *Irish Times* for possible publication during the Lisbon Referendum debate. It did not appear.

Following it there are some remarks on the major change wrought in the fourth edition of the leading constitutional textbook, *The Irish Constitution* (Butterworths) by J.M.

Kelly. First published by Kelly in 1980, after his death it was updated

by Gerard Hogan and Gerry Whyte

LISBON

In the midst of the hate-filled 'Lisbon' whirlwind, both sides, whether for 'yes' or 'no', have arguably got it wrong in the most fundamental issue, which is that what we are to be asked to do on Friday, 2 October is to change—or not—our Constitution, *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, our most fundamental document of political and civic life. That is the nub of it. And in this regard, the starting point has to be Article 1, which states:

"The Irish nation hereby affirms its inalienable, indefeasible, and sovereign right to choose its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economic and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions."

So we are being asked by our present Government to decide whether or not we accept that the changes we are being asked by it to make conform with Article 1—whether the form of Government we are being asked to endorse or reject (because it is a simple 'yea' or 'nay') is in conformity (or not) with the project set out in that Article.

Neither side in the campaign (our present Government and its supporters, including most of the parliamentary Opposition; or those opposed to its proposed course of action) has really put their arguments in such light. We are told simplistically that our vote is for (or against) 'jobs' and 'economic recovery', or for (or against) 'war' and 'militarism'; that

it is about being for (or against) 'Europe'—and so on. To the extent that there is any connecting point with Article 1 in the campaign it is to be found among those on the 'no' side who particularly emphasise the sovereignty issue. Otherwise the posters scream abuse down at us, the media bombard us. Artists, poets and sporting heroes among others are phalanxed on one side or the other. Commentators comment, pundits pund and leader-writers anonymously pronounce. And we, individually and privately, as citizens responsible for *our* Constitution, must decide on 2nd October, to change or not to change it. That is what we are being asked to do (or not).

Article 1 of the Constitution is described in that great authority *Kelly* (3rd ed.), as being (with Articles 2 and 3) "*of mixed legal and political content*" and in this respect *Kelly* quotes then Chief Justice O'Higgins (in a 1976 judgement), "*It is true that the Constitution is a legal document, but it is a fundamental one ... and it expresses not only legal norms but basic doctrines of political and social theory ... [it] contains more than legal rules: it reflects, in part, aspirations and aims and.... the political theories on which the people acted when they enacted the Constitution*"—but also when they (we) are asked to change it and do (or not) do so.

On the first Friday of October we are being asked to change our Constitution:

literally, to undo the decision made by the people in 1972 to change the then Constitution to allow the then Government to join Ireland in membership of the then EEC. We are also being asked, again literally, to further undo all of the subsequent referendum decisions flowing from that (facilitating respective Governments' signature to the Single European Act (1986) and the Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2001) Treaties), through the deletion from our present Constitution of the present subsections 4 to 11 inclusive of section 4 and part of subsection 3 (relating to the now defunct Coal and Steel Community) of Article 29. In so doing, if such is the decision, we will also, through the deletion of Article 29.4.11, remove the constitutional protection given to European Community patents, an arcane provision that I could never quite see why it was there in the first place. But then as I recall, it was Dr. Garret FitzGerald who insisted on its insertion.

We are being asked, again literally, to facilitate the Government through constitutional change, allow it (with the other member states) to abolish the present EU and to join us (through the insertion of new subsections 4 to 9 in section 4) to a new EU which will be established on ratification by all member states (should they so decide) of the Lisbon Treaty. That new EU, should it be established, will have as its 'constitution' two treaties, the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), based on the Maastricht and Rome Treaties as they have evolved and been amended and as proposed to be again amended by the Lisbon Treaty.

While neither the Government or on this issue, any of its supporting advocates for a 'yes' vote, have really put it like this, any more than most of the opponents (the advocates of 'no'), we are being asked whether (or not), in determining our relations with other nations and developing our "*life, political, economic and cultural*", the Government's proposed course of action is in our view in accordance with our nation's "*genius and traditions*"; whether from this standpoint we wish to allow for, participate in, finishing off the present European Union and to be members of the new Union that it is proposed to establish on the ratification of *Lisbon*, should that happen. That, again, is the nub of what is before us.

KELLY BOWDLERISED

A note that may amount to something or nothing, but between the 3rd and 4th editions of *Kelly's The Irish Constitution*, the well-known legal authority on the topic, the discussion of Article 1 has changed quite significantly as has that

generally of Articles 1—3 (The Nation).

Since the author's death in 1991 'Kelly' has been jointly edited by Gerard Hogan and Gerry Whyte, Hogan being a practising SC and both being academic lawyers at TCD.

In the 3rd edition (and presumably the earlier editions of 1980 and 1984) Article 1 receives a somewhat extended treatment. It is in the discussion of Article 1 that Kelly introduces the view that the this section, comprising Articles 1 - 3, is—

"of mixed legal and political content ...

The mixed character of this part of the Constitution (and of some other Articles also) led the Supreme Court, in *In re Article 26 and the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill 1975* to say: "It is true that the Constitution is a legal document but it is also a fundamental one which establishes the State and it expresses not only legal norms but basic doctrines of political and social theory ... The constitution contains more than legal rules: it reflects, in part, aspirations and aims and expresses the political theories on which the people acted when they enacted the Constitution." ... "

'Kelly' quotes further at some length from this judgement, which was delivered by the then Chief Justice O'Higgins, dealing with the ideas of 'nation' and 'State' and the national right to unity (a right superior to positive law, a reading upheld by the Chief Justice); and also adds a detailed footnote outlining the historical antecedents of this grouping. In the footnote (fn2, p11, 3rd ed.) the author states—

"It {Article 1} also echoes earlier documents significant in Irish political history: in particular the 1916 Proclamation {...}; the Sinn Fein Manifesto for the 1918 General Election {...}; and the Message from Dail Eireann to the Free Nations of the World {...}; these documents are reproduced in Dorothy McArdle, *The Irish Republic*, pp 168, 919, 925 respectively."

The footnote continues at some further length to set out de Valera's views on independence (as opposed to Ireland a republic), particularly as expressed during the Dail debate on the Republic of Ireland Bill 1948, and also the views of Frank McDermot TD (FG) who claimed of Article 1 that it enshrined a right that had "been claimed and exercised by the Irish Free State since its foundation".

Whether or not all or any of this is interesting or useful from the point of view of understanding the Constitution, in particular what the provisions on *The Nation* were encapsulating in the spirit of the day ("*the political theories on which the people acted when they enacted the Constitution*"), it has all disappeared from the 4th edition (which is to say between 1994 and 2003).

The 4th edition discussion commences with an "Historical Background" that starts with "*The Belfast Agreement*". There then follows a highly detailed and heavily annotated discussion of the (new) Article 2 and Article 3 including cases, decisions, themes and some criticism of the original articles. Most of it revolves around the Belfast Agreement.

In a work such as 'Kelly' that is all necessary: it is after all a legal guide to the Constitution as it has been amended and judicially interpreted. But surely it should be something else also: a work in which, to the extent necessary, we can see and come to understand as well, "*the political theories on which the people acted*" when enacting and amending (or not) the Constitution?

Feargus O Raghallaigh

The Attempts To Replace European Civilisation

Desmond Fennell replies to John Martin

In the September *Irish Political Review*, John Martin disagreed with the significance I give to the West's official approval of the Hiroshima massacre. (Confusingly, he wrote 'genocide'—a word I have not used about it, and which I never use.)

For me, that approval of an act, namely massacre, which European civilisation, in Europe and America, had declared to be morally and legally wrong, began a rejection of essential rules of that civilisation which continued through the 1960s and 70s. After the approval of massacre (if done with good intentions), came the legitimisation of sex outside marriage, and of abortion, pornography, homosexuality and single motherhood; an end to the legal precedence of men over women, the social precedence of age over youth, and the division of work into 'men's work' and 'women's work'; and so on, as we all know.

John Martin was not denying that this general rejection of the rules system of European civilisation has occurred, but merely that approval by the West of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki massacres initiated it.

However, in my last book and others before it, that initiating role of the Hiroshima justification was incidental to my main argument; namely, that the West is now subscribing to a rules system which has replaced that of European civilisation. As a development, that is not so outlandish as it might seem. The West's state-assisted, left-liberal replacement of the European rules system, originating in the United States, is merely one of three big efforts to replace it which occurred in the twentieth century.

The first was that of the Bolsheviks, who established and maintained their post-European rules system for seventy years. The other one, that of the German National Socialists, had barely got off the ground when it was overthrown by military defeat.

Nor again, did attempts to replace the European system with a radically different system have to wait until the twentieth century. Such attempts have occurred throughout the history of European civilisation since its foundation in western Europe in the eleventh century.

The first substantial attempt was that of the Cathars, in several parts of Europe, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The last notable efforts before the twentieth century were by the Jacobins during the French Revolution, and by the Parisian and other French Communards in 1871. It has been reckoned that, in the course of the nineteenth century, roughly four thousand individuals in Paris alone formulated projects for a fundamental reordering of how society operated, with quite a number of them managing to mobilise bands of followers.

The recurrent objective of such enterprises was a rules system which would, on the one hand, be more in accord with reality, and, on the other, better satisfy the needs, and realise the just impulses and desires, of human beings, or of some section of them.

By the twentieth century it had become evident that the only way to attempt this with any chance of lasting success was—in imitation of the French Jacobins—to acquire the power and resources, or at least the backing, of an existing powerful state. Better still, if, as in the case of the Christians in the Roman Empire and the left liberals in the USA, the lawful rulers of that state could be brought to realise that the proposed remaking of the rules would serve their interests.

However, for a new rules system to really replace that of European civilisation, it would need to make lasting sense to the great majority of westerners, as European civilisation had done for nearly a thousand years. Making sense to its adherents has been a basic quality of every civilisation since history began

In my latest Athol book, and in the second essay now published on my website, I argue that the new collection of rules that, for the past forty years has held sway in the West, does not make sense to the peoples it has been presented to for adoption. I illustrate how this is the case.

Consequently, the current rules system is not a new civilisation. Rather, like the Soviet experiment before it, it is a utopian scheme whose life span is limited by its senselessness.

Remembering 1969

History & Memory: Brian Hanley (Lecturer in History at Queen's University, Belfast)

HANLEY

The Communist Party of Ireland are to be congratulated on organizing the above meeting as part of their Greaves Summer School in the Pearse Museum, Pearse St, Dublin. Participating in the packed meeting were about 150 veterans of all the various Republican/Socialist splits, mostly footsoldiers, but a few of the officer class/advisors, such as Roy Johnston, Anthony Coughlan and Tomas McGiolla. Some of the associates of the 'Boy General'—Seamus Costello were there too.

With Scott Millar, Brian Hanley is the author of the recently published *The Lost Revolution, The story of the official IRA and The Workers Party* (reviewed in the October issue of *Irish Political Review*).

The meeting was chaired by Mick Ryan [Quartermaster, IRA, 1950, 60s].

Brian Hanley attempted to disentangle fact from myth about events in Belfast around the defence or not of Catholic areas in August 1969. He suggested that a layer of myth had grown up, which had become entangled in the subsequent eventful and bitter split which gave birth to the Provisional IRA in 1970. Hanley said he actually had never seen any visual evidence of the much hyped "IRA... IRAN AWAY" slogan, reputedly graffitied on Belfast walls after 1969. *The Lost Revolution* went into the matter in more depth.

It was obvious that those present were, if not happy, then pleased to see someone from academia make an honest effort at getting the record straight, separating fact from myth: and giving some recognition to the fact that the Officials did not run away when the heat came on; they just hadn't got enough guns on the ground.

Hanley outlined the myth about the IRA in the 60s, "I Ran Away", which he attributed in the main to Tim Pat Coogan's *Irish Press* editorials, as well as to other academics who claimed there was no IRA in 1969—that it had become demoralised by failure and socialism. This was a socialism grafted onto the IRA by Roy Johnston/Anthony Coughlan and their willing student Cahal Gouling.

The myth now accepted as "fact" was that Gouling was trying to take the gun out of republican politics and was a convert to Socialism; that IRA members had become woolly radicals and not serious revolutionaries by 1969—thus failing in August 1969. The myth says Gouling and Co. didn't want a United Ireland but a united working class; that they wanted and end to military struggle, believing

that NICRA [NI Civil Rights Association] would reform the North not abolish it. Hanley said all this is wrong: the Official IRA wasn't Marxist and believed it was overthrowing the North, not reforming it.

An Phoblacht, the IRA newspaper of the time, tells a different story to the Leftie view. There was a militaristic view, not a social one. Military activity continued in 1965-70, albeit at a low level—skirmishing which should not be compared with the all-out war of the 1970s. In 1967, the IRA agreed to rearm, militarise and turn against the lefties within their ranks: and base themselves on Papal Encyclicals, not Marxist dogma. The military men who decided this route were to be the Officials in the Split of 1970.

The politics of the late 1960s in the North were more fluid than the myth makers are prepared to admit—especially within the IRA, where the traditional core aims remained and all else was Pretence and Leftist Delusion. Actual republicanism in the North was not for equal citizenship. It was always for a United Ireland, even in NICRA. The dynamic of Civil Rights was not in fact 'civil rights' for all, but 'national rights' for Catholics. The Civil Rights people—some of them—were for National Rights. Burntollet is supposed to be the year zero, the point of no return, over the brink: it occurred when Republicans infiltrated the civil rights movement. Amongst the leadership only Eamon McCann was concerned about alienating Prods: but that wasn't a high priority amongst NICRA leadership.

Hanley said the IRA wasn't extinct in the south but it was in no position to overthrow the State in the 1960s. Fianna Fail wanted to split the IRA and so hyped-up the Leftie conspiracy. Fianna Fail didn't set up the Provos: they would have emerged anyway. The IRA was discussed by the Government. Communism was a smear used successfully in Southern politics against the Labour Party. FF used this smear in the 1969 General Election. Hanley said FF were afraid of losing contact with their working class base to Sinn Fein's social campaigning methods in rural and urban working class centres. The IRA role in the EI bus burning strike in Shannon worried the Government, for example. FF smeared the IRA with Communism. Then the *Irish Press* (Editor, Tim Pat Coogan) said loudly that the IRA was active in Belfast in 1969—the same Tim Pat Coogan who later in his so-called academic tomes said the IRA *ran away*,

that they didn't exist in August 1969.

Hanley said the IRA was active on August 13th, 14th, and 15th 1969 in Belfast. The Unionists were not wrong to see their hand in the organized diversionary tactics from the desperate situation in Derry. Catholics did originate violence over this period. Hanley suggested that the Split of 1970 has coloured our interpretation of 1969. Part of the fall-out from that moment of truth was Eoghan Harris's pathetic attempt to create Cathal Gouling as a plaster saint. Gouling was anything but. He was for military action in 1969. In 1970 he asserted that IRA arms were used in 1969. (In the 1980s he denied this: his assertions then were coloured by the Split and sectarianism. The IRA was not being run down in the 1960s but in the 1980s the Officials played down their military role in the 1960s.)

OTHER SPEAKERS

Mick Ryan said it was good to see Bobby McNight in the audience: along with his comrades, he defended his area in Belfast in 1969.

Then **Roy Johnston** spoke, rather tetchily, to the effect that the RUC had been informing the British Government since 1966 of the possibility of an IRA uprising. They wanted to encourage that myth so as to keep the unionists myth live!

Fergus Whelan (ICTU) said he was there in Belfast in August 1969. *Jim Sullivan* was in charge of the defence of the Falls at that time. Harris tended to gild the lily to distance himself from the Provos.

Brian Haddon asked, did Brian Hanley find that Captain Kelly offered money to eliminate Cathal Gouling—a story originated by *Johnny White*.

Hanley replied that Captain Kelly was sincere in his involvement. He couldn't confirm any such story

Mick Ryan, the Chairman, said that Cathal Gouling was one of the great influences on him. He was attempting to do a lot with an organization that was all but defeated. There wasn't an organization after that. But they did defend areas in Belfast in 1969. But in 1962 IRA resources were exhausted. In 1967 there was only resources for one major operation. From 1964 Gouling went to the USA for guns. He was told he wouldn't get any until something concrete existed in Ireland, a chicken and egg situation. Ryan added:

"We thought violence comes first, then politics comes after the people give their support.

"In the 1966 period, things were so bad that we had to look for the odd 100 pound to do things ... we borrowed 100 pounds from Donal O Connor of the Castle Hotel for funds. We had no money. The spirit was good but we had no resources. Hundreds of us were only lately out of jail with no support. I was a late convert to the path of Cathal Gouling in the 1960s."

Tony Hayden (Walkinstown) said that Goulding told him in the 60s that the 'Northern thing was only a minor squabble ...that he wanted to sort out the World first...'

Sean O Hare (Belfast) said:

"I was there in August 1969 and I didn't know what was going to happen." It was all "isms" but no defence. Hanley said there was going to be a split anyway, but that wasn't true. West Belfast was a Hibernian, not a Republican, area. Belfast was defended. "We only needed a few more guns ...not a lot more guns ...because they would only have been used to attack prods—not defend our areas—and bring more pogroms down on our heads". Hibernian/nationalists infiltrated the Republican forces and were in control. There would not have been a Split without Southern interference, in the shape of bringing in massive amounts of weapons. It was that promise that led to the split. What actually happened in August 69 was about defence not politics."

Hanley: Ruairi O Bradaigh would have split on the grounds on the grounds of Abstention and Sean McStiofain would have split on the grounds of 'collaboration with Commies'. They split when they did but it would have happened anyway over ideology.

Peader O'Brien (Dublin): The split was planned in Dublin. It was instigated by Daithi O Connell and the 'Rosary Brigade' at Bodenstown. It was inspired by Neil Blaney, who organized a teacher's job in Donegal for him.

O Connor Lysaght: Goulding was riding two horses in 1969

Roy Johnston: As regards civil rights and armed struggle—"We wanted to run down the armed struggle in the 20th Century republican epoch because in that era there was a political structure to operate within which could be reformed." Armed struggle was appropriate from the 1840s and 60s 70s 80s, when there was no other viable option. But, he stressed, guns were a 'rightist' option—as evidenced in the Larne gun-running thing {*coup d'etat*} against Home Rule. The armed approach was becoming obsolete even then. The Brits wanted a split in the Volunteers and to keep an armed struggle going to achieve that and prevent unity with Prods in the Republican tradition—which Prods themselves had invented. The hard core Unionists preferred to keep the IRA in existence so as to keep the Unionists united. He always felt this Unionist conspiracy existed.

Hanley stressed that the Split had nuances were not being faced up to ...

Eoin Bennett (former Provo): he was not around in 1969, he used to write for *An Phoblacht* but commented: "we disliked political action because the Officials' politics were dubious and confusing". The Officials in the late 60s were not Marxist:

they were not clear about classes as Marxists are. "There are no normal classes in Ireland". He quoted Tomas McGiolla—who was in the audience with his wife—saying in 1969 that Republicanism and Socialism were the same thing. This was not so, he commented. Bennett also quoted McGiolla from the same period saying "Socialist partition is more dangerous than real Partition". Bennett said the Officials used social questions to retreat from the national question, which contributed to the Split. Northerners asked themselves what these Southerners were talking about—fantasy politics. "Goulding pushed Socialism in a fantasy way to us Northerners".

Mary McMillan asked whether, if the IRA had been better armed in August 1969, would that have made the situation worse.

She didn't get a clear answer..

Hanley: The Workers' Party in the 1980s played down totally their role in August 1969 in Belfast—as if they weren't active. This was untrue. They were active.

He wanted to stress that he wasn't a Marxist. He didn't see it as a science: it could be a guide. Even Marx said he wasn't a Marxist. It wasn't the case that all Provos were sectarian bigots. Some were Socialists who believed in a defence of their areas. They were certainly not fascists.

Tomas McGiolla rose to speak. He said he came determined not to speak and he wouldn't be entering into any debate with a Provo about Socialism. However he thanked Brian Hanley for his book: he was genuinely surprised at its objectivity. He attacked the press consensus and he was delighted with the book breaking that consensus. McGiolla stressed that RTE still had a Censorship Board: mention of Michelle Smith's 4 gold medals for swimming in the Olympics was censored, airbrushed out of the country's memory. Mick Mc Carthy was *persona non grata*. So was Tomas McGiolla. Roy Keane was censored. That's what you had to break through in this country. He thanked Brian Hanley for debunking "IRan Away", which was an extraordinary insult to Malachy McGurran, Joe McCann, etc. They were all out that night. Tim Pat Coogan had been pushing the *IRan Away* line. But, he asked, who was arrested after August 69?—Jim Sullivan, Billy Mc Millan etc, i.e. the Official IRA: that was the answer to *IRan Away*. The split in the IRA came in October 1969. It didn't happen in Sinn Fein until 1970. Jim "Solo" Sullivan was in charge in his area on 13th August. Billy McMillan was O/C in Belfast overall.

Eoin O Hare: "At the moment the two communities are sharing power but there is benign apartheid, separate development". He would say to 20 year olds now: don't join any political party unless it is

cross community.

Scott Millar (co-author): Conspiracies existed on the Protestant side too. "We need to find out what was going on there. There is no real debate in the South." The Workers' Party were at least back then trying to break that stifling consensus. He believed that the Southern Partnership arrangements are a product of that consensus.

Hanley stressed in conclusion that his and Scott Millar's book was not the last word on the subject, nor the best—but it was a start. He was continuing to talk to people and he thanked those present who had already done spoken to him.

Malachi Lawless

Book reviews:

Giving A Redmondite Full Credit!

"*Irish Solidarity with Cuba Libre—a Fenian eyewitness account of the First Cuban War of Independence*" edited by Manus O'Riordan, published by SIPTU, 2009, €15 (ISBN 978 0 9555823 1 9)

This is an account of the life of J.J. O'Kelly the Home Rule MP for Roscommon North for many decades up to 1916. He was unusual in that he was a committed and active anti-Imperialist outside Ireland and recognised internationally as such.

Manus O'Riordan does a good job in giving a detailed account of O'Kelly's long career as a champion of anti-Slavery and for the rights of African and Cuban peoples. He also details his relationships with Parnell, Devoy, Davitt, and other Fenians and with the Marxist movement. The main body of the book reproduces his reports on the first Cuban War of Independence which played a major role in making his reputation. These won sympathy for Cuban aspirations and were reprinted by Castro in 1968 to commemorate the centenary of that War.

This is an unusual book in that it is by a well-known anti-revisionist who nevertheless does full justice to a member of the political opponents of the Irish revolution in 1916: O'Kelly played an iconic role in Irish history, in that it was his seat that taken by Sinn Fein in the pivotal Roscommon-by-election of 1917, an event that confirmed the arrival of Sinn Fein as the new representative force in Irish politics.

Why bother to write about someone who was so dramatically consigned to the proverbial dustbin of history? This is not just hidden history—in fact it is unknown history. At a personal level it is the honourable and decent thing to give full credit to anyone who did great work in any area,

despite other misgivings one may have about them. The other useful thing that O'Kelly's career highlights is the fact that a person of such substance being 'left by the wayside' helps to put into perspective the enormity of the change that occurred in Ireland post-1916.

And O'Riordan does this very well in giving a detailed account of O'Kelly's long career as a champion of anti-Slavery and for the rights of African and Cuban peoples. He also details his relationships with Parnell, Devoy, Davitt, and other Fenians and with the Marxist movement. The main body of the book reproduces his reports on the first Cuban War of Independence which played a major role in making his reputation and gaining sympathy for the war. They were reprinted by Castro in 1968 to commemorate the centenary of that war.

The other useful thing that O'Kelly's career highlights is the enormity of the change that occurred in Ireland post 1916. The fact that a person of such substance was 'left by the wayside' helps to put into perspective the nature of the advance that was made.

O'Kelly, while being an effective parliamentarian, also had the traditional Fenian perspective as regards Irish freedom, i.e. that it was most likely to be only possible in the context of a scenario of 'England's difficulty being Ireland's opportunity'. The interesting question then is why O'Kelly did not put that principle into practice when the opportunity arose in 1914: most Fenians appreciated the opportunity had arrived and took full advantage of it by organising the Rising and these included some of O'Kelly's life-long associates.

The usual explanations of opportunism, naivety, moral cowardice etc., applicable to some of the Redmondites and Home Rulers, do not ring true in his case. Being an original piece of work this is also a seminal piece of work and this is well illustrated when O'Riordan explains that there was an interesting and understandable, if misguided reason, for O'Kelly acting as he did over WWI and supporting that war.

Buy the book to find out what the reason was!

It is not to be expected that the victors in a revolution will write positive accounts of those they defeated. The victors in the Irish Revolution were no different and this is understandable. Originally sufficient of the defeated were around: highlighting their merits would not make political sense for the victors as it would give succour to the defeated, thus strengthening continuing enemies of the revolution. Objectivity is the job of the inheritors of the revolution, not the makers of it. It is unfortunate that such a review of the immediate past was not conducted in Ireland by the immediate

inheritors of those that made the revolution. Instead they tended towards *hubris* about the achievement of the revolution. The result was that the revolution came to look like something inevitable and pre-ordained. Its context was removed and soon its heroes become simple icons. Icons of persons or events are fragile things and so it proved in this case when the revisionist assault began a couple of decades ago.

Party Politics, 1918-32

"Freedom to choose—Cork & Party Politics in Ireland 1918-32"

by Micheál Martin (The Collins Press).

This book was written by 'Micheál Martin' who is described as 'Minister' for Foreign Affairs in the 'Irish' Government. This is a factually correct statement but it would clearly be more correct without the inverted commas. They introduce a weird element into the facts: 'Micheál Martin', 'Minister' and 'Irish' become somewhat questionable, somewhat doubtful, something disparaging is introduced. There is a query introduced over who and what he really is.

Yet this is how Mr. Martin introduces the national issue in his book. Some examples: "*In the Cork City Borough constituency, 'national' issues also predominated.*" (p3). "*On the other hand it must be accepted that the victory of the 'national issue' over all other issues in 1918 foreshadows much of what was to follow...*" (p7). "*For its part, Sinn Fein made apologies for declaring the 'national issue' to be paramount...*" (p24).

If Mr. Martin was writing about Palestine today I wonder would he put the national issue there in inverted commas? Is there another issue bursting to come forth but held back by the diversion of the struggle against Israel?

The implication of his inverted commas is that the Irish national issue itself was in some way extraneous, that there was something as important as, or even more important than, that issue in the context of the period. This attitude gives an unreal air to the book. This is further confirmed when he explains that he effectively uses only Free State sources, such as Liam de Róiste, *The Cork Examiner*, and Bishop Coholan who is quoted regularly and approvingly. In addition our old friend Peter Hart is invited to give his views (and "*at length*") as an authority. On the other hand, Martin explains that he did not consult the de Valera papers and he regrets this. What other sources he did not consult is not clear but the Republican view is glaring by its omission.

And, without that view, the whole period becomes meaningless, especially as the Republican position did dominate in the end. For example, Mr. Martin emphasises the bad showing of the Republicans in the 1922 Election where

Labour came top of the poll. (He does nothing to show why such a strong Labour vote existed in Cork where there was no Connolly or Larkin.) But then Labour goes downhill and the Republicans slowly but surely gain support despite all that was thrown at them and out of them comes Fianna Fail. And Labour did not become less Labour in the same period. But all he does is state the facts—not explain them: "*The origins of Fianna Fail are to be found in the disorganised, abstentionist and intransigent anti-Treaty groups, a group whose political and electoral prospects seemed pretty grim in 1922*" (p75). It is the national issue without the commas that explains this but Martin clearly finds it very difficult to relate to that.

As readers will know Peter Hart specifically denies the legitimacy of the Irish Independence movement as he made very clear in the *Irish Times*:

"...the Dail had no legal standing and was never recognised by any foreign government. Nor did the IRA, as a guerrilla force acting without uniforms and depending on their civilian status for secrecy, meet the requirements of international law. The British government was therefore within its rights to give courts-martial the power to order executions." (Irish Times, 23 June 1998).

And furthermore:

"Nor were members of the IRA protected by the Hague Convention, the basis for the law of war on land. The British government and its forces were not at war in this sense. To be recognised as belligerent soldiers, the guerillas would have had to be fighting for a responsible established state, wear a recognisable uniform or emblem, carry their arms openly, and not disguise themselves as civilians. None of these conditions applied. It is of course true that international law favours established states, but if any group can claim belligerent status when using political violence, then so can the INLA or the LVF. The Oklahoma bombers would also conceivably have a right to POW status" (Irish Times, 22 July 1998).

I am sure Mr. Martin reads the *Irish Times*.

The whole thing was therefore a wanton criminal affair according to Hart—yet Minister Martin introduces him as an authority to '*observe*' the 1918 Election for us: "*...each side looked on the other as a mob of armed hoodlums, and themselves as the upholders of decency. Both saw the 'rabble' and corner-boys as being on the other side*" (p16). This leaves little doubt as to what he thinks of the whole thing.

Martin introduces Hart again to explain the 1922 Election result: "*Bands, tar barrels and faction fights returned to the welcoming streets of Cork. The guerrillas*

tampered extensively with the vote but, like guns and sticks, the attempted theft of traditional seats was a traditional part of the game which had many expert players." The same attitude of contempt for the whole thing is again evident, as for the 1918 Election, even when the Republicans lost heavily! Who exactly were not guerrillas in 1922? Both sides could be described as such and proud of being so described.

Hart goes on "*..in the city and West Cork, the mantle of William O'Brien passed on to Mick Collins—whose electoral coat-tails, as it turned out were almost as long*" (p75) This is plain wrong. William O'Brien's supporters became Sinn Fein supporters, explicitly, in 1918 and went on to become Fianna Fail supporters and O'Brien was invited to stand for Fianna Fail in 1927.

The fact that Hart—with his stated contempt for the founding efforts of this state and sheer misinformation—is an authority for the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State is an extraordinary fact. Inevitably, and in short, this is an awful book that explains nothing despite it being a most interesting topic. It is normal for victors to write history but here we have an inheritor of the victors who cannot write his own political history. A sorry state of affairs.

Jack Lane

Getting people ready for killing

Picture the scene: Afghanistan, two hijacked tankers filled with highly inflammable fuel, surrounded by a crowd of Afghans eager to siphon off some for free ... What's the last thing you want to do? Right—drop bombs on the tankers. That's what a German military commander signalled an American drone airplane to do September 4th. Kaboom!! At least 100 human beings incinerated. This incident has led to a lot of controversy in Germany, for Article 26 of Germany's post-war *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law/Constitution) states: "*Acts tending to and undertaken with intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for a war of aggression, shall be unconstitutional. They shall be made a criminal offence.*"

But NATO (aka the United States) can take satisfaction in the fact that the Germans have put their silly pacifism aside and acted like 'real men', trained military killers. While, prior to this incident, the Germans had engaged in some aerial and ground combat, there hadn't been such a dramatic and publicized taking of civilian lives. Deutschland now has more than 4,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, the third largest contingent in the country after the US and Britain, and at home they've just finished building a monument to fallen members of the Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces), founded in 1955; 38 members (so far) have surrendered their young lives in Afghanistan.

In January 2007 I wrote in this report about how the US was pushing Germany in this direction; that circumstances at that time

indicated that Washington might be losing patience with the pace of Germany's submission to the empire's needs. Germany declined to send troops to Iraq and sent only non-combat forces to Afghanistan, not quite good enough for the Pentagon warriors and their NATO allies. Germany's leading news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, reported the following:

"At a meeting in Washington, Bush administration officials, speaking in the context of Afghanistan, berated Karsten Voigt, German government representative for German-American relations: "You concentrate on rebuilding and peacekeeping, but the unpleasant things you leave to us." ... "The Germans have to learn to kill."

A German officer at NATO headquarters was told by a British officer: "*Every weekend we send home two metal coffins, while you Germans distribute crayons and woollen blankets.*" Bruce George, the head of the British Defence Committee, said "*some drink tea and beer and others risk their lives*".

A NATO colleague from Canada remarked that it was about time that "*the Germans left their sleeping quarters and learned how to kill the Taliban*".

And in Quebec, a Canadian official told a German official: "*We have the dead, you drink beer.*" (*Der Spiegel* (Germany), November 20, 2006, p.24).

Ironically, in many other contexts since the end of World War II the Germans have been

unable to disassociate themselves from the image of Nazi murderers and monsters.

Will there come the day when the Taliban and Iraqi insurgents will be mocked by "*the Free World*" for living in peace?

The Anti-Empire Report

September 29th, 2009

by **William Blum**

www.killinghope.org

TURNCOAT

Why must religion and politics mix, changing politics when changing religion. Both sides of the divide chant derision, rising from frankincense smoke a phoenix, freed from ongoing persecution, while those smiles of welcome are hesitant. It is Catholic into Protestant. Maybe a taunt too much brought disillusion. Now Nationalist into Unionist. They do not bring their grievances with them. Sectarianism they all condemn while claiming their own as illuminist. Here lies smouldering Britain's Ulstergate, blood, democracy, cannot coagulate.

Wilson John Haire.

18th October, 2009.

Review of *If Lynch Had Invaded*. Broadcast 1 Sept. 2009.
A Doubleband Films production for RTE.

More On 'What If' Lynch Had Attacked Britain

PART ONE

The programme opened with the statement:

"This documentary includes reconstructions based on actual events. It also features dramatised sequences that have used factual sources to illustrate one version of what may have happened had an invasion of Northern Ireland taken place."

If one invades, one does so with the intention "*to enter another state's territory with military forces in order to conquer it*". Not one member of the Irish Cabinet ever envisaged an invasion. Neil Blaney suggested an "*incursion*", i.e. "*an act of entering the territory of another state, without the authorisation or permission of that state*". He believed this would have achieved international attention and guaranteed UN attention—not necessarily successful UN intervention. The documentary failed to distinguish between an invasion and an incursion.

Narration from Tom Clonan claimed "*that night {13 Aug.} Chichester-Clark ordered the mobilisation of 8,000 B Specials*". This is factually inaccurate. On 13th August various B Special platoons

mobilised on their own initiative and an estimated 600 came out on the night/morning of 13/14 August. However they did not receive official mobilisation orders until 14th August. Narration from Clonan stated "*some began to blame Lynch claiming he was fanning the flames of sectarian hatred*". Why didn't the narration address this assertion rather than accept it at face value? This implied Lynch's speech caused further unrest in Northern Ireland. On the contrary, requests by the NICRA [NI Civil Rights Association] for protests across the North (in order to tie down RUC resources) spread the violence.

Tony Benn, interviewee, stated the Irish Government didn't want to "*take over an angry North with a Protestant majority*"; he used the phrase "*intervention*", i.e. "*to enter a dispute between two other parties*". Benn alluded to the fact that the Irish Government considered intervening between nationalists and RUC/B Specials who sought to attack them. Why does the narrative continue to claim the Irish Government considered an *invasion*?

The documentary often made references to the Lynch "*no longer stand by*" speech. Why is there no mention that, prior to the speech, the Cabinet had ruled out military

intervention and therefore the speech was solely for propaganda?

Clonan stated, regarding the 13th August Cabinet meeting, "*some of his senior Cabinet Ministers actually advocated such an invasion of Northern Ireland*". No, Blaney advocated an incursion and Boland supported him.

Regarding the use of British troops to restore order, Keelin Shanley stated Stormont was reluctant "*handing over their law and order powers to Westminster by calling in the British army*". I thought this didn't happen until 1972 and this coincided with the prorogation of Stormont. The narrative implied the deployment of the British army equated to handing over law and order powers. T.K. Whitaker, interviewee regarding the 13th August Cabinet meeting, said "*who was for peace and who was for invasion*" but then he says "*the strongest personalities were on the side of intervention*". Despite this clear statement that some desired "*intervention*", why did the narrative not define the exact proposals from Blaney and Boland? Des O'Malley claimed "*Boland was the most vocal, Blaney was not far behind him*". Why did the narrative not explain their proposals?

Blaney's idea was to send troops into Derry, provoke international attention and secure UN interest. At no time did Blaney ever envisage the Irish army going head to head with the British army.

PART TWO

Shanley stated that on 13th August evening the Cabinet decided to move 250 soldiers up to the border "*in the same area close to the North*". This is a factual error. Army logistics reports show that on 13th August, an infantry group had been established and deployed in the general Letterkenny and Ballybofey areas. This group consisted of 415 military personnel, including three infantry companies, 101 command and support troops, and 20 nurses. Narration from Shanley narration claimed that Lynch at the 13th August Cabinet meeting faced "*men who in effect were demanding that Ireland go to war with Britain*". Neither Blaney nor Boland ever contemplated a "*war*" or even an engagement with the British army. They believed Irish intervention could act as a propaganda event.

Clonan's narration of the *Interim Report of the Planning Board on Northern Ireland Operations* (Sept. 1969: referred to hereafter as the "*Interim Report*") clearly stated it was compiled "*weeks after*" the 13th August meeting and that it envisaged possible troop movements into Derry and Newry. There is a serious problem with the documentary's later counter-factual because the Interim Report was drawn up after British deployments in Derry, and in a vastly different political, military and

security context. If Irish troops had crossed the border on 13th August it would have been into Derry, as Blaney suggested, to intervene between Bogside rioters and the RUC and B Specials (many members reported for duty on their own initiative). On 13th August no one in the Cabinet recommended Newry—only Derry.

British Major-General Julian Thompson, interviewee, stated regarding Irish troops crossing the border, "*the British Government would have reacted with get out or else we will come and fight you*". British Lieutenant-General Mike Dewar said it was "*absurd*" and Ken Bloomfield said it was "*mad*" regarding an Anglo-Irish war. Dewar outlined every strategic asset the British army had that the Irish army didn't. He described the Irish army as "*tinpot*". The narrative misleadingly claimed that (a) Blaney and Boland sought an Anglo-Irish war, and (b) they were ignorant of the Irish army's limitations in respect to the British army. However Blaney and Boland knew the limitations of the Irish army and did not want an Anglo-Irish war. They wanted an incursion to attract world attention and UN interest; they did not have military objectives. Furthermore there is no evidence to suggest that either Minister even wanted an engagement with the British army.

Shanley stated despite the rundown of the Irish army "senior Government Ministers continued to demand a military solution to the crisis". No one was naive or deluded enough to think the Irish army could provide a military solution. The objective was international attention and UN interest. Clonan stated regarding General McKeown, based on *Interim Report*, "*if push came to shove he would have confined it to one company in attack on the town of Newry*". "*He would have done so because Newry was the most assessable border town for Irish troops and had an overwhelming nationalist majority*." Extremely inaccurate; the primary attractiveness of Newry was the lack of British soldiers deployed to its general area from 14th August onwards.

Shanley stated Lynch "*would have taken the [incursion] decision reluctantly and under duress*". More extremely inaccurate narration. The Cabinet would have voted on the decision so each Minister would have contributed to the decision. Lynch would not have alone taken the decision nor acted under duress. When Shanley's narration dealt with Lynch's counter-factual speech, she spoke of "*plans to invade Northern Ireland*". However: (a) on 13th August there was not a plan—Blaney had an *idea* to send troops into Derry and (b) I have already defined an invasion.

There is a serious problem with the hypothetical times given for the incursion

into Newry. The narrative claimed it would take place after midnight on 13th August. Clonan stated "*within 24 hours of receiving instructions to prepare for an incursion*" McKeown summons his senior officers. However: (a) Why does it take 24 hours to get senior officers together? They would have all been either at the Curragh or else at HQ in Parkgate Dublin. (b) How is it possible for troops to cross the border at midnight on 13th August after a Cabinet decision a few hours earlier when it would (according to Clonan) take 24 hours to get senior officers together? Clonan stated "*within 72 hours of this meeting a company of 120 men is formed in Dublin to prepare for the attack on Newry*". Why would it take 72 hours when on 14th August it only took 12 hours to send 795 men to the general areas of Cavan and Dundalk? Clonan stated "*at the same time the army would have begun working on transport for the operation, this would have been a difficult task*" and spoke of a "*Requirement to hire buses to move troops North of the border*". How did 116 men of the 20th Battalion, Cork get to Cavan late on the night of 14th August as part of the deployment? These soldiers didn't need to commandeer transport.

Shanley stated Lynch would have hoped that troops crossing the border would result in a UN response rather than a confrontation between the Irish and British armies.

"But there were problems with such a strategy, being the aggressor they were not in a strong position to call for peacekeeping forces. Had they done so the British Government would simply have taken the position... internal British matter that had nothing to do with the Irish Government or the UN."

"There would be no UN helmets to come before the British and Irish armies."

Blaney and Boland thought if this happened well then the strategy had failed. There was no "Plan B" to go head to head with the British on the battlefield. Clonan said "*invasion is about to begin*" "*they seize the northern border checkpoint*". However in reality the checkpoint was unmanned and rioters from Newry burned down a nearby customs post on 13th August. Therefore the scenario is factually impossible.

Clonan stated the 120 men split into three platoons. "*Number one platoon would have staged a lightning assault on the RUC station... with their cover of darkness and a strong element of surprise they would have been successful in this*." This is factually impossible because Newry RUC barracks was under siege from rioters who threw volleys of petrol bombs at it. Clonan said "*Number two platoon would have acted quickly to seize the main junctions here to secure an evacuation corridor south for refugees*

fleeing the conflict zone. In addition they would have requisitioned buses, trucks, anything to get refugees moving." There were no refugees moving through Newry on 13th August. Even on 14th August, after the Belfast pogroms, most refugees sought shelter in religious and civilian accommodation in the greater Belfast area. Refugees from Belfast didn't cross the border until days later. Clonan stated "*some nationalists who may have come out to support the troops... there would have been an eerie calm in the town*". In fact Newry was in a state of anarchy on 13th August because rioters had hijacked lorries to block access to the town and arsonists attacked public buildings.

Shanley stated "*some of his [Lynch] Ministers might have thought, or hoped, this was the start of the end for partition*". No one thought or hoped that, at the most they hoped for UN mediation. No one was naive or deluded enough to think otherwise. Tony Benn accurately stated "*You don't go to war if you haven't got war aims*". Rather than develop a sensible narrative along these lines and examine what might have happened in the UN, the narrative led us to believe that Blaney was naïve and irresponsible enough to think that the British would just hand Northern Ireland over to the Irish Government. On the contrary the narrative should have asked what was the most the Irish Government could have got from the UN? Even if it only achieved the opportunity to have a public arena to debate what had caused the unrest this still would have achieved a measure of success.

Clonan stated "*McKeown tells Lynch his soldiers are consolidating their positions, preparing for a counter-attack by British soldiers and a possible air strike*". Why later do we see Irish soldiers unprepared for the British counter-attack and air strike? We see Irish soldiers walking around the perimeter of a field. Wouldn't they have dug bunkers ("*a shelter to withstand artillery and small arms fire*") or foxholes ("*a hole in the ground used by infantrymen as a fire position and as shelter from enemy fire*")?

Narration tells us about the British ultimatum and British ground and air units moving around Newry "*this has an extremely sobering effect on the Cabinet members. For some of them perhaps it is only now that the enormity of what they have undertaken is becoming clear*." This is absurd. It implies that the Cabinet had not discussed all of the possible British responses.

Clonan stated "*Irish army dig in just south of Newry*". I thought "Number One" and "Number Two" platoons were in Newry urban area? Clonan goes on: "*Shortly afterwards the men find themselves outnumbered as the first British*

Let's Stick To Facts

The following letter appeared in the *Irish News*, 2nd November 2009

Let's stick to the facts when dealing with the narrative of history.

Pierce Martin writes that the "Aubane Society's narrative of the west Cork atrocities is thereby revealed as a grotesque part of the greater malignant tree of the Republic's national liberation myth" (October 17).

The Aubane Historical Society has not produced a narrative of those events as there is as yet no evidence as to who did them or what the motives were and it has so far proved impossible to establish the facts regarding either. The first three killings are clear-cut and acknowledged by all as the execution of those who had killed a local IRA commander.

The others are a mystery well known for nearly 90 years but still a mystery.

I had hoped the RTE programme would have investigated and established who did them and why. But it did not even present unfounded allegations of who the killers might have been.

It threw out a couple of vague innuendos but left the mystery just as it had found it.

It could not even find a local rumour attributing responsibility. The silence remains because nobody in the locality, Protestant or Catholic, has any information about the identity—general or particular—of the culprits.

Mr Martin mentions the Coolcrease killings: we have indeed produced a full narrative of that event and I challenge Mr Martin to refute one single line of its 472 pages.

We would do the same with the Dunmanway killings if there was similar documentary, personal and verifiable information available. Hopefully it will emerge.

Apart from the actual killings, Mr Martin refers to one fact concerning them—Willie Kingston's leaving of Dunmanway as a result.

But, typically, we get half the story. Willie returned shortly afterwards, set up a legal practice in the town, set up the local historical society, was a prominent citizen and lived a full and active life in the community until he died in his bed in 1965.

Unlike Mr Martin, Aubane likes to put all the facts on the table.

Anything else is not doing justice to history or to the descendants of the victims of those killings.

That is our interest in the issue—facts, not rhetoric and bombast.

Jack Lane,

Aubane, Millstreet, Co. Cork.

troops appear on the scene, just North of their positions." The only possible way this could happen is if the first British troops wedge themselves between the Irish units in Newry and those Irish units closer to the border. What happened to the Irish troops in Newry urban area?

Shanley stated that the Irish Government received the withdrawal ultimatum. She asked, would the Irish Government "*just capitulate and tell the Irish troops to come home... would they be prepared to call the bluff of the British Government?*" The answer is the Government would withdraw the troops because they would know that they had achieved international attention and perhaps most important, knowing that the focus would now shift to the UN, attempt to portray themselves as a responsible concerned Government that had only sought to protect civilians.

PART THREE

Shanley stated:

"the doves within Cabinet would have no doubt argued it was time to withdraw, but as a Government they had succeeded in drawing international attention to the situation in the North and had been seen to take firm and determined action in

defence of Northern nationalists. But for the hawks, men like Neil Blaney and Kevin Boland... such a withdrawal would have been seen as a capitulation to the British. They would have argued that this was an historical moment, one that could bring about the end of partition and that the Government should stand firm and call the bluff of the British."

However: (a) Wouldn't the "*doves*" outvote the two "*hawks*" in Cabinet; and (b) why does the narrative insist that Blaney and Boland thought the Irish army could end partition and face down the British army? Mike Dewar commented "*I can't imagine that the Irish Government would have been so foolish to allow that to happen... they would have withdrawn having made their point... it would have been headlines around the world they would have made their point*." That is exactly how Blaney and Boland envisaged things would play out! Yet the narrative wanted us to believe they thought otherwise. Dewar added "*if you are saying that a small Irish army... what would have happened had they taken on British troops, the answer is an awful lot would have got killed, captured or wounded*." Blaney and Boland knew this as well—despite the

constant inference of the narrative.

Clonan said:

"you never know who would have won the argument in the Cabinet room and if the hawks had prevailed, and if the British deadline for withdrawal had passed, it would have been a catastrophic error of judgement for which the Irish troops on the ground would have paid dearly."

We do know who would have won the argument because no one in the Cabinet wanted a British-Irish military engagement. Video footage showed Irish troops on foot patrol when jets fly over head. I thought the narrative previously told us they had dug in? Why are Irish soldiers running around in an open field allowing themselves to get bombed and strafed?

A more accurate depiction of a British-Irish engagement, either in Derry (most accurately) or as this documentary envisaged in Newry, would see British soldiers advancing into a bombed-out urban area under Irish sniper fire. Shanley narrated that General McKeown told the Cabinet that even a withdrawal is now out of the question because soldiers would get "picked off". Presumably he would have advised the Cabinet of this prior to the lapse of the British ultimatum. Why then would the Cabinet authorise a stay beyond the deadline if there was no chance of withdrawal unless they wanted a suicide mission?

Narration:

"the full enormity of what they had done would now be dawning on the Cabinet... they may have thought they were staging a humanitarian rescue mission for northern nationalists... even persuaded themselves that they were going to face down the British and perhaps even reunite the island. But instead they had become responsible for a military fiasco, Ireland's own Bay of Pigs."

However: (a) What kind of fools do they think Blaney, Boland or the Cabinet would have been: "*face down the British and perhaps even reunite the island*"? Furthermore: (b) the Bays of Pigs (Cuba 1961) was an invasion to conquer territory and overthrow a Government—an Irish incursion would have sought to internationalise the crisis and ensure UN intervention. There is no comparison. Shanley narrated "*news of the war in Ireland would have been the big story spreading across the globe*". A war is a series of battles therefore it would not have been a war. According to the Clonan's narration in a British-Irish engagement "the Irish could not have held out for more than an hour or so". A battle is "*aprolonged engagement between a large numbers of opposing troops*". So it wouldn't have even been a battle. It would have been an engagement, "*an exchange of fire between opposing forces*".

Narration claimed: "*Jack Lynch and*

his Government would have been condemned for unprovoked aggression against what was supposed to have been a friendly neighbour". This implies no condemnation would have arisen for Britain's supposed one-sided slaughter of Irish soldiers. Consider the *Belgrano* incident in the Falklands conflict. Clonan narrated that "*Rivers of blood*" would have flowed in Northern Ireland "*in a province fatally destabilised by invasion the situation would have been far worse than it was at the height of the Battle of the Bogside*". However: (a) Violence in Northern Ireland peaked on 14th August, after the Battle of the Bogside ended; (b) Loyalists assaulted Catholic districts of Belfast, burning hundreds of homes, displacing thousands of civilians and this was without Irish military intervention. The narration implied Irish non-intervention prevented such events.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The documentary fails, like most current literature, to question how sectarian rioting would tie down British troops and prevent an instant engagement with Irish forces. The British Government would have needed several days to reinforce Belfast and Derry before using foot soldiers

against Irish troops. If the British practically abandoned Belfast and moved troops to the border then the resultant pogroms would have justified Irish intervention because the Irish Government could accurately claim that Britain had forsaken its responsibilities under humanitarian law.

A counter-factual based on archival considerations of the period should read as follows. If the army crossed the border it would have been at Derry, the Irish Government would have accepted Britain's withdrawal ultimatum, and as Blaney envisaged the focus would then move to the UN. Counter-factualism aside this is what did happen. On 13th August the Irish Government decided against using an incursion to internationalise the crisis and provoke UN intervention. As an alternative Lynch made his provocative speech and sent the army to (but not over the border) in order to create an internationalised political context which allowed Patrick Hillery, Minister for External Affairs, to later address the UN Security Council.

Edward Longwill

University of Ulster, PhD:

"*The Irish Army and*

State Security Policy, 1956-74."

Casement 2008

Part 2 of a report of the 12th Annual Roger Casement Symposium,
held 8th November 2008

FRANK CONNOLLY

This speaker is that rare thing in mainstream Irish journalism, a genuine investigative journalist. He has worked for over a quarter century for a range of media outlets including RTE and a number of newspapers. He has broken major stories which exhibited the dark underside of the Irish state and its political culture. An example was his investigation of the financial activities of one time prominent Fianna Fáil Minister Ray Burke, which led to the setting up of the Flood Tribunal which later morphed into the Mahon Tribunal. In its "Mahon" incarnation then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern was called to give evidence in regard to his personal financial affairs while Minister for Finance over a decade earlier. This testimony was generally perceived as incredible. Frank Connolly broke a series of revelations concerning Ahern's convoluted financial affairs before and during the former Taoiseach's tribunal appearances. Concerted media pressure eventually forced Ahern to resign.

Connolly's revelations on Garda corruption and malpractice in Donegal led to the setting up of the Morris Tribunal. For a time he was Executive Director of the Centre for Public Inquiry, an independent body set up under the patronage of Irish American philanthropist Chuck

Feeney, tasked with ongoing investigation into Irish public life. Justice Minister Michael McDowell made a sensational allegation in the Dáil that Connolly had consorted with FARC guerrillas in Colombia. Though the charges were denied the watchdog organisation collapsed.

The talk which Connolly gave began with his time as Northern Ireland Editor at *The Sunday Business Post*. This was during the years leading up to and following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. He also devoted time to discussing the murkier side of politics in the Republic in the 1990s and the current decade. A lot of territory was covered. This account covers some of the issues raised.

Collusion between RUC and Loyalist Paramilitaries

In February 1989 Pat Finucane was shot dead at this home in Belfast in front of his family. He was killed by a loyalist assassination team armed with handguns. As a solicitor he had represented members of the IRA and INLA. Some four weeks before Finucane was gunned down Douglas Hogg, then a Junior Minister in the Home Office, speaking in the House of Commons, claimed that several solicitors in the North were acting for the IRA.

Clients of Finucane were told by the RUC he would be killed before the shooting took place. Profound suspicions were raised that the killing was ordered and planned from within the British security establishment and carried out by loyalist paramilitaries. His widow, Geraldine, believes the order came from the highest level that is from the Joint Intelligence Committee which meets at Prime Ministerial level and includes senior members of the RUC the British Army, MI5 and MI6. There has until now been no proper effective investigation of the killing.

In a case that recalls that of Pat Finucane, Rosemary Nelson was murdered in Lurgan, Co. Armagh. Like Finucane, she was a solicitor who handled controversial political cases. It was March 1999 and almost one year after the Good Friday Agreement. A booby trap device ripped through her car just outside her home. The "Red Hand Defenders" a cover name for Loyalist militants claimed responsibility for the attack. She had represented the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition, an organisation campaigning for the rerouting of Orange parades in Portadown. She also had represented Republican paramilitaries. She led demands for an inquiry into collusion between the security forces and loyalists in relation to the death of Pat Finucane. She had received death threats from the RUC. The murder was never properly investigated although a public inquiry has been underway for more than a year.

Rosemary Nelson had a serious investigative interest in collusion between the RUC and loyalist paramilitaries. She had acquired information and names. Frank Connolly was scheduled to meet her in late March of 1999. She had come by new material. For the sake of her security she wished to meet south of the border. She was due soon to visit the US and to meet with a Committee of the US Congress where she would present the information she had gathered on collusion. Rosemary Nelson was killed before Connolly had a chance to meet with her and before she travelled to the US Congress.

One of the main suspects for the murder was a man named Mark Fulton. He was an inmate in Maghaberry prison. A police officer from Britain, Colin Port, had been sent to investigate. When told by Connolly that Fulton had been on temporary release and had returned to jail on the Sunday evening prior to the murder which happened close to midday the following Monday, Port was not inclined to agree. On the contrary, Port had been informed by the prison authorities that Fulton had *not* been released on compassionate grounds as Connolly had learned. Two weeks later Port had to admit that indeed Fulton had been out of the prison. There looks to have been an effort to mislead

Port by elements of the Prison Service.

In prison the morning of the killing Fulton had asked other prisoners what had been on the news. However, they had nothing special to report. Fulton's curiosity in the morning suggested his guilt. Contrary to her usual, habit Rosemary Nelson did not get into her car till around noon time as opposed to early in the morning. So news reports of the bomb explosion were not broadcast till after midday. Nobody was charged with the murder. More than a year afterwards Fulton was found mysteriously hanging in his cell.

Martin O'Hagan was the only journalist murdered during the Northern Ireland conflict. He was shot dead close to his home in Lurgan, Co. Armagh in September 2001. He had worked for the northern edition of the *Sunday World*. O'Hagan had an extensive knowledge of the workings of Loyalist groups and had been investigating collusion between them and the RUC. He had received death threats from Loyalists. Nobody was charged in relation to his killing. He was the person who told Frank Connolly about Fulton's release from jail in the days before Rosemary Nelson was killed and about the prisoner's behaviour when he returned to Maghaberry.

A Channel 4 documentary produced by experienced film-maker Sean McPhilemy was shown in 1991. Rosemary Nelson was McPhilemy's solicitor and adviser. The programme claimed a conspiracy of RUC officers, Unionist businessmen, politicians and clergy was controlling and running loyalist death squads. They had begun operations in 1989. The organising group was called "*The Committee*". Mostly Sinn Féin and IRA activists were targeted. Sometimes innocent Catholics were the victims. The film provoked assertions it was a hoax. McPhilemy took a libel case against *the Sunday Times* and in 2000 he won his case and received substantial damages.

In 1998 McPhilemy published a book, also called *The Committee*, which developed the theme of the television programme. In the book he named leading Northern Ireland figures who he claimed were members of "*the Committee*". The book was the subject of a court injunction, so it could not be sold in Britain or Ireland. It was effectively subject to censorship in these islands.

Readers were only able to acquire the book through online booksellers in the US. The theme of collusion between Loyalist paramilitaries and the RUC is a theme underplayed by the mainstream media in Ireland.

Strange Occurrences

After the first IRA ceasefire in 1994 strange things began to happen. A veteran Republican went to a Greek island on holiday with his wife. In the hotel he was

approached by a man with an English accent who claimed to be called "Tom". Tom explained that he was interested to learn how Republicans felt about the peace process. It was to be understood this just amounted to general information. It would be worth £20,000 should the man wish to co-operate. Tom provided a contact number.

On his return the man contacted Frank Connolly and provided him with the telephone number given to him by "Tom". Connolly called "Tom" and recorded the subsequent conversation during which "Tom" confirmed that he was prepared to pay generously for information. Then he checked the telephone number to an east London location which turned out to be an empty warehouse. The conversation was published in the following edition of *The Sunday Business Post*.

In 2000 journalists from various media outlets in Dublin including RTE were invited to a meeting in the exclusive Merrion Hotel where they were surprised to meet the then Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Mandelson and his chief handler, Tom Kelly, seated at the head of a conference table. The assembled press were informed that the British Government was about to suspend the Northern Assembly. Mandelson asserted that this story was not to be attributed to any British source. Frank Connolly challenged what Mandelson expected of them. He asserted he had every right to tell the Irish people that Mandelson was in Dublin and report what he said. At this Mandelson smiled and Kelly looked upset. But the most negative reaction came from the rest of the assembled Irish journalists.

Only *The Sunday Business Post* reported the reality. The headline referred to Mandelson's *Secret Trip* to Dublin. Later that evening, after having met the media, Mandelson met representatives of the Irish Government. The earlier meeting with the media had been to try to ensure the subsequent reporting of the Assembly suspension was in favour of the Northern Ireland Office. The Dublin media, with one exception, were happy to be compliant.

TIM O'SULLIVAN

Reviewing noteworthy material relating to Roger Casement, the speaker noted the production of *Prisoner of the Crown* by The Irish Repertory Theatre in New York from May to July 2008. The play was written by an American, Richard F Stockton, and originally produced in the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1972. It presents Casement in what would today be considered a traditionally Irish nationalist light.

Another item with an American aspect was a letter which appeared in the *Sunday Independent* of 3rd June 1973. It originated with a James C Heaney, Buffalo, New

York State and hit out at the then newly-published Casement biography from Brian Inglis, which was the first freely available biographical work claiming the Diaries as fully authentic. The headline in the newspaper was *Casement diaries 'crude forgeries'*—US lawyer.

Heaney wrote that he had spent two days in 1967 inspecting the Diaries. They were "*forgeries, and crude ones at that*" and there was "*little or no effort to simulate the handwriting*". He had not read the Inglis book but he noted that in 1959, writing in *The Spectator*, Inglis had claimed that "*a few minutes study*" of the original material would be enough to convince of its authenticity. That such little study might be sufficient for someone to reach a conclusion Heaney claimed was "*ridiculous*".

The letter said the legal grounds given for restricting public availability was faulty according to a proper reading of the British *Public Records Act*. (The Diaries were at that period subject to very restricted public access.) The Diaries did not qualify as "*secret documents*" under the Act as the Government had made alleged copies available to various persons in the past.

However this reasoning was never tested in a court.

Using some creative detective work Tim O'Sullivan contacted a son of James C Heaney who also happens to live in Buffalo. He was able to report that his father had founded an organisation *The American Congress for Irish Freedom* in the 1960s. It was a forerunner of *Noraid*. He was a dedicated Irish Republican who had been born in the United States. He died in the 1980s.

When asked how his father had managed to get access to the Diaries for two whole days, despite the restrictions in place—which restricted access to those who could prove special interest, such as dedicated scholars—Heaney junior said he was not surprised. It had been the normal tactic of James C. Heaney to employ the law where possible and, if necessary, to threaten to sue. It looks like this was a case in point.

The speaker suggested that Heaney's perception of the Diaries as "*crude forgeries*" may have been a reflection of his passionately held political beliefs. One can argue they are forgeries, but it is not so easy to argue they are crude ones. The Diaries are freely available to the public since 1994. The question of the legal status of the former restriction on access is now essentially academic.

The long awaited biography by Séamas O Síocháin, of the Anthropology department at NUI Maynooth, *Roger Casement, Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary*, appeared in 2008. Dr. O Síocháin has trawled through very extensive archival material and the book holds a wealth of information. The book was beautifully

produced. One matter which jarred was a portrait of a face claimed to be of Casement which appears at the start of the book. A credible resemblance was lacking.

In his review in the *Times Literary Supplement* Prof. Roy Foster of Oxford lavished praise. He was particularly taken with what he titled O Síocháin's "*Admirable Appendix*", a 20 page addendum at the end where he attempted to explain why he was convinced forgery had played no part in the provenance of the questioned Diaries. This material, which takes up pages 477 to 494, was less than impressive.

For instance on page 481 he relies on "*the results in 2002 of a careful analysis of the disputed documents by Dr Audrey Giles.....which found the diaries to be Casement's work*". On page 482 he confidently claims "*the results of new tests ...in 2002 constitute an important milestone in the debate*", and the: "Giles tests equally undermine the second forgery model, that of interpolation-cum-rewriting by a forger" (page 483). In fact high-tech tests for this very purpose were not employed.

The reality is that he relies on the 2002 Giles Report which itself has been discredited by experts James Horan and Marcel Matley. Though he mentions the collection of papers published in 2005 by the Royal Irish Academy, *Roger Casement in Irish and World History*, nowhere in his book does he mention the opinion expressed by James J. Horan in that collection which undermines his rosy view of the Giles Report.

As well as dealing with unwelcome facts by way of evasion O Síocháin is also technically naive. He wrote on page 494 that "*Interpolation, though, seems impossible because of the position in the text of many 'contentious' entries...*". Apparently he does not realise that in the early 20th century it was relatively easy to erase chosen sections of a block of inked writing with bleach. Once the page was dry one could overwrite.

Another book which appeared in 2008 followed a similar approach to discussing the Diaries as the Maynooth academic. This was *Terrible Queer Creatures, Homosexuality in Irish History* by the prominent Archaeologist Dr. Brian Lacey. Lacey is the author of a number of books and is himself a gay man. One chapter is devoted to Casement. On the last page it is admitted that the diaries are the primary evidence for him being described as homosexual. At the end he refers to the Giles Report as "*the forensic tests that confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that they were genuine*".

On June 3rd 2007 an article in the *Sunday Tribune* titled *Book of Kells to tell its Secrets* revealed that a technology called Raman Spectroscopy had for an 18 month period been in use in examining the Book

of Kells. Through its use it was hoped to learn more about the range of substances used to make up the pigments and inks used in decorating the famous book and national treasure.

Later that year this writer managed to talk with Dr. Bernard Meehan, Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College Library. He was happy to assure me that Ramon Spectroscopy was not destructive to the materials under examination. If it were otherwise, he stated, the technology would not have been applied to the Book of Kells.

Yet in the Giles Report (2002) there is a heading: *The examination of inks*. Under the heading the forensic technique is referred to as "*destructive*", as in: "*Destructive testing using a variety of modern analytical techniques, including Ramon Spectroscopy, may reveal more consistent differences between the inks*". And:

"Certainly, preliminary examination of the ink entries in these documents [1-5] showed an enormous variation in the appearance of the deposits. I have therefore noted the physical difference, appearance and differences between inks as appropriate, leaving the question of possible further destructive analysis to be considered further."

While the Giles Report referred to Ramon Spectroscopy as "*destructive*" in 2002, in the year 2000 in the professional Forensic Science literature the technique was routinely being referred to as *non-destructive*. For example the journal *Science and Justice* in 2000 carried a paper which described the technique as "*non-destructive*".

A new generation of Ramon Spectroscopy equipment had been coming on the market which did not require the destruction of samples under examination. The professional literature had been referring to this from well before the year 2000. One manufacturer was the British firm Foster Freeman.

Three letters to Dr. Giles from this writer inquired about the strange treatment of Ramon Spectroscopy in the 2002 report. Neither the first two by email nor the last by registered post elicited any reply.

The man who initiated the process which led to the 2000 Royal Irish Academy Symposium on Casement and from there to the 2002 Giles Report was one Bertie Ahern. In April 1999, at the Fianna Fail 1916 commemoration at Arbour Hill, the then Taoiseach announced:

"in justice to the memory of Roger Casement there is now a compelling *prima facie* case for a new and rigorous enquiry into the provenance and genuineness of the so-called 'black diaries'. *The issue is not one of interpretation but of fact. The truth ought to be possible to determine, using modern forensic and analytical techniques.*"

Yet, ironically, it was in regard to "modern forensic and analytical techniques" that the Giles Report, the final outcome of the process Ahern had launched, was at its most bizarre.

Tim O'Sullivan

Comments On A Criticism

Last month *Irish Political Review* published a criticism by Bernard Ó Ceallaigh of the views on the 2nd World War expressed by Brendan Clifford and Jack Lane in Elizabeth Bowen's *Notes On Eire*. Ó Ceallaigh wrote:

"I was horrified to read that you consider the Holocaust to be 'an obscure incident in the hinterland of the German-Soviet War'... The Holocaust is the defining event of the 20th century and its effects are still being witnessed in the Middle East today. You ignore the fact that Nazism was virulently anti-Semitic... Nazism displayed violent eliminationist tendencies well before the war had started. Jews were purged from German intellectual and economic life... before 1939. The infamous 'Madagascar Plan'... would have seen millions of Jews moved from continental Europe to a harsh tropical climate... This in itself is inherently exterminationist. Therefore... your point that the Holocaust was 'unimagined even by the most daring spirits of the SS in the summer of 1939' is incorrect..."

What we are witnessing in the Middle East is not the effect of what Germany did. It is the effect of what Britain did. The policy of building up a Jewish colony in Palestine and marginalising the actual population of the country as it stood at the moment of the British conquest, was set in motion long before the Nazi Party came to power, and even before it was founded.

Anti-Semitism was far from being peculiar to Germany. It was general in the new states of Europe between the World Wars. This was because the Jews had been the middle class of the Hapsburgh Empire—they were a people of the Empire as a whole and could not be the middle classes of the new nationalistic States established by Britain and France in 1919.

When Germany expanded Eastwards from 1939 to 1941, its extreme anti-Semitic policies gave it a point of affinity with local nationalisms. This fact was not publicised during the Cold War, though it was never difficult to discover.

Popular anti-Semitism was operative in Polish nationalism between the wars, as

in other Central European countries, but other features of Polish nationalism predominated over it after 1939. The Polish Resistance, without ceasing to be anti-Semitic, discovered the Extermination Camps for Jews, secured evidence of them, and managed to get that evidence to London and Washington. London and Washington did not want to know.

Systematic Jewish extermination was carried on for about three years in the hinterland of the Nazi-Soviet War. Little attention was paid to it. It was obscure—or was obscured, if you will. The SS wanted to keep it secret and Britain co-operated in keeping it secret.

If Ó Ceallaigh has evidence that the SS had an extermination policy before 1939 he should present it. Anti-Semitism is not evidence of exterminationism. Nazi Jewish policy 1933-39 was of a kind with English/British policy towards the Irish for three generations after the Williamite Conquest. The Madagascar scheme was of a kind with the Irish policy of the English Republic. What one might take to be the implication of a rhetorical turn of speech is not the same thing as a policy.

It seemed to me, from what I could discover, that some leaders of the SS began to have the daring thought of applying Dzerzhinski's liquidationist methods to the Jewish problem. Bolshevism was the threatening background against which Nazism developed. The existence of a capitalist stratum (bourgeois and incipient bourgeois) was a social problem for the Bolshevik regime and was dealt with in large part by direct action. The Jews were a social problem for the Nazis. They were seen as a social solvent which exerted a destructive influence on national cohesion. Bolshevism was an ideology of international socialism and Fascism was an ideology of national socialism. National Socialism arose as the effective defence against Bolshevism in the elemental chaos brought to Europe by Britain's Great War and the catastrophic peace imposed at the end of it.

Churchill, who knew what Fascism was, declared himself a supporter of Mussolini as the saviour of European civilisation in the late 1920s, and in the 1930s he said

that, if England were ever put in the situation in which Germany was put by the Versailles Treaty, he hoped a man like Hitler would arise to restore it. When he launched his crusade against Germany in the later thirties, it was not because it was Fascist but because Fascism had restored it to strength, and the strongest state in Europe was England's enemy, regardless of its political complexion.

I know of no evidence that the Nazis wanted to do anything with the Jews before September 1939 but get them out of Germany because they were an internationalist social solvent (whether Communist or finance capitalist) on national cohesion. Fascism, in opposing Bolshevism, had borrowed methods from Bolshevism. When the reckless British war policy led to the spread of German power in Eastern Europe, the Nazis found themselves with a vastly increased Jewish problem. And when they found themselves at war with the Bolsheviks, they began to apply systematic Bolshevik methods to the problem.

During the past twenty years both Bolshevism and Nazism have been treated as vast criminal conspiracies. Bolshevism has been freely described as the greatest criminal conspiracy (which was Churchill's view, reasserted after 1945) and I have not noticed much of a public challenge to that description—even though former members of the Communist Party have been in power in Britain.

The moral distinction between Bolshevism and Nazism, which was absolute in British war propaganda in 1941-1945 (though not in neutral Ireland), was upheld to a considerable extent while the Soviet Union lasted, but was replaced after 1990 with the view that they were two forms of the same thing, and that there was no more to be said for the liquidation of classes than for the liquidation of the Jews.

Perhaps this will change if Putin's Russia consolidates itself as a world Power and links up with Bolshevik Russia in the form of Bukharinism. But it has not changed yet.

(There has recently been a hint that the description of Stalin as a murderer is to be made a crime in Russia. In this, Russia only follows the Western example which has made discussion of the Holocaust a crime.)

The British policy of Jewish colonisation led to strong Palestinian resistance in 1936 which took a major military effort to suppress. When it was suppressed Britain was contemplating war with Germany (having acted to strengthen it until then) and thought it expedient to publish a White Paper which promised to limit Jewish colonisation to what was agreeable to the Palestinian majority, after one final batch of colonists were permitted to enter under Imperial authority. This was to deter the Arab world from going

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TOPICS:

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Kevin Mannerings

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"The Prerogative of Grace"

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Irish Unity.

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into active alliance with Germany. But, after the defeat of Germany, Britain was faced with an all-out Jewish terrorist offensive, and surrendered to it. It jettisoned its own policy, announced that it would simply cease to govern Palestine in 1948, referred the matter to the United Nations but would not allow it to be put on the agenda of the Security Council—and where it would still have had to take some responsibility for what was done. Instead it had the matter referred to the General Assembly, which had no Executive authority and was unable to implement whatever decision it made. In the General Assembly Britain piously abstained from voting.

The General Assembly voted to award the greater part of Palestine to the Jewish colonist minority for the formation of a Jewish State. In the territory allocated for the Jewish State there was a very large Arab population, almost equal to the Jewish population.

When the UN was being formed it was suggested that it have regional structures. In America it had a strong regional structure. American States which came to the UN with a complaint about the USA were told they had to refer the matter to the Organisation of American States in the first instance. The OAS was of course dominated by the USA.

But, when awarding the greater part of Palestine to the Jewish minority, the UN General Assembly set aside the regional principle in the most extreme way. Every Government in the Middle East voted against the motion to establish a Jewish State in Palestine.

The motion was carried by the USA and its client states, the Soviet Union and its client states, the British Dominions, and the West European states: Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden—but not Greece.

The membership of the UN then was less than half of what it is now. The Palestine motion was carried by the White world. It was the last major expression of the 'White Man's Burden'.

In the course of the following generation, the UN was opened up to entire world and resolutions hostile to the Jewish State were carried in the General Assembly, but were without effect.

The 'Jewish War of Independence' was the successful terrorist war against Britain in 1946-7. When Britain reneged on its undertakings and obligations, and the Soviet/American lobby carried the motion for a Jewish State, the Jewish terrorist effort was directed at the Arab population. The UN motion was carried in October 1947 and the British administration withdrew in May 1948. Britain had six months in which to make preparations for

an orderly implementation of the UN Resolution, but chose not to do so. It gave up on policing the Jews, which was perhaps the most essential task of government in the circumstances. When the British administration returned home in May 1948, a massive Jewish act of ethnic cleansing was directed against the Arab population of the region allocated for the Jewish State, and conquest of the territory allocated for an Arab State was set in motion.

The UN made no attempt to confine the Jewish State to the territory it had allocated for it.

What we see in the Middle East today is the effect of what was done by Britain in its act of abdication in the face of Jewish terrorism, and by the USA/USSR as an act of policy in 1947-8. It is hard to see how Germany bears responsibility for it.

Britain of course bears the main responsibility. It deliberately established Zionism as an organised force in world affairs in 1917 and helped it to get a grip on world Jewry. It did this on the understanding that earlier Jewish states in the Middle East during biblical times had been catastrophic for their neighbours, and therefore on the condition that it would control the Jewish colonial development. But, at the critical moment, it abdicated in the face of the Jewish terrorist onslaught.

When the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917 there was strong Jewish protest against it. It was argued that, if the formation of a Jewish State in Palestine was set in motion, this would set off a regression within Judaism towards the fanatical fundamentalism of the Maccabees. The assurance that this would not happen this time was that the Jewish political development would be British. It would serve the British Empire and would be directed by it.

Zionism became part of the socialist vision of British socialists who rejected Bolshevism. Zionist motions were adopted as a matter of course by Labour Party Conferences. When Labour won the 1945 Election and Ernest Bevin unexpectedly became Foreign Secretary, he saw what would be involved in giving effect to these motions and he was appalled. He did not see what sense there was, at the end of the war on Fascism, in setting up a new state on a religious basis and at the expense of the population which inhabited the relevant territory. He set up a commission to investigate the matter. He assumed that Richard Crossman, the major Labour figure on it, would see things as he did. But Crossman came out as a very enthusiastic Zionist. He had only one criticism of the project launched by the Balfour Manifesto of 1917. He thought

that Britain, as a final act of grand Imperial authority, should have done the dirty work of clearing out the Arabs, instead of leaving it to the Jewish colonists to do it piecemeal.

The Zionist vision had sources deep in English Puritanism, which was saturated with Old Testament ideology, and had little to do with actual Judaism. That was the socialist Zionism. It combined with the Zionism of Anti-Semitism which was evident in Balfour, Churchill and a host of others. And these influences operating at the centre of the most powerful Empire the world had ever seen brought about the present condition of the Middle East.

When Britain made war on the Palestine Arabs in 1936 Germany was still a minor military power, and the position of the small Jewish minority in Germany was roughly comparable to that of the Catholic majority in Ireland under the system of Penal Laws established by the Enlightenment regime of the Glorious Revolution. During the next two years Hitler built up German military power with active British collaboration. Responsibility for confining Germany within the limits set by Versailles lay with Britain. The USA had withdrawn in the face of Anglo-French refusal to make a settlement in accordance with the principles under which President Wilson had brought the USA into the Great War. And then Britain had prevented France from disabling the German state after humiliating it. Its great concern was to prevent France from establishing a hegemonic position in Central Europe.

It connived at covert breaches of the Versailles settlement by the Weimar democracy, and then collaborated with Hitler in openly breaking the Versailles restrictions. This had the initial purpose of restoring balance-of-power conditions, but later seemed to go beyond that, with the object of establishing Germany in hegemonic power directed eastwards against a Bolshevik State which had not only survived amidst the ocean of peasants, but had organised the peasants into an active component of the State in the course of an effective process of industrialisation.

In the Autumn of 1938 Britain used its influence to induce France to betray Czechoslovakia and to prevent the activation of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty in support of Czechoslovakia. Then it browbeat the Czech Government into handing over a defensible part of its territory to Hitler—territory which had not been part of the German State.

The neighbouring states had always regarded Czechoslovakia as an artificial construction among the new nation-states of 1919. Its submission to the British requirement that it surrender the best-defended part of its territory to Nazi

Germany confirmed that view. Poland and Hungary collaborated with Germany in taking it apart. Then the Slovaks declared independence. The German remnant was then made a German Protectorate without a fight. Benes, who surrendered the Sudetenland on British demand, urged that German occupation of the Czech remnant should not be contested—but later suggested that treason had caused the Army not to fight.

The unresisted establishment of the Czech remnant of the state into a German Protectorate was too absurd as a pretext for war, even for Britain.

The Danzig issue remained as an authentic German grievance from the Versailles arrangement. Its transfer to Germany would not have weakened Poland, because Polish authority over Danzig was merely notional. And its importance in power terms to Germany was slight by comparison with the Sudetenland. Early in 1939 Hitler opened negotiations with Poland about it. Britain then brought Poland into military alliance against Germany with itself and France. The Poles, apparently with the two strongest armies in the world at their disposal, refused to negotiate. Hitler, caught in a paper military encirclement but convinced that it was only paper, struck at Poland. Britain and France left the Poles to fend for themselves. They declared war on Germany but did not wage it. Early in 1940 they made preparations to get involved in war against the Soviet Union in Finland. When the Finns settled with Russia, Britain prepared to intervene in neutral Scandinavia, and breached Norwegian neutrality. It was pre-empted by a surprise German move to Norway, and was still licking its wounds when Germany responded to the declaration of war against it in May 1940.

Nine months after the declaration of war Britain still had no will to fight Germany, and France was not going to bear the brunt for a second time of a war into which it had been led by Britain. Britain took the remaining part of its small army home. France made a provisional settlement with Germany, pending a general conclusion of the war. Britain—with naval dominance, and with Churchill probably knowing from breaking the German codes through the Enigma machine (which was kept a tight secret of a small inner circle for thirty years after the War) that Germany did not plan to invade Britain—refused to make a settlement, though it was both unwilling and unable to continue the War with any realistic hope of success.

Britain's purpose was to embroil others in a war which it had started in the expectation that France would fight it.

When France settled, it hoped to gain the USA as an ally, but it was a groundless hope. Roosevelt encouraged Britain to maintain a state of war, for his own purposes, by supplying it with obsolescent equipment at a high cost, but Japan had long been marked down as the main obstacle to American ambition. (A recent American publication confirms that Roosevelt was not inhibited by public opinion from declaring war on Germany: he had no wish to do so: Thomas Parrish: *To Keep The British Isles Afloat. FDR's Man In London*, Harper Collins.)

For Britain to keep up a declaration of war, which it had no realistic possibility of winning, hardly accords with the doctrine of Just War. The only realistic hope was that, by keeping Europe on a war footing by small-scale activity on the margins, it would prevent the German-Soviet relationship from settling down, and would gain the Bolshevik enemy—against which it had tried to go to war early in 1940—as an ally.

I tried to present an account of events in time, which is what I take history to be. If this is a misrepresentation, I would be happy to have it demonstrated so that I could settle down in the Churchillian myth—a myth spun by Churchillians. But O Ceallaigh does not demonstrate it.

He says: "*Hitler dismembered Czechoslovakia in 1938*". In fact, Britain, France, Poland, Hungary and Hitler dismembered it.

He dismisses the "*Britain fought alone' brigade*". All that is wrong with the slogan is a slightly inaccurate verb: Britain kept the war going alone while not doing much fighting. It was still the greatest Empire in the world and did not need to do much to maintain the instability and uncertainty of a war condition.

"*Hitler absorbed Austria*": fair enough. He sauntered across the border, and Austria fell into his hands. There had long been a strong party in Austria seeking unity with Germany after the destruction of the Hapsburgh state. In the early 1920s the Austrian democracy sought unity with democratic Germany, but Britain and France would not allow it. A patriotic Fascist party developed in Austria and took power. It was supported by Fascist Italy. But Mussolini would not act alone to prevent the *Anschluss*, and when he saw that Britain would not act to prevent a Fascist merger, as it had acted to prevent a democratic merger, he accepted the *Anschluss* as inevitable. And one of the leaders of the patriotic Austrian Fascism, without being born again ideologically, contributed to the British literature of the 'Anti-Fascist War': Prince Starhemberg: *Between Hitler And Mussolini*, London & New York, 1942.

The German invasion of the Balkans—as I first gathered from a British military historian—followed from a pressing offer of British military assistance to Greece in its war with Italy, a war in which it was holding its own. General Metaxas rejected the offer. It wasn't needed, and accepting it would, he reckoned, oblige Hitler to join forces with Mussolini, because it would reduce the Greek/Italian War to an incident in the British/German War—which was the purpose of the offer of course. Metaxas died in March 1941 and Britain had its way with his successor, with catastrophic consequence for Greece.

The Yugoslav Government made a Treaty with Hitler, giving the German Army a right of passage, but was overthrown by a Serbian revolt. The Germans were then welcomed as liberators in Croatia, but were resisted by the Serbs. The Serbs were defeated in positional warfare but resorted to guerilla warfare. When a Communist resistance was formed after the German invasion of Russia, Britain went into alliance with it and backed it against the Serbs who had obstructed the German march to Greece and delayed the attack on Russia by a few weeks, which may well have prevented something approaching a German victory in Russia before the onset of Winter. Then, fifty years later at the end of the Cold War, Britain set about destroying the Yugoslav regime it had put in power.

Metaxas had in 1915, as Chief of Staff, supported the King in his rejection of the British demand that he should declare war on Turkey. This led to an Anglo-French invasion of Greece, the overthrow of the Government, and the establishment of an *Entente* puppet Government, with disastrous consequences for Greece. I notice that, in a new book about Anglo-Greek relations, Metaxas is described in accordance with the British war propaganda as a German agent. (P. Dimitrakis: *Greece And The English: British Diplomacy And The Kings Of Greece*, Tauris Academic Studies, 2009.)

If "*Hitler actively wanted war*", then Britain laid it on for him, by one means after another. And, if that was the case, I do not know how it can be established what Hitler wanted. All he said he wanted was Danzig and a road to connect the two parts of Germany. If that had been negotiated, it seems to me that he would have found it very problematical to arrange a war for himself.

Anyhow, the British policy towards Germany after March 1939 was never one of containment, or of limited war in support of Poland.

Brendan Clifford

To be continued

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

GLOBAL WARMING

Newspapers reports are suggesting that Finance Minister Brian Lenihan TD will bring in a Carbon Tax so as to penalise so-called Carbon Emissions. This is supposed to be the Politically Correct thing to do because it is said to be "*Carbon Emissions*" which are causing Global Warming which in turn will lead to higher sea levels. There is no concrete scientific evidence for any of this global warming guff—it is all based on pseudo-science and computer-generated scenarios fed with improper data. As we all well know about computers—GIGO—garbage in, garbage out. The computer-generated scenarios are constructed on the basis of false or misleading assumptions.

Now I have found some interesting figures from *The History of the Ancient and Present State of Navigation of the Port of King's Lynn and of Cambridge* by Thos. Badeslade—published in London, 1725. It is known that work on draining the Fens has been done by the Roman Army up to 2000 years ago and the work had been continued and kept in various states of repair on and off ever since. Specifically, on 26th September 1611, a Session of Sewers held at Kings-Lynn ordered a sluice to be built with its sole or apron one foot under the low tide level and this was done. In August 1723, Thos. Badeslade and three other named engineers found the sole of the same sluice and proved that the low water mark in the Ouse was 8 feet 11 inches lower in 1611 than in 1723. The Industrial Revolution in England is said to commence in or about 1720. So how could the rise in the tide in the *previous* one hundred years of nearly 9 feet be due to "Carbon Emissions"? That the tide did rise considerably prior to the Industrial Revolution is evident from the sites of ancient Viking harbour works, visible only at low tide whereas, when they were built, they must have been designed to be useful at the then high tides which indicates a rise in the tides of possible 3 or 4 metres in the past thousand years.

The changes in tides and in climate are of course always taking place and are much more likely to be caused by fluxions of the sun or by changes in volcanic activity and unlikely to be caused by any human activity. What is important is that we do not waste finite resources such as oil and coal in frenetic and mostly useless jetting around the world to "Climate Change" Conferences.

CARBON TAXES

Carbon taxes are all about raising money and not about reducing carbon emissions. Keep an eye on the climate change conferences—the next one is in Copenhagen—and you will see the talk is all about money and how Governments are going to make it off their people's fears about global flash-out. Carbon Credits are the next big thing and how these can be traded for a truly global cash bonanza. The Carbon Taxes being talked about will raise the prices of retail coal, peat briquettes, petrol and diesel, but the rise in prices will in all probability do nothing to reduce the consumption of these products and so the taxes are unlikely to do anything for our climate. What it stacks up to is just more taxation.

THE MOON AND THE USA

If the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference will be really about concern for our climate, it will pass a severe vote of censure on the USA which recently slammed two probes into the moon to see if a resulting plume of moon dust revealed any ice crystals. "*Identification of water in the ejecta (their word for flying debris) would be an important discovery—and could be a resource for any future human base*". There was no sign of the expected flash or explosion—i.e. no *ejecta*! The thing cost 79 million dollars and it vanished without trace in a crater, and the camera after it!

If President Barack Obama is serious about conserving resources, he might shut down NASA. The guys in NASA are unreal—they announced after the event with the moon experiment that it was "*a success*" and that "the team is excited to dive into the data". Anthony Colaprete, a project scientist at NASA, stated "*luck has to come to get the ejecta to fly in the way we want it to fly*"—read that again and meditate on it—is Anthony Colaprete proposing to get the results to show what he wants? Even the biggest telescopes saw nothing, yet Colaprete said: "*But I am not convinced that we will not see the ejecta when we look more closely*" and "*it might be months before the team was ready (sic) to say how much water had been detected, if any*". Colaprete and the other NASA scientists said *before* the event that they expected a dust plume 10 kilometres high. It would take an explosion to have that effect—would it not? But NASA said nothing about explosions and nothing happened except the projectile and cameras vanished. The 79 million dollars is safe in someone's bank account. President Barack Obama should carpet Anthony Colaprete and his associated scientists. Something doesn't stack up!

However, the reason the Copenhagen Conference should reprove the USA is because the moon, twice a day, has much more affect on our tides than any supposed

climate change. The recent USA space vandalism could change the orbit of the moon which in itself could cause catastrophic global environmental damage and indeed real climate change.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AND PRESIDENT OBAMA

The Nobel Committee has done it again and again. It is just a ghastly laugh at this stage. Al Gore got it for making about 90 million dollars for his own self talking about Climate Change. Just as Al Gore got it for talking, so President Barack Obama got it for talking and, make no mistake, his oratorical powers are phenomenal. The President delivers—I am convinced at this stage—the same speech over and over again with the added mantra "*we can do it*". But what has he exactly done yet, besides continuing Bush's wars? He talks now about sending in more troops and equipment (very important, don't forget the equipment, good for someone's bank accounts) to Afghanistan. Iraq is still raging on, with more people dying every day. He is *talking at and threatening* Iran about their nuclear peaceful programmes while Israel gets away with every kind of wrong-doing. What is the result of all this talking? When the President's own staff heard about him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, even they thought it was a wind-up. And really doesn't that say it all?

Michael Stack ©.

Benedict Chifley, Prime Minister Of Australia 1945-49

Part Two of our occasional series on
Australian leaders

Following the death of John Curtin the Australian Labour Party caucus elected the Treasurer, Ben Chifley, as party leader and Prime Minister. Unlike Curtin, who was, throughout his lifetime, a committed socialist, Chifley was less deeply committed to that cause for, while he had been an active Unionist as an engine driver and had been dismissed for his part in a strike in 1917 and was not re-employed until 1925, eight years later, he was well known for his so-called moderate approach to politics.

Chifley continued to work actively in the ALP while dismissed from the railways and was selected to contest the Federal seat of Macquarie, based on the Bathurst district in 1925. He failed to win the seat until 1928, three years later. Then, when Joe Lyons led his revolt against the Scullin Labor Government and formed a conservative breakaway party, he invited

Chifley to join him as his Treasurer. Chifley refused the offer and was rewarded with the position of Minister for Defense in Scullin's Government. Then, in 1931, when Lyons defeated Scullin and became PM in a new conservative administration and Chifley lost his seat he was also expelled from the engine drivers' Union. This event probably came about because of his close alignment with Scullin and his active conflict with Jack Lang's breakaway Labor Party. (Lang, when he was Premier of New South Wales, had attempted to induce Scullin to withhold interest payments on loans borrowed from the British banks. Lang was deposed from his premiership by the NSW State Governor, Sir Philip Game, who represented the British monarch. He then formed a breakaway Labor Party which competed with the "official" ALP. for many years.)

Chifley failed to win the seat of Macquarie at two subsequent elections, but was appointed by the conservative Lyons Government as an independent advisor to the Treasury. Then he won the seat of Macquarie in 1941 and was appointed Federal Treasurer in the Curtin Government. Curtin later appointed him to the new portfolio of Minister for Post-War Reconstruction following the Labor landslide victory of 1943.

Although Chifley as Prime Minister, implemented, or attempted to implement, many of Curtin's policies, he strongly supported the Western Allies in the Cold War, as did most of his colleagues. His decision to establish the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), a domestic spying organization, modelled on Britain's M15, along with the Australian Security Intelligence Service (ASIS), an external spy organization, modelled on Britain's M16, confirmed the role he chose for Australia in the Cold War. Chifley also "lent" Woomera, a site on the Nullarbor Plains in South Australia, as a British rocket testing site and nearby Maralinga site as a nuclear testing ground for Britain's nuclear bomb programme.

People also praise Chifley for his decision to build the massive Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electricity Scheme, but neglect to tell the electorate that the real purpose for this enormous enterprise was not to ensure electric power for Australian industry, nor for the provision of fresh water for the irrigation of arid agricultural land, but to ensure a plentiful supply of water for what was planned to be Australia's nuclear bomb-making enterprise. The bomb-making project was eventually ditched by the Americans when they decided to limit the availability of nuclear weapons to a few chosen allies. Because of the many protests which the use of the rocket testing and nuclear testing sites engendered, the Chifley Government introduced draconian laws to be used

against anybody who protested against the militarization of these sites.

Chifley was an enthusiastic supporter of the US-dominated United Nations and Dr. Herb Evatt, his Foreign Minister, was elected as the first President of the United Nations General Assembly. Although many members of Chifley's Cabinet were of Irish descent, they all appear to have adopted a particularly hostile attitude towards the then Irish Free State, for its having remained neutral throughout World War 2. Arthur Caldwell, Chifley's Minister for Immigration, despite the fact that his mother was a native of Co. Leitrim, attempted to exclude Irish people from emigrating to Australia, a decision that was later rescinded, but the Chifley Government still stood by their racist "White Australia" Policy, which discriminated against Asian immigration, but also discriminated against Australia's grossly mistreated indigenous population.

Soon after Chifley replaced Curtin as Prime Minister the British Labour Party won a landslide victory over Winston Churchill's Tory Party. However, while the British party established what could have been the basis for a genuine socialist programme in Britain, the ALP, even after scoring yet another sweeping victory over the deeply conservative Liberal/National Coalition, followed what amounted to a Liberal, rather than a socialist policy. Chifley prolonged rationing of food and petrol so as to make it possible to export aid to what he saw as a still-embattled Britain. Despite these shortcomings, Chifley continued many of the programmes initiated by Curtin. His Government set up the Australian National University in Canberra and established a system of scholarships at other universities as well as providing scholarships and trade training for demobilized military personnel. The Government consolidated social welfare programmes introduced by Curtin, such as a limited payment of unemployment benefits, sick leave and free universal testing for tuberculosis—a disease that was then rampant in Australia.

Chifley's attempts to improve the health services were met with virulent opposition from the medical profession as well as the Coalition. Similarly his attempts to nationalize the banking system met with serious opposition and accusations that he was being influenced by the Communist Party, despite the fact that the Labor Government strongly attacked the communists at every possible opportunity. Finally, after a prolonged and very expensive court case, the High Court of Australia ruled that bank nationalization was unconstitutional. The Government appealed to the British Privy Council, but, the Privy Council supported the decision of the Australian High Court.

Real trouble also arose when the

Australian working people began to experience inflation, brought about by shortages of food and other necessities. Many workers had held high hopes of an improvement in living and working conditions once the War was over and the Labor Party made political gains federally, but they were deeply disappointed. Particularly restive were the coal miners, who were still suffering very poor conditions and wages imposed by the mining barons during the brutal battles of the great depression. The last thing the miners expected was the blunt refusal by a Labor Government to consider any improvement in their wages and conditions.

It is true that the Communist Party agitated for improvements in the terrible working conditions and poor pay being doled out to many categories of workers, but the pretence that the workers' demands were motivated solely by communist agitation is both false and cynical.

If Chifley believed he could curry favour with the conservative Opposition by refusing the just demands of workers, he was deluding himself and his party, but that is exactly what was happening. As the coal miners' strike progressed and industry and the public began to experience shortages, government and media propaganda encouraged people to believe that communist agitators were indeed the sole cause of all their trouble.

Rather than meet the demands of the workers Chifley decided to use the army to break the miners' strike. Soldiers were employed to distribute the coal that was stockpiled in the mining areas and the army commenced to dig coal from the open-cut mines, of which there were many in New South Wales. Chifley also made a promise to the miners that he would meet their demands if they returned to work, but when the troops took over the coalmines Chifley quickly withdrew that offer. Chifley won the strike and the defeated miners had no option but to return to work under the old conditions. In the meantime the Opposition increased their attacks on the Government.

In the Federal election that was scheduled for the end of 1949 the Chifley Government suffered a heavy defeat in the Lower House of parliament, but retained its majority in the Senate. However this proved to be of little use and when the new conservative Government, led by Robert Menzies, introduced laws banning the Communist Party, Chifley and his party voted in favour of the legislation. But Menzies had become overconfident. Not content with declaring the Communist Party illegal he included in the Bill laws by which anybody could be declared to be a communist and therefore unfit to hold a position of trust. This was aimed directly at Trade Union leaders. The onus to prove that one was not a Communist Party member was placed on

the person who was so accused.

The Communist Party appealed to the High Court and hired Herb Evatt, the Attorney General in the defeated Chifley Government, to lead the appeal. When the High Court declared the legislation unconstitutional, Robert Menzies, who had a long history of expressing his admiration for the now defeated German Nazi Party and had a long history of involvement with local extreme right-wing groups, decided to test the issue in a referendum.

This referendum was rejected by the electorate. Many groups, including the Catholic Church campaigned for the banning of the Communist Party, but many Catholics ignored the Church and voted against the Bill, especially the clause placing the onus of proof on the accused. Despite many other dirty tricks played against the communists and the Unions in later years, there the matter has remains to this day.

Despite rampant inflation and the systematic undoing of most of the legislation beneficial to workers, Menzies won a second election in 1951. By now the ALP was deeply divided over the issue of communism and while Chifley did not capitulate totally to a violent, right-wing faction within the ALP, he could have been described as ambivalent. Perhaps his health had become a major problem, for he died of a heart attack in June 1951. He was replaced by Herbert (Doe) Evatt. So ended the ascendancy of the ALP for many years.

Patrick O'Beirne

War guilt and other nonsense

Irish Independent's Review page (04.04.09) had *Isn't it time we started mentioning the War?* It does not specify which war. Colin Murphy's subject is World War 2. He is unhappy with Ireland's role in that mass slaughter.

His first paragraphs contain smear by implication:

"After the Night of Broken Glass in Germany, in November 1938, the Department of Foreign Affairs sought a report from our man in Berlin. Almost 100 Jews had been murdered in the Kristallnacht pogrom and thousands of businesses ransacked.

"The tiny Berlin legation was headed by Charles Bewley.

"His report back made no mention of attacks on Jews and Jewish property. Instead he wrote approvingly of measures towards "the elimination of the Jewish element from the public life of Germany", contrasting Germany favourably with other European countries.

"The method of the 'Western democracies' in dealing with the Jewish problem has been to deny that the problem exists," he wrote, "and to consider the matter settled by calling those who think otherwise 'anti-semites'."

"Our man in Berlin was indeed an anti-semitic. Bewley had 'gone native', and was a Nazi sympathiser. In 1939 he was recalled to Dublin; he didn't appear, was dismissed, and later wound up writing propaganda for Goebbels. So Much for Bewley."

The last sentence is dismissive, the preceding ones build up a case against De Valera's Ireland, and an element of straightforward racism. Bewley is described as 'going native' because he was anti-Jewish. Germany prior to WW1 had nothing like the UK's Aliens Act (1904) France's Dreyfus affair, or Tsarist Russia's pogroms. Bewley probably acquired this creed in the Public School he attended in Edwardian England. If Bewley wrote about the 'Jewish problem' in the above terms he was quite wrong.

The 'Western democracies' resolutely refused entry to Jewish refugees. They feared the millions of uneducated Jews of eastern Europe, not the educated Jews of Germany. Dublin's intellectuals are prepared to engage in analytical or critical thought about the City of London's (many) wars.

US President Roosevelt convened a conference on the Jewish problem (Evian, France, July 1938). He was trying to off-load responsibility for the plight of Europe's Jews onto the UK. They could all go to Palestine. The UK was having problems there and did not want to inflame matters. It had an anti-Semitic programme. Jews were allowed into Palestine on the assumption that they would constitute a 'little loyal Ulster' in the region. Jewish refugees entering the UK between 1933-39 were the charge of the Jewish community and not 'the public funds'. See John Smith's *Britain, Zionism and the Holocaust* (ISBN 085034 099 3 Athol Books, £4.50)).

Mr Murphy tells us about "Ian Kennedy-Martin" (Mr Martin does not hyphenate his name). He "came to Dublin" in 1954, "because it was the cheapest town in Europe for a university education". (Belfast was as cheap). He stayed five years. He "dug up a Donegal granny" to acquire citizenship and a passport. He returned to London in 1961. National Service had ended.

Colin Murphy's assertion rather odd "[h]e... learned that Eamon de Valera had made a condolences visit to the German ambassador on the occasion of Hitler's death. It rankled." Quite why it 'rankled' a 'draft dodger' is difficult to fathom. Mr Martin, despite claiming to be a 'hack' is a very distinguished television scriptwriter. His work ranges from *Z-Cars* and many other series to one-off dramas and adaptations.

Murphy writes that Martin wanted to write a stage play. He wanted "'a contained situation"... with a small cast..." and "preferably just the one" set. He "stumbled upon a reference to the Irish wartime legation in Berlin: a small room, a couple of people, an external threat (the bombs falling)... potential for internal conflict. He had his play." (The innocent-minded reference to "bombs falling" is interesting. Diplomats discussing the deliberate targeting of working class residential areas (as opposed to the factories producing weapons of war) by the RAF would have been useful in Britain in reference to the war. But 1939-45 was a just, even a Holy War. Nearly all the critics reviewing Mr Martin's *The Berlin-Hanover Express* took the opportunity to attack Ireland's refusal to take part in their war.

PRSI continued

Separately, the document states that a number of cuts or cost-saving options are available to bring down social welfare expenditure.

These include abolishing the entitlement to "half-rate" payments for those in receipt of an existing welfare payment.

This includes the half-rate Jobseeker's Benefit and Carer's entitlement.

The Social Insurance Fund, meanwhile, has faced significant deficits before, with the Government making up almost a third of the Fund's contributions during the 1980s.

An actuarial review of the Fund in 2005 advised that significant increases in contribution income would be required in future years.

The Department, in the documents submitted to McCarthy, suggested building a closer relationship between Contribution rates and Benefit rates.

At present, for example, significant portions of the Fund are not used for Social Insurance purposes and **are used for health contributions and a training levy**.

The document says recent contributions to the Health Levy will increase a person's PRSI contribution without enhancing their right to any particular payment or service.

"This may have the effect of weakening the overall principle of social insurance in the mind of contributors (who may not be aware of the various elements of the overall contribution) as the overall amount payable will appear very much higher without any changes in benefit entitlement," the document states.

There is no way that either PRSI or the Health Levy should be absorbed into a single Tax System, both should have been ring-fenced 30 years ago, and dedicated towards a proper universal health system and not the hotch-potch that currently exists. No doubt this is what Frank Cluskey had in mind in 1974—it says a lot as to how Labour and the Trade Union movement has 'advanced' since then.

Murphy scolds Irish dramatists for "relentlessly" pursuing the personal. Most drama from 'The North' has been about State power for most of the past thirty years. As it is mostly about the British State misbehaving it is ignored. Murphy notes "Conall Quinn's *The Death of Harry Leon*".

Colin Murphy asks, "... who will take up the gauntlet" on tackling "Ireland's role in the war".

An enterprising writer could produce a lifetime of dramas on what the UK got up to in the course of WW2. Whole series could be written on participation in the war by Taigs from Belfast's 'Sailortown'. Readers should not hold their breath waiting for such an eventuality.

Seán McGouran

PRSI continued

You have to pay some of the cost of other procedures. Those with an income of over €65,000 pay somewhat more.

Optical: Eye tests for spectacles are free, although a charge of €22.15 is made for a contact lens test. Standard glasses are free while you pay €15 for slightly fancier frames, or can get a benefit of €42.07 towards frames or contact lenses of your choice, or €83.71 in the case of bifocals.

Aural: You can claim half the cost of a hearing aid up to €760 and half the cost of any repairs.

THE TWO BUDGETS

It's not just that the Income Levy rates doubled as of May 1st last, but the threshold was lowered too. If you earn more than €15,028 a year, you're now paying a 2% levy on all income up to €75,036. After that, it's 4% up to €174,980, and after that again you're getting hit for 6%.

The Health Levy, which insured workers pay out to fund the health service, has doubled to 4% for anyone who earns between €26,000 and €75,036 and 5% after that. And finally, the PRSI ceiling has gone up from €52,000 to—you've guessed it—€75,036.

Many workers have already taken pay cuts—up to 20% in some cases, and not just for those on very high wages—and others are working three-day weeks.

May 1st also saw the early childcare supplement, payable to families with children under the age of five, halved to €41.50 a month before it gets phased out at the end of the year. And if you've owned a house for more than seven years, your mortgage interest relief has vanished too.

On the upside for the consumer, there has been a decline in the cost of living so dramatic that, according to the Central Statistics Office, it is declining at its fastest rate since May, 1933.

The annual rate of deflation is now running at 3.5%, and much of this is thanks to the drop in mortgage rates, from which some—though not all—homeowners have been benefiting in recent months and this could well come to an abrupt end after December.

However, the positives brought about by the decline in the cost of living fall well short of balancing out the cuts.

STOCK EXCHANGE WELCOMES REPORT

Shareholders face significant changes in the way shares are taxed, including the abolition of Stamp Duty and a cut in dividend tax, under the proposals outlined by the Commission on Taxation.

The commission recommends the present 1% Stamp Duty applied to all share transactions should be scrapped,

noting that several other EU countries have already abolished the tax. The UK rate is 0.5%.

The Irish Stock Exchange welcomed the proposal, saying the present stamp duty "*is the highest in the Western world*".

Stamp duty on share transactions generated €406 million in 2006 for the State but is only likely to raise €145 million this year. The low take makes it an ideal time to scrap the duty, the commission argues.

The Commission also recommends that tax on dividends should be reduced to the same rate as the Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) charged on bank deposits, which is currently 25%. The Commission argues that it is wrong to tax people who contribute to economic investment more than people who leave their money in a bank account.

Dividends are currently taxed as income tax, which means that most shareholders would pay 41% tax on their dividends. The move would cost €53 million, it adds.

"As part of a rational and coherent approach to the taxation of capital, we also conclude that the tax rate on deposit interest, on funds, on capital gains and on dividends received by individuals should be the same," the Report says.

SEAFARERS ALLOWANCE

The Daly Report has also advocated the abolition of the "*Seafarers Allowance*". If you are employed on board a ship and spend at least 161 days in a calendar year at sea travelling to or from foreign ports, then you may qualify for Seafarers Allowance. The allowance is €6,350 and it is an allowance available at your highest rate of tax.

Having destroyed any semblance of a national shipping fleet, I suppose there's a certain logic, however barmy, in wiping out the Sailors' and Seamen's Allowance.

THE RANCHERS—SMALL AND LARGE

Farmers have escaped the double whammy of a possible carbon tax on livestock and Local Authority Rates on land and buildings in what was a relatively benign assessment by the Commission on Taxation.

However, alterations to the Capital Acquisition Tax (CAT) thresholds might make inheriting farms more expensive, while the removal of stock relief will hit those starting out or expanding their operations.

The decision to concentrate the carbon-tax element of the proposals on users of fossil fuels will come as a major relief to farmers given that a tax on livestock had been suggested.

There was more good news with the decision to maintain the exemption of agricultural land and buildings from Local Authority Rates.

There has been a positive farmer

reaction to the proposal to reinstate rollover relief for Capital Gains Tax where replacement land is being purchased by property owners who were subject to a CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order). In addition, stamp-duty relief is to be retained for young farmers.

On the downside, relief on the CAT (gift and inheritance tax) is to be reduced from 90% to 75%. Farm representative bodies have hit out at this move, maintaining that it will act as a disincentive to the transfer of holdings to young farmers.

There was bad news in relation to the Capital Allowance Tax for farm buildings. It has been proposed to reduce the rate at which the net of grant cost can be written against profit from 12.5% to 4%.

The ICMSA welcomed the re-introduction of rollover relief on CPOs, but warned that the CAT proposal should not amount to the re-introduction of "*penal death duties*".

SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND 'SKINT'

The Social Insurance Fund, into which every worker pays their PRSI contribution, will run out shortly and face a deficit of some €4.4 billion by the end of next year, according to official projections.

This contrasts with the findings of a 2005 review of the Social Insurance Fund, which estimated it would remain in surplus for the next decade or more.

The Fund is used to help pay Unemployment Benefit, State Pensions, Maternity Benefit and Redundancy and Insolvency Payments for those who make PRSI contributions.

Updated projections from the Department of Social and Family Affairs indicate the overall surplus will shrink from €3.4 billion last year to €360 million by the end of this year.

It will be exhausted within months and face a significant deficit by the end of 2010.

The deficit will place pressure on the Government to raise PRSI contributions from workers, or divert funds from the exchequer to pay out social insurance benefits.

The above figures were contained in the Department's submission to the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes (McCarthy Report).

The rate of increase on the Live Register this year and the continuing drop in contributions have contributed to the dramatic reduction in the Fund, which has been in surplus throughout the years of the Celtic Tiger from 1997.

Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin has said the Exchequer will make up any gap, but has acknowledged it will cause greater problems in framing a budget.

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PRSI continued

works totalled around €66 million per year.

However, since then, artists earning more than €250,000 a year from their work have been liable for tax.

The Report said the exemption is of no benefit to artists whose income doesn't reach the taxable threshold.

"While the tax exemption may have created an environment in which the arts can flourish, considerations of equity and efficiency outweigh this factor and, accordingly, we recommend that the exemption be discontinued," the Commission said in its proposals.

The Sports Persons' exemption would survive—these are payments to such luminaries as Sonia O'Sullivan and the loudmouths in the Gaelic Players' Association. Sport, it would appear has now taken the place of religion as the opiate of the masses. Before long, the cry must go up for the separation of Sport and State.

The restrictions on the use of tax reliefs and exemptions by high-earners introduced in 2007 should remain part of the tax code. They should apply to individuals with income of €250,000 or more, rather than the existing threshold of €500,000. Restrictions should apply on a graduated basis to individuals earning more than €200,000.

Although it recommends further integration of the tax and welfare systems in general, it says only the health levy should be fully subsumed into income tax. This should only happen when the economy recovers. Mr Daly said if the recommendations on property taxes, carbon taxes and the abolition of certain tax reliefs were implemented, this could be offset by lower income tax bills.

MAIN POINTS

* **Income tax** relief for trade union subscriptions should be discontinued.

* The relief for **benefit-in-kind** and PRSI exemption for employer-provided public transport travel passes and bicycles should continue.

* The income tax relief for **scholarships** and fees paid for training courses and third level education should continue.

* The exemption from income tax of statutory **redundancy payments** should continue, as should the exemption from income tax for retraining on redundancy.

* Continue the income tax exemption for approved **profit-sharing** schemes (APSSs) and remove the PRSI, health contribution levy exemptions.

* The PRSI exemption for employee (unapproved) **share options** should be discontinued

* The tax treatment which applies to

employee share ownership trusts (ESOTs) should continue.

* The income tax exemption for **approved share option schemes** (APSOs) should be discontinued. They should also be liable to employee PRSI and levies.

* Continue the income tax exemption for **Save As You Earn** (SAYE) schemes but remove the PRSI, health contribution levy and income levy exemptions.

* The income tax exemption for **new shares** purchased on issue by employees should be discontinued.

* The **artists' exemption** should be discontinued but consideration given to introducing income averaging in the taxation of income from creative work.

* The **sportsperson's relief** should continue but under modified rules.

* The **seafarer's allowance** should be discontinued.

* **Expenses of Oireachtas members** should be treated in the same way under the tax code as expenses paid to employees and office holders generally.

SINGLE INCOME TAX SYSTEM

The Daly Report also says there should be a single income-tax system that incorporates PRSI and levies.

It states: "*There are now four parallel systems which collect tax on income. These are income tax, PRSI, the health levy, and the income levy.*"

But the Report points out that each of the four income-tax measures has a different base. This means there are differences in the number and categories to which it applies.

The base for the two per cent levy and the income levy (at 2%, 4% or 6%) are both wider than the usual income tax base, say the Commissioners.

"Our strong view is that there should be a single system which collects tax on incomes."

It examined the option of bringing the two levies into such a single-income tax system. "*We looked at the option of integrating the health levy on its own into the income tax system*", says the Report. But, "*...the key imperative is to restore fiscal balance*", and there were likely to be significant consequences from any rushed amalgamation. It could mean increased marginal rates of tax and new taxation on those on low incomes. It also admitted it could increase the tax burden of those on higher incomes.

"Integrating the four systems into a single system for taxing income would inevitably give rise to an increase in the standard rate of income tax, if the main personal credits remain at their 2009 levels," the report says.

"This would reduce the relative value of their personal credits, thus bringing low earners into the tax net, or causing

them to pay more tax." (*Irish Independent*, 8.9.2009).

PRSI BENEFITS TO GO?

The McCarthy Report published in July said treatment benefit, which contributes to the cost of dental, and optical treatment and hearing aids, was "**no longer affordable**" given other pressures on the social insurance fund.

The scheme, which has been in place for decades, allows patients who make PRSI contributions to avail of free or subsidised dental treatment including a screening service for oral cancer—which kills more people in this country than melanomas and cervical cancers.

McCarthy said some €92 million would be saved in a full year by the abolition of the payment. In the region of €50 million of this is paid out for dental treatments out of more than €8 billion in PRSI contributions.

Patients are effectively being told that, despite many years of contributions, they are now to be deprived of this scheme. Workers on the average industrial wage (€33,000) contribute €20 per week in PRSI contributions while higher earners contribute up to €53 per week towards their dental and other welfare benefits.

Under the scheme, which is funded by workers paying PRSI, patients are entitled to a dental examination free once a year and assistance towards their treatment which included fillings, extractions and cleaning.

The Social Insurance Fund, out of which Social Welfare benefits are paid, is expected to run into deficit next year after many years of running a surplus. With fewer people paying PRSI, the flow of money into the Fund has diminished while the demand for benefits has greatly increased. It's little wonder than the McCarthy Report suggested a range of measures aimed at reducing the looming gap between income and expenditure.

Have no doubt former PD and Fianna Fail renegade, Health Minister Harney, will have the option high on her agenda as she juggles to balance Social Welfare needs with the inevitably reduced budget that she is going to have next year.

The majority of workers making PRSI contributions are entitled to these benefits, although in certain circumstances the benefit is scaled down where income exceeds €65,000.

Benefits can be claimed in respect of treatments carried out in any EU member state.

BENEFITS

Benefits fall into three categories: dental, optical and aural.

Dental: Routine preventative treatment is free—a yearly examination, scaling and polishing, including mild gum treatment.

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PRSI continued

head of the Revenue Commissioners—said the 16-month time frame allowed the experts only to concentrate on a "broad reform rather than detailed design".

The Government asked it to look at ways to avoid tax-rate increases or any proposals that would discourage people from taking up paid employment.

It is now up to the Fianna Fail/Green Party Government to decide which of the 230 recommendations it intends to implement.

As stated above, Brendan Hayes, Vice-President of SIPTU, refused to sign the final report because he does not believe in the low-tax model of the economy.

The Committee believes that in order to plug the hole in the Exchequer finances an overall increase in the levels of taxation is not needed, but rather a "broader and less volatile base".

It warned that our relatively narrow base of current taxation has made us very susceptible—and therefore vulnerable—to changes in economic conditions.

It admitted that while some of the proposals were "radical" they claimed that they were needed in order to protect Ireland from any future economic shocks.

But despite recommending income cuts that will affect every person in the country, Commission members were well remunerated for their work.

The members were paid €700 per meeting, with the exception of Brendan Hayes of SIPTU who waived his fee. However, the Chairman, Mr. Daly, was paid €1,000 for turning up at each meeting, bringing the bill per day to over €12,000. It is understood they met an average of twice a month.

ABOLITION OF PRSI CEILING

The Commission on Taxation recommends that the employee cut-off point for PRSI should be scrapped.

This means that PRSI would apply across the board on all income, draining further cash from take-home pay packets.

This would hit those workers earning more than €50,700 a year—the current ceiling for payment of the pay-related social insurance.

The balance of income being taken up by PRSI contributions would effectively triple beyond this mark.

The only reprieve would be a possible reduction in the general PRSI rate as a consequence of its wider application to PAYE workers.

The Employers' ceiling has meanwhile already been scrapped, and the Commission advises against its reintroduction. But the report does recommend that companies should be given the option of offsetting R&D tax credits against employer PRSI costs.

And it says that workers should be subject to PRSI on 'unearned' income, for example money from investments or renting property. This proposal is likely to present huge logistical difficulties, not to mention verification problems. The Commission also wants PRSI to apply to share options.

Meanwhile, the Commission has harsh things to say about the Government's reliance on PRSI as a revenue-raising measure.

PRSI is meant to operate as a system whereby both employers and workers make contributions towards an individual's entitlement to various benefits outside the workplace.

These include health and dental treatment, as well as eligibility for the Contributory State Pension and Unemployment Benefit.

But Governments have failed to ring-fence PRSI to pay for the services they are meant to fund, with the Commission complaining that PRSI has "certain characteristics of a tax".

The report says the Health Contribution Levy, generally lumped in with PRSI in pay slips, "does not confer any right or entitlement of benefit" and should be abolished "when fiscal conditions improve sufficiently" and absorbed into the general income tax system in the meantime.

The Commission recommends that PRSI should apply to more workers "in view of the burden on the Exchequer" during the current financial crisis.

Having a wider range of people contributing to PRSI would help keep the rate of contributions low all round, according to the advice. PAYE workers and the self-employed should pay the same rate of charge.

The rate of PRSI for a PAYE worker is 6% (4% plus a 2% health levy), up to a ceiling of €50,700 after which only the Health Levy becomes payable.

The employer's rate, in respect of each employee, is 10.75%.

Workers on the minimum wage should continue to be exempt from income tax and PRSI, it said.

TAX INDIVIDUALISATION

The Commission also concludes that, on balance, the controversial system of Individualisation should stay. This policy has meant that single-income couples pay proportionately more income tax than double-income couples as a result of reduced tax credits.

The Commission believes there is an incentive in persuading spouses to enter the labour market and both earn incomes, rather than encouraging them to stay at home.

On Individualisation, the Commission says there is evidence to suggest that

making the taxes on couples more independent "would produce a positive but small effect on married women's participation in the labour force".

Mr. Daly said they struck a balance between the desire to provide incentives to women to participate in the workforce and the "very strong views in this country with regard to childcare choices".

He said Individualisation of tax bands and credits was a topic that had "got a lot of airing" during the discussions held by the Commission, but it had decided to "leave it as it is".

Completing the Individualisation process, which would require giving a single person the same tax bands and credits as a single-income married couple, would be "hugely costly". At the same time, reversing the steps made toward partial individualisation during the early part of the decade would also be hugely costly.

IBEC'S POSITION

"It recommends keeping the same family unit as the basis of income taxation and suggests maintaining the hybrid method announced by Charlie McCreery. This will ensure incentives for a partner to re-enter the workforce after child rearing" (David Croughan, Chief Economist, IBEC, *Ir. Exam*, 8.9.2009).

TRADE UNION SUBS

The Daly Report also called for an end to tax relief for Trade Union subscriptions suggesting that membership is more likely to be a condition of employment rather than taken for €70 tax credit purposes.

As part of the Commission's wide-reaching blueprint for the reform of Ireland's tax framework it also proposes the discontinuation of PRSI exemption for employee Share Options.

The Commission said, however, that the tax-free status of Employee Share Ownership Trusts (ESOTs) should remain, on account that they "play a role in the modernisation and privatisation of State-controlled businesses."

On the subject of Employee Tax Credits (ETCs), or the PAYE Tax Credit, the Commission has concluded that it should be extended to the self-employed, rather than just PAYE workers mainly on account of the self-employed having to pay preliminary tax for a year of assessment before the end of that year and are likely to have higher compliance costs than the majority of the PAYE sector.

Meanwhile, the Commission concluded that the Government could net upwards of €70 million a year in tax if it were to totally discontinue its artists' exemption rule.

That forecasted figure is largely based on most recent estimates, from 2006, which calculated that the amount of income tax waived from money earned from artistic

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PRSI continued

Governments to tackle the failure of full and fair payment of tax in general by a substantial element of the population. The wealthy, the speculators and the tax evaders must be tackled, there is no other way to relieve the growing burden on the PAYE sector.

Workers are not intrinsically opposed to paying PRSI! What galls them is that they get shag all in return while substantial elements in the community who pay little or no tax, get all the benefits.

A Commission on Social Welfare was set up in 1983, this is what it said about Social Insurance (PRSI):

"The Commission favoured the retention of the Social Insurance system. The *raison d'être* of social insurance has never been sufficiently articulated in Ireland. For this reason, the Commission emphasised that social insurance was an expression of social solidarity and citizenship in which the risks, costs and benefits are spread as widely as possible in the community.

"Furthermore, in the Commission's view, social insurance contributions create a sense of entitlement to benefit and generate support among the community for these benefits.

"The Commission recommended that all income earners should therefore contribute to and benefit where appropriate from social insurance."

COMMISSION ON TAXATION

The 550-page report of the Commission on Taxation, chaired by Mr. Frank Daly, which was published on 7th September 2009, focuses on a huge range of subjects, and its 230 recommendations have the potential to impact on every taxpayer in the country.

The Report recommends €3 billions worth of sweeping tax changes.

"However, despite its stated aim of spreading taxes more evenly, middle-income earners with children will take the heaviest hit. An average family of four would end up paying around €4,000 a year more, if all the recommendations are implemented" (Ir. Indep, 8.9.2009).

The new tax hikes would come on top of the €5,000 in additional taxes and levies in the two Budgets in the past 12 months.

The contentious recommendations of the Commission include:

- * New domestic water charges phased in over a five-year period.
- * Annual property tax on homes based on market value.
- * Abolition of stamp duty.
- * A third rate of income tax
- * A carbon tax on petrol, diesel, coal, briquettes and home heating oil.

- * The taxing of child benefit with a credit to be given to low-income families.
- * A windfall tax from land re-zonings and a tax for sitting on land banks.
- * Making workers pay PRSI on all their income.
- * Scrapping a range of tax reliefs availed of by workers.

Within Government circles, the Carbon Tax and PRSI changes are seen as strong prospects for inclusion in Finance Minister Brian Lenihan's December Budget—although both measures would be gradually phased in over a number of years.

There are a significant number of recommendations on personal taxes and in the PRSI area. PRSI would be extended to share-based payments, the employee PRSI ceiling would be phased out, social welfare payments would be taxable (possibly including child benefit), and the artists' exemption would be abolished (although the sports persons' exemption would survive).

LONE VOICE

Top earners will not be hit with higher taxes under the new tax recommendations, the Vice-President of SIPTU, Brendan Hayes has warned.

In a letter issued to the Chairman, Mr. Daly, he said that the manner in which the policy is applied to the economy is "*fundamentally flawed and is inhibiting economic growth*".

He believes the current system is exacerbating social and economic inequality and inequitably distributing the tax burden.

Brendan Hayes, declined to sign the final report because of "*serious reservations*", said people earning more than €200,000 would not have to pay any more tax.

He said although this affected a relatively small number of people, a significant amount of money was involved.

Speaking on RTÉ's *Morning Ireland*, Mr. Hayes said the distribution of income in this country was "*totally skewed*".

He said the way the Tax Commission's proposals for a third tax band had been constructed meant a new tax band could fall between 20% and 41%, or below 20%, but no higher rate of tax could be introduced.

The Commission's Chairman, Frank Daly, declined to specify whether a third rate should apply above the current marginal rate of 41% or in between the current standard rate of 20% and the marginal rate. However, he said a three-rate structure would allow for greater equity and flexibility. "*We're not prescribing what the third rate should be, we're simply saying that the Government has options there.*"

Mr Hayes, who wrote a letter to the

Commission, contained as an annex to the Report, said if its recommendations were implemented they would not change our unfair society.

He said he believed couples earning about €70,000 would be the worst-hit.

"The State pretends to provide social infrastructure, and we pretend to pay for it," he said.

"We need to ask what kind of society we want, what public services we want and are we prepared to pay the taxes to have them?"

The Director of Social Justice Ireland, Father Sean Healy, said there was "*no justification*" for the Commission's conclusion that the total tax-take should not rise.

"Eurostat, the European Union's statistical body, states that a country is a low-tax economy if its total tax-take is below 35% of GDP. Ireland's total-tax take is likely to be less than 29% of GDP in 2009.

"This is far below the Eurostat benchmark for a low-tax economy and is also far below the percentage of GDP that Ireland has taken in tax for many years", he said.

"Social Justice Ireland believes that Ireland should remain a low-tax economy, but should set a target of 34.9% of GDP for total tax-take.

"This can be done without increasing income tax rates. A first step in the right direction would be to eliminate the tax breaks that litter Ireland's tax system", Fr. Healy added."

THE COMMISSION ON TAXATION

The 18 member Commission on Taxation was established in February 2008 by then Finance Minister Brian Cowen to review the "*structure, efficiency and appropriateness of the Irish taxation system*".

The terms of reference were also crucial to the outcome. The first of these set the tone of the report: "*...to keep the overall tax burden low*". Is it not the low tax regime created here since 1997 that got us into so much trouble and caused the deep inequalities that now characterise our society?

"Of the 18 members of the commission, 10 were financiers or tax consultants or accountants or members of a business lobby or the head of the stock exchange (the latter resigned during the course of the commission's work, but surely she can claim credit for the extraordinary proposal to remove the 1% stamp duty on share transactions" (Vincent Browne, *Irish Times*, 9.9.2009).

As the economic crisis deepened, the work of the Commission took on a new urgency.

It is the first detailed examination of Ireland's tax system in a quarter century. Chairman Frank Daly—who is a former

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LABOUR

Comment

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The Great PRSI Swindle

The McCarthy Report (Special Group on Public Expenditure Programmes), which reported last July and the Daly Report (Commission on Taxation) presented in September set out proposals to the Government for consideration in next month's Budget.

McCarthy proposes €5.3 billion in cuts, including 17,000 jobs in the public sector, whilst Daly's new tax plan would leave an average family of four paying near €4,000 a year more.

A common thread throughout the two Reports is a call for the elimination of PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance), in effect, retaining the payments but abolishing the benefits. This article will focus on the PRSI question.

A huge onus now rests on the entire labour movement to concentrate on the PRSI and Health Levy issues, there can be no surrender on this principle—it is a basic bread and butter issue and should be fought for tooth and nail. Down the years, it has been used and abused by administrations of every political hue, to such an extent that even some workers would be happy to see PRSI abolished. Woe the day, the benefits will be abolished but the payments will be absorbed into general taxation—what a sorry pass for organised labour if this happens.

HISTORY REPEATS

"All social welfare payments including child benefit should be subject to taxation as a general rule, the Commission on Taxation has recommended.

"The Commission recommends the introduction of a single system of collecting income tax rather than the present four-strand system which incorporates income tax, PRSI contributions as well as Health and Income levies." (*Irish Examiner*, 8.9.2009).

In 1994, the Fianna Fail/Labour coalition wiped out the PRSI payment for Unemployment Benefit and on top of that taxed the new £61 personal rate of Unemployment Benefit.

That same budget in 1994 compelled all new public service employees to pay the full rate of PRSI from April 1995. Those already in the public service at that time were not affected by the new increase.

The Social Insurance schemes are financed from PRSI contributions from employees and employers, with the state making good any deficit on out-goings from general taxation. The financing of Social Assistance schemes (non-contributory) is from general taxation. The contribution from workers and employers go into a Social Insurance Fund.

Both Cowen and Lenihan have poo-pooed the Property Tax proposal in the short term, but you can bet there will be no reluctance to go in 'boots and all' with the PRSI proposals.

When the Coalition Government was elected in 1973, Frank Cluskey was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Brendan Corish, the Labour Party leader.

The Pay-Related Benefit system was introduced with Frank Cluskey's Act of 1974. Over the years, Cluskey has been personified by the trendy elements within the Labour Party as a well-meaning "old

sod", a real "Dublin character" but whose vision of Labour and the working people would be limited to the monotonous old demands of social welfare or social insurance or a free health system.

Frank looked for the bread first, the roses could come after.

He was anything but narrow in his vision as he proved over Dublin Gas and the Anglo-Irish Agreement—he had more Socialism and common sense in his small finger than that possessed by the entire clique of *gauleiters* who hang around the Labour Party at the present time.

And, when the Coalition collapsed at the polls four years later in 1977, he was one of the few Ministers to emerge with credibility, for, he had proven to be the right man in the right place when he became virtually Minister for Social Welfare.

He had the complete trust of his leader, Brendan Corish, and had fought hard to ensure that the Coalition's commitments on social welfare would be honoured. He regarded his time in the Social Welfare Department as the most enjoyable period of his political career (*Irish Independent*, 8.5.1989).

"It was the most enjoyable and the most productive. We brought in pay-related benefits, deserted wives' allowances, unmarried mothers' allowances, brought down the pension age from 70 to 66 and organised that children's allowances be paid directly to the mother," he said in the 1986 article.

In 1974, Frank Cluskey introduced a system of insurance which guaranteed that if things went wrong and you were out of a job, at least for 15 months, your Pay Related Benefit ensured that you had something more than the basic benefit. In 1994, Labour along with Fianna Fail dismantled and destroyed that benefit. At a time, when workers were never in greater need for such a system—and here it is all over again, in 2009, with almost half a million on the exchange.

Any debate on taxation or PRSI must be qualified by the serious refusal of Irish

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