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News From Nowhere

The leader of the SDLP is to resign the leadership of the party after the next election. He will contest his Westminster seat, relinquish his Stormont seat and attempt to make it a principle that the "dual mandate" of holding seats at both Stormont and Westminster should be ended.

The leader of the Liberal Democrats, who expects to hold the balance of power at Westminster next year, says that, with the devolved system now established, the Northern Ireland Office of the Whitehall Government should be abolished.

The DUP, which dragged its heels on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement a couple of years ago while waiting for the flighty Tony Blair to be replaced by the sound Presbyterian Scot, Gordon Brown, was disillusioned by Brown and is now delaying the devolution of Justice and Policing powers while waiting for the Tories to take over from New Labour.

Brown had to pull out of a Commemoration meeting for Trade Union leader Jack Jones in order to go to Belfast and try to get the DUP to implement the agreement on the devolution of policing. He did not succeed.

While the leader of the DUP refuses to implement the policing agreement for Unionist reasons, the DUP Finance Minister appeals to Dublin for Northern representation on the NAMA (National Assets Management Agency) Board, one aim of which is to prevent a collapse of property prices under the influence of the market by taking over major building projects and assets from the banks under a system of anticipated future prices. Over the past decade there has been heavy investment by Southern business in property in the North, and a fundamentalist Unionist wants representation in the Southern rescue system. And the Southern Finance Minister, a member of Fianna Fail: The Republican Party, refuses. (Report, IT 9.9.09.)

The Irish Labour Party, under Stickie leadership, has in recent times been doing its best to break off the slight engagement in the political life of the North which it undertook a few years ago. Yet the Stickie leader of the Party suddenly engages with internal Northern affairs by needling Sinn Fein (Provo) in its Northern dimension over the lower minimum wage prevailing in the area "where you are in government" (23.9.09 IT: The respective levels are €8.65 and €6.32).

Fianna Fail under Bertie Ahern opened up the prospect of extending its organisation to the North. Then under Brian Cowen it closed down that prospect. And now, apparently under grass roots pressure, the organisation of Fianna Fail branches in the

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LISBON REFERENDUM:

Ireland Toes The Line

Lisbon II was a demeaning affair. The whole idea of refusing to recognise a referendum result and insisting on another was an insult and a clear indication that Ireland is not taken seriously in the EU. The enthusiasm of the Government and most of the political class in accepting the need to rerun it confirms that there is no need to take the country seriously and it will not be taken seriously from now on—least of all in the EU.

The EU has changed fundamentally and it is now driven by the larger Member States as they see fit. There used to be a 'community method' of doing things as exemplified and practised by the Commission and its approach. All members were equal and treated accordingly and agreement reached by consensus. Now the President of the Commission is not even sure how many Commissioners there will be or should be. During his visit here "Mr Barroso said there was no agreement yet on a proposal by Sweden to allow 26 member states to retain a commissioner and give the 27th country the right to appoint a new EU high representative for foreign affairs. 'There are different scenarios. Some people say we should have a commission of 15 members. It's too soon to speculate,' he added" (IT, 19.9.09).

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Labour and the destruction of FÁS

The Government has moved swiftly to capitalise on the collapse of FÁS—the state training and employment agency with an annual budget of €1bn.—in the wake of the resignation of its Board following a year-long campaign of public vilification based on the exposure of alleged corruption. A draft Bill (Labour Services Amendment Bill, 2009) "leaked" to the press showed the Government's intention to establish a new Board reduced in size from 17 to 11 and, most significantly,

excluding Employer/Trade Union representatives (currently four ICTU and four IBEC) as well as the two directly-elected FÁS Worker Directors. Together these accounted for 10 of the 17 Board places. The Bill will instead provide for the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to personally select the board members in a "non-prescribed manner" and "in consultation with the Minister for Social and Family Affairs and the Minister for Education and Science". Those appointed will "have experience and expertise in areas relevant to the functions of Fás" and in "finance, trade, commerce, corporate

governance or public administration" (*The Irish Times*, 6.10.2009).

This is the beginning of the end of FÁS as one of the great Social Partnership organisations with roots going back to the tripartite employer-labour-state institutions established during the 1950s-60s Lemass era of industrial development. That industrial take-off owed not a little to a close alliance between Trade Unions and state following the re-unification of the Trade Union movement under the leadership of "Young Jim" Larkin. Larkin, contending with a weak Labour Party then in opposition and inspired by his

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

Irish Militarism by *Pat Maloney*

It's That Time Again, poem on Afghanistan by *Wilson John Haire*

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Now it is the intergovernmental method which is in control and that means it is the big boys who count, naturally, and they will decide for Mr. Barroso how many Commissioners there will be and what they should do. Mr Sarkozy, for example, has shown many times how he approaches things and it is not via EU consensus. *"Tired by the slow pace of EU justice initiatives, French president Nicolas Sarkozy set up the G5 group (now the G6 which includes Poland) in 2003 as a forum where the justice ministers from the five biggest EU states—Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Spain—meet to formulate new ideas. Ireland and the other small- to medium-sized EU states are not invited to attend even though the ideas often become legislative proposals introduced at an EU level"* (IT, 10.9.09).

The main Member States have driven Lisbon and it is they will decide who is to be the new President. There is already a High Representative, appointed and imposed on the Commission, whose foreign affairs role epitomises the humiliation and downgrading of the Commission by the Council of Ministers—a move initiated by Pat Cox and the Liberals.

Foreign Relations and 'Defence' will be

the focus of the new EU and the new President will be its cutting edge. Already we know what to expect even if Mr. Blair does not get the job. No need to speculate—just get the maps out to locate the next 'crisis.'

The following figures show the line-up of existing combatants in Afghanistan from the EU and applicant countries: Albania 140; Belgium 510; Bosnia and Herzegovina 2; Bulgaria 470; Croatia 295; Czech Republic 340; Denmark 700; Estonia 150; Finland 110; France 3,160; Georgia 1; Germany 4,050; Greece 145; Hungary 310; Iceland 8; Ireland 7; Italy 2,795; Latvia 165; Luxembourg 9; Macedonia 165; Netherlands 1,770; Norway 485; Poland 2,000; Portugal 90; Romania 1,025; Slovakia 230; Slovenia 80; Spain 780; Sweden 430; Turkey 730; UK 9,000; Ukraine 10.

If all these countries feel an obligation to be there—they can hardly have an actual need to be there—how much more of an obligation will there now be to join in the next adventure in wherever. Iran perhaps? But the targets can appear almost overnight and disappear again just as quickly—as has been the case with Mugabe in Zimbabwe, for example.

Afghanistan is certainly a good place where those Member States that had developed a bit of a conscience about wanton killing can at least *arrange* to amend their ways as the Germans did on the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of WWII. Soon they may be reblooded enough to do it on their own account.

Now Ireland is joined up to this game: and its political and moral capital in the world used to support it. Welcome to the new EU.

Jack Lane

Labour and FÁS

continued

father's life work and the political legacy of Connolly, insisted on organised labour co-determining the shape of the Irish industrial programme.

The ethos of the FÁS organisation can be judged by its reaction to the collapse of the construction industry—over the last year it has "arranged" for 400 electrical apprentices made redundant from the building sector by the recession to complete their apprenticeships with another "semi-state" corporation, the ESB. Indeed, by 2007 FÁS was overseeing the training of over 30,000 apprentices in Irish industry, with an annual intake of nearly three times the figure of a decade previously (see FÁS annual reports, on www.fas.ie).

A relentless campaign has been waged against the agency by anti-state forces in the Republic. The "scandals" revealed by Senator Shane Ross in the *Sunday Independent* in November 2008 were simply a call to arms to close in for the kill.

The Board of FÁS which has just resigned was chaired by Peter McLoone, the highly regarded General Secretary of the public services union, IMPACT, and former President of ICTU. Other prominent Trade Union members of the board include Sally Anne Kinahan (ICTU) and Des Geraghty (former General President of SIPTU). On taking over in 2006, the new Board headed by McLoone was made aware of irregularities in spending in some sections of the organisation, notably in Corporate Services. It immediately established a special Audit Committee with "freedom to roam", which soon began to unearth profligate activities in the Corporate Services Division and elsewhere. It was the findings of this very board-appointed internal audit which subsequently formed the basis of the press "revelations". Ironically, the latest report of the State's own Controller and Auditor General, which sparked the resignation of the FÁS Board, *"actually praised FÁS's internal set-up for controls in 2006 and 2007"*, The CAG report states that the

issues which led to the resignation of the Board were those revealed by the audit process initiated by the Board itself (*Industrial Relations News*, no. 33, 18.9.2009). As the ever interesting Sarah Carey noted in *The Irish Times*, the period of the worst abuse was actually under the reign of PD Minister Mary Harney at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. She had appointed IBEC Director "Brian Geoghegan as chairman of FÁS in November 2000 and married him in December 2001" (*FÁS gravy train and a sorry tale of two Marys*, 30.9.2009).

With the media in a feeding frenzy wantonly implicating the FÁS Board itself in irregularities in some divisions of FÁS unearthed by that Board's audit committee, the Board attempted to offer its resignation several times in early 2009. But this was refused by Minister Mary Coughlin. The media campaign continued relentlessly.

So where has Labour been and what has it done to defend the major employment and vocational training institution in Ireland in which organised labour plays such a crucial role? In 2007-08 Eamon Gilmore was in full flight preparing the Labour Party for coalition with Fine Gael. To increase its compatibility with Fine Gael, Gilmore, in a flight of rhetoric at the 2008 Labour Conference, made the thoroughly unnecessary concession of indicating that excessive Trade Union influence in the party would have to be brought to an end. His reaction to the sensational *Sunday Independent* reports of November 2008 on FÁS was to call for the sacking of the Board and to state that "*leading trade union representatives*" on the FÁS board "*had a case to answer*" (IT, 29.11.08).

With the refusal of Labour to stand by the absolutely defensible, the resignation of the FÁS Board in September 2009 was inevitable. Indeed it was welcomed by Labour (see statement by Roisín Shorthall, 13.9.2009, www.labour.ie). Gilmore's answer to the destruction of the Social Partner and Worker Director domination of the FÁS Board contained in the FÁS Bill leaked on 6th October has been merely to demand an "*investigation*" into the "*political oversight of FÁS*" over the last decade.

The unravelling and destruction of core Social Partnership institutions of the Republic have begun. As so often in the history of the State, the Trade Union movement will await in vain any Labour Party defence of those institutions and will have to look to make alternative arrangements to protect the working class interest.

Philip O'Connor

Martin Meehan

Reading the August 09 *Irish Political Review*: the editorial on the Orange marches in Ardoyne/Crumlin Rd said that Martin óg Meehan is a leader of Republican Sinn Féin in north Belfast. This is not true: he is in fact an activist with in the Republican Network for Unity. Both groups have different ideas and goals. **Sean Garland, Belfast**

Bowen And World War 2

My name is Bernard Ó Ceallaigh and I have been a student of Irish & European history for many years. I recently read your book, 'Elizabeth Bowen/; Notes on Eire' with interest and wish, if I may, to comment on some of the points you have made.

Firstly, it occurred to me that your insistence on classifying Bowen as English has the effect of reinforcing the negative attitude towards Cork which you claim to be trying to reverse with your book. She was born in Dublin. Just because her attitude was perceived to be un-Irish does not mean she must be excluded. If we follow the same logic, then de Valera's Irishness could be questioned as he was not born here, or perhaps even Michael Collins, as he worked for the Crown in the London post office.

Secondly, I find your attacks on Brian Girvin, Geoffrey Roberts and Eunan O' Halpin to be very odd. I fail to see what relevance O'Halpin's family background have on his work on Ireland and the Second World War. Girvin's & Roberts' political beliefs are surely their own private business and should not be trotted out as compelling reasons why their historical analysis is flawed. I have been fortunate enough to have been assisted by all three and find them to be excellent and open-minded historians, although I disagree with much of their opinions.

Thirdly, I was horrified to read that you consider the Holocaust to be 'an obscure incident in the hinterland of the German-Soviet War', a conflict which you claim was engineered by perfidious Albion. Am I to believe, then, that Britain is actually responsible for the Holocaust? Your argument seems to suggest this.

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. Without wanting to wander into Daniel Jonah Goldhagen territory, it is still an indisputable fact that Nazism displayed violent eliminationist tendencies well before the war had started. Jews were purged from German intellectual and economic life and many were terrorised into emigrating before 1939. The infamous 'Madagascar Plan' of 1939-40 would have seen millions of Jews moved from continental Europe to a harsh tropical climate, with little or no thought being given for their survival. This in itself is inherently exterminationist. Therefore, I believe your point that the Holocaust was 'unimagined even by the most daring spirits of the SS in the summer of 1939' is incorrect.

Fourthly, I am appalled by your interpretation of the war itself. On page 144 you say that the German demand of Poland in 1939 was for 'a comparatively minor adjustment of its border'. Hitler absorbed Austria and dismantled Czechoslovakia in 1938, after claiming that he was interested only in returning Germans to the Reich. All the evidence points to the fact that he was planning to either dismember Poland or to convert it into a German satellite. You further claim on page 210 that in April 1941 'hardly anybody was at war except Britain and Germany.' This displays the same blinkered worldview of the 'Britain fought alone' brigade that you claim to oppose. In April 1941, not only was Britain & Germany actively at war, but conflict was also raging in Africa (where Italy was a combatant), the Balkans were invaded by the Germans, Japan was deeply mired in China and moving into European possessions in the Far East. In addition to that, the British Dominions were also involved in the war and there was unofficial naval sparring between the US & Germany. To cap it all off, you claim with spectacular naivety on page 222 that Germany & Britain were at war simply because London refused to jettison its declaration of war. This ignores the facts that a) Hitler actively wanted a war, as it was the only way he could achieve the domination of Europe that he wished, b) any 'settlement' between London and Berlin would have involved such a reduction in power and influence that London would not have been able to accept. To claim that Germany was not the aggressor in the Second World War is, I believe, to wilfully ignore the facts.

I should add that I agree with your assertion that Britain went to war in 1939 to preserve its Great Power status, and not to save the oppressed people of Europe from the Nazis. However, this is hardly a penetrating insight. If Chamberlain had admitted that he wished to restore the balance of power in Europe and maintain British global interests, then the public would never have followed him. No nation ever goes to war for the reasons that it publicly states. Do any of us believe that the US & UK invaded Iraq for the good of Iraq's people? If they don't believe them now, it stands to reason that the British public did not believe its leaders in 1939.

Finally, I would like to point out that I am a strong advocate of Irish neutrality in the Second World War, but that I am also realistic enough to realise that it was not a morally correct stance to take. However, politics & diplomacy do not operate on such clean lines. We succeeded in demonstrating our independence, but we should be prepared to face up to the costs of our actions.

I look forward to hearing from you. Is mise, le meas, **Bernard Ó Ceallaigh**

Irish Political Review will carry a reply to this letter next month.

Major McDowell (1923 – 2009)

The death occurred last month of Major Thomas McDowell, the dominant figure in *The Irish Times* for the best part of 40 years. This British Army Major stood for everything which this magazine opposes and yet we must concede that he was a man of principle.

Within the apparatus of the British State each person has his role. McDowell's was to retain the British Imperialist ethos of *The Irish Times*. He overcame the nationalist sympathies of the newspaper's most successful editor Douglas Gageby by contacting Downing Street in 1969.

In 1974 with the help of Lord Arnold Goodman—Harold Wilson's "Mr Fixit"—the newspaper was taken in hand. The new legal structure accorded McDowell almost absolute powers within the paper, which included the following positions:

- Governor for life of The Irish Times Trust Ltd (the controlling body of The Irish Times Group)
- Chairman for life of The Irish Times Trust Ltd
- Chairman of The Irish Times Ltd until he decided to resign
- Chief Executive of The Irish Times Ltd until he decided to resign

The appointment of the editor of the newspaper had to be approved in advance by McDowell. The editor was also responsible for duties which McDowell "*may from time to time prescribe*".

That was the substance of the so-called Trust. The parts about education and building lifeboats were just so much window dressing for the useful idiots who worked for the newspaper, and its readers who knew no better. The pretence that it was some kind of charity might also have had favourable tax implications for the former owners.

The new structure heralded the departure of Douglas Gageby, or the "*white nigger*" as McDowell described his Editor to the British Ambassador in 1969.

But the "*white nigger*" was to return in 1977 on the insistence of the banks when the company ran into financial trouble. McDowell had to bide his time knowing that the banks were temporarily calling the shots, but he had not relinquished any of his powers. He had plenty of time to groom Gageby's successor ensuring that the newspaper would make the transition from being a Protestant to a Catholic Unionist newspaper.

We have said that McDowell was a man of principle, but no one is perfect. *The Sunday Business Post* and the *Irish*

Independent reported in 2001 that McDowell and his daughter were on a combined salary of 850,000 pounds. His chauffeur and gardener were on *The Irish Times* payroll at a time when the newspaper was forced to make redundancies.

But these are trifling matters compared to his achievements.

It could be said that McDowell's dominance of *The Irish Times* was similar to the de Valera family's dominance of the *Irish Press*, but the project of the *Irish Press* was open and transparent. It was openly Republican and Nationalist. *The Irish Times*, on the other hand, concealed its Unionism. Its anti-partitionism was a cover for its Unionism. *The Irish Times*'s anti-partitionism was a means to put a brake on national development. It opposed *Bunreacht na hEireann* on the grounds that it would alienate Northern Unionists, a group that *The Irish Times* had never an affinity with. But the real basis for its opposition was that the Irish Constitution was one more step in loosening the imperial connection which the Treaty settlement had attempted to preserve.

The newspaper's role since independence has been to sneer at the Irish State and the Irish people, a practice which it continues to this day with the aid of some of its tame lefties. All criticism of Britain is a sign of "*immaturity*". And John Redmond must be rehabilitated even though the newspaper despised him when he was alive.

In this project neither McDowell nor *The Irish Times* could ever be candid about the newspaper's relationship with the British State. McDowell has been one of the most influential people in Irish society and yet there is hardly an interview on record from him. That is how he wanted it. Since 1974 Directors of *The Irish Times*, including the Editor, have been obliged to swear an oath of secrecy before a Commissioner of Oaths because the newspaper was based on a lie.

All that must reflect on the Major. But on the occasion of McDowell's death we must give the man his due. If he were alone, naked, in a dark room and with nobody watching he could tell himself who he was. And that is much more than can be said of those professional pontificators who worked for him; who wear their hearts on their sleeve, but don't know who they are and what their role is. McDowell was not like that.

To thine own self be True ... and thou can then be false to anyman. Is that not the way of the British State?

But perhaps we are being harsh on the useful idiots who work for the newspaper. John Waters, for instance, might be a court jester, but he is no fool. In a moment when he thought nobody was watching he emailed the following to a French academic:

"It is important to understand that The Irish Times is not so much a newspaper as a campaigning institution committed to making Ireland come to resemble the aspirations of its more privileged citizens. There is, accordingly, no tradition of giving voice to different opinions in The Irish Times. What there is, is a desire to present the "truth", to have this "truth" accepted, and to discredit all viewpoints, which do not accord with this. In order to achieve this, paradoxically, it is necessary to create the illusion of democratic debate. This is where I come in. The purpose of my column in The Irish Times is to demonstrate to the readers the consequences of error, while at the same time illustrating the "tolerance" of those who know and love the "truth". In this way, the "truth" is affirmed all the more. My views in The Irish Times, have a function analogous to a vaccine, which aims to immunise the patient to the effects of certain conditions by implanting the essences of these conditions in their systems. Thus, the readers of The Irish Times are immunised against any dangerous forms of thinking which, if allowed to take serious hold of their consciousness, would render them incapable of acting in their own best interests" (cited by Jean Mercereau in *Évolution et singularités d'un journal de référence irlandais: L'Irish Times 1859-1999*).

But, even in the quietness of a note to a French academic, he could not mention the British connection or who the privileged citizens were that the rest of the Irish were supposed to resemble. Certainly, not the native bourgeoisie! After Independence the newspaper had to proceed with caution, but its first editorial in 1859 could reveal the orientation of those the Irish were to resemble:

"We shall labour to develop in Irish society such a public opinion as may command the respect and sympathy of all that is most intelligent and liberal in England" (*The Irish Times* 29.3.1859).

To thine own self be true... almost! That is the way of John Waters.

But what of the others; those *bien pensant*, earnest journalists, who rail against corruption, but never write about the institution they work for? What do they tell themselves? What do they make of McDowell's documented and well known work for British intelligence? How do they explain that when McDowell contacted Downing Street in 1969 the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson assumed it related to "*intelligence*" rather

than "journalistic" activity?

And what of the old man himself; the person who retained the allegiance of *The Irish Times* and died with the title President for Life of The Irish Times Group. If he thought Douglas Gageby was a "white nigger", what would he have thought of them? Perhaps in McDowell's last moments he would have allowed himself an indulgent smile—in the manner of a father who thinks of his children—and said with justification:

"I did my work well".

Catalan And Anglo-Irish Identities

An interesting exchange on national identities has taken place in the letters page of the *Financial Times*. Under the heading of "When Britain abandoned the Catalans", the following letter from a Josep Pons Punti was published on 14th September:

"Perhaps the FT would do well to read up on European history every time it decides to publish tendentious and ill-informed articles attacking Catalonia and criticising its relationship with Spain. The historical root of the conflict between Catalonia and Castile lies in the war of the Spanish succession, lost in part because our British allies abandoned us to our fate in 1714, leaving the Borbonic troops to force us into an increasingly centralised Spanish/Castilian state against our will. Lord Macaulay says as much in his *War of the Succession in Spain: 'The English allowed the Catalans to suffer the vengeance of Philip V in a manner that was incompatible with humanity and honour.'* Winston Churchill makes a similar reference in the third volume of *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. The treachery of the English towards the Catalans was duly rewarded by the Castilians at the subsequent Treaty of Utrecht, with the cession of Gibraltar. When I look at my ID card, which identifies me as 'Spanish', I cannot help but think of historical Britain's role in making me something that I am not. Many thanks, sons of Great Britain."

This evoked (provoked?) a patriotic British response from Philip Porter, an expatriate resident of Cugnaux, France. Under the heading of "Catalonia spared an unwanted fate", the following letter from him was published on 25th September:

"Mr. Josep Ponce Punti forgets that it was the British army under the (Irish) Duke of Wellington who rescued Catalonia from Napoleonic rule. But for those 'sons of Great Britain', Mr Punti's home town of Barcelona might still be the seat of the *préfecture* of the French *département* of Montserrat."

Apart from dubbing Pons Punti a "Ponce", Porter's Union Jackery widened the net of national provocation. Under the heading of "Anglo-Irish and a very English duke", the following letter from a Ted Gaffney, of the Connecticut, USA, town of Waterford, was published on 29th September:

"At the risk of seeming pedantic, I take issue with Philip Porter's letter in which he refers (however obliquely) to the Duke of Wellington as being Irish. Born in Ireland as a member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, was adamant about his 'Englishness'. Reflecting the prejudices of his time and class, the duke famously said that '*being born in a stable does not make one a horse*'. Even his ducal title, of the Peerage of the United Kingdom, reflects an English preference. Rather than taking his title from a famous victory, an English locality was chosen. Wellington is a town close to the village of Wellesley in Somerset, where the duke's brother believed their family had originated. I believe we should respect the avowed convictions of the late duke and not claim him for Ireland. I doubt if a hundred statues in the capital of the Irish Republic would have changed his feelings on the matter. Certainly to his way of thinking the gulf between being Irish and Anglo-Irish (or English) was that of the gulf that exists between a colonial ruling class and that of a subjected people."

It might be added that double offence was probably given to Pons Punti when the FT Letters Editor published his address as "Barcelona, Spain" and saw no need to correct Porter's "Ponce".

Manus O'Riordan

News From Nowhere

continued

North has proceeded. A Fianna Fail meeting was held in South Down with FF Ministers Eamon O Cuiv and Dermot Ahern and a former Ceann Comhairle (Rory O'Hanlon) in attendance. It was addressed by Harvey Bicker, a former Ulster Unionist politician, who received a standing ovation when he gave a speech addressing "true republicanism" and the spirit of 1798. An *Irish Times* report noted:

"It is understood he encouraged Fianna Fáil to adopt a policy driven approach to Northern development and avoid being drawn into simple contest for nationalist votes with other parties" (7.9.09).

A local SDLP Councillor, Peter Fitzpatrick, also supported FF organisation.

Within the South, which in so many ways still cannot stop itself from following

the British example, there is a crisis over the Speakership of the Dail over his high spending both as Speaker and in his previous capacity as Minister for Culture, and there is also carping about the lifestyle of the civil servants who played a considerable part in making the country prosperous in recent times.

Money attracts money. The poor mouth attracts a fleeting mixture of pity and contempt. The prosperity set in motion about twenty years ago by Haughey was floated on globalist finance. Reynolds, following on from Haughey, thought that the puritan lifestyle of the Free State civil servants was inappropriate to the era of the Celtic Tiger and inhibited them from taking advantage of new opportunities. They were encouraged to behave as members of a bustling and confident bourgeoisie, which would put their international business and political contacts at their ease and encourage business.

But now belts are being tightened, and there is a projection backward, to the era of prosperity, of the puritan disapproval of high spending that is appropriate to the present moment.

Maybe it would be better if that wave of prosperity had never happened. Maybe it would be better if, twenty years ago, Haughey had not made the Office of Taoiseach into a kind of Politburo and launched the country into the prosperity of globalist finance. Maybe it would be better if the Future, which the Professor of Politics at UCD tells us was prevented by cramped small-timers for seventy years, had continued to be Prevented. But it was not Prevented. Haughey brought the new business class into its own; everyone benefitted (financially at least, and one is tempted to ask if contemporary Ireland knows much of benefits which are not financial); and hardly anybody complained.

It is true that, at the peak of this globalist financial prosperity, we had a Taoiseach who did not seem to know what a bank account was, and kept his money in his pocket. But we do not recall that he was much praised for his ignorance of tricky financial instruments.

The lavish lifestyles of the people who were running the system was a condition of the unprecedented prosperity achieved by the system for a generation. And, whatever else one might say about John O'Donoghue, it cannot be said that he does not have style. And style was undoubtedly an asset in the Minister of Culture of a State which made much money out of culture—and much of it out of a culture that was far from being its own.

And as to the Speakership—there is a critical absence in the structure of the Irish State. The nominal head of state has little status in the State. The function of the President is to be there and do nothing. It was a suitable position for retired elder politicians. Mary Robinson, who was

doing something useful in society, took it on and tried to give it substance in the life of the state. She was not allowed to do so. She couldn't face a second term as a functional nonentity, but when she gave up the job she had been spoiled for anything else.

In the 1930s, after the Governor General was seen off, the Speaker performed the functions of head of state for a while. It might have been better if that practice had continued. And if O'Donoghue spent some money in an effort to make the Speaker a person who is noticed, and who helps to fill this vacuum in the structure of the state, good on him.

Back to the North: The latest academic history we have seen is *Talking To The Terrorists* by John Bew. It concludes that the Good Friday Agreement is in essence the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973-4. And it quotes the SDLP jibe at the Unionists in 1998 that the GFA was *Sunningdale for slow learners*.

There is in fact an essential difference between the two. Sunningdale was a system of Cabinet Government based on majority rule, though a weighted majority. The GFA is a system of independent Government departments, not combined in a Cabinet, and not subject to a majority vote in the Assembly. And it has worked, after its fashion, because of that essential and fundamental difference. The various departments can function independently of each other between Stormont elections. The first necessary point of crisis is the electing of a First and Deputy First Minister under the double-mandate system, where the votes of the elected representatives of the two communities are counted separately and the representatives of each community have to approve the nominee of the other community.

As to Sunningdale: the SDLP (at the end of its tether) needs to be reminded that it was its refusal to negotiate a deferral of the establishment of the Council of Ireland in order to preserve Power Sharing that undermined the Sunningdale arrangements in the North.

As to the Lib-Dem proposal (to abolish the Northern Ireland Office), which sees devolution as being of a kind in the North, Scotland and Wales, it need only be pointed

out that Scotland and Wales are part of the British system of politics while the North is not. The parties which are in contention for a mandate to govern at Westminster are also in contention for a mandate to govern in Edinburgh and Cardiff, but not in Stormont. And the devolved systems in Scotland and Wales make whatever arrangements they please, under Cabinet systems, subject to majority rule Parliaments.

The Northern system is not capable of autonomous functioning. It is not only devolved, but supervised. It is actually subject to Whitehall and notionally subject to Whitehall and Dublin. If Prime Minister Brown was willing to write off the next election, and govern positively for six months, he could probably make the DUP give way on policing with the threat of giving teeth to the Dublin voice on the North. But that is unlikely. So things will hobble along.

(see interviews by Hamas leader Khaled Meshal with former US President Jimmy Carter and Ken Livingstone—*Haaretz*, 14.06.09, *New Statesman*, 17.09.09). Hamas has not commented one way or the other on the Lisbon Treaty. So, both Fatah and Hamas, jointly supported by nearly 90% of the Palestinian electorate, support a peace process with Israel involving the international community and neither oppose the Lisbon Treaty.

Most Irish people, regardless of how they might have voted on Lisbon, and all mainstream Irish political parties, support a just solution to the Middle East conflict that ensures the rights of the Palestinian people. The arrogance of 'Irish Friends of Palestine' in holding that it knows better than the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people what is good for them is breathtaking. They have done the Palestinian people no service.

Philip O'Connor

Palestine's 'Friends'

The following letter was submitted to *The Irish Examiner* in early October

The front page of *The Examiner* of 1st October carried a list of organisations with their positions on the Lisbon vote. Prominent among the 'No' list was a group called 'Irish Friends of Palestine'. On the same day *The Irish Times* reported the denunciation by the same organisation of Ms Leila Shahid of the Palestinian Delegation to the EU because of her support for the Lisbon Treaty. Ms Shalid had stated the Delegation's belief that a united EU foreign policy would strengthen the European voice in the Middle East peace process and therefore should be supported.

The spokesman of 'Irish Friends', Mr Seán Clinton, rejected Ms Shalid's right to make such a call on the basis that she was part of the Fatah movement, which, he said, was "hand in glove with the EU in this charade of a peace process".

In the 2006 elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council—universally accepted as "free and fair"—the Fatah alliance won 41% of the popular vote and the Hamas alliance ('Change and Reform') won 44.5%. The two together represent the views of the vast majority of the Palestinian population. Fatah has recognised the right of Israel to exist within the 1967 borders accepted under International Law, and seeks the end of the illegal Israeli occupation and settlement of lands outside these borders. Hamas has refused to recognise the state of Israel until Israel recognises the national or democratic rights of Palestinians. However, since the 2006 elections, Hamas leaders have repeatedly stated their aim of peace with the state of Israel on the basis of an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and a dismantlement of illegal settlements

NETZARIM JUNCTION

Fifteen bullet holes marks the cinder blocks,
this wall of death for a twelve-year-old shocks.

Mohammed Durrah died here, killed here,
30 September, 2000, the tears,
in his father's arms, at Netzarim Junction.
A Saturday and a used-car auction
in Gaza City, a pleasurable trip
but at Netzarim Junction bullets zipped:
The Israelis cleansing the area,
hum lead to make a death-head aria.
Fifteen notes on cinder-block papyrus
dedicated to the cadaverous.

There is a wedding here at Netzarim,
harshly the bass-baritone sings his hymn.
Now the music hots up to allegro.
Any time soon death will don her
trousseau.

Begin, you chorus of father and son!
Ram's-horn, cymbals, bombardon, all
begun.

Orchestra drowns chorus as it screams.
STOP? But the supreme cannot stop their
dream.

Mohammed succumbs to the crescendo,
his dad's wounds teases death's innuendo.

One of their generals writes a review
saying another orchestra, not Hebrew,
did play this dirge of sharp semi-quavers.
His musicians don't want for favours
but he shall apologise anyway:
"SORRY! Now you say sorry for that
day."

Mohammed will live again through
etiquette?

This general builds the future with regrets.

Wilson John Haire.
9th August, 2009

***Irish Political Review* records with regret the death of Muriel MacSwiney's daughter, Alix Blakelock.**

Born on 5th May 1926 she died on 3rd September 2009. Family contributions at the secular ceremony were made by Juliet, Adrian, Nigel and grandchildren Orla, Martin, Roxie and Leah.

Shorts

from
the Long Fellow

MAJOR McDOWELL

The media reaction to the death of Major Thomas Bleakley McDowell—the dominant figure in *The Irish Times* for the last 40 years—was muted. In his life he avoided publicity and the deficiency was not remedied after the death of this influential person.

The Long Fellow is aware of two substantial obituaries: one from Charles Lysaght in the *Sunday Independent* and, of course, *The Irish Times* obituary.

Both obituaries mention the "white nigger" letter, which is interesting. On the death of Douglas Gageby in 2004 *The Irish Times* studiously avoided the subject even though the matter had come to public attention only the previous year. It appears that now, five years later, the subject cannot be avoided and must be dealt with.

The Irish Times dealt with it in a typically dishonest way. It suggested that the reason for McDowell's meeting with the British Ambassador was that he wanted to encourage greater communication between "nationalists or unionists or between Irish and British politicians and bureaucrats". The fact is that there was no mention of such communication between McDowell and the British Ambassador on 2nd October 1969. McDowell's purpose in meeting the British Ambassador was to place the newspaper under British influence because his Editor, Douglas Gageby, was a "renegade or white nigger" on Northern matters.

It was only four weeks later (October 30th) at a meeting with Kelvin White of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office that McDowell offered his services as a "link" between the various parties in Britain and Ireland. But Kelvin White in a letter describing the meeting makes it very clear that this offer did not exclude McDowell's original offer of placing *The Irish Times* under British State influence.

The obituary in *The Irish Times* also claims that the British Ambassador was irritated by McDowell's direct approach to Downing Street prior to the meeting with the British Ambassador in October 1969. This is obviously a pathetic attempt to suggest a reason why the British Ambassador might have misrepresented what happened at the "white nigger" meeting. The obituary writer is grasping at straws.

First of all, why would the Ambassador be irritated unless he considered McDowell a subordinate who was obliged to report to him rather than directly to the British Prime Minister!? Secondly, even

if the Ambassador were irritated by McDowell, why would this very professional and experienced diplomat misrepresent what happened at the meeting? The idea is ludicrous.

THE IRISH TIMES TRUST

The obituary is quite amusing on *The Irish Times Trust*. Apparently, Major McDowell considered allowing public bodies or interests to name members of the Trust, but then decided that it would be better if they were all appointed by himself!

On the setting up of the Trust the obituary reveals that the other Directors of the newspaper had no ideological objection to selling the newspaper to another newspaper group: it was McDowell who wished to prevent this by the Trust Structure which gave him control of the newspaper. McDowell apparently went through 28 drafts before he handed the completed document to Gageby who suggested a clause requiring the newspaper to reflect minority views.

This is interesting. It confirms something which would be obvious to anyone that read the Trust document, that Gageby had minimal influence on it. And yet *The Irish Times* in another obituary of Tony Gray, who was commissioned to write a history of the newspaper in the 1980s, claimed that the reason why the project was abandoned was that Gageby objected to what was written about the Trust!

THE RECORD OF THE NEWSPAPER

This brings us to the question of how the newspaper reports on itself. Much of the information for the obituary comes from an interview last year with McDowell himself. But the obituary says that the interview was for the "newspaper's archives". There is no indication of when it will be published, if at all. Perhaps the practice of the British State will apply and it will be released under the 30 year rule!

When Mark O'Brien was researching his book on *The Irish Times* he requested an interview with Major McDowell but was refused on the grounds that the latter was contractually obliged to the authorised version of the history of *The Irish Times*. O'Brien was under the impression that this would be published this year on the newspaper's 150th anniversary.

But the year has almost gone and there is no sign of the authorised history of *The Irish Times*. The paper cannot deal with its own history because it is based on deception. There is one difference between an official history and other types of history: in the former the authors cannot claim not to know; and therefore the evasions are official evasions.

TIMES PAST

All that has been produced by the newspaper on its 150th anniversary is a coffee table magazine and some extracts

from past editions of the newspaper. It must be admitted that some of these extracts are not without interest.

Last month, it reproduced an editorial from 24th September 1885 denouncing the National League (the successor to the Land League) for boycotting a land grabber. The present-day commentary suggests that the tactic of boycotting was considered "controversial". But neither the commentary nor the actual 1885 editorial tells readers if the tactic of eviction by the Landlord class was "controversial or not".

The Irish Times was a virulent opponent of the Land movement. William O'Brien of the Land and Labour League used to refer to *The Irish Times* as "The Liarish Times". He was once accused of assaulting an *Irish Times* journalist. O'Brien's defence was that this person was not a real journalist at all, but a spy for the Landlords.

Another editorial of 23rd September 1919 which was reproduced last month describes *The Irish Times's* anti-partitionism. It opposed it on the grounds that it would divide Protestants on the island. But the United Ireland it envisaged was firmly in union with the United Kingdom as the following concluding sentence from the editorial makes clear:

"The growing hope of reunion would be killed for ever. We can conceive no advantage from any "settlement" by partition which would furnish compensation for this calamity to the spiritual and social life of Protestant Ireland" (*The Irish Times*, 23,9,1919).

And now for something completely different . . .

UNFUNNY HOLOCAUST JOKE

"How can you stand the silence
That pervades when we all cry
How can you watch the violence
That erupts before your eyes"

(from *A Wonderful Remark*
by Van Morrison).

The Long Fellow thought of the Van Morrison song when he saw Tommy Tiernan in Vicar Street. Doors opened at 8.30; the show started at 9pm; and the heaving mass of 30 and 40 something fans was in an alcohol-induced state of hysteria by the time Tiernan appeared at 10.30. The ranting and raving could now begin.

The audience and performer fed each other into a communal frenzy. They were speaking in tongues in a language the Long Fellow could not understand: each in turn giving the other permission to reach a new level of psychosis... It's called comedy... Rock and Roll for the middle aged... a new revivalist religion?

But apparently the High Priest has blasphemed and has had to apologise. The new religion must be tamed.

Now the Long Fellow finds *that* funny.

'What If' Lynch Had Attacked Britain?

While there is no evidence that the Irish Government contemplated invading the United Kingdom in 1969-70, or that any element within the Government urged it to do so, there seems to be a felt need on the part of influential strata of the state to believe that an invasion was contemplated, so that they can terrify themselves, and the public, with its imagined consequences.

According to the narration of the RTE programme, *If Lynch Had Invaded*, at the emergency Cabinet meeting of 13th August 1969 there were bitter divisions and "high profile hardliners— were to demand that Jack Lynch mobilise the Irish Army and invade the North".

The programme was "Written and Directed by Michael Hewitt". We don't know if Mr. Hewitt provided evidence of this elsewhere. He did not do so in his programme.

The alleged advocates of invasion are not named. Kevin Boland and Neil Blaney are named in other parts of the programme as "hardliners", so presumably they are meant. But why the coyness if they are meant and there is evidence that they proposed invasion?

Charles Haughey is not mentioned at all until the credits at the end, and then only in connection with the Arms Trial, long after the event. There was no suggestion even by the incompetent prosecution of Haughey that the arms he was accused of conspiracy to import illegally were for the purpose of an invasion of the UK by the Irish Government.

The point of the programme, as was made clear at the end, was to tell the country how lucky it was to have had Jack Lynch as its leader in that dangerous moment, because he had decided not to invade the UK. The implication was that any of the likely alternative leaders would have invaded.

But the actual outcome of the Cabinet meeting was a television speech by Lynch at a critical moment in the Northern turmoil, threatening that his Government would not stand by, and an announcement that he had deployed his Army to the Border.

We have always described Lynch's speech as inflammatory. That was how we saw it at the time, and we have never seen reason to change our opinion. And it seems that what we have published was not entirely in vain, because that was, in effect, how it was presented in the programme. Only Desmond O'Malley said it was the right thing to say. Even Lynch's "Political Adviser", Ken Whitaker, had no weasel words to say in support of it.

O'Malley said: "It was strong, and it

needed to be strong, and it needed to be strong in the circumstances of what we were seeing was happening in the North".

What was happening was that the police were barricaded out of the Bogside area of Derry following the provocation of the Apprentice Boys' march on August 12th and were becoming exhausted by their frustrated attempts to break in.

The force of the State was blocked out of the Bogside. There was a *de facto* insurrection. The area was under siege from the police. Lynch's speech gave the insurgents to believe that he was sending his Army to help them.

By the same token it gave the upholders of law and order to believe that there were to be subjected to an attempted conquest. And so the populace rallied to the support of their defenders and attacked the waiting Fifth Column in its stronghold of West Belfast.

In many ways the Bogside of Derry was not part of Northern Ireland at all. It was not a strong minority, but a majority. Constitutionally, so to speak, it was cut out of such political life as there was by the Gerrymander. It lived its own life without the same degree of routine humiliation by the forces of law and order that was experienced by the Catholic minorities in Belfast and elsewhere. And it backed onto Donegal.

What changed everything in the North was the assault on the Falls area by the combined force of the police and the populace. And it must be conceded that Lynch's speech played a part in bringing that about.

We played some part in the defensive operations in Belfast in that period, and so we know that people from every political tendency in the South did something towards arming the Catholics. When the British Army—i.e. the Army of the State—was deployed on the streets and a kind of order was restored, we concluded that the point of severe crisis had passed, and we proposed that the Southern Establishment should adopt a radically new approach to the Northern situation. It should acknowledge the obvious fact that there was nothing in the Protestant community that responded to the appeal of Irish nationalism, should recognise that community as a distinct nation, and should see where that led—that was 'the two nations'. Lynch immediately rejected the Two Nations approach and asserted that Ireland was a nation, that Partition was the cause of the trouble in the North, and that a solution could only come from the ending of Partition.

And he instructed his Army to make

contingency provision for intervening in the North in certain circumstances. Army planning was set in motion very soon after August 13th, and continued until the following July. In February 1970 a formal Directive was given verbally to the Army chiefs which they insisted on minuting and having the minute approved by the Government.

Some of the planning documents were referred to in the RTE programme, but in a misleading way. And the Directive from the Government to the Army was not mentioned at all.

Tom Clonan (*Irish Times*), the main presenter of the RTE programme, told us that on 13th August "senior Cabinet Ministers had actually advocated an invasion of Northern Ireland":

"Today the idea of such an act of declaring war on Britain might seem absurd, unthinkable even. But in fact by 1970 the Irish military had generated a war-game which envisaged exactly that scenario. The war-game was called *Exercise Armageddon*, and the Top-Secret military document sets out in detail its aims and objectives... But the Defence Forces were not just drawing up war-games. And in fact within weeks of the August 13th Cabinet meeting the military authorities were the authors of an even more remarkable document. This document, dated the 27th of September 1969 and prepared by senior military personnel, contains a wide range of options for military operations north of the Border..."

Viewers were given a glimpse of these documents. They were all published in full some years ago in Angela Clifford's *Military Aspects Of Ireland's Arms Crisis Of 1969-70*, along with an account of the circumstances under which they were drawn up. The Irish Defence Force was not an Army with a General Staff with some degree of autonomy which played war-games and drew up contingency plans as a matter of course for a range of eventualities. It was a deliberately fragmented body which achieved unity only under Government direction. Its contingency plans for the North were drawn up under Government instruction. The Government was Lynch. The Ministers were his Ministers. And the Minister who gave instructions to the Army was a loyal Lynch man, who was kept on in Government after May 1970 when others were sacked.

Various wise men were brought on to say that the Army planning was madness. If so, the madman was Lynch. The overall message of the programme was that Lynch saved us from the war that nobody but he had planned.

The programme then showed us how it thought the war would have worked out if it had been fought. But it did not start from the contingency plans and try to envisage their implementation in the circumstan-

ces for which they were devised—circumstances of extreme turmoil in the North. What we were shown was a complete fantasy scenario of an Irish war on Britain. And British officers were brought on to say that the tin-pot Irish Army would have been destroyed within hours. And who can doubt it? Properly speaking, it is not an Army at all—although it has a force of 6, or is it 7, acting with NATO in Afghanistan. It was set up in 1922 to break the Army that brought Britain to the negotiating table, and it never escaped from its origins. We do not doubt that the British Army would have pulverised it in an hour. And yet the British Army took a quarter of a century to achieve a draw with the insurgent army of the Catholic minority in the North.

The war plans of 1969-70 envisaged action in conjunction with a Northern insurgency in a Northern Doomsday situation. Leaving the insurgency out of the scenario reduced the scenario to mere fantasy.

The programme showed us how we escaped disaster because Lynch did not implement the intervention/invasion which he promised/threatened on August 13th, and for which he directed his Army to plan during the next nine months. Of course it wasn't put like that, but if you discounted the red-herrings, the strange noises, and the posturings and poutings, that is what would be there.

Then Ken Whitaker, "Adviser to Jack Lynch", said:

"I think we should regard ourselves as blest, extremely fortunate, that the man in charge of affairs at the time was one who was not a product of violence. He had no family background of that kind and his instincts were those of a civilised person trying to achieve what was necessary by reason rather than by force..."

And Desmond O'Malley:

"His actions had the net result anyway of keeping the Republic out of the conflict and reducing substantially what would have been the loss of life".

Then, as if suddenly remembering something:

"Even though the loss of life was catastrophic over a thirty year period. Three and a half thousand people. It could have been very much worse..."

A politician can never be quite as lost to the world as an "Adviser".

Then the concluding blurbs came up:

"On the 14th August 1969 British troops were deployed on the streets of Northern Ireland.

"Two days later Jack Lynch's cabinet agreed to set up a secret fund of £100,000 to provide relief for Northern nationalists.

"Nine months later Jack Lynch sacked Neil Blaney and Charles Haughey from

his cabinet on accusations that they had used this fund in a conspiracy to import arms destined for the North.

"Kevin Boland resigned from the government in protest over the sackings, claiming that the entire cabinet knew of the plan to send arms across the border."

Now what has the alleged conspiracy to import arms for the Northern minority got to do with the Army plan to invade the North which RTE tried to imagine being put into effect by the Government?

Then the titles came up, accompanied by film clips and comment.

Clip of Haughey walking, apparently from British television news, with comment in English accent: "Five men were charged with the illegal importation of arms into the Republic of Ireland".

Clip of Lynch saying: "I have no intention of discussing the Arms Trial at this stage. The matters that are before the Court, therefore sub-judice".

Clip of Haughey walking to a car. Programme narrator: "Charles Haughey's exact role in that crisis will perhaps never be known".

Clip of Lynch: "The charge in the Courts was one of conspiracy. On the other hand nobody can doubt that there was an attempt to import arms illegally".

Clip of Blaney after the Trial: "They have vindicated all those who have been smeared and blackguarded by the powers-that-be, who ran this trial not merely as a prosecution but as the Counsel said inside, as a persecution. And I think they've their answer today. And I hope they realise it and take the appropriate action".

And there the programme ends, subliminally, with no hint of what the Arms Trial for illegal conspiracy had to do with the official Army plans for intervention in the North. Or, if there was some connection between the two, why was Blaney, who was the chief actor according to the programme itself, not prosecuted?

Review: *If Lynch Had Invaded*. RTE One, 1 September 2009.

Incursion Not Invasion

Once again another classic documentary from RTE. This is the most inaccurate documentary since the notorious 'The Killings at Coolacree' production. RTE has deliberately ignored the facts and chosen to let fictional drama rather than factual accuracy drive narration.

INVASION VERSUS INCURSION

Produced by *DoubleBand Films* for RTE, the documentary constantly used the term "invasion", the Irish Government never considered an 'invasion', i.e. an attempt to conquer territory. On the contrary the Government considered an 'incursion', a small-scale operation to provoke international attention. Narration claimed that Neil Blaney and Kevin Boland wanted an Anglo-Irish war and were naïve enough to think an 'invasion' could potentially end partition. No one in the cabinet thought that—everyone knew an incursion's primary purpose would have been to create a dramatic propaganda event. According to RTE most of the cabinet didn't want to go to war with Britain. Well neither did Blaney or Boland. They wanted an incursion. Lieutenant Colonel Mike Dewar accurately stated that the Irish Government never sought an Anglo-Irish war. "They made a point to get out again." He knew Irish military intervention did not have a military objective. The primary objective would have been to internationalise the crisis. Similarly, Tony Benn queried the narrative's assertion that the Irish Government would authorise an "invasion" without an

attainable objective. His comments, like many contributions made by other interviewees, sat awkwardly alongside RTE dogma.

PROBLEMS WITH COUNTER-FACTUAL

RTE used the September *Interim Report* of an Irish Army planning committee as the basis for a 'what-if' scenario for 13th August. However the *Interim Report* was written in a completely different political and military context to 13th August and therefore not suitable for a counter-factual. If troops had crossed the border on 13th August they would have posed as peacekeepers between civilians and the RUC in Derry. When the *Interim Report* was produced, British deployments to Derry and a changed security context lessened that city's attractiveness for an incursion. This is why planners in the post-British Army deployment period viewed Newry as the most suitable area for an incursion.

Narrators claimed it would take 72 hours for the Army to prepare for an "invasion" and they might have needed to commandeer buses for transport. This is ridiculous because one infantry group had been formed and deployed to Donegal on 13th August and by the evening of 14th August two groups had been deployed to the Cavan, Monaghan and Dundalk areas. Deployments actually took 12-24 hours and the Army did not need to commandeer civilian transport. Why would deployments in a counter-factual be any different?

RTE's entire visualisation of an incursion into Newry is woeful. Narration

claimed that Irish troops would have taken the border customs post. Well that would have been impossible because rioters burnt it down on 13th August. According to RTE the troops would have then entered Newry town, found it in a state of "calm" with "some nationalists coming out to support troops". An Irish platoon would then take the local RUC station in a surprise attack. This is just absurd because Newry experienced intense rioting on 13-14 August and rioters placed the RUC station under siege with volleys of petrol bombs. Sleepy Newry town was in fact in a state of anarchy. Hijacked lorries blocked roads and arsonists targeted several public buildings.

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.

Irish troops were shown in an open field, standing there waiting to get bombed or strafed. RTE thought that Irish soldiers don't know how to take cover. However, Irish military planners envisaged taking positions within an urban area and it is unlikely that the RAF would have been ordered to strike targets south of the border. According to the documentary's scenario Irish troops would lie in ditches shaking with fear or else run away and get shot in the back. This implied that Irish soldiers were poorly commanded and undisciplined. A more accurate depiction of British soldiers fighting with Irish soldiers would involve British troops advancing into a bombed out urban area under Irish sniper fire. Would it have been the 'Irish Bay of Pigs' as the documentary claimed? No, because the Bay of Pigs was an invasion to conquer a territory and overthrow a government. An Irish incursion would have been a short-term operation to intensify the crisis followed by a rapid withdrawal.

ALTERNATIVE

I could write a simple counter-factual based on archival considerations of the period. 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.

Ultimately the Irish Government succeeded in achieving its limited aims without resorting to military intervention. If you want factual analysis then read

work based on serious historical research—if you want light entertainment then watch RTE.

Edward Longwill

A more detailed critique by Edward Longwill of deficiencies in this 'What If' programme will appear in the November *Irish Political Review*

Book Review:

"Rebel Cork's Fighting Story, 1916-21, told by the men who made it" (Mercier Press, 2009)

Professor Hart On Rebel Cork

This is a classic, now reprinted by Mercier but carrying the baggage of an academic introduction.

Professor Peter Hart begins his introduction to this book as follows:

"In the years before 1916, Cork saw a lot of political violence, but it was fighting between rival political parties—'Mollies' versus 'All For Irelanders'—not against the government. When a rebellion did take place, in 1916, Cork's Easter Rising was confined to a single family and home, the Kents of Bawnard House. The year ended with by-election in West Cork in December, more faction-fighting and a victory for the Irish Parliamentary Party."

Each sentence here is a cleverly constructed deception. And constructed by the Professor in his ongoing effort to discredit the War of Independence in Cork.

There were two parties operating in Cork and nearby areas for a generation before 1916. Like all political parties they dealt with Government polices. Any party that does not do so is not a political party by definition. One party, the AIL [All For Ireland League], practically wiped out the other party in Cork at the second General Election of 1910. This all had to do with radically different views on how to deal with the Government's policies towards a range of issues—how to get Home Rule, finalising the land issue, equitable taxation. Also, what a future Home Rule Government would do with Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/Nationalist relations.

Essentially the AIL saw the Home Rule party of Redmond, Devlin and Dillon as heading towards disaster by relying on conflict between the two British political parties to deliver. The AIL represented the radical Land and Labour movement, and was militantly hostile to the militant Catholic wing of the Home Rule party, the AOH [Ancient Order of Hibernians], rightly seen as wanting to "replace the Protestant Ascendancy with a Catholic Ascendancy"—as succinctly put by Canon Sheehan. The Free Staters who included the direct heirs of the AOH did precisely that after defeating the direct heirs of the AIL in 1923.

The AIL in destroying the Home Rule party in Cork in 1910 had done in large part what was done elsewhere in 1918. Hardly an indication of political inaction. Their supporters were therefore in a post-Irish Parliamentary Party situation after 1910 and were ready for action after 1918 in the follow-up to a country without the IPP. They had a head start politically speaking and that is why they were to the forefront.

That conflict between the two parties was about the most fundamental issues facing the country. It was the real origin of party politics as they were formed in Ireland and all Professor Hart sees is "faction fighting".

On the second point. The Cork Volunteers were fully prepared to participate in the Rising but the arrangements were compromised by the confusion created by the countermanding orders, which was happened in other places as well. There is hardly any reason to doubt that Sean O'Hegarty, Terence MacSwiney, Tomas MacCurtain, Florrie O'Donoghue and all the others were as ready and willing to fight before the Rising as they were afterwards. They were not born-again Republicans after that event. The Kents were outside the city, near Fermoy, and were provoked into action by an Army and RIC raid. There was no question of differing attitudes among the Cork Volunteers towards participation in the Rising that entailed one family participating as opposed to others deciding not to do so. All this is actually described in the book the Professor is introducing so the deception is quite deliberate: after all, he probably did read the book.

The third point. The West Cork by-election he mentions was very clearly analysed by Manus O'Riordan in the July 2009 issue of *Irish Political Review*. He pointed out that the vote of the IPP actually went down but it won because of the split between the other parties—the AIL and newly emergent Sinn Fein. It was just the opposite of what the Professor seeks to imply. The fact is this was a result that

confirmed the decline of the IPP, rather than indicating any increase in support.

Hart's deceptions about the alleged lack of any sign of pre-1916 action in Cork provide the Professor with an opportunity to indulge in his favourite type of explanations for the later activity in Cork. "So what accounts for the extraordinary change?" he asks (p17). "One answer" he says, "is that the Volunteers in the South started taking on the RIC much earlier than anywhere else" (p18). But this is not an explanation, it only begs the same question.

He then says that "They {the Volunteers} were also backed by an enthusiastic and (and angry) popular movement". But this is no explanation either—where did this enthusiasm and anger suddenly come from?

We are then told this anger was a sort of leftover from the Land War which "had been the previous generation's rebellion". But even the Professor knows that the resurgence of an over and done conflict is not much of an explanation, so he moves on quickly to introduce the Christian Brothers as the cause. This is hardly credible either. The Christian Brothers' great aim was to produce model educated citizens of the time and specifically to produce successful candidates for the British Civil Service and they were enthusiastic supporters of the Empire in WWI. There is no evidence that they had any different views than that of the Excommunicator General, Bishop Coholan of Cork, and if they had a different attitude I am sure we would have some evidence for it. Moreover, Christian Brother schools were an urban affair, while the War was hardly confined to urban areas.

Then Hart moves on to "Who were the IRA?" And we are given the groundbreaking information that they were men, mostly Catholic, came from a variety of backgrounds and other similar banalities. "Why did they join? It wasn't political or cultural indoctrination." he says and then we are told "Perhaps the most important factor in determining who joined or who would fight was not what you believed but who you knew" (p.21).

But why did the people you knew join and fight? What we are presented with is a lot of socio/psychological babble that seeks to create an impression of a mindless herd of people who did not have a political thought in their heads. Any normal person would not even necessarily join a football club for the reasons he gives and no practical, sane person would be prepared to go out and die for the reasons he gives or rather the non-reasons. But this is vintage Hart—childish views that would border on the embarrassing if said by an actual child. One would not be surprised if

he had given the Cork weather as another reason for people joining up.

Anyway, by some mystery, he admits that these people went on to cope successfully with the British Army that had just won the greatest war in history and did so in a "far more chivalrous" (p25) way than their opponents and these "British forces were much more murderous than the IRA" (p25). A back-handed compliment if ever there was one. However, this is certainly a very different picture from the sectarian villains that Hart had painted the IRA in his earlier books. But Hart is such a dyed in the wool charlatan that, even when he tries to say the right thing, he gets it wrong.

Murder and chivalry are not the central issues in any war, as all is fair in love and war. What is central is what is morally and politically right. And how can one judge that from Professor Hart who never mentions the 1918 Election or any other election. He never mentions why a quarter of a million Irishmen fought for the "freedom of small nations" in WWI, nor that up to 50,000 lost their lives or that their people were then denied this very freedom when they overwhelmingly voted for it.

Neither does he mention such things as the burning and destruction of Cork city by these very same fighters 'for the freedom of small nations'.

These few things alone might help explain the perfectly rational behaviour of people in creating the IRA—not just joining it.

Hart tried to make a name for himself by vilifying the IRA, and the Cork IRA in particular, during the War of Independence as sectarian. He used the methodology that reached full fruition with the RTE programme on Coolcrease—though he'd gone one better with, among other things, his interviews of the dead to help make his case. That project has failed miserably. He now drops that case but there is then a vacuum created and he fills it with the concept that the whole thing was really nonsensical and inexplicable.

Mercier Press should be ashamed of themselves for publishing and perpetuating this rubbish. Hitherto their publications have added value to our understanding of Irish history. This is a regression to history for ignoramus and simpletons.

Jack Lane

National Anthems And Emblems

What has happened the Reform Movement? It began with such a spurt of verbosity and bluster, far less concerned with the civil and religious rights of the Republic's Protestants than with launching a project aimed at reconstituting them as some sort of oppressed British nationality in our midst. But Southern Protestants are thoroughly Irish by virtue of their escape from the Anglo-Irish incubus. Who could ever conceive of Protestant TDs like the Green Gaeilgeoir Trevor Sargent or Labour's Jan O'Sullivan (or indeed the former Fine Gael TD Ivan Yates) as being anything other than quintessentially Irish? The Reform Movement would like to turn the clock back on all of that. But when offered the chance to wallow in British monarchist nostalgia this June it funk'd the issue and remained silent.

The occasion was an *Irishman's Diary* in the *Irish Times* of June 4th in which, *inter alia*, Frank McNally wrote:

"Writing in the journal *Studies*, Mary Kenny describes the trauma 'southern unionists' suffered on the declaration of the Republic 60 years ago; some of it related to postboxes. She quotes Senator David Norris saying how 'devastated' his maternal aunts and cousins in the midlands were at the farewell to their monarch, since Irish Anglicans would no longer pray for the king during religious services... The colour of postboxes aside, Mary Kenny suggests, letters were a

vexed issue throughout the years of the Irish Free State. Specifically, southern unionists had the habit of writing to Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle to assure the monarch of their continued affection, despite the change of management. This caused certain diplomatic problems. Sometimes they took the trouble of posting such letters from Holyhead lest the Free State censor them. And the suspicion was not entirely unjustified. When the death of King George V provoked an upsurge in the correspondence, Taoiseach Eamon de Valera insisted that all royal acknowledgments should be sent via his government, as correct protocol. Buckingham Palace disagreed and even summoned Dev's man in London for a dressing down from the king's secretary, who lectured: 'Gentlemen don't open other gentlemen's letters!' The list of Irish institutions that wrote then included, unsurprisingly, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Old Comrades Association and the Royal St George Yacht Club, Kingstown. But condolences were also sent by the County Sligo Agricultural Society, the UCC Literary and Philosophical Society, the Guardians of the Coombe Lying-In Hospital and the Sandycove Bowling Association, among many others..."

"When the Republic was formally established, even George VI joined the congratulations, although privately appalled that 'Eire' was leaving the

'family'. Irish Anglicans, in Offaly and elsewhere, dutifully amended their prayer-books, and would henceforth plead for the President's health rather than the monarch's. But there was time for one final letter to the king, which left him deeply moved. It was from Mrs Doris Weir, wife of the rector in St Matthew's Church, Dublin 4, where a "valedictory" service for the old order had just been held. *'In our Parish Church, once the royal chapel of St Matthew, Irishtown, on Easter Sunday evening, we sang with sorrow, for it was the last time, the National Anthem'*, she wrote. *'It was a prayer from all our hearts—God Save the King. Legislation does not kill love and loyalty. We will forever continue to pray for you and for all your family, and to hold you in deep affection.'* ..."

This Empire loyalist incubus took a long time to slough off. Yet the Reform Movement chooses to ignore the arguments of two (mutually antagonistic) Southern Protestant men of letters as to why it had been so necessary to do so. In his 1962 autobiography, simply entitled *West Briton*, Brian Inglis, originally from Malahide, Co. Dublin, recalled the inter-War years:

"The emergence of the new Ireland grated mainly when it touched old sentiment. We hated to stand for the Irish National Anthem, *'The Soldiers' Song'*; at private dances we always asked the band to omit it, and play *'God Save the King'* instead; and whenever *'God Save the King'* was played in public—say, to greet the English army riders at the Horse Show—we sang it so lustily that the Government eventually had to put a ban on it. We relished the story of the Irish peer who, having deserted to the Irish side, tried to keep his hat on and remain seated at the Horse Show when *'God Save the King'* had been played; the hat had been knocked off his head, and he had been lifted to his feet by some loyalist in the row behind. But though we felt malicious over this side of the Free State's activities, it was from resentment rather than fear; we were convinced it was a passing phase—that the men in power would eventually come to their senses. Even when de Valera—de Valera, Grandmother called him—came into power in 1932 there was little alarm. His constitutional juggling did not make any visible difference; the Union Jack remained hanging in church, the prayers for the royal family continued; and the rector's sermon on the death of George V was so moving that a formidable parishioner who had refused to take up her usual pitch in charge of the games at the village fete, after a quarrel with him, relented on hearing it ..."

That an Irish journey still needed to be completed in the post-War years was brought home to Inglis (then the *Irish Times* Dáil correspondent) in a conversation he had in the early 1950s with his

counterpart from the *Irish Press*:

"Yeats had not simply been invoking ghosts when he spoke of the Protestant Anglo-Irish as no petty people: he had assumed that the breed would show its stamina by continuing to produce champions. Time had proved him wrong; there was, after all, a lack of stamina. Partly it was Protestants' own fault, for clinging to old Unionist ways. Going to the funeral of an *Irish Press* colleague, Jim McGuinness was startled to find a Union Jack hanging in the Church; it was only then he realized that his colleague had been a Protestant. This was a tribute, he argued, to the lack of religious bias in his paper; but not to the Church of Ireland which even after the Declaration of the Republic continued to display an alien flag. Nor was there any sign these habits would change."

Hubert Butler saw a more sinister strain in such Union Jackery, detecting unhealthy parallels between the Channel Islands and the Anglo-Irish *herrenvolk* tradition. In his essay *"The Invader Wore Slippers"*, published in the November 1950 issue of *The Bell*, Butler reflected:

"In Jersey there is an excellent museum of the occupation but it deals with the behavior of the Germans and not with that of the Jersey people themselves. And in the newspaper room of the British Museum I searched in vain for the Jersey newspapers which were published all through the war, and had to be content with the incomplete Guernsey file, the personal gift of a Guernsey man. The indifference of the British archivist to the history of the Channel Islands under occupation struck me as curious and significant. Has the national mind, like its individual prototype, some Freudian censor, which automatically suppresses what is shameful or embarrassing?"

"The public does not want a truthful account of occupation. It prefers to switch over from extremes of reprobation to extremes of condonation. You will see what I mean if you read the most authoritative book on the occupation of Jersey by R.C. Maugham. The publisher appears to be about four years behind the author. On the dust-cover the title, *Jersey under the Jackboot*, is illustrated by a big cruel boot crashing down on a helpless little green island and the blurb talks of the 'courage and fortitude of the islanders' and 'the misery, ignominy and privations that marked the trail of the Nazi hordes across the face of Europe'. But the author makes it plain that the islanders were subjected to a more subtle instrument of pressure than the jackboot. They were very liberally treated indeed. The small island parliaments and courts continued to function, provided all their measures were submitted to German sanction. It was by an ordinance of the Guernsey Royal Court that all talk against the Germans was made punishable; thus when the manager of Rich's stores was cheeky to a German

customer, it was before the Guernsey Court that he appeared. He got off by explaining that it was all a mistake, that the German officers had all been charming and his son-in-law was taking German lessons. Divine service with prayers for the Royal family and the Empire were permitted. So were cinemas and newspapers."

"In an organized society our dependence on the newspapers is abject. The readers of the *Guernsey Evening Post* were shocked and repelled no doubt to see articles by Goebbels and Lord Haw Haw, but not to the pitch of stopping their subscriptions. How else could they advertise their cocker spaniels and their lawn mowers or learn about the cricket results? Ultimately Haw-Haw became an accepted feature like the testimonials for digestive pills, and an edge of horror and revulsion was blunted. Here is the printed summary of events for an October day in the first year of occupation: *'Dog-biscuits made locally. Table-tennis League of Six Teams formed. German orders relating to measures against Jews published. Silver Wedding anniversary of Mr and Mrs W.J. Bird.'* The news of the deportation of the local shopkeepers is made more palatable by being sandwiched between sport and domestic pets and society gossip. 'Lady Ozanne had passed a fairly good night. Mr. Stephen Candon is as comfortable as can be expected.' There was Roller Skating at St. George's Hall and 'Laugh it Off' was still retained at the Regal and 'the bride looked charming in a white georgette frock'. Lubricated by familiar trivialities, the mind glided over what was the barbarous and terrible."

"The *Herrenvolk* philosophy judiciously applied, as it was in the Channel Islands, can be swallowed easily enough if you have not too sensitive a digestion and belong to a ruling race yourself. Flowerbeds were trampled, housemaids whistled to, garden tools unceremoniously borrowed, but formal apologies, printed receipts were often forthcoming if applied for. 'I must record', wrote Mr. Maugham, of the German soldiers in his garage, 'they did their best to give us as little trouble as possible, were perfectly polite and grateful for any slight help which they received from us', and the Procurator of Guernsey officially declared: 'The Germans behaved as good soldiers, *sans peur et sans reproche*'. Such behavior is plainly more formidable than the jackboot, we are hypnotized by the correctness of the invader into accepting invasion itself as correct. The solidarity of our resistance is undermined by carefully graded civilities, our social and radical hierarchies are respected. For example in Jersey there were Irish tomato pickers and Russian prisoners at whose expense German prestige was adroitly raised in British eyes ... When later on a feud broke out between the 'correct' occupation troops and some 'incorrect' naval ratings

who daubed the shop fronts of St. Helier with swastikas, the authorities blamed this breach of etiquette upon the Irish, and there were some gentlemanly headshakings between the German and English officials over these vulgar antics of an inferior breed ..."

"I think the Nazi policy in regard to Ireland would have been equally agile and ambiguous. The Celtic nationalist would, as in Brittany, have been regarded as a valuable tool for undermining a non-German hegemony, but of decidedly less value for the reconstruction of a German one. The nationalist would have been maneuvered, not kicked, of the privileged position ... I think when the success of the invasion had been assured, it would have emerged that the respectable Anglo-Irish *Herrenvolk* of Ulster and the Dublin suburbs would prove the more satisfactory accomplices in establishing the German hegemony. The Jersey treatment would have been applied to them, insofar as they were civilians. There would have been a dazzling display of 'correctness'. It is probable that at Greystones and Newtownards, as at St. Helier and at Peterport, divine service with prayers for the King and the British Empire would continue to be permitted in the Protestant churches. Certainly the inevitable bias of German correctness would have been towards the Anglo-Saxon, towards bridge and fox hunting, and away from the Irish, from ceildhes and hurley matches and language festivals. A master race will be at times indulgent to these regional enthusiasms but will not participate in them. Ultimately this bias would have led to a complete reversal of policy, more in keeping with the *Herrenvolk* philosophy. Lord Haw-Haw, an Irishman himself, seems to have been in closer sympathy with the Mosleyites than with the Irish republicans. The British Nazi-philosophes were romantic, traditional, imperialist. Irish separatism would have been incompatible with their Kiplingesque ideal of a merry, beer-drinking 'old' England, allied with Germany, grasping once more in her strong right hand the reins of empire and dealing out firm justice to the lesser breeds. I do not see how the Irish could have raised themselves permanently into the *Herrenvolk* class from which Czechs and Poles had been excluded ... Nazi philosophy was permeated with race snobbery and we are outwardly a rustic and unpretentious people. When a Nazi leader, Ribbentrop, visited Ireland, it was with a Unionist leader, Lord Londonderry, at Newtownards that he stayed. In the Nazi hierarchy of races the Irish would not I think have ranked high."

Four years later, in an article entitled "*Portrait of a Minority*" and published in the June 1954 issue of *The Bell*, Butler was even more acerbic:

"We Protestants of the Irish Republic are no longer very interesting to anyone but ourselves. A generation ago we were

regarded dramatically as imperialistic blood-suckers, or, by our admirers, as the last champions of civilization in an abandoned island. That is the way the Roman settler may have appeared to himself and others when the legions had departed from Britain and he was left alone with the tribes he had dispossessed ... So we are flattered, when, as recently, an American writer like Mr. Blanshard investigate our problems (Paul Blanshard, *The Irish Catholic Power*, London 1954). No Irish Protestant has hitherto questioned Mr. Blanshard's facts or could easily do so, for he has taken pains with his documentation. But facts, by themselves, are dispiriting things and it would be wrong if we appeared as a depressed or resentful community. A stranger would find us cheerful enough and on excellent terms with our Catholic neighbours."

"Inevitably, the more conscientious foreign investigator prefers newspaper files and libraries to human beings as a source of evidence. Mr. Blanshard tried both and I am not surprised if he found us appallingly unsatisfactory in the witness-box. Take Mrs. A., whose husband is an impoverished country gentleman; she is chatty and genial about our relations with the Catholic majority, but all her comments are marginal ... I can imagine how exasperating we must appear to any American investigator. Let us picture him asking leading questions of that typical Irish Protestant lady, Mrs. A. Though she is impeccuous, she has an air of assurance based on a long inheritance of privilege of which only the tradition now remains ... So instead he asks about jobs. Do Irish Protestants feel themselves discriminated against in the Republic?: 'Well, my two are very well placed, I'm thankful to say. Amy is in the Brussels branch of Thomas Cooks and Arthur is in the British Consulate in Cuba. Denis is still at school in Dublin and would like to find work in Ireland but the pensions are so poor and not knowing Irish would militate against him.' ..."

"And now Mrs. A. is launched on another equally beloved theme, the attempt to suppress the coronation film in Ireland: 'The manager of the Mayfair said he'd show it but then he got a threatening letter and the wretched creature got cold feet and refunded all the tickets. But thank goodness dear old Archdeacon Potts had a bit of pluck! He showed the film at the Diocesan Rooms. They were packed twice over

and I even saw Catholics there and we took enough at the door to get a new bathroom for the rectory. It's such nonsense. Why they would give their eyes to see it too, I know. My cook has stuck up a photograph of the Queen in her bedroom'. All quite true doubtless but misleading. And so too are Mrs. A.'s other views. Though all the cooks in Ireland plastered their walls with pictures of the royal family, the dominant sentiment of the Irish people is anti-monarchist, anti-imperialist ... For thirty years and more she [Mrs. A.] has grown used to the Cassandra-like mournings of her hybrid race; gradually they have become less shrill and have the familiar monotony of a lullaby."

Unlike the (no less arrogant) Protestant Republican Hubert Butler, who believed in letting her fall into a permanent sleep, the Reform Movement would wish to give the kiss-of-life to the long dead Mrs. A.. And yet, when offered an opening by the *Irish Times* in June, it funk'd the issue. The only letter to appear under the heading of "*Playing the 'national anthem'*" was of a very different tone. The *Irish Times* of June 11th published the following from Brian P. Ó Cinnéide:

"Frank McNally's story about the congregation at an Anglican church in Dublin singing the '*national anthem*' for the last time reminds me that at the start of the second World War, the congregation at the Anglican church in Howth asked the rector, Canon Armstrong, to play the '*National Anthem*' at the end of service each Sunday. The following Sunday the organist stuck up '*Amhrán na bhFiann*'. The good parishioners were outraged and demanded an explanation from the rector. He replied he had been asked to play the national anthem and had the '*national anthem of this country*' played. Many of his flock betook themselves to the next parish and did not return for many years. Canon Armstrong had strong left-wing views and was known at one time at the Red Rector."

And fair play to him!

Manus O'Riordan

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A Revolting Fantasy

As we go to print *The Lost Revolution: The Story Of The Official IRA And The Workers' Party*, written by Brian Hanley and Scott Millar has been published by Penguin Books. One would expect the sequence of events from August 1969 to the Arms Trials to be at the core of any account of the Officials. Unfortunately this book is written capriciously, verbosely, at great length, and with scant referencing. Hanley is now a lecturer at the Queen's University in Belfast, which is a great place for gossip. And the book is of the *Dubhairt bean liom go dubhairt bean lei* [a woman told me that a woman told her] kind.

The story of the Arms Crisis (pages 137-141) goes something like this. The Cabinet in August 1969 set up a Committee with £100,000 for "*humanitarian aid to nationalists, which Blaney and Haughey effectively controlled*". Cathal Goulding, IRA Chief-of-Staff, was told that arms were available for him in London. He met Haughey's brother there who told him money was available. Goulding said that at least £50,000 was needed. He was given £1,500 cash and told more would come. A Fianna Fail businessman in Dundalk said £150,000 would be available if the IRA stopped its activities in the South and gave up left-wing politics. Even before the trouble in Belfast, a Derry businessman, a friend of Blaney, had approached the IRA commander in S. Derry with an offer of equipment. In September Captain Kelly renewed the contact and offered Irish Army training for IRA Volunteers on the condition that independent IRA training ceased. In September 1969 IRA men from Derry were trained at Fort Dunree. Captain Kelly was then active in Belfast, offering arms and money, but he reported to Dublin that these were getting into the wrong hands, "*meaning elements hostile to the Southern government*". He preferred Tom Conaty, and Hugh Kennedy of Bord Baine who was PRO for the CCDC (Central Citizens' Defence Committee).

"Special Branch believed that Charles Haughey had met senior IRA men during September [1969] and promised that arms shipments to the North would not be interfered with, if the IRA cease their attacks in the Republic.

"A big load of arms was picked up at Dublin airport and taken to Goulding for distribution."

In late September there was a meeting in Lurgan to co-ordinate the Defence Committees which was attended by Ruairi Bradaigh without Goulding's knowledge. There was discontent with the IRA leadership. Jim Sullivan, Paddy Devlin

and Hugh Kennedy arrived at the meeting on the way to see a Dublin Minister. They went on to meet Haughey who—

"agreed that a bank account would be opened in Clones for funds for the defence committees. Money from the account was supposed to be paid weekly to the IRA and defence committees in Belfast. Realizing they were unlikely to receive their fair share, Goulding's supporters demanded access to the fund at gunpoint. During October 1969 a Belfast IRA officer (who supported the Dublin leadership) was able to withdraw £4,000 from the account for the defence committees, while the dissidents also drew money from the fund."

Captain Kelly made another visit and said that four members of the IRA leadership would have to go before more money was supplied (Goulding, Costello, Ryan and Johnston), and a separate Northern Command should be established. Captain Kelly later asked how they could expect a Government to give them arms to overthrow it. On October 30th the IRA went public on this at a press conference in Dublin, and exposed the "*plot to take over the civil rights movement*", naming Blaney, Haughey and Boland. The *United Irishman* reminded its readers that Fianna Fail had "*climbed to power on the backs of Republicans on the pretext that they were sincerely trying to reunite Ireland*".

Relations soured. But the promise of arms and money had an effect on new recruits in Belfast who only wanted "*to defend their areas, or indeed to gain revenge for the attacks on their localities*". And so the split happened.

Ten pages follow about the sorting out into Stickies and Provos. Then suddenly, out of the blue, without reference to what the Dublin Government had itself been doing in the meantime:

"The clandestine contacts between the Southern government and those who became the Provisionals were brought to public attention during 1970. By May Charles Haughey, Neil Blaney and Kevin Boland had either resigned or been sacked from government for their part in the scheme. Haughey, along with Military Intelligence officer Captain James Kelly, Belfast Provisional John Kelly and Flemish businessman Albert Luykx eventually faced trial for their part in the operation. A jury, unconvinced that the men had not been working with official sanction, and caught up in the wave of sympathy for Northern Catholics, acquitted the four in Dublin's High Court" (p152).

In fact Captain Kelly was acquitted because his military superior gave evidence that he acted under orders in his

efforts to import arms covertly from the Continent. The others were acquitted for lack of evidence against them. John Kelly became a Provo in the aftermath of the shambles caused by the prosecution. And nothing at all came to light at the Trials about collusion with Republicans etc.

The North was thrown into flux in August 1969, and the South was seriously disoriented. There is very little firm ground during the following years. There is what Lynch promised/threatened as the crisis in the North was approaching a climax. There is the fact that the IRA, redeploying for an ill-conceived version of class war, was ineffectual, and was discredited in the areas it failed to defend against an attack it helped to provoke. There is the fact of what the Irish Army was instructed by the Government to do during the nine months after August. And there is the evidence tested by cross-examination at the Arms Trials. If all of that is set aside as irrelevant by a historian, what is left to him but a kind of gossip shaped by hindsight?

The sorting out into Provos and Stickies was largely between those who experienced the events of August in the raw and were stimulated to action by them, and those who were caught up in a fanciful version of socialist revolution and could not deal coherently with those events. The Stickies have long since retreated from the fantasy that dominated their minds in 1969-82, and in recent years have been busily reshaping the Irish Labour Party into a Business Party of the middle class.

The B&ICO appears here and there in Hanley's story of the Stickies. The way it appears enables us to assess the quality of the general narrative.

It tells us (p62) that Liam Walsh, Phil Flynn, Frank Keane, Eamon McCann, Michael Farrell and Brendan Clifford were members of the Irish Communist Group, formed in the mid-1960s. Of these six only one was unquestionably a member. And, even by stretching a point, only two others could be included.

There is a chapter called *A New Revolution*, in which the Housing agitation in Dublin and Cork is introduced. This agitation certainly led to something new in the public life of the 26 Counties—to a Hunger Strike on a social issue, which brought traffic in central Dublin to a standstill, spoiled the half-century commemoration of the Declaration of Independence by a smug bourgeoisie, led to the appearance of the Communist leader of the agitation on Radio Eireann to put his case, and brought about a spate of *Capital Study Groups* on Dublin housing estates.

Hanley says that Denis and Mary Dennehy, "*living in roadside accommodation*" became "*key activists*". Proinnsias De Rossa was the "*prime mover*". And "*the*

Irish Communist Organisation were also involved" (p89). Dennehy's name does not appear in the Index.

The next Chapter, entitled *1969: Backlash*, begins with this paragraph:

"The year 1969 began dramatically. The Peoples Democracy march from Belfast to Derry was under way, encountering opposition in several towns before being ambushed at Burntollet Bridge... This news sparked off major rioting in the Bogside and barricades went up along with the newly painted slogan: 'You are now entering Free Derry'. Meanwhile housing activists were squatting with a family of five in Derry's Guildhall. A few days later in Dublin 1000 attended a meeting in the Mansion House to protest against the Criminal Justice Bill. Speakers warned against giving Fianna Fail the same powers as those of the Unionist government in the North. The following weekend 10,000 joined in a civil rights march in Newry and rioting followed that saw seven RUC vehicles destroyed. In Dublin protesters blocked off traffic outside the GPO to highlight the case of Dennis Dennehy, jailed and on hunger strike for squatting with his family. A message from the Guildhall occupiers was read out proclaiming that 'the struggle is the same North and South'. Running battles on O'Connell Bridge between the Gardai and protesters followed another 2,000 DHAC Committee march... In Cork housing demonstrators disrupted a Fianna Fail dinner at which the Taoiseach Jack Lynch was the guest... In Dublin veteran Joe Clarke was escorted from a government ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the First Dail after he interrupted a speech by President De Valera raising the Dennehy case..." (p108-9).

The suggestion is that all of this was brought about by the new socially-concerned line of the IRA. In fact the Dublin housing agitation was conducted by the ICO, and the events referred to by Hanley were conceived, planned and implemented by Dennis Dennehy. There were Republicans involved in the agitation but the Republican leadership was marginalised when Dennehy got a resolution adopted that only homeless people were eligible for membership of the executive committee directing the agitation. He was particularly concerned that the Wolfe Tone Society, which he saw as a pretentious part of the bourgeoisie, should be excluded from influence on the agitation, both because it was part of the housing problem, and it would subordinate the agitation to an ulterior purpose.

While friendly relations were maintained with the Derry housing agitation, it was understood that the struggle was *not* the same in the two cities. In Dublin it was a straight conflict with a capitalist class and Government, with no national complications, while in Derry there were complicating intermediate layers of class

and government between the homeless workers and the State.

The ICO was clear that the Housing question was not one on which the capitalist system could be brought down. It could be resolved, or considerably alleviated, within the system. The object of the agitation was to throw a scare into the complacent rulers of the State, which would stimulate them to deal with a housing situation which was scandalous even by bourgeois terms, and Dennehy explained this in a number of pamphlets.

He had carefully arranged for prosecution and conviction beforehand, making it impossible for the Court to let him off with a caution, and timing things so that he would be some weeks into a hunger strike in prison when the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was being commemorated, and old Republican reflexes could be re-activated against the complacent bourgeoisie of the Republic.

The agitation was conducted with a view to succeeding in its limited object. It had little in common with Republican agitations. And no Republican agitation was conducted with anything like the success of this housing agitation.

Ruling circles were disconcerted by the agitation. They lacked the informal means of handling it which competent ruling circles in a democracy usually have to hand, and Dennis did what he could to make it hard for them. Eventually some Quakers came to their aid, the Hunger Strike was ended, and it was arranged that Dennis should have the use of a caravan in Mountjoy Square.

During that Spring, in the months leading up to the major breakdown in the North, Dennis was a kind of Dublin folk-hero. When he was interviewed on Radio Eireann he refused to appear as anything but a Communist. For a couple of years before this the ICO made a practice of selling its magazine at the GPO, giving it the title *The Irish Communist* so that there could be no doubt about what it was. After an initial attempt at intimidation, the Garda stopped interfering with the public selling but informal harrassment continued. The events of January 1969, and what followed from them, transformed the public atmosphere, and established a *de facto* right of Communists to public existence.

Associated with the ICO in 1968-9 was a fearless group of Trinity radicals called The Internationalists, who had demonstrated against a state visit by the King of the Belgians, and who went on mission around the country, like Jacobins in France in 1792, with the purpose of livening things up. Many of them became members of the ICO.

What was done by the ICO and The Internationalists was done independently of the IRA, and without reference to it. And, insofar as it is sensible to talk of there being a revolutionary atmosphere in

the State in 1968-9, it was caused by the public agitational activity of the ICO and the Internationalists, rather than by the occasional physical force intervention by the IRA in a strike, or the intimidation of a German farmer.

(The most effective Republican action of those years was the attack on a British warship on a courtesy visit by Richard Behal—for which Behal was courtmartialled and deported by the IRA.)

The next mention of the ICO is in connection with the 'National Liberation Front' formed, or at least projected, during the Winter of 1969-70 by the section of the IRA/Sinn Fein that was declaring itself to be the Official, and only authentic, Republican organisation. The NLF was to be a broad grouping under Official hegemony:

"Some groups were beyond the pale of the proposed NLF. The Irish Communist Organisation, which had adherents in Dublin and Belfast, was dismissive of Sinn Fein's leftism. DHAC activist Dennis Dennehy was one of its members..." (p117).

As we recall it, the term 'National Liberation' was used by the Officials as an indicator of Marxist orientation for the purpose of suggesting that the military activity which they were preparing to engage in in the North was different in kind from what the new Republican body, the Provos, were preparing to do. The Stickies were the National Liberationists, the Provos were Nationalists and were, it was suggested, a kind of sub-group of Fianna Fail.

We could see no difference in concept between National Liberation and Nationalism. It seemed to us that the Officials had lost themselves in their new political jargon and had entered into a fantasy world.

We had a shared experience with Provos—that is with people who would become Provos as a consequence of their experience—in the defence of the Falls area in August 1969. Early in 1970 we had a discussion with some leaders of the Provo movement in Belfast, as it was taking definite shape, about what should be done. By then we were notorious as 'the two-nationists'. This did not seem to matter to the Provos, who knew what we had done in August and who also had direct experience of social realities in Belfast. It was official nationalist Ireland in all its varieties (including the Officials) who responded hysterically, or by going into denial, to the suggestion that the Ulster Protestants were a stubborn community with a will of their own.

We never had any discussion with the Officials about what should be done. As soon as we published 'the two nations' we were anathema to them, and judging by their statements we concluded that they had entered a parallel universe from which they saw the real world through a series of distorting lenses.

Ireland And The two World Wars

This letter was submitted to the *Irish Times* on 6th September, but was not published

The Irish Times on Friday (Sept. 4) carried two separate but not unconnected commentaries on Ireland and the two world wars.

'Back Pages' reprinted a story from 4 September 1939 following France and Britain's declaration of war on Germany. The report related comments by Dubliners that reflected a sceptical and non-committal attitude to what the war might be about, concluding: "*Dear Dublin! London, Paris, Berlin and Warsaw are living in fear and terrible dread ... but Dublin ... remains just the same "aisy-going" Dublin.*"

'Book of the Day' featured a review by Oliver Fallon of *Belfast Boys* by Richard Grayson headed 'How unionists and nationalists fought side by side in the first World War'. Fallon recounts how the rank and file of the UVF enlisted in huge numbers in the Ulster Regiments of the British Army, while Belfast nationalists who enlisted were transported south and enrolled in the Connaught Rangers, the Leinsters etc.

While enlisting in the same army this was hardly fighting "side-by-side", but Fallon seems oblivious to the significance of this. They did not fight "side by side" because they were fighting for mutually incompatible aims: the unionist volunteers to retain the union and prevent Home Rule, the nationalist volunteers in the belief that they were fighting to ensure it was implemented.

Nationalists responded in great numbers to the calls by Redmond, Devlin and Kettle to support Britain's "war for civilisation" and ensure Home Rule for Ireland. Britain, it was declared, was fighting for democracy and the "freedom of small nations" against what Kettle called "the philosophy of evil Nietzscheanism". Britain's military response to the outcome of the 1918 election in Ireland showed the hollowness of those claims, obvious for everyone to see.

Is it any wonder that Dubliners responded in 1939 to the start of another war for democracy and small nations with some scepticism?

Philip O'Connor

"The People's Democracy was initially critical of the Officials for concentrating too much on the national question to the detriment of uniting Catholic and Protestant workers... After internment, the PD line shifted dramatically to support for the Provisionals armed campaign and criticism of NICRA's 'reformism'. PD began to argue that the Protestants represented a reactionary colonizing bloc, like the French in Algeria. By the late 1971 the fracture was complete, with the PD pulling out of NICRA and helping to establish the Provisional-supporting Northern Resistance Movement.

"The much smaller ICO was also challenging Official policies, taking the view that responsibility for the Northern conflict lay 'at the door of the Southern ruling class' and that the choice was between a 'secular social democratic British state' and the 'reactionary 26 county Catholic state'. Claiming to be applying Stalin's writings to the national question the group now argued that there were two historic nations in Ireland—Protestant and Catholic—each entitled to self-determination. The organisation accordingly changed its name to the B&ICO. They argued that the Officials were 'chiefly responsible' for the Troubles, having led NICRA into 'a policy of sectarian confrontation'.

"Some Official strategists also delved into Marxist ideas on cultural identity and revolutionary theory, but came to different conclusions from BICO" (p207-8).

The People's Democracy saw itself as operating beyond traditional, or established, political structures and divisions. When it came up against those structures as immovable obstacles, it began to fragment. Some of its members went to the B&ICO and others to the Provisionals, these being the two organisations whose positions corresponded with experienced reality. Some retreated to private life. We can think of only one who possibly went from the PDs to the Stickies, and he was done in by the Stickies in their war on the IRSP.

The picture of the PDs, who were a 1969-70 movement, moving *en bloc* to the Provos is false.

The assertion that the ICO "*was also challenging Official policies*" with the view that "*responsibility for the Northern conflict lay 'at the door of the Southern ruling class'...*" etc. is strange. The Republican leaders in the Autumn of 1969, who became the Official Republicans a few months later, were strongly of the opinion that responsibility for the North lay with the Southern ruling class. They demanded an arming of the people by the state so that the North could be dealt with, and expressed willingness to collaborate with the Government for this purpose.

The ICO did not challenge "*Official policies*" particularly. It challenged a position that was common to the whole

spectrum of 26 County politics. It had no special relationship with the Republican leaders and had been in sharp disagreement with them on a range of issues before August 1969, particularly with regard to opinions and procedures which they were learning from the British Communist Party through Desmond Greaves.

The ICO did not "*claim to be applying Stalin's writings*" in discovering that the Protestant/Catholic conflict was national in character. The fact of national conflict was plainly evident in the Northern situation. Advanced theory was needed to conceal it rather than to discover it. But advanced theory was rife at the time, and commonsense was at a discount. The ICO therefore set out the 'two nations' in Marxist terms. But, since the national question was a bourgeois as much as a socialist question, it also set out its view in bourgeois terms. The classical Marxist work on the national question was Stalin's. The classical bourgeois work was Ernest Renan's. Renan, who had observed the Paris Commune, was actively Anti-Communist. The ICO cited both Stalin and Renan in its setting-out of the Two Nations view.

The Official strategist who "*delved into Marxist ideas on cultural identity*" and disagreed with the ICO was Eoin O Murchu. Hanley gives no hint of O Murchu's argument against the ICO position and we do not recall it. O Murchu later left the Stickies for the Communist

Party, which was a move towards commonsense, and he has for many years been one of the better journalists in the Southern media.

Hanley gives what we take to be quotations from ICO publications, but gives no reference for them. Although the quotations are possibly accurate, there is no way of checking them. This is the academic procedure used by Hanley throughout.

The Officials launched the National Liberation War in their parallel universe. It was a series of disasters and was called off (sort of) after a couple of years, and Stickie influence on the media, which became very strong, all but removed it from the historical record. The National Liberation War was followed by a kind of Civil War in which the Stickies attempted to exterminate Seamus Costello's IRSP.

When the Officials had called off their own war (at least officially) they made some furtive contacts with individuals in the UVF, the terrorist group fostered by a section of the Unionist Party in its conflict with Captain O'Neill. They apparently convinced themselves that these personal meetings were the beginnings of class unity which would over-ride the Unionist/Nationalist conflict. That belief was quickly proved to be a delusion.

Hanley deals with the Sunningdale development in a paragraph of 17 lines:

"A powerful reminder of the strength of a mobilised Protestant working class

came in May 1974. Since the beginning of the year, after agreement at a conference at Sunningdale, some Unionists, the SDLP and the cross-community (but mainly middle class) Alliance Party had been operating a power-sharing government. In opposition to this arrangement, many grassroots unionists, the DUP, Vanguard and the Orange Order had come together under the umbrella of the Ulster Unionist Council. This group both reflected and fuelled widespread Protestant unease with the "Irish Dimension" of the Sunningdale Agreement. Behind-the-scenes contacts between the UUUC, loyalist trade unionists and paramilitaries culminated in a general strike organized by the newly created Ulster Workers' Council. Two days into the stoppage, on 17 May, UVF car bombs in Dublin and Monaghan killed 33 people. After thirteen days, with all essential services threatened with closure and loyalist paramilitaries openly on the streets, the power-sharing Assembly collapsed" (p228).

A second paragraph says that the Officials were willing to co-operate with the Provos in defence against the Protestants during the Strike. And that is all that is said about the entire Sunningdale affair, from the six-part negotiations in the Fall of 1973 which led to the setting up of the power-sharing Executive, to the destruction of the Executive by the Secretary of State in May 1974. We are not told how the Officials viewed the unprecedented Protestant/Catholic, Unionist/Nationalist negotiations at Sunningdale. We are not told about the confidence trick performed by the Dublin Fine Gael/Labour Coalition in the negotiations, with Garret FitzGerald and Conor Cruise O'Brien as the chief negotiators. Tricky wording in the Agreement gave Unionist opinion to understand that it had gained Southern recognition that the North was legitimately part of the UK, as a *quid pro quo* for Power-Sharing and participation in a Council of Ireland. We are not told that Kevin Boland challenged the Constitutional legality of recognising the legitimacy of the North as part of the UK in court, and that the Coalition met the challenge by showing that it had in fact not recognised the North as a legitimate part of the UK; that the Constitutional claim of sovereignty remained intact for any future Government to act upon; that its signature to the Agreement said no more than that it was not its policy to enforce the claim. We are not told that the High Court pleading of the Dublin Coalition was published in the Unionist papers in Belfast, and that Unionist opinion began to turn powerfully against the Council of Ireland dimension of the Agreement.

We supported the Agreement without concern about whether it was middle class or not. Hanley comments that the Alliance Party was mainly middle class. At Sunningdale, under the leadership of Oliver Napier, it performed a useful mediating

function. If it had proved to be an effective cross-community party in the long run, its effectiveness would in our view have been of far greater importance than its middle-classness. It did not prove to be effective. The bulk of the Catholic middle class stayed with the SDLP and the Protestants with the UUP.

We supported the Sunningdale Agreement. In March 1974, after the Dublin Court action, we contacted the leadership of the SDLP with a view to discussing how the power-sharing Executive might be saved against the wave of hostility set off in the Unionist community by the Dublin Court pleadings. Our apprehensions were brushed aside, and we were told we were people of no consequence. But we were a thoroughly cross-community body, and we knew what was going on in the Protestant community, which the SDLP did not. And the Officials had no more than personal contact with a couple of eccentric Loyalist paramilitaries.

Strike notice was published in the Unionist papers in March 1974. It said that, unless the establishment of the Council of Ireland was deferred, or an election to the devolved Assembly was held for the purpose of ratifying it, there would be a "*Constitutional stoppage*" in May.

The SDLP and the Dublin Coalition decided to carry on regardless. They refused to negotiate on the Council of Ireland with a view to preserving power-sharing. The Strike began, as advertised, in mid-May. It was unofficial, condemned by the Union leaders, and organised by the shop stewards. The successful operations of the policy of Greaves and the Communist Party had made the Union leadership unrepresentative of the Union membership. The leader of the British TUC led a strike-breaking back-to-work march which was a complete failure. The SDLP Ministers in the Government described the Strike as a Fascist insurrection, and the Secretary of State, Labour's Merlyn Rees, went along with that view. The policy of the Government, both real and devolved, was to precipitate chaos in the hope of turning public opinion against the strikers. The B&ICO, when it saw that the Strike was a genuine working class event and not a repetition of the attempted Vanguard disruptions, and when the Strike began to be denounced in hysterical terms as Fascism, began to issue Strike Bulletins to explain from day to day what the Government was trying to do and how it might be countered. These Bulletins had mass circulation during the critical period.

When the Strike held firm, and was not provoked into going beyond its initial demand, which was as democratic as anything could be in a Constitutional setup that was undemocratic, the Government position became unsustainable. The Protestant community—all classes—

became actively supportive of the Strike. It became a national event, as Strikes in nationalist Ireland had been in the War of Independence. The ground fell away from the Unionist Party in the devolved Government, and Brian Faulkner resigned the Prime Ministership. The Deputy Prime Minister—Gerry Fitt, leader of the SDLP—declared himself willing to be Prime Minister and hold the line against Fascism. But in the 'Northern Ireland state' it is always another body that decides what to do. The Secretary of State of the actual State, Merlyn Rees, decided at that juncture to scrap the entire Sunningdale structure, which had not been a Strike demand. The UWC had never been negotiated with on its actual Strike demand.

The *de facto* group of shop-floor Trade Unionists, which called the Strike and conducted it, then dissolved and disappeared from the scene. The Loyalist paramilitary groups attached themselves to the Strike. Earlier and later attempts by them to bring about mass protests were ineffectual episodes of rowdiness. But the Stickies could only relate to the Loyalist paramilitaries or terrorists. The actual organised working class of the Protestant community was always beyond their horizon, no matter how socialist they purported to be.

The fundamental parting of the ways between the Stickies and the ICO occurred in August-September 1969 when the ICO, which was at the source of the agitational turmoil in Dublin earlier that year, prevented the agitation from being harnessed to the resurgent Anti-Partitionism. By May 1974 the theoretical ground of difference between the ICO and the Stickies had become a practical abyss.

Two pages after his brief reference to the UWC Strike, Hanley writes:

"During this period the Officials identified a new source of funding. The Inland Revenue allowed building contractors to settle their tax affairs at the end of the year. Rather than pay tax on a weekly basis the subcontractors were granted tax exemption certificates, which enabled the main contractor to pay in gross without income tax being deducted... If false certificates were produced then contractors could present a figure to the authorities and pay a percentage to the OIRA. An anarchist group and BICO were recruited to help print the first false certificates" (p230).

The notion that in 1974 BICO was financed by the Stickies through the business of Inland Revenue fraud is the most ludicrous of the suggestions we have heard about how BICO is financed.

BICO decided at the outset that it would be beholden to nobody. The skills on which modern society depends are in the working class, but are usually only set in motion commercially by the profit motive. The B&ICO was a group of workers who

decided to apply their skills directly in publishing. This kind of socialist self-help was unheard of then, and it has not become more common. The scale of publishing done would cost a fortune if done commercially, and it is incredible to the modern socialist that it should be done in any other way. Various suggestions have been made about the secret source of the wealth that made the publishing possible. When the Two Nations view was published it was obvious to some that the source was the Orange Order. It was obvious to others, when BICO supported NATO as a defence force, that the source was the CIA. But the socialists who were against NATO, when it was a West European defence force, mostly went over to supporting it when it became an aggressive force eager to operate destructively anywhere in the world, while BICO turned against it, and continued publishing, and on an increasing scale. So a new secret patron is needed. But, of all the suggestions of who it might be, the Stickies are the most outlandish.

In 1974 the Officials held a two-week Anti-Imperialist Festival in Belfast and in Dublin. Matt Merrigan, Padraig O Snodaigh and John De Courcy Ireland spoke at it.

"However, not all leftists were happy with the event. The B&ICO picketed Liberty Hall, declaring Official Sinn Fein was a "sectarian nationalist body", while the Provos organised their own lecture for festival delegates. Despite their animosity to the Officials, BICO's theories were having an impact. The group's theoretical literature was eagerly read by many activists, particularly those attached to the Industrial Department. John Mac Manus recalled BICO as "tremendous intellectually, lobbying bombs into our assumptions about things; we opposed them very often but at the same time a lot of their ideas became our currency as well"..." (p279).

What seems to be a quote from a BICO publication in this passage is again unreferenced.

The B&ICO certainly disagreed with the Officials, took their arguments apart, and made it clear that their activity in furthering a revolution fantasy had nothing but nuisance value in the North. If that is to be described as "animosity", so be it. But it is animosity of an essentially different kind from that directed by the Officials at the B&ICO, and also at others, including the People's Democracy.

Hanley's book seems to have been constructed mostly from interviews with Officials. If they say in retrospect, after the collapse of their fantasy, that they were influenced by BICO publications, then they say it. But at the time they acknowledged no debt to BICO influence, and we could see no sign that we had

influenced them, or that they wanted to do anything with us but get rid of us.

It may be that some Stickies came to realise that what they denounced us for saying about the Ulster Protestants in 1969 was not a figment of the imagination, or a product of Orange patronage—that, if put under extreme nationalist pressure they would resist with the stubbornness of a durable nationality. When they went to war their ideology began to break up against the facts of life. But, if they began to see that BICO had it right, that led to no lessening of hostility against BICO. The threats continued into the 1990s. The last one we recall was issued by a person of considerable importance who in his public relations facade has a neat line of patter on the evil of terrorism of every sort and description.

And so on to page 340:

"*The Irish Industrial Revolution* redefined SFWP [Sinn Fein, Workers' Party] ideology. Many members, particularly those attached to the Industrial Department and the paramilitary structure, eagerly adopted its thesis. As one activist recalls, 'The *Industrial Revolution* was our Bible, it won people over'. The brutal simplicity of its core demand, for rapid industrialization through central planning, showed a debt to Stalin. It also drew liberally on the output of the B&ICO..."

As we took little heed of it at the time, and do not have a copy to hand, we cannot comment.

"Historians Henry Patterson and Paul Bew, who had been influenced by BICO's analysis during the early 1970s, argued that the British state could play a progressive role in Northern politics and that the Irish left had consistently misunderstood the nature of working-class unionism: there was "nothing inherently reactionary about the Protestant working class or, for that matter, a national frontier which puts Protestants in a numerical majority". Patterson had been sounded by Smullen to write a Northern section for *The Irish Industrial Revolution*, and was drawn into closer contact with the party. Eventually both he and Bew joined, deciding that the Clubs were the "only significant group on the left with decent politics"..." (p395: The Clubs were Republican Clubs The Workers' Party, one of the many names taken by the Officials over the decades. It is not clear from the cryptic referencing if the first quotation within the passage is attributed to BICO. We are told on page 513 that Patterson was a member of the Ard Comhairle when he wrote his book *The Politics Of Illusion*, published in 1989, and it is suggested that the book was written in collabor-

ation with Goulding, Garland and other leaders. One presumes this information is accurate as one of the acknowledged sources of the book is an Interview with Patterson).

Lord Bew and Professor Patterson were very much around BICO in Belfast from 1970 to 1972. They set themselves very much apart from it thereafter. The ICO in the first instance hoped that nationalist Ireland would adopt a 'two nations' approach to the Ulster Protestants with a view to inaugurating a process of *rapprochement*. That view was categorically rejected by Jack Lynch within weeks of being proposed, and Fine Gael and Labour also rejected it. We then argued that the UK, as a multi-national state of long standing, was better fitted to contain and ameliorate the national conflict within the 6 Counties than the Free State was. Then we saw that the North was excluded from the vital element in the British State which made it functionally multi-national—the party system around which it had been shaped historically. We then embarked on an attempt to bring the North within the party-politics of British democracy. When we next encountered Bew and Patterson they were utterly hostile, indeed venomously so, especially with regard to this matter of the party politics and the democracy of the state. We cannot say if it was because of this that they parted company with us suddenly and comprehensively, but it happened at the time when we concluded that exclusion from the party-political system of the democracy of the state was effective exclusion from the democracy.

The British State, when partitioning Ireland, gave itself a special form in the North which has been an insuperable obstacle to democratic development and a generator of communal antagonism.

PS Hanley says on page 206 that, when the ICO adopted the Two Nations position, "*The organization accordingly changed its name to the British and Irish Communist Organisation*". The change of name had nothing to do with the Two Nations. It had to do with what we saw as a relapse of the 26 Counties into a very weak neo-colonial dependency on Britain, so that the determining socio-political realities would only be visible from a British & Irish vantage point. This was explained at the time in a policy document. In those days the Irish budget was a follow-on from the British budget. Irish money was British money. A rate of exchange between the two was scarcely imaginable. And Ireland had surrendered itself into the British world market. The great change that occurred subsequently was based on Irish entry into the protected European market, combined with the political will of Charles Haughey in the exercise of political power. ■

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

STATISTICS

"You can't manage what you can't measure" is deemed to be basic ideology in Management Schools. Governments have always wanted to know the size of their populations, the size of their armies and how much taxes they could extract from the land and from the peoples which they governed. Statistics are required—often as an end in themselves or sometimes to boast about and sometimes to teach about in the ivory towers of universities and colleges of further education. (Further than what?) Most statistics are perhaps interesting but practically-speaking useless. And there is a lot of truth in the saying about "*lies, damned lies and statistics*". It is easy to measure a metre exactly. It is less easy to be exact about precisely where a kilometre ends. If two engineers each measure out a kilometre it is most unlikely for the two kilometres to end exactly in the same spot. And so most of these sorts of measurements are approximations. Close, but approximations nevertheless. Consider the population of Lagos, Nigeria? The population is now reckoned to be eighteen million persons. The UN estimates that by next year the Lagos population will be twenty million and that by 2015, Lagos will be the third largest (most populous?) city in the world after Tokyo and Mumbai. These are guesses of course, and seem irrelevant when Babatunde Fashola has stated he is rebuilding Lagos to be a city of forty million people. In truth, nobody knows the population numbers of Lagos and in practice Governor Fashola really means "*very big*" or "*about double*". And so can we conclude that all the effort—and there is a lot of costly effort—to count the population of Lagos, or indeed every other city, is unnecessary and a waste of resources? I think we can say that.

Censuses of populations are all very interesting but they are nothing other than guesswork and are not acted upon by Governments to any meaningful extent. The latest Census in Ireland is well known to be very unreliable because of all the newly inhabited apartment blocks to which, in many cases, the census-takers could not gain admission. How many people died in the Great Hunger or in the Great War? No one knows exactly or even approximately. The business of measuring Gross Domestic Product—GDP—which Governments are very fond of, is ridiculously unreliable and yet it continues to be the bedrock on which careers in economics and in financial journalism are founded.

China, I have been maintaining for the past fifty years, or more, has always been the largest economy in the world. By any commonsense standard this has been so. China maintains about four times, at least, the population of the USA. It has enormous physical and mineral resources. It has always had huge visible wealth in gold, precious stones, art, anything you care to mention. You don't need to measure it. It is visibly there. Travellers to the USA and China have reported that the Chinese people are mostly visibly happier than the people seen in the USA. And yet, financial journalists and commentators insist on using the discredited GDP to compare the relative prosperity of states. GDP does not include and is unable to measure unpaid care provided by a society to its children and to its elderly. Quite obviously a society is more prosperous where such care is enabled to be provided by family members or by neighbours to each other. But, if a society cannot do this but provides such care in paid childcare and retirement homes, the money value is added to the GDP while that society is actually unhappier and worse off! Likewise, environmental degradation, such as felling forests and flooding farmland to build hydro-electric schemes, are added on to GDP but the state is actually poorer.

In Ireland's Celtic Tiger era, the GDP was hugely boosted by the construction of vast offices, warehouses, apartment blocks, shopping malls and estates of suburban housing. All at grossly inflated values. The GDP too was grossly inflated which misled politicians, bureaucrats, developers and bankers who, as a direct result of a false GDP, continued like lemmings to rush forwards (as they thought). And over the edge of the cliff into free-fall they went! The economy is still falling and no one knows when the dust will eventually settle. The 1929 recession took forty years and a World War before the economy in Ireland began to recover. When the Irish economy does settle down, if it does, it is never going to be desirable to get back to the levels of greed and corruption experienced in the years 1995—2008. It is not possible for some states to have great wealth without other states suffering great deprivation.

Economic growth is pursued by politicians and their economic advisors as a sort of substitute for real societal welfare and happiness and wellbeing. Increase in GDP is their substitute for God (whom they think has been abolished). Pursuit of the false god of GDP had led our politicians to where society is today. GDP is a false measurement. We did not know there we were going and indeed we still do not know where we are going. Then, like children caught out in the dark forest, the politicians panicked and they caught the first hands put out to them by the Bankers

and under pressure from the Developers the politicians found their MAMA in the forest.

NAMA

NAMA is an example of the Christopher Columbus syndrome. "*He didn't know where he was going and when he got there he didn't know where he was*". But at least he was able to find his way back again to Spain after not discovering the USA. Our politicians, of all parties, haven't a clue where they are now. They don't know how they got here and they don't know how to get back to prosperity (for us, if not for them!) again.

Firstly, you have got to get the terminology right. And they didn't last year. A billion is one thousand million (9 noughts) in the USA, while a billion in Europe and among the international scientific community has always been one million millions (12 noughts). Now, in the past few months, the European financial community has settled for the nine nought billion.

Secondly, you have to have actual lists of loans given out, the actual names of borrowers and the amounts due by each borrower, and the security given in the lending bank by each of the borrowers and the value of that security.

Thirdly, an assessment must be made of the amount and circumstances of each loan made by the banks. *A big question must be—was fraud on the Bank and on its shareholders involved in some or many of these loans?* Anglo Irish Bank grew, seemingly without any regard for normal banking practices. Quite clearly this bank was not regulated. Did Anglo-Irish Bank lend recklessly and perhaps fraudulently to regulators—and to politicians so as to escape scrutiny by the regulators like the Central Bank and the Financial Regulator? The rumours around Dublin suggest that the Bank did have the regulators turning a blind eye to its affairs. It is also suggested that it is the self-interest of many politicians and regulators which is served by having their borrowings transferred to NAMA to be buried and covered up and eventually forgotten.

NAMA is obviously a political creature. *There is no transparency. Where the taxpayer is at risk, which the taxpayer certainly is here, there is no reason why the identity of the bad borrowers of the bad loans are not revealed openly to the tax-paying public.* What right is there to privacy where the public money is being spent?

NAMA is saving the bad borrowers from being sued in open Court. Is that not enough privilege for the bad borrowers? Why should they have a right to privacy also when, in effect, they are taking our money?

It does not stack up but we are all taking it lying down! NAMA is not about saving

the banks. It is about saving the bad borrowers! It is a "snow job" as they say in the USA. A cover-up and if we take it as per usual—well we deserve such contempt.

LISBON TREATY

Truly enormous sums of money were pumped into the Yes campaign, especially becoming a financial avalanche in the week before the 2nd October 2009, referendum-day. Reporters and commentators in the print media, on radio and on TV were pumping out the Yes message almost to the exclusion of everything else. No real reasons were given for voting Yes—just statements like "*We need Europe*" and "*We need friends in Brussels*" and even non-sequiturs such as "*Yes to jobs*" or "*Yes to Europe*". It seemed, from the publicity, that EUROPE is seen as 'over there' i.e. not here. At a pro-Yes conference sponsored by *Alliance Francaise*—French Government funding—there was a prize competition organised by European Irish.com and the first prize was "*2 tickets to Europe*"!

I am not sure if this stacks up or not.

Michael Stack. (c)

John Curtin

John Curtin, (1885 to 1945) was born into a turbulent period in the history of Australia. He was a mere school-boy during the early struggles to establish a democratic socialist movement in this country and would also have been fully aware of the struggles to transform the six squabbling British colonies into a democratic Federal State. Curtin first came to prominence as a political activist in the Victorian Socialist Party, but eventually became involved through his Trade Union activity with the Australian Labor Party, which appeared to be attracting strong support from the majority of working people. The Victorian Socialist Party had become bogged down in internal factional disputes.

When Andrew Fisher resigned as Labor Prime Minister in 1915 he was replaced by Billy Hughes, also with a Trade Union background. While Fisher had been a staunch supporter of Britain's imperialist world war, Hughes was determined to reverse the sharp drop in volunteers for military service, brought about by the evidence of the heavy losses being suffered through death and injuries by the Australian military in Europe. Hughes saw conscription as the only solution for the dearth of recruits, an idea strongly opposed by a large numbers of the ALP members.

Hughes's main opponent was John

Curtin, President of the Anti-Conscription Congress of Australian Trade Unions and he had Curtin arrested and jailed for failing to register for military service. Within days Curtin was acquitted and released while Hughes was expelled from the ALP.

Relying on ALP traitors and conservative politicians Hughes was able to retain his position as PM, with a slim majority. Rather than risk defeat in Parliament, Hughes called a referendum which he lost by the narrow margin of 51% of the votes against to 49% in favour. This loss was confirmed when a majority of voters in three states, NSW, Queensland and South Australia, voted against conscription. The anti-conscription vote was enhanced by the action of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix, who rallied the Catholic vote against conscription. Also active in the "No" campaign were the numerous Irish people in Australia. Hughes held a second referendum in 1917 but lost that one too by an even bigger margin.

At this stage Curtin decided to move to Western Australia where the ALP had lost every seat in Parliament. He also married his long time fiancé and settled into suburban life in Fremantle. He was appointed Editor of the newspaper owned by the West Australian branch of the Australian Workers' Union and rose to prominence in the leadership of the W.A. Branch of the ALP. He was persuaded to stand for the Federal seat of Fremantle but lost on his first attempt. He won the Fremantle seat in 1928 and held the seat with one short interruption until his death in 1945.

Curtin was elected as a delegate to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) where he met the leaders of European Socialism. He appears to have altered his ideas on how best to benefit the working class and appears to have adopted the works of John Maynard Keynes as opposed to those of V. I. Lenin, the Russian leader.

Although he was widely regarded as an excellent speaker and a competent leader, Curtin was not offered a Cabinet position in the Labor Government of James Scullin (1929-1932). The reason for his exclusion is said to have been Scullin's dislike of non-Catholics. Curtin was an atheist.

It was during Scullin's period as Prime Minister that the depression of the 1930s struck, but Scullin who was conservative in his thinking accepted and implemented the dictates of the British bankers, who proposed-cuts to wages, pensions, employment and all other forms of payment to workers. However, in NSW the Labor Premier, Jack Lang, countered the advice of the bankers by proposing a moratorium on interest payments on British and all other forms of financial loans. Lang was deposed by the NSW Governor, but Scullin meekly accepted this questionable action, thereby splitting the Labor Party and the

whole of the labour movement. In this conflict Curtin, while remaining within the party, attempted to legitimize the rebels, an attitude which added further to his unpopularity with the PM. The ALP lost government in the election of 1932 and Curtin also lost his seat of Fremantle.

During the following years Curtin worked as a free-lance journalist, but continued to hold his position on the Federal executive of the ALP. He regained the seat of Fremantle in 1934 and, when Scullin retired from the leadership in 1935, Curtin was elected party leader by one vote. He took up the position of party leader on 7th October 1935.

Curtin set about the difficult task of rebuilding the party, particularly in NSW where the party was still deeply divided as a result of Scullin's handling of the depression. Other issues agitating the party were the Spanish Civil War, the appeasement of Germany at Munich, Italy's invasion of Abyssinia and the export of pig iron to Japan.

If the ALP was divided so was the Conservative Government, led by Lyons, another Labor Party traitor, who was feuding with his fellow party member Robert Menzies and Eric Page, the leader of the Country Party. This feuding continued right up to 1941 when the intra-Government disputation came to a head with Menzies resigning as PM and party leader. Because of his many statements praising Hitler and Mussolini, Menzies was widely regarded as being at heart a fascist sympathiser.

Menzies was followed as PM by Earle Page who lasted for only a couple of weeks. On Page's resignation Curtin became Prime Minister with a margin of only two seats. Nevertheless he set out to put in place a program of defense production which included the allocation of manpower. Thus, for the first time since the landing of the First Fleet in 1788, Australians experienced full employment. Curtin also established a taxation regime which curbed excessive salary payments and profits and introduced rationing for clothing, footwear and food. To further enhance defense production Curtin lifted the ban on the Communist Party, that had been imposed by Robert Menzies when he was last in power. He also called for assistance from the Americans and the Russians, although Russia had not declared war on Japan. However Curtin had been Prime Minister for a very brief period when Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, advanced into the Philippines, and proceeded to overrun the Dutch colonies of what is now Indonesia. Singapore fell to the Japanese on 5th February 1942. They invaded Timor and bombed Darwin heavily, killing many people.

With all its seasoned troops engaged in the Middle East, or captured in Malaya,

Australia was in a particularly weak position. It was then that the Cabinet called for the return of the two divisions of troops that had been sent to protect the Suez Canal.

Despite the Australian perception of imminent danger of a Japanese invasion, Winston Churchill, the British PM strongly contested Curtin's request and even after he finally agreed to return the troops he attempted to have them diverted to Burma. Eventually the troops arrived home, but they were denied either naval, or aircraft protection on their long sea voyage.

Eventually General MacArthur, who had escaped from the Philippines, made his base in Australia and with him came thousands of American troops and much equipment. Despite the loss of two British warships in the vicinity of Malaya, fears of a Japanese invasion diminished further when the Americans won the Naval battles of the Coral Sea and Midway. Australian morale also rose when their troops scored a victory over the Japanese at Milne Bay.

With the diminution of fears of a Japanese invasion the Australian Government set about planning for the establishment of a new society in their homeland. It sought to achieve a fairer distribution of wealth by reform of the taxation system. It established a new department of post-war reconstruction which developed a White Paper on how to achieve a full employment economy. Between 1941 and 1944 the Government introduced widow's pensions, maternity allowance, along with unemployment and sickness benefits. Also planned was a National University in the Australian Capital Territory and a program of university scholarships was introduced. They also planned to reform the Commonwealth Bank.

An election was due in 1943 and, despite savage criticism of the Labor Government by the Packer Press and the Murdoch Press, the Government won a resounding electoral victory over the conservatives. However, even to this day some people question the necessity for the involvement of Australian troops in the re-conquest of S.E. Asia. The Americans have frequently belittled the overall Australian contribution and refused to permit Australian troops to become involved in the liberation of the Philippines.

Curtin appears to have been unaware of the hostility which his withdrawal of Australian troops from the Middle East generated in the minds of the British and United States allies. He seems to have been unaware that both Roosevelt and Churchill were in full agreement regarding the implementation of Churchill's plan to permit Australia to be attacked and possibly overrun and then recovered by the allies at a later date. Thus when Curtin decided to visit the US and Britain towards

the end of the war he was unprepared for the cool receptions he received in Washington and London. Even his proposal for an improved method of communication and organization within the British Commonwealth was ignored and his visit to London was not particularly welcoming. In the meantime Curtin's health was rapidly deteriorating. When he arrived home he became seriously ill with a lung infection and died on 6th July 1945. Japan had not yet capitulated and he was unaware of the nuclear bombs that were in preparation, so he never lived to share the horrors of the

dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Curtin was buried with great pomp in Western Australia after a full state funeral was held in his honour. A commemoration service was also conducted in Westminster Abbey, London.

Unlike Chifley, his successor as PM, little publicity was given to Curtin's dedication to Keynesian socialism and his ideas are not widely known.

Patrick O'Beirne

Next Month: Benedict Chifley, Prime Minister of Australia, 1945-9

Casement 2008

(8.11.08)

PART ONE

With the 2009 Casement Symposium being held in Buswell's Hotel
on Saturday 28th November,

we reproduce below a report of some highlights the proceedings of last year's event

JACK MOYLETT

The day's events were chaired by Jack Moylett, Secretary of the Roger Casement Foundation. In his introductory remarks he referred to steps the foundation was taking in order to facilitate an independent forensic examination of the so called "*black diaries*", attributed to Casement. He referred to this small collection of mainly manuscript sized dated notebooks as "*horrible documents*". These had been deliberately used to blacken the name of Casement, during the time leading up to his execution. Yet the real Roger Casement was in mind and spirit "*a most beautiful man*", he told the gathering.

He referred to women Casement had been romantically involved with, such as the cultural activist Margaret Dobbs.

He described how the infamous diaries disappeared completely from view immediately after the man was executed. The writer T.E. Lawrence sought access but was unsuccessful in his efforts to be allowed view them. They now belonged in a bureaucratic limbo-land; their existence was neither confirmed nor denied. The English poet and literary academic, Alfred Noyes, had promoted the diaries as genuine in 1916 when he had operated in the then neutral United States as a war propagandist. By the 1950s he had undergone a complete change of heart. His book, *The Accusing Ghost*, outlined why he believed the material had been the work of a forger. His most compelling argument revolved around accounts of the initial discovery of the diaries by the British authorities. Absurdly, Casement's official accusers had provided FIVE mutually contradictory written accounts of their discovery.

In 1959 the existence of the material was officially admitted and was placed on restricted public release. A secretive investigation by a Dr. Harrison brought about a claim it was genuine. No report

from that investigation survives.

A handwriting specialist, a Dr. Baxendale, in the early 1990s, was presented on a BBC radio programme making a claim the material was genuine. It later turned out he had only been allowed to inspect a few preselected pages, and this after he had first to sign the Official Secrets Act.

The Giles Report of 2002, overseen by Prof. Bill McCormack, made a similar claim. Once this report was critically examined by forensic experts, it was "*shot out of the water*". It did not stand up as a piece of professional forensic work.

Moylett was happy to report that a group in Cork had raised an amount of money which enabled the foundation to purchase computer equipment and software for the Write-On program.

It is planned the contested diaries will be scanned into a computer. So also will a wide selection of acknowledged genuine Casement handwriting. Once this work has been completed satisfactorily copies of all the material now stored on disk can be provided to document examiners. (The Write-On program is a computer software system for the matching and comparison of stored images of handwriting. It allows for multiple examples of the same word or phrase to be called to the screen, examined, collated and stored for easy retrieval. It is commonly used by forensic scientists.)

Moylett again expressed his thanks and appreciation to the group of gentlemen in Cork who through their efforts had made the acquisition of the Write-On program possible. He especially remembered the late Pdraig O Cuanachain deceased during the year who had helped greatly with the project.

PAUL CULLEN

The 1910 "*black diary*" provided the primary theme for this speaker. He focused on the entries for March. Casement left

Brazil for Argentina on 8th March. On Friday 11th he arrived in Buenos Aires.

For a number of days from 14th March the name "Ramon" crops up. It is written in ink for the days Monday 14th and Tuesday 15th. Nothing else in ink appears for the whole page which covered from Monday 14th to Wednesday 16th. There is some writing in pencil for each of the days, including an entry at the top for Sunday 13th.

The name "Ramon" appears in ink at the position on the page where Casement habitually wrote the name of the locality where he was on a given day. The Ramon in the pencilled text is an individual who receives payments in exchange for sexual favours.

Interestingly there was a family named Duggan who lived near to Buenos Aires who were close to Casement. They were an Irish immigrant family from Ballymahon, Co. Longford. They had become exceedingly rich in their adopted homeland. They lived at a large ranch or *estancia* called "San Ramon".

Cullen was of the opinion that this was the root of the original meaning of "Ramon" in the diaries. Casement could have spent a few days at *San Ramon* and write that down in his diary as he habitually did with the location where he was staying. He knew the family well, as Luisa Duggan, who had written an account of the families history in 1992 stated. She mentioned a visit from Casement in the book. She has confirmed to Paul Cullen that Casement had spent a number of days at San Ramon. She could not confirm, however, that he had been there at the given time in March 1910. Nonetheless it was a very serious possibility.

The pencilled text could then be explained as forged interpolation.

Casement apparently then spent a number of days in Mar del Plata by the sea. On 22nd and 23rd March 1910 the name "Ramon" again appears in ink where one would normally expect a place name with no other inked writing on the page. There is pencilled writing, some of it suggestive.

On 24th Casement meets Eddy Duggan and his brothers and they play Bridge. They meet at *San Marco*. He is at San Marco on 25th and 26th. Obviously he was close he was to the Duggan family.

On 28th and 29th the name "Ramon" again appears as the only inked writing on a page.

Cullen explained that a forger could easily have repeatedly erased the first word of the phrase "San Ramon" from the original text and then added in complementary material in pencil mentioning a character named "Ramon" to create an original story to suit his own purpose.

BRYAN MUKANDI

This speaker is originally from Zimbabwe. On giving his talk he has been living in Ireland already for two years. He has written an opinion column for *The Irish Times* and maintains a blog on the website of that paper.

He spoke of growing up in the colonial culture of what was then Rhodesia, the state that preceded the founding of the modern state of Zimbabwe. This was a state run by white colonists who had refused to accept the concept of majority black rule. The culture of colonial white dominated Africa still prevailed. Whites were thought of as superior beings not only by other whites but also by most of the native black population. The speaker's ability to readily outperform whites academically was a source not only of pride to his family but also of a certain surprise.

Roger Casement's appeal is that he was a pioneer in highlighting extensive human rights abuses in Africa. Now, almost a century later, not a lot has changed. Innocent people are still suffering on a vast scale as a result of being brutally economically exploited.

In sub-Saharan Africa governments can be divided roughly into two types. One could be called the "Animal Farm" type. In George Orwell's novel the animals on a farm rebel and take over the running of the farm from the farmer. They are led by the pigs. Eventually the pigs adapt the same characteristics as the humans and become indistinguishable from them. This type of regime in its most extreme form is represented by Zimbabwe under Mugabe. What you have is a change of personalities at the top but the same attitudes are in place. When a system has really been superseded there is a change in cultural perspectives. This provokes a question. What is an appropriate African political philosophy?

South Africa under Thabo Mbeki represents another type of African regime. Over the last 10 years Mbeki has been doing a good job. For him the economy is the most important thing. There has been real economic progress. However, the post-Apartheid government provoked ever growing expectations which realistically can not be met. This is a serious dilemma.

Apartheid is still there. The school system is the same as under the old regime where there were C, B and A schools. The C schools get the most funding. These are for whites and rich blacks.

Traditional African society did not have the concept of private property as we know it. Should western culture be adapted wholesale or should traditional culture be rethought out and adapted to democracy? He felt there should be an effort to make a new society based on the underpinnings of traditional culture. Ideas should have precedence over vested interests.

Botswana is a country that is doing well. Yet reports speak of frustration and a lack of drive. African people have a vision of life which is relaxed and unhurried. They do not strive to necessarily copy the west outright. It may not be wise to see progress in Africa as a matter of opening Dell and Microsoft plants in Botswana.

Tim O'Sullivan

Roger Casement: *The Crime Against Europe. With The Crime Against Ireland* Introduction by B. Clifford. 184pp. Index. ISBN 0 85034 101 9. AB, 2003. €13, £9.99.

Alsace-Lorraine & The Great Irredentist War by *Brendan Clifford, Roger Casement, Rene Bazin, Coleman Phillipson, Nicholas Mansergh*. 48pp. ISBN 978-1-903497-42-5. ABM No. 34, 2009. €5, £4.

Six Days Of The Irish Republic (eyewitness account of 1916), by *L.G. Redmond-Howard*. Contains a profile of Roger Casement, written during his trial; the Irish Case for the League of Nations; and a play written jointly with Harry Carson (the Ulster leader's son). Intro. by *Brendan Clifford*. Index. 256pp ISBN 1 903497 27 2. AHS, March 2006. €16, £12.

Roger Casement: A Reassessment Of The Diaries Controversies by *Mairead Wilson*. ISBN 0 85034 112 4. 32pp, AB. October 2005. €6, £4.

The Casement Diary Dogmatists. Edited by *Brendan Clifford*. 68pp. ABM No 22. ISBN 1 874157 09 X. October 2004. €5, £4.

Traitor-Patriots In The Great War: Casement & Masaryk by *Brendan Clifford*. 56pp. ABM No 23. ISBN 1 874157 10 3. October 2004. €5, £4.

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The Ford job-cull

The Ford Motor Company invented the firm 'Visteon' in 2000. This was an alias for Ford in its outlying car-parts plants. When the unions negotiated with Ford over this matter they got a 'mirror' contract. They demanded that the factories under the 'Visteon' label got the same amount of work as standard 'Ford' plants. Ford has been increasingly renegeing on that part of the new contract. The 'book' sent out to the employees of the 'new' firm was word-for-word the same as the Ford book. The cover of the 'Visteon' one was yellow, Ford's orange with the word 'Ford' on the cover.

This and most of the rest of the information in this article comes from *The Leveller*, the Belfast paper of the anarcho-syndicalist Organise! Another libertarian group Haringey Solidarity (anarcho-Old Labour) offered the workers in Enfield the use of their postal address and bank account. This is noted because going into the internet to investigate this dispute it was apparent that the Enfield workers were visited by every set of initials on the London Left. They gave these workers the benefit of their interpretation of the works of Marx and Engels. What they needed was funding and other practical solidarity.

The Belfast plant's workforce on April 1, was 210 people, 15% of what it was in 1980. They decided to force the hand of the Ford management by occupying the plant. It is on Finaghy Road, where in the fairly recent past, there have been sectarian problems. It was never as brutal as in older, inner city areas, but there were a number of deaths and some 'exchange of population'. This did nothing to stop the occupation. The local MP (Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin) was made welcome when he offered solidarity in person.

Enfield and Basildon occupied their plants at much the same time. This was not (overtly) co-ordinated by Unite the Union. It may have been co-ordinated by way of the National Shop Stewards Network. (This is similar to the situation in Belfast during the postal workers strike in 2006, and the Lindsey Oil Refinery actions this year. The Unions not being directly involved in the act are not liable to fines and other forms of punishment. There is very little doubt that after twelve years of New Labour the bosses have the whip hand in what is left of industry in the UK.)

The Finaghy Road workers, apart from welcoming Gerry Adams were grateful for solidarity action from 'across the water'. There was strong solidarity from Liverpool. In the form of Billy Hayes (CWU—Communication Workers'

Union), Donnelly Kinder (a law firm) and the Initiative Workers / Sacked Liverpool Dockworkers group. The message of solidarity from the latter was signed by Terry Teague. They sent a singer called Alun Parry to Belfast. He was well received. Belfast could supply a battalion of singer-songwriters out of its own resources. Alun noted that the local papers were sympathetic to the Visteon workers. That is not particularly unusual these days. There must be a feeling in Belfast, and Basildon and, Enfield, that the UK is becoming post-industrial.

Belfast is in a worse position than the other outlying bits of the Ford empire. The shipyard is gone, engineering is going, linen is threadbare. The prospects for a tourism-led economic take-off have been blighted by the depression. (And racist violence. Television images of terrified minorities fleeing the place are not a tourist-magnet.) That is not to claim that everything is honky-dory in Basildon or Enfield. The latter is a London Borough, and the other a short train ride away from the heart and centre of the UK economy. (London's industry has been dumped in Essex.) The *Enfield Independent* was right behind the workers in the Ponders End plant.

The immediate consequence of the occupations was Ford demanding that the workers be thrown out of the various premises. Unite opposed this in the courts and Kevin Nolan the (Enfield) union convenor, Derek Simpson, the joint secretary general (from the Amicus end of the union) and Roger Maddison went to New York for talks with Ford. They got rather little for their efforts. KPMG, (which administered the factories), wanted the workers out of the buildings. Those in Enfield took the union's advice. But they picketed on a twenty-four hour basis until the end of April. The Belfast workers remained in occupation of their plant. (This was probably inspired by the sit-in in Waterford Glass.)

Unite issued a May Day message to the effect that Visteon / Ford was to do "the decent thing" in regard to the workers. They had been thrown out of work at—literally—minute's notice. (That was the routine in the Belfast shipyard. Men got a tap on the shoulder, meaning 'collect your cards at the end of the shift'). Women and men in Visteon were told that they were not entitled to pensions or redundancy—despite having paid into this provision—in some cases for thirty years. They were told they would be entitled to the basic state redundancy pay. The difference

between that and what they were entitled to from Ford was between 10 and 30 times (the state redundancy pay). Unite seemed very sure that Ford would not renege on this. It urged the people picketing, blockading and occupying the plants to stop doing what they were doing.

The *Leveller* article *Post-Fordism in Belfast: The Running Down of Visteon*, by 'Mike' notes that Belfast is (in terms of the Ford supply flow) in contention with the Visteon plant in Port Elizabeth. The material from South Africa is of poorer quality than stuff from the UK plants. That has to do with South Africa not having the same legally binding quality control not any fault of the workforce. Ford / Visteon is not exactly putting pressure on the 'rainbow republic' to introduce such laws. The Belfast workers had been hoping their occupation would lead to the plant being kept open. Unite was quick off the mark agreeing with management that all three factories should be vacated. Enfield and Basildon are closer to Unite's headquarters than Belfast.

The workers may have been in the T&G (Transport and General Workers' Union). The T&G has not prospered in the lash-up with *Amicus*. *Unite's* May 1st Statement claims that the workers in the 'Visteon' plants will be given first shout when jobs come up in other parts of the Ford infrastructure. That did not raise howls about 'British jobs' from the Left (as the Lindsey situation did). So far as Belfast is concerned the offer is entirely cynical. Mike (*Leveller*) surmises that Ford welcomed the recession as a cover for its job-cull. The Visteon management created a further accountancy entity early this year to safeguard their own pensions.

Seán McGouran

NON

You were given a democratic vote but you voted for you and not for us. Forget the last time you were impious, let's make that history an anecdote. Of course you found a leak in the boat so how could you sail all the way to Lisbon. But understand the most fatal leak is 'non.' Fixed now, climb aboard, and repeat by rote: Floccinaucinihilipilification. You may not understand that word right now but many of us here don't either. Ciao! Mark 'ja' and there's no vilification. Democracy gives you a second chance. But remember this: It is not carte blanche.

Wilson John Haire.
5th January, 2009

MILITARISM continued

missions as military missions", he said.

Military support had been supplemented by new skills, including the deployment of the two Irish experts to Afghanistan and the West Bank, and the contribution of experts in areas such as monitoring the ceasefire and leading confidence-building initiatives between the two sides in Georgia. Mr. Martin also pointed to An Garda's Síochána's contribution to EU missions in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"These members of the gardaí and other Irish civilian experts continue to serve the cause of international peace and security in some of the most dangerous parts of the world," he said.

Paying tribute to Ireland's professional peacekeepers across the globe, he said their work had radically changed from the static observation posts of Lebanon to mobile quick-reaction forces protecting refugees in Chad.

He said the Lisbon Treaty reiterates that the EU's action internationally, "will respect the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law" (Irish Times-3.8.09).

George Canning claimed that "*Nations have neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, only permanent interests*". Ireland up until now has laid great emphasis on her anti-imperial past but how you convince the Afghan nation and the Arab world that Ireland is a neutral state and yet attempt to explain the presence of our troops in the main NATO headquarters in Kabul takes some doing.

Iveagh House may feel it is playing a cute game—the kidnapping of Ms. Commings might provoke some of them to think again!

"Neutralism must also be distinguished from neutrality; while neutralism refers to the foreign policy of a state in time of peace, neutrality is a term of international law referring to the rules that states are obliged to follow during a legal state of war in which they are not belligerents. Their neutral status implies strict impartiality and abstention from any assistance to the belligerent parties" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978, 15th edition).

SHANNON AND BLOOD MONEY

"US troop traffic going through Shannon airport is the only growth area at the airport this year with 130,922 soldiers passing through in the first six months.

"The number of US troops going through Shannon between January and the end of June stood at 130,922 on 991 flights—an increase of 4.8 per cent on the corresponding period last year.

"The figures show that 63,996 US

troops passed between March and the end of June.

"The profits from the troop movements this year are estimated to have earned the cash-strapped Shannon Airport Authority €3.5 million for the first six months this year.

"The airport's overall traffic for the first six months of the year is down 7 per cent to 1.4 million with commercial transatlantic traffic down 19 per cent and European traffic down 3 per cent.

"Outspoken critic of US troops using Shannon, Dr Ed Horgan said yesterday: "What is going on at Shannon is wrong and it would seem that the increased numbers of troops going through is connected to the US sending through additional troops to Afghanistan."

"Dr Horgan said that "if Shannon is relying more and more on military traffic, then it is doomed".

"He added: "We will continue to protest at the use of Shannon by the US military and the local support for our stance is increasing."

"In the years 2005 to 2008, the authority recorded an estimated €30 million in profits. The number of troops using the airport since the two US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has now exceeded 1.35 million.

"In the past three years, the State has spent almost €10 million in paying Garda and Army personnel to provide security at Shannon airport.

"Recent figures from Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern show that the State has spent €8.6 million on policing at Shannon airport, while the Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea has confirmed that the "Army has been paid €964,702 to patrol the airport over the past three years.

"Mr Ahern said €4.8 million had been paid in salaries during the period with an additional €2.7 million paid in overtime.

"A further €1 million was spent paying travel and subsistence expenses. (*Irish Times*, 15.7.2009).

Dr. Horgan commented further:

"Ireland is a military ally of the US, and we are party to their so-called war on terror.

"The Irish Government abandoned neutrality on March 20, 2003, [Iraq II] and has facilitated the transit of armed U.S. troops and refuelling of more than 1,000 CIA flights through Shannon Airport.

"Shannon Airport has made more than \$3m (€2.1m) profit on an estimated 1,350,000 armed U.S. troops transiting through the airport in clear breach of international laws on neutrality.

"This amounts to blood money, given that an estimated one million people have died as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Up to 500 armed U.S. troops per day are still passing through Shannon, and CIA planes are still being refuelled there.

"Yet, our Government has the gall to tell the Irish people that they have secured legally binding guarantees that the Lisbon Treaty will not affect Ireland's traditional policy of neutrality."

"As became the professional diplomat he was more concerned with his country's interests than her role and he had the bureaucrat's healthy respect for the realities of power. While realizing that Ireland's anti-colonial past made her sympathetic to the emerging nations, the close ties—and potential pressures—between Ireland and certain western countries, notably Britain and the United States, should not be disregarded. Significantly when Ireland was offered the presidency of the General Assembly in 1960 as the nominee of the western group, this offer was made contingent on Boland being the man to fill the office" (*The Times*, London, Obituary on Frederick H. Boland, 1904-1985).

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Listen, church bells toll in Wootton Bassett still, securocrats turn on the faucet.

A Wiltshire town near RAF Lyneham. Boxed torn flesh parades as Simple Simon, too young to die but never the Afghan. Did the army expect a kissogram. Imperial history dusted off?

Not war psychosis only a slight cough? Many more hearses coming through today? Yet more blood bypassing the tourniquet? That must make eighty in the last two years passing through this narrow high street of tears.

The media do go on about this curse. Give each soldier a minder and a nurse? Bye, shopping-trolley time at No. 10. 0800 hours striking from Big Ben. Prime Minister, sir, we lack equipment, having many souls ready for shipment. It's not the Afghan who kills our boys but a deplorable lack of military toys. General, sir, is war not plc, knightships, private contracts, for a fat fee.

Any idea what a drone will cost? From 7,000 miles it blasts a mosque. Ten million pounds without munitions, worked with joystick in office conditions. Problem, we don't have total control, think Nevada Desert, a U.S. troll: 'Target only, Bud. I'm in command, especially when it's Pakistan.' Afghans who live on a dollar a day must cost a thousand pounds to wound or slay.

Got to hurry down to the Job Centre, pick a few lads out of the dissenters. No, those church bells can't be ringing again!

And here again these most peculiar friends: undertakers, gravediggers, tabloid hags, TV, Radio, and the broadsheet rags.

Wilson John Haire.
20th July, 2009

MILITARISM continued

substantial progress in 2003 and early 2004, although skirmishes in parts of the south continued. The two sides have agreed that, following a final peace treaty, southern Sudan will enjoy autonomy for six years, and after the expiration of that period, the people of southern Sudan will be able to vote in a referendum on independence. Furthermore, oil revenues will be divided equally between the Government and rebels during the six-year interim period. The ability or willingness of the Government to fulfil these promises has been questioned by some observers, however, and the status of three central and eastern provinces was a point of contention in the negotiations. Some observers wondered whether hard-line elements in the north would allow the treaty to proceed.

A final peace treaty was signed on 9th January 2005 in Nairobi.

CHADIAN-SUDANESE CONFLICT

The Chadian-Sudanese conflict officially started on 23rd December 2005, when the Government of Chad declared a state of war with Sudan and called for the citizens of Chad to mobilize themselves against the "common enemy", which the Chadian Government sees as the Rally for Democracy and Liberty (RDL) militants, Chadian rebels, backed by the Sudanese Government, and Sudanese militiamen. Militants have attacked villages and towns in eastern Chad, stealing cattle, murdering citizens, and burning houses. Over 200,000 refugees from the Darfur region of north-western Sudan currently claim asylum in eastern Chad. Chadian President Idriss Déby accuses Sudanese President Omar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir of trying to "destabilize our country, to drive our people into misery, to create disorder and export the war from Darfur to Chad".

"I do not believe we can build a democratic state in Afghanistan", announces Dianne Feinstein, the California Democrat who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee. "I believe it will remain a tribal entity". And Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, does not believe "there is a great deal of support for sending more troops to Afghanistan".

Colin Kenny, Chair of Canada's senate committee on national security and defence, said this week that "what we hoped to accomplish in Afghanistan has proved to be impossible. We are hurtling towards a Vietnam ending".

It is instructive to turn at this moment to the Canadian army, which has in Afghanistan fewer troops than the Brits but who have suffered just as ferociously; their 130th soldier was killed near Kandahar

this week.

Every three months, the Canadian authorities publish a scorecard on their military "progress" in Afghanistan—a document that is infinitely more honest and detailed than anything put out by the Pentagon—which proves beyond peradventure that this is Mission Impossible or, as Toronto's 'National Post' put it "Operation Sleepwalk"... (Robert Fisk, *Irish Independent*, 19.9.2009).

AFGHANISTAN

On September 21st, the day that US military commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal, in a leaked report, suggested that the US mission in Afghanistan would "likely result in failure" unless troop levels were increased, Italy held a solemn and dignified state funeral for the six Italian paratroopers killed in a suicide car bomb attack in Kabul on 17th September 2009.

Concern about the fate of the 3,300-strong Italian contingent in Afghanistan provided an unwelcome counterpoint to the mood of national mourning during the funeral service in the Rome basilica of St. Paul Without The Walls. Even as the haunting tones of the Last Post, played by a military bugler, resounded around the silent basilica, an unidentified man calling himself a messenger of peace grabbed the microphone to shout: "Peace Now".

The interloper was quickly removed but later there was another manifestation of concern about the Afghan mission.

As Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi made his way out of the basilica, he was greeted by a lone voice in the otherwise silent crowd, shouting: "Pull them out of there, how many other deaths are we going to have to suffer?"

Banners in the church from the regions of Basilicata, Campania and Puglia served as reminders, too, that all the six dead men were southern Italians, for whom the army was a lifeline out of a difficult socio-economic environment.

GOD BLESS THE

IRISH ARMY IN AFGHANISTAN

The above scene in Rome might easily have taken place in the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin—it very nearly did.

On 15th August 2009, suicide bombers struck outside Nato's Kabul headquarters, where seven Irish personnel are based, killing ten people and injuring around 100 in the city's supposedly most secure area.

Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea has "received assurances" from senior Defence Forces officers as to the safety of Irish personnel serving with a Nato-led force in Afghanistan following a recent increase in unrest and killings in the country.

Mr. O'Dea was briefed by a delegation of senior military personnel led by Defence Forces Chief of Staff Lieut. Gen. Dermot

Earley on the situation in Kabul, where the seven Irish are based as part of the International Security Assistance Force (Isaf).

The force is mandated by the United Nations and is Nato-led.

Following the briefing Mr. O'Dea said that while he was satisfied the Irish troops' security needs were being met, given the volatile situation in Kabul he and the Government would closely monitor events.

"I was anxious to receive assurances from the military that their safety and security at this particular time ahead of the elections is being closely monitored," said Mr. O'Dea.

"I want to reassure the families of those personnel based in Kabul that the safety of their loved ones is my main concern right now."

The safety of the Irish was being monitored before recent attacks at the Isaf compound but that monitoring was now a priority.

In light of the risks of the mission the Department of Defence said Irish personnel had been supplied with vehicles fitted with electronic devices that would help repel roadside bombs.

Irish troops have been serving in Afghanistan with Isaf since 2002. Mr. O'Dea said the small number of Irish played a "small but significant" role in Isaf's operations, particularly in the area of "technical expertise" concerning improvised explosive devices.

In June Mr. O'Dea secured Cabinet approval for seven Irish soldiers to remain in Afghanistan for an open-ended period, subject to review by Mr. O'Dea.

Because the number of troops on the mission is so small Dáil approval is not needed to sanction their deployment.

While Isaf was expanding there were no plans to increase the number of Irish personnel on the mission. Those serving in Kabul are rotated after tours of duty lasting six months.

"MR. NATO"—MICHEAL MARTIN

Irish personnel will join EU missions in Afghanistan and the Middle East this month as part of the State's peacekeeping contribution, Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin announced on 2nd August 2009.

A "rule of law" expert will serve with the EU's police assistance mission in Afghanistan and a human rights expert will serve with the EU police mission in the West Bank later this month.

Mr. Martin said Irish efforts to support peace had broadened beyond purely military. "This is nowhere more evident than in our EU missions, which have an overwhelmingly civilian emphasis. There have been twice as many European civilian

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MILITARISM continued

colony in 1920 and was made an overseas territory in 1946. The country achieved Independence in 1960 but has had decades of civil war, resulting in political instability and a lack of economic development—arising from conflict between the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south.

The Muslim group received support from Libya, which claimed and occupied part of North Chad—the Aouzou strip—in 1973, precipitating numerous changes of Government.

The country's first President, Ngarta Tombalbaye, was killed in a coup in 1975.

In 1979, a coalition Government, headed by Goukouni Oueddei, a former rebel from the north, assumed power, but fighting broke out again in 1980. In 1982 Goukouni's Government was overthrown by the forces of former Prime Minister Hissene Habre. He moved to include all factions in his Government and defeated the Libyans in 1987, but they retained control of the Aouzou strip. Habre was ousted in 1990 by rebels led by Idriss Deby, who became President. A national democracy conference established a transitional Government in 1993, with Deby remaining President, and called for free elections within a year, but they were later postponed until 1996. In 1994 the International Court of Justice rejected Libya's claim to the Aouzou strip and other Chadian territory, and the strip was returned to Chadian control.

Chad is now a republic with one legislative body; its chief of state is the President, its head of Government the Prime Minister. The country has a population of near 10 million.

"The dangers Irish troops have faced in Chad in recent months are laid bare in a UN report of a battle in May between rebels and the Chadian army.

"On May 4th a coalition of anti-government rebel groups streamed into eastern Chad from Darfur and the Central African Republic in three columns of between 60 and 70 vehicles each.

"Every vehicle would typically carry 10-15 men with rocket launchers, grenades and AK47s.

"Two of the columns met up about 100km northwest of the Irish Army's camp in Goz Beida. On May 6th Chadian fighter planes bombed the rebels from the air just south of Goz Beida.

"The following day an intense ground battle ensued close to the Irish camp in which 22 soldiers and 225 rebels were killed. More than 200 rebels were captured, including 84 child soldiers.

"During the fighting Irish soldiers moved out of their base in a convoy of armoured personnel carriers. They travelled 35kms from their base to Goz Amer and evacuated 77 international and local aid workers who feared they were

about to be killed.

"The evacuation mission was arguably the most high-risk task undertaken by Irish troops serving abroad for many years.

"The Irish have had plenty to contend with as they try to enforce the fragile peace in Chad.

"In recent months there have been 152 attacks on UN and aid agency staff and facilities, many of them in the UN mission's southern sector, for which the Irish are responsible." (*Irish Times*, 8.8.2009).

The McCarthy Report on cutting public expenditure recommended the 411 Irish troops be withdrawn from Chad next March as a cost-saving measure.

If Ireland ends its participation, the troubled mission would be left with 2,013 personnel rather than the current 2,424.

The mission is supposed to be operating at a strength of 5,225 personnel.

Sources said because most of the cost of the mission is being reimbursed to the Irish Government by the UN, the saving from ending Ireland's involvement would only be in the region of \approx 10 million to \approx 12 million annually.

On a visit to Chad in February, Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea stated that the recession would not force Ireland's withdrawal.

However, since then Mr. O'Dea has informed the UN that Ireland's need to cut public spending might affect its ability to remain in Chad beyond next March.

The McCarthy report recommended there be no extension to the deployment beyond mid-March.

REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, with a population of 40 million. The Nile river flows the entire length of the country. The country is ruled by an Islamic military regime.

Egypt had conquered all of the Sudan by 1874 and encouraged British interference in the region; this aroused Muslim opposition and led to the revolt of al-Mahdi, who captured the capital, Khartoum in 1885 and established a Muslim theocracy in the Sudan that lasted until 1898, when his forces were defeated by the British. The British ruled, generally in partnership with Egypt, until the region achieved independence as The Sudan in 1956.

Since then, the country has fluctuated between ineffective parliamentary Government and unstable military rule. The non-Muslim population of the south has engaged in ongoing rebellion against the Muslim-controlled Government of the north. In 1972, President Muhammad Gaafar al-Nimeiry ended the conflict by granting the south a measure of autonomy. However, his imposition of Islamic law on the entire country in 1983 reopened the

conflict, and an estimated 1.5 million people have died since. On April 6, 1985, a group of military officers, led by Lieutenant General Abd ar Rahman Siwar adh Dhahab, overthrew Nimeiri, who took refuge in Egypt. Three days later, Dhahab authorized the creation of a fifteen-man Transitional Military Council (TMC) to rule Sudan.

In June 1986, Sadiq al Mahdi formed a coalition Government. Sadiq proved to be a weak leader and incapable of governing Sudan. Party factionalism, corruption, personal rivalries, scandals, and political instability characterized the Sadiq regime. After less than a year in office, Sadiq al Mahdi dismissed the Government because it had failed to draft a new penal code to replace the sharia, reach an agreement with the IMF, end the civil war in the south, or devise a scheme to attract remittances from Sudanese expatriates. To retain the support of the southern political parties, Sadiq formed another ineffective coalition Government.

This coalition Government was overthrown in 1989 by Lt. General Omar Hassan al-Bashir; he officially became President in 1993. Bashir's Government reinstated Islamic law, banned opposition parties, and jailed dissidents. In 1992 and 1994, the army mounted offensives against the rebels in Southern Sudan and ousted them from many areas, but the rebels regained territory in 1995.

The civil war has displaced more than four million southerners. Some fled into southern cities, such as Juba; others trekked as far north as Khartoum and even into Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, and other neighbouring countries. These people were unable to grow food or earn money to feed themselves, and malnutrition and starvation became widespread.

In early 2003, a new rebellion in the western region of Darfur began. The rebels accuse the central Government of neglecting the Darfur region, although there is uncertainty regarding the objectives of the rebels and whether they merely seek an improved position for Darfur within Sudan or outright secession. Both the Government and the rebels have been accused of atrocities in this war, although most of the blame has fallen on Arab militias (Janjaweed) allied with the Government. The rebels have alleged that these militias have been engaging in ethnic cleansing in Darfur, and the fighting has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, many of them seeking refuge in neighbouring Chad. The Government claimed victory over the rebels after capturing Tine, a town on the border with Chad, in early 2004, but violence continues.

Peace talks between the southern rebels and the Sudanese Government made

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Militarism continued

"The kidnapers are asking for \$2m", state minister for humanitarian affairs, Abdel Baqi al-Jailani said. "But our policy is not to pay ransom. We feel that would encourage others to do the same."

The Minister said Darfur officials were using local leaders to negotiate with the kidnapers, adding he was still expecting a positive outcome. "Our main priority remains the safety of the two women", he said, stating that the kidnapers did not appear to have political motives and said a "hotline" had been established as part of the negotiations to free the aid workers.

The news that the kidnapers were looking for a ransom was the first confirmation that officials were negotiating with the armed gang who seized the women.

An Irish team of hostage negotiators, led by Ireland's ambassador to Sudan Gerry Corr, has been involved in intensive behind-the-scenes talks with Sudanese authorities since the two women were abducted. The delegation, which includes a GOAL representative, was in contact with the kidnapers.

DEATH OF AID WORKERS

"The statistics tell a harrowing story. For instance, since January 2008, 42 aid workers have been killed and 33 abducted in Somalia, alone. The truth is that since 2006, attacks on aid workers have increased dramatically, according to the Overseas Development Institute.

"Afghanistan, Somalia, and Darfur account for more than 60% of violence against aid workers. Last year was the worst in 12 years, with 260 humanitarian aid workers killed, kidnapped or seriously injured in violent attacks, according to the institute.

"Surely it is time for the UN to take responsibility for the security of aid workers. It is next to impossible for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to protect themselves. For instance, in Darfur, agencies employ security staff, but they are not even allowed to carry guns" (John O'Shea, CEO of GOAL, *Irish Independent*, 10.9.2009).

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

On 6th March 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for the Sudanese President, Omar al-Beshir for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The 65-year-old President, who seized power in Africa's largest country in a coup 20 years ago, became the first sitting President to be issued with an ICC arrest warrant.

The Government of Sudan retaliated by ordering the expulsion of 10 foreign relief agencies, a move that threatened aid to several hundred thousand people.

The action affected major organisations

such as Oxfam (UK) and Medecins Sans Frontieres (France). Between 200-300 foreign staff are affected by the expulsion orders. It would appear that GOAL the Irish agency did not come under the expulsion order and continued to work in Darfur. Five of those agencies complained that the Sudanese authorities have since seized \$5.2 million (€3.65 million) of their assets.

Sudan's allies, including African and Arab states and also China, called for the suspension of the warrant, warning it could undermine efforts to end the six-year conflict in Darfur.

Khartoum vowed it will not cooperate with the Court, based in The Hague, which accuses Beshir of masterminding a campaign of extermination, rape and pillage in Darfur.

"The true criminals are the leaders of the United States and Europe", President Beshir said, charging that the ICC and UN Security Council were the instruments of "neo-colonialism".

The UN says up to 300,000 people have died since conflict broke out in Darfur in 2003, when ethnic minority rebels fought against the Arab-dominated regime for a greater share of resources and power.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the European Union said Beshir must face justice, but analysts say there is little prospect of him being hauled before the Court.

Sudan called on fellow African states to withdraw from the ICC in protest.

China, which supplies military aid to Beshir's Government in return for oil imports, expressed its "worry" over the ICC move.

Many Sudanese fear the warrant against Beshir could plunge Africa's largest country into further chaos, and aid agencies were already warning of the potential fallout of their expulsion.

THE DAIL AND CHAD

Concern was raised immediately in the Dáil about the impact on Defence Forces operations in Chad of the decision by neighbouring Sudan to expel foreign aid agencies.

The issue was raised as TDs backed a Government motion for the continued deployment of 400 Irish personnel in the African country as part of a United Nations mission. The troops have served to date in an EU-led operation, protecting refugees fleeing war-torn Darfur in Sudan and internally displaced Chadians.

The deployment will continue on a "year-to-year" basis with a decision yet to be made on whether it will be for a maximum of two or three more years.

Under the EU operation, Ireland paid its own costs but with the UN mission the Government will recoup about €8.5

million of the €16.2 million annual cost.

Labour Defence Spokesman Brian O'Shea welcomed the improved security in the region due to the operation. However, he was concerned about the effect of further refugees moving from Darfur and the consequences for the operation of Irish troops.

Sinn Féin defence spokesman Aengus Ó Snodaigh welcomed the move to a UN operation. "This is where we should have been. EU military missions are unconstitutional for our supposed military neutrality", he said. (*Irish Times*, 6.3.2009).

"General Nash revealed that his force had received the full support of 60 humanitarian aid agencies working in Chad while the other 10 opted to remain totally separate from any military operation in the country.

"MINURCAT, in taking over from the EUFOR bridging operation, is authorised to take 'all necessary measures' to provide a secure and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons and has 5,200 military personnel, 300 police and a large team of civilians.

"He pointed out that about 2,000 personnel from his force had 'rehatted' and joined the bigger United Nations MINURCAT mission, which has replaced EUFOR in Chad.

"The Irish troops will remain part of MINURCAT for at least a year but are expected to stay longer, with the approval of the Government and the Dail" (*Irish Independent*, 19.3.2009).

440 Irish troops are currently involved in the Chad operation. The European Union handover to the UN control of the Chad peacekeeping mission took place on 15th March 2009.

Ireland's Brigadier General Gerald Aherne will also become the force's deputy commander.

A REVISIONIST VIEW:

"External defence policy, however, remains rooted in neutralist rhetoric... Despite the commitment and professionalism of its members, the army in independent Ireland remains what it always has been, an underequipped infantry force just large enough to meet any likely internal security threat and to perpetuate the public illusion that the state is seriously committed to independent external defence" (*The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 1998).

REPUBLIC OF CHAD

In the years 1883-93, the area which now makes up the state of Chad fell to the Sudanese adventurer Rabih al-Zubayr, who in turn was pushed out by the French in 1891. Extending their power, the French in 1910 made Chad a part of French Equatorial Africa. Chad became a separate

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Irish Militarism

*"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"*

Its mission and roles are to defend the state against armed aggression, to aid the civil power, to participate in multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations in support of the United Nations and under UN mandate, including regional security missions authorised by the United Nations, and to carry out such other duties as arise from time to time" (*The Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, 2003).

Recent events highlight the thin line in which Irish foreign policy operates in its adherence to EU and UN mandated policy and the supposed commitment to neutrality : the kidnapping of Sharon Commins, an aid worker in Darfur in the Republic of Sudan and the presence of the Irish Army in neighbouring Chad, just a short distance over the border from Sudan.

Indeed, a third dimension comes into play with the Irish military role in Afghanistan.

The common denominator in these three theatres of war is the major role being played by Islamic armies. From the point of view of the Irish Government : what may seem an innocent role in carrying out aid work in Darfur or Chad, may from an Islamic context be very hard to reconcile with an Irish military presence in Afghanistan as part of the occupation forces!

On October 1st, Sharon Commins, an aid worker with GOAL, the Irish Aid Agency, will have spent 90 days in captivity after being kidnapped at Kutum, North Darfur in the Republic of Sudan on 3rd July 2009.

Up to eight armed men seized Ms Commins (32)—from Clontarf, Dublin—and co-worker Hilda Kawuki (42) from Uganda, and a Sudanese watchman.

The kidnapping has now become the longest-running abduction of foreign aid staff in the region. Between March and July, two groups of humanitarian workers were captured. One group was held for

three days, the other for more than three weeks—before being released unharmed.

On September 5th, Foreign Affairs minister, Micheál Martin arrived in Khartoum, for meetings with Sudanese Government officials as efforts continued to secure the release of the kidnapped aid workers.

Mr. Martin is believed to have met officials including Sudan's Foreign Minister; President Omar al-Bashir's main adviser on Darfur; and Abdul Bagi al-Jailani, the Sudanese humanitarian affairs minister who has been overseeing negotiations to secure the women's release.

However, according to the *Irish Daily Mail* (12.9.2009), "*Foreign Affairs Minister Micheal Martin travelled to Sudan last week and held talks with Sudanese President Omar al-Basher.*" If this is true: Minister Martin must be the first Western politician to meet al-Basher since last March, when the President was served with an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Mr. al-Jailani has described the eight kidnappers as members of a nomadic tribe in north Darfur seeking a ransom. He said

that Sudanese authorities were continuing to liaise with tribal elders to free the women. Officials stopped talking directly to the kidnappers some time ago.

Sudanese officials had hoped there might be some developments before the holy month of Ramadan ends, on or around September 19th.

"Ramadan is a very special month, a month of forgiveness..." said Mr. al-Jailani. "We are hopeful that this game will come to an end soon but, as I have said to the Irish officials, we are dealing with people who have no sense of time..." (*Irish Times*, 5.9.09)

The kidnappers have been described as "*bandits*": "they are not well organised and do not respect the Sudanese government" (*Irish Daily Mail*, 12.9.2009). They are located in the Al Fasher area of western Sudan, near the Chad border and in terms of distance in Africa, a short 400 miles from the Irish UN camp near the Sudanese border, Goz Beida in south-east Chad.

"Despite assurances from Sudanese minister for humanitarian affairs Abdul-Bagi al-Jailani, who has been directly involved in the talks, that "these are bandits. They have nothing to do with the {Darfur} rebels, they have nothing to do with politics", there are indications the gang's clan leaders may have connections to the Janjaweed militias who have terrorised Darfur since 2003 with the NCP's support. To date, they appear impervious, however, to pressure even from senior "friends" in the NCP" (*Irish Times*, 8.8.2009; The National Congress Party, NCP, is led by President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir).

On September 23rd, Mr. Martin met with UN Under-Secretary General Gregory Starr because the UN force UNAMID has also had two people kidnapped in Darfur. "*We are sharing experiences*", the Minister said. He also spoke at length to Scott Gration, President Barack Obama's envoy on Darfur, who has intervened on Ireland's behalf with the Sudanese Government in the past.

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